

Take shooting classes.



ACCEPTING YOUR

Limitations

[BY BRUCE N. EIMER, Ph.D.]

We all have inherent limitations no matter what our age.

After all, we are all human—well, at least the majority of us. Limitations refer to such things as inherited physical traits, fundamental personality traits, cognitive and physical talents and abilities, age, gender, and cultural background. These are factors that cannot be changed, and therefore, these limitations need to be acknowledged and accepted. Acceptance is the first step in personal improvement. Once we accept our limitations, we can compensate for the restrictions they impose. For example, physical conditioning can be improved by working out, knowledge can be acquired by getting educated, and attitudes can be changed.

In addition, regardless of our economic and professional positions, we all have limitations imposed by situational circumstances. Some things, such as

clearing a house, cannot be done alone without grave risk. Other things typically should not be done even if one has the skills. For example, if you are with your family in a public place and you hear gun shots, your immediate goal should be to get your family to safety, and not to take out the shooter.

The reason to carry a gun

If you carry a gun, you need to recognize that the reason you do so is for personal protection, not to transform yourself into a would-be super hero. Carrying a gun does not give you a license to get involved in situations that are none of your business. It does not give you the authority of a police officer. Your job is to stay safe and keep your loved ones safe. It makes good sense as a general principle to avoid becoming inextricably involved in confrontations where

you are not directly affected in the first place. You take a risk when you involve yourself in other people's arguments. This is not to say that there will never be a situation that is worth the risk, but that is a personal decision.

The Philly stomp

Some years ago, at a Phillies game, a young man got stomped to death in the parking lot of Citizens Bank Park by two men who had followed him into the lot. They came to attack him after words had been exchanged at an eating and drinking establishment in the ball park. The murderers were known rowdies and the victim had been part of a bachelor party. If the decedent had been carrying a gun, and if he knew how and when to use it, he might still be alive today. In a similar vein, on a Philadelphia subway platform, several years ago, in the wee hours of the morning, a twentyish-year-old man traveling home from his late



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Being a good samaritan by defending the weak may end up backfiring in a society that loathes guns.

night job as a barista at Starbucks was attacked and beaten to death by a wolf pack of teens. Again, if the decedent had been carrying a gun, and if he knew how and when to use it, he might still be alive today. Self defense is a good reason to carry a gun. On the other hand ...

Nemo curat

My friend and teacher, noted firearms trainer John Farnam of Defense Training International, recently sent an email to his students that drove home why discretion is the better part of valor. In summary, somewhere in the "Conservative West," a super-sized young man was physically beating his girlfriend on line at a movie theater as people looked on. A middle-aged gentleman stepped forward and commanded the offender (whom we'll call Biff) to stop, at which point Biff instantly turned on him. According to witnesses, the good Samaritan repeatedly told the offender to stop beating him, with no results, and while he was

still able to make sense, the Samaritan informed Biff that he had a gun and that he would use it if Biff did not stop beating him up. To no one's surprise, Biff responded with something like "take your gun and shove it where the sun doesn't shine!" The Samaritan, now a victim himself, then produced a .22 LR North American Arms mini-revolver and fired two rounds into Biff at close range striking him in the groin. The result was that Biff stopped his attack and backed off.

Biff survived, and within a few days, the local prosecutor cleared the good Samaritan shooter of any wrongdoing. Nevertheless, local newspapers started receiving angry letters calling for the immediate recall of the prosecutor, referring to his decision to clear the Samaritan as "vigilante justice" with the argument that no matter what the circumstances, "no one should be able to take the law into their own hands." Farnam points out that this case is a prime example of the phenomenon known in Latin as *Nemo Curat* which

translated into English, comes out to *Nobody Cares*.

Social reality is a limitation. Farnam points out that the moral of the story is that we should avoid becoming a victim of unrealistic expectations. It is foolish to ignore reality, no matter how distasteful it might be. Getting involved voluntarily in any situation that has the potential of requiring the use of lethal force on your part carries enormous risks, and one should never expect to be thanked or to be hailed as a hero. The fact is that it is foolish to expect that people, even friends and family, will understand or sympathize with you. Getting involved carries the very probable risk of plummeting yourself into a desperate, life-threatening position in which you will be "criticized, ridiculed, and denigrated in the media, and by others who weren't there, indicted by an over-zealous prosecutor who hates guns and everyone who owns one, and sued by the shootee/decedent, or his 'estate'/family, for 'wrongful death,' et



above: An affordable CRKT Folder and Streamlight high lumens pocket flashlight enhance your preparedness.

left: Be a student and teach to transcend your limitations.



al.” (John Farnam, 2011) Unfortunately, reality is a limitation that must be heeded if you want to survive. Real life is not a Marvel Comic.

If only I had been there?

After the tragic mass shooting in Tucson, Arizona in January 2011, I cannot count how many times I heard “gun people” say, “if only I had been there.” In fact, yours truly is guilty of bleeping same during emotional moments. However, emotions aside, no matter how super aware you are, even if you are always in Condition Orange, you cannot have eyes everywhere and you can be taken by surprise, especially in a crowd. There is a reason why the Secret Service work in teams and have earpieces.

Learn from your mistakes and limitations. It is always a humbling experience when I take a shooting course. While I, like everyone else, want to impress with my skills and finesse, I invariably fall on my face and trip over my own equipment. Is this good or

bad? Well, it doesn't feel good to make a “horse's stern” of yourself. However, it can be a good learning experience if you take the time to analyze why you screwed up. Often the answer is a combination of too many gizmos with which you are unfamiliar or which are faulty, and being overly focused on your performance. That breeds performance anxiety. Gun school is where you want to make mistakes and then learn why you messed up. In school, if you make a mistake, you have a chance to correct it. Thus it is not failure. However, it could be failure, spelled R-I-P, if you don't learn from your mistakes in school, and make those same mistakes in a street fight.

Hesitation can get you killed. Accepting your limitations means doing and not trying. John Farnam is known for teaching that in a fight, to dither is to die. In a fight, you cannot afford to hesitate or freeze. You must always be doing something. Doing something is better than doing nothing. To just try is to ac-

cept the possibility of failure, and failure is not an option. Remember what Jedi Master Yoda said to Luke in Star Wars: “Luke, you either do, or do not. There is no try.” Have you ever said something like, “I'll try my best”? The problem is the mindset of trying: it means no commitment, and that means no possibility of succeeding. If you want to succeed at something, you must make your commitment and just do it!

You need not be a SEAL to learn from them. At a writer's conference at the Blackhawk Corporate headquarters several years ago, I and other writers had the opportunity to play paintball with Navy SEALs. Do you think I got creamed? After the games, I was debriefing with several SEALs. I asked them how they managed to avoid getting creamed as much as me each time I emerged from cover. They answered, it's all about commitment. When you emerge from cover, you must commit to explosive force. I came out too tentatively. They came out guns blazing. “Luke, you either do, or do not. There is no try.” ★

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