CrossFitjournal **DEFERISE DEFERISE NEVER RESTS**

Tim Pipes explains how CrossFit Defense prepares athletes to stay alert, cultivate the warrior mindset and respond to threats.

BY TIM PIPES

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I SHALL ONLY ASK FOR A LONG LIFE AND THAT I MAY CONTINUE TO RISK SO OTHERS DO NOT HAVE TO.

OR I INTEND TO GO IN HARN'S

MEASURE MY QUALITY BY THE EVIL I STOOD AGAINST

> AND BY THE EVIL I REMOVED FROM THIS EARTH.





I also offer up good news: "There is an athlete and a warrior within everyone. We differ only in degree and purpose," said former Navy SEAL Cmdr. Mark Divine, a colleague in the CrossFit and tactical fields.

You see, athletes and warriors are among us in many capacities: current and former SWAT-team members and military operators; law-enforcement officers and firefighters; emergency medical technicians, paramedics and rescue personnel; highschool, college, amateur or professional sports athletes; CrossFit competitors and CrossFit box members; and stay-at-home moms and other everyday civilians with the warrior heart and mindset.

"Who cares how much you deadlift if you're dead?" is the provocative question CrossFit Defense founder Tony Blauer often asks.

We all understand how warriors demand the most from themselves and must maintain exceptional fitness for operational/ mission readiness. Warrior fitness combines conditioning of the mind, body and spirit in the warrior tradition of extreme training and preparedness. The beautiful effects of such intense training include marked improvement with vital skills that relate to reallife scenarios warriors encounter. Preparation for and involvement in extreme challenges tests these skills in individuals and builds team camaraderie and dynamics like nothing else.

That is why we love CrossFit. But let's be honest: No amount of physical, fitness or tactical training can prepare an individual for a real one-on-one violent attack.

"Elite fitness doesn't guarantee your safety," Blauer has said.

One-on-one human violence: It's often up close and personal, overwhelmingly uncomfortable, brutally intense, and devastatingly traumatic. Many prefer to imagine violence doesn't exist, but make no mistake about it: Evil and violence are real, and complacency and denial are useless when we experience violence by chance or by choice of profession.

I don't make these statements to frighten, intimidate or discourage. I only want you to ponder your preparedness when it comes to personal protection and self-defense.

Enter CrossFit Defense—the study of human movement as it our surroundings to some degree and picked up on some prerelates to violence, fear and aggression for the CrossFit athlete. How cool would it be to take the constantly varied functional movements that we have performed at high intensity for thousands of reps and seamlessly combine them with a lightningfast, genetically ingrained method of self-protection?

CrossFit Defense theory accomplishes just that.

Getting off the X

In the early days of my law-enforcement training, police officers were taught to immediately seek cover if ambushed with gunfire. Once in cover, officers would draw their weapons, find the source of the attack and return fire. Infantry training was similar in concept, but infantry members were taught to kneel, go prone, look for and find natural cover, and then seek shelter. In shelter, soldiers could ask "what next?" or await orders from command.

During my 10-plus years on the SWAT team, the training shifted to a more appropriate response: immediate and accurate return fire that caused the ambusher to seek cover. Special forces operators respond the same way by laying down immediate and accurate return fire and aggressively suppressing and flanking the ambush or disengaging if needed.

This response is triggered by a personal mental directive that shifts the mind from reactive to aggressive. If realistic training has acclimatized combatants to violence and favorable outcomes, then the mental directive and the associated tactical response become second nature once danger is encountered. The personal mental directive establishes a positive, assertive and motivating inner dialog that creates a natural "this then this" scenario.

"All fights are dangerous, but the most dangerous of all is the ambush."

----Tony Blauer

In an ambush, we are already well behind the curve. In reality, every street fight is a surprise of some kind because we don't walk around performing our everyday business while expecting or fearing a violent attack. But if we became more aware of

contact cues from potential attackers, could we potentially avoid the ambush altogether?

The spot where the ambush attack occurs is symbolically referred to as the "X." Blauer would submit that self-defense can begin far before you step on the X. Response to an attack must be quick and decisive, but responding before the attack is even better.

