
A TALE OF TWO PROFESSIONALS

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Thank you for visiting this article. I hope that it makes some sense for you and motivates you to commit to honing your skills for the benefit of you, your family and society as a whole.

In the following, I draw parallels between professionals from differing backgrounds, but who share important aspects to honing their craft. My lovely daughter is an aspiring college level musician, and I have marveled at her ability to perform complex tasks in highly stressful environments. It is truly inspirational and not very different from what we ask of our law enforcement officers to do in terms defensive skills performance.

The purpose of this article is to draw a parallels between these two professionals. Both have skills and talents necessary to perform at the professional level. One makes a living with a musical instrument; the other carries a gun. How they attain a professional level of proficiency with their chosen instrument is necessarily the same.

Picture an aspiring child musician who is learning to play a violin. Early on she needs to learn how the instrument works, how to hold instrument, the bow and how to make sounds with them. With time and practice, screeches become notes. Notes, proper timing, and sequence produces a simple song like Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Even though this budding musician aspires to ultimately play a Mozart Violin Concerto as a featured guest in Carnegie Hall, she must begin with the basics. Honing the fundamentals of music making through hours of practice daily to be able to perform precisely on demand is what professional violinists do.

For law enforcement officers, the path of becoming a professional gun handler is essentially the same. Regardless of any previous firearms experience, new officers receive their duty-issue firearm. They learn how to hold it, understand the use of the various buttons and levers, and ultimately they learn to fire accurately with it. For this new or veteran police officer, having to draw and shoot their handgun to protect themselves or the lives of others amounts to the "Performance of a Lifetime" that is conceptually no different than standing in Carnegie Hall performing a concerto. The similarities end there. The primary difference is that the officer must prevail in the encounter or stand the chance of losing his or her life. He or she must then withstand the onslaught that will follow to survive legally, professionally, socially, financially, emotionally/psychologically and spiritually. Not to mention that the agency must survive these particular aspects as well.

A key difference in the preparation leading up to the incident (or performance) is that the musician doesn't have to worry about deciding when to play and what sheet of music to use. She has the benefit of a scheduled performance and a pre-planned musical

piece. The officer never knows the time and place of their performance. He/she must prepare for myriad of scenarios at any time day or night. The officer must also understand that the need may never present itself. That understanding offers the officer no benefit but may serve as an excuse not to prepare.

Nevertheless, he must be ready at a moments notice. To do so, the officer's training and rehearsals must cover all of the necessary bases to ensure his survival. Plus, the officer doesn't have the luxury of hours of daily practice.

The bases needing covered include, but are not limited to:

- Technