
On Combat: A Brief Synopsis From My Perspective And Opinion

From what I gather the author, Dave Grossman, attempts to convey what happens when you're confronted with having to fight for your life. How your body reacts to these stresses are normal and not individualized. Even though as individuals we may react differently no matter what level of training you may have had. Now, by fighting for your life I don't necessarily think he means only actually physically fighting, but also any instance where you have to fight to survive, such as the survivors on 9/11. That fight to do whatever you deem necessary to survive. Everyone is different, with that being said, I believe we all have that fight in us to want to survive. Although some of us may lose that due to our own individual experiences as we go through our lives. Most people will live their lives never having to experience having to fight to that level. Those who do, how does it affect them? Do they realize what happens to the body when one goes through such trauma? I don't know if anybody could ever be truly ready and prepared for having to fight for their life. No matter what amount of training. Being a United States Marine for eight years, I personally have encountered many life threatening situations. Although we trained diligently and talked about it and prepared for it's inevitability. Nothing truly prepares you for that fight. Even before joining the Marine Corps I was in situations where I had to fight for my life, and yet still it didn't prepare me any better for any future situations that I encountered. I think that if you're constantly confronted with life or death situations it can prepare you better. I've seen it. It's almost as if you get resigned to the inevitability of having to fight, so it becomes blasé. Again I think that all depends on the individual. Soldiers, Police Officers, Firefighters, Ems are trained to run towards the fight while others run from it. I truly believe these professions have a special calling. Although being in these professions doesn't preclude you from the inevitable bodily reactions that happen naturally, the training and mindset you need to do these jobs helps you push through.

The warrior mindset is a mindset that when others run from the sounds of gunfire, or any form of disaster those that have that warrior mindset run towards it. That was something I took pride in as a U. S. Marine. I think Mr. Grossman is trying to convey that. As you become fearful, it may affect your ability to physically function. Your heartrate increases. Mr. Grossman identifies this with certain condition levels. Condition White he says is your normal heartrate, which Mr. Grossman equates to being a "Sheep", because it's a place where you are helpless, vulnerable, and in denial, is usually between 60 - 80 beats per minute (BPM). Condition Yellow, which he equates to being a "Dog", because they are survivors and always ready, would be between 80-115 BPM. Condition Red, 115-145 BPM. This is your optimal range for survival and combat performance. This is where your complex motor skills, visual reaction time and cognitive reaction time are all at their peak. Condition Gray usually occurs between 145 - 175. Condition Black is anything above 175. This can be where your gross motor skills ie; running, charging, etc, may be at their highest performance levels. Cognitive Distortion, in a nutshell is when your brain lies to you to help you cope with your situation. It's a function of your brain and body that enables you to cope with certain scenario's. Examples of this in combat may be tuning out sounds or pain or memory loss. Warriors train to live. Training is an important aspect in combat. It prepares you to face adversity, but it also serves a purpose to give you the mindset of never giving up.

For example, soldiers are training with each other using knives, one soldier gets “stabbed” and then he declares himself “dead”. The instructor comes to him and say, you were stabbed, you’re not dead continue to fight until you can’t anymore. I don’t train people to die, I train people to live. There have been instances where someone gets shot several times but continues to fight and lives. Training should be taken with the mindset of trying to survive as well. Having this mindset in training can serve well in real life combat or emergency situations. Video games and shooting simulators have become an important tool in the training of first responders. It gives the ability to have responders put into situations that they may really face in real life combat. It plays an important role today. Some video games can be looked at as mass murder simulators. The kids who shot up a school in Littleton Colorado bragged in their diaries about using games as a precursor to their actions. When a child plays a violent video game it’s sort of like a training tool for mass murder. The child doesn’t put the controller down after killing one enemy, he keeps on killing until no ones left alive. Video games have been and will continue to be used to train soldiers because it has been deemed as a successful tool in training. “There are no friends in violent video games, only targets”.

The concept of combat breathing has saved and will continue to save many lives. It helps an individual in focusing on something while in crisis as well as reminding the individual to continue breathing. The technique requires that you breathe in through your nose for a count of four and out through your mouth for a count of four. In dealing with the aftermath of traumatic events, it’s important to note that every person would like to return to normal as soon as possible. Do not pretend that the incident never happened, it’s also important to treat that person who went through it the same way you’ve always treated them. Let them know that you’re there for them. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often occurs after traumatic incidents. It requires patience and understanding to be able to deal with an individual that may be experiencing it. It is not something that can be measured in levels or stages. An individual either has it or they don’t.

Someone showing signs should be treated fully. Personally, as I read through this book, I found myself identifying with a lot of what was written. There have been quite a few instances where I was confronted with the fight or flight reaction. Growing up where I did, I was reminded daily by other people’s stories or experiencing things on my own on how to handle traumatic situations. A couple of incidences I think may have led me on the path of my life where I feel the need to be able to help other people. I consider myself to be selfless, and I find that trait to be one of the highest honor. As a parent, it is important to me to instill some sort of selflessness in my children as well. Not only selflessness, but the will to continue fighting no matter the circumstance. As I’ve expounded upon earlier, I feel nothing can truly prepare you for any sort of traumatic or life and death event, training helps, but you don’t know how you’ll react until you’re faced with it. I believe Mr. Grossman wrote this book with the intention to give a graphic sense of what it takes to go into these type of events and what happens to the body and mind in these times. He also takes into consideration what it takes to train individuals that have to deal with these events on a regular basis, as well as, being able to cope after the fact. Train warriors to attempt to deal with, and keep fighting no matter what. That warrior mindset is necessary in determining your ability to continue to push through no matter the circumstance. That mindset is something that most of us hope to never have to find out. Whether we have that inside of us or not. I believe if put into life or death circumstances the majority of people will continue to push through. Overall, I enjoyed reading.