Mindset is key to getting off the X and out of harm's way. We must possess an aggressive "when/then" mindset sparked by a mental directive we have already determined and practiced—and have ready to implement when trouble appears. The mental directive will change the body's involuntary fight-or-flight response into an active and aggressive fight response enabling actions that prevent an attack or help someone get off the X.

If a victim senses something is wrong even before the attack, the body's built-in survival system can become frozen with fear or indecision. "Fear causes hesitation, and hesitation will cause your worst fears to come true," as said in the movie "Point Break." We may be occupied with thoughts of "why?" "what now?" or "oh no," or we may be frozen in utter surprise. This is fear-induced psychophysical inertia.

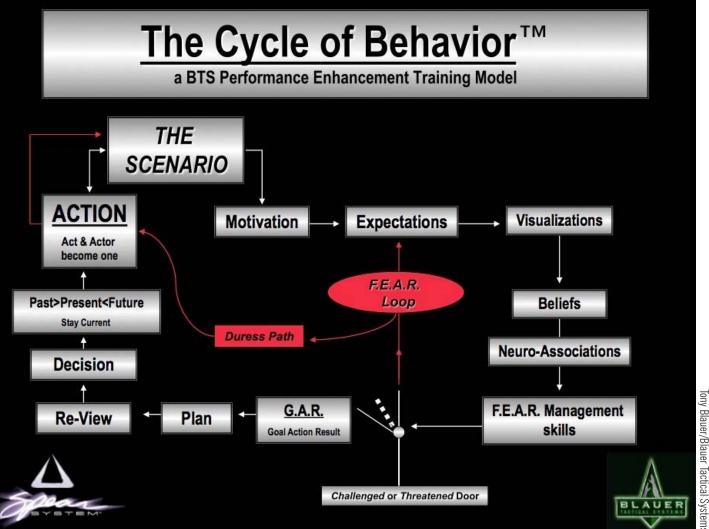
A mental directive creates a pathway to an immediate response. We also scientifically understand that action is faster than reaction. In a typical street fight, the bad guy's action is faster than the good guy's reaction. Therefore, a way to beat the bad guy is to be "in-action" beforehand. In Blauer's SPEAR System (spontaneous protection enabling accelerated response) and in CrossFit Defense, we want to operate forward of the bad guy's action. In-action is faster than both action and reaction, so we must tune into our intuition and immediately act upon it.

The bad guy wants at least one of three things: our body, our property or our life. We don't necessarily have the luxury of waiting around to determine which. If the hair on the back of your neck is standing up, it's time to initiate a directive and get off the X.

Consider the potential cost of ignoring survival instincts. Erring on the side of safety is never wrong.

The Cycle of Behavior

Several years ago, my wife, my son and I were in Red River, New Mexico, for an event under a huge outdoor tent with seats



The Cycle of Behavior shows how the FEAR Loop derails goal-oriented actions that can bring positive results in a conflict.

for several hundred people. During the evening, the threat of an impending mountain rainstorm was apparent, and the storm soon hit with a vengeance. In a matter of seconds, it appeared as though the wind was going to pick up the tent, drop the poles and tear the place to pieces. I was wide eyed and frozen because I had not been paying attention. I had not even thought of a plan or response to anything like that. Frozen due to lack

of preparation or forethought, I was sorely unprepared to protect my family and myself from violence—natural violence, this time. Having grown up as a military brat and living in Maryland for

part of her childhood, my wife was no stranger to preparing for, encountering and surviving hurricanes and tornadoes. She immediately pushed down on top of my head and crammed me underneath a table. She knew that we needed to be protected from anything falling, and the table was the closest sturdy protection. We sought refuge there for a few minutes, and the so on. wind let up.

We came out completely unscathed, and my mind and body were still playing catch-up. I was amazed at how quickly and precisely she had responded to the impending threat. She saved us all. Had it been up to me, we might have been injured or even killed.

I had used visualization in sports to increase performance, and I had learned to push through fear or pain to accomplish a goal, a mission or even a CrossFit workout. In the tent, I was frozen with fear and stuck in a rut. I was trapped in a FEAR Loop. It was years after my incident in New Mexico that I saw Blauer's chart and explanation of The Cycle of Behavior, including the FEAR Loop (false expectations/evidence appearing real). Once I saw the chart, it all made sense, and I was able to apply it to scenarios involving not only combat and self-defense but also sports, CrossFit workouts, business projects, relationships, and





An ambush puts the victim at a disadvantage. Having a pre-programmed mental directive helps him or her "catch up" and deal with the threat.

The chart provided a map for understanding the pitfalls of being threatened or trapped in the FEAR Loop, and it laid out the performance-enhancing pathways to proper fear management and appropriate responses.

The Cycle of Behavior is not absolute or exhaustive, but In 1988, something remarkable happened while Blauer was it's certainly a great tool to help you understand fear, fear management and performance. It applies to violent scenarios but can also be applied to increase safety and performance in nonviolent situations.

Intro to SPEAR

Blauer describes people as "hard-wired human weapon systems."

Self-defense was around long before the various martialarts systems and styles; the martial arts grew out of organic self-defense. That doesn't discount the value of those systems and styles, but it does make Blauer's SPEAR System the first and only behaviorally inspired and genetically wired selfdefense system. The SPEAR System was designed to help us convert the universal flinch into a protective response to danger or attack.

Blauer had immersed himself in traditional martial arts since a young age. In the late 1970s, as Blauer began developing a way to teach self-defense to others, he questioned the application of typical self-defense training to real-life scenarios.

conducting an experimental drill, later called "the sucker-punch drill." The drill was simple: Blauer, with a mouthguard, would maintain a natural stance; his aggressor, wearing 16-ounce gloves, would encroach, taunt and gesture before launching a punch at any time and from any angle. Blauer could block, counter or evade but not strike.

In attack after attack. Blauer found his technical martial-arts-inspired blocks and counters were often ineffective at protecting him from the unpredictable angles, ranges and timings of the strikes. When pain, discomfort and fear of impact prompted a flinch as opposed to the typically regimented martial-arts movements, Blauer was far more successful in avoiding the brunt of the blows.

The martial-arts systems were simply not as fast and effective in intercepting a sucker punch during a drill that very accurately simulates the unpredictability of a real-life fight. Once Blauer's swelling and headache subsided, the SPEAR System was born.

It literally had to be pounded into Blauer's head that sport fighting and the random reality of a real fight are vastly different. We now have lots of video evidence to easily prove the point Blauer discovered through years of research: The body can be refined into a completely natural, subconscious, lightning-fast, tactical human weapon system.

The SPEAR System uses the body's genetically ingrained survival system and response to danger, and Blauer has pointed out the three-dimensional integrity of the system.

The first aspect of the three-dimensional model is the emotional power of the spear as an icon. A spear is a sharp, powerful impaling weapon. It invokes images of Spartan warriors, strength, precision and domination. In Blauer's system, we are the weapon-the spear. The second aspect is the psychological benefit of the phrase "spontaneous protection enabling accelerated response." A suspect's aggression triggers a spontaneous reaction, and the

lightning-fast flinch response both protects from the initial attack and enables a response that can result in control or dominance. The third aspect is biomechanical/physical: When we put our arms in the full SPEAR position, we resemble the shape of a spear.

Golden Rules

Once we imagine or fear pain or damage, or if we doubt our ability to be victorious or survive a violent confrontation, we are at a significant mental disadvantage. The losing mindset of a helpless victim often stems from apathy, and the victim's thoughts are clouded with denial born of an inability to accept the reality of a dangerous situation. If we don't inherently possess a warrior mindset, acceptance is the first step toward that mindset. Acceptance is the key to action and the remedy for fear- or panic-induced inertia. The golden rule is that we must simply accept the situation and move on.

In the Cycle of Behavior model, a decision must be made to exit the FEAR Loop. Remaining frozen in a threatened state keeps us in the loop, and so the second golden rule is to be challenged immediately upon recognition of a potential threat. We must accept our circumstances, get challenged, examine the goal, and start figuring out strategic plans and tactics to make it happen.

In an attack, remaining frozen is not an option. Immediate assertive action is required.

In a fight or violent encounter, our mindset is dynamic, and Blauer has three golden rules regarding the psychological aspects of a violent encounter.



The warrior mindset can help victims turn into survivors.

The third golden rule: Don't stop thinking. Many people freeze in We don't have time to teach the police cadets how to box, situations because they stopped thinking about other options or because they keep trying to force something that isn't working. In wrestling, if one move does not work, we keep thinking and immediately move to another-and another if needed. If we miss a double-leg takedown, we snatch up the single. If that doesn't work, we try something else. We call it "chain fighting." We link the moves together and go from one to the next without pausing, never getting stuck on one option. If this mentality is I always point out that fitness is foundational, with skill and practiced and drilled, it becomes second nature.

These three golden rules are effective psychological fearmanagement tools. The mind can be your greatest ally or your most formidable foe, so get your mind right. The warrior mindset is an invaluable asset.

Be Your Own Bodyguard

I recently had the honor of once again co-instructing the boxing block of instruction in the Abilene Police Academy in Texas. The block is always scheduled for the beginning of the second week of training. We regularly lose between one and five new cadets during the first two weeks, and the boxing portion is often one of the main catalysts.

and that's not the intent of the training. Cadets view videos of officers in fights, and we teach them the basic boxing strikes, then encourage them to relax, keep their hands up, throw straight punches and throw punches in combinations. We tell them to avoid turning their backs on opponents, and we tell them to show some heart and never ever quit.

application following. Even with an experienced fighter, skills go out the window once he or she is tired. I explain how much it sucks to be tired and scared in a real-life street fight, and I let them know they are worthless to me as a police officer if they are unwilling or unable to fight.

To motivate, I ask them to identify the meaningful thing or things in their lives and use the mental images of these things to help them prepare for and finish the fight. I tell them they are expected to finish any fight-quitting is never an option.

When the cadets cram in a mouthpiece and put on headgear and gloves and then fight, any remnant of boxing skill goes right out the window after about 30 seconds. They almost immediately forget most of what we taught them, and they only have the opportunity to show the cadre and academy staff members their heart.

It becomes painfully apparent which cadets are woefully lacking in mental strength. Place a young, inexperienced, scared, intimidated, out-of-shape or mentally weak cadet a couple of minutes deep into a round with someone pounding his or her headgear, and that person's heart, mental strength and mindset become clearly visible.

Some cadets who have chosen a profession involving the warrior craft simply do not exhibit the desire to survive. The discomfort of their body outweighs their will and causes them to forget the things that matter to them. They are unprepared, and they lack the warrior mindset. However, the will to survive and the determination to never quit are vital to us all regardless of profession.

Each individual has the inherent right and ability to protect himself or herself, his or her family and those who cannot protect themselves. Find what motivates you. Cultivate the heart and mindset of a warrior. Get indignant and stay in the fight. Be your own bodyguard.

Quitting is never an option: Your life is on the line.



About the Author

Tim Pipes has been in law enforcement for 22 years, with work experience ranging from corrections and patrol to street crimes, undercover narcotics, instructing, and SWAT. Tim currently serves with the Abilene Police Department in Texas as a detective in Criminal Investigations/Major Crimes Against Persons, and he's been assigned to the department's SWAT Team for 11 years. Tim is a frequent instructor on law enforcement, fitness, pursuit driving, firearms/weapons and tactics, and combatives for Abilene Police. West Central Texas Law Enforcement, Texas Tactical Police Officers Association and the U.S. Department of State. Tim owned CrossFit Benedictus in Abilene for five years and holds the following CrossFit certificates: Level 1, Coach's Prep Course, Endurance, Movement and Mobility, and Judges Course. He holds CrossFit Defense Instructor's, CrossFit Striking Instructor's and Blauer Tactical Systems Personal Defense Readiness Instructor's certificates. He is also a USA Weightlifting Level 1 Sports Performance Coach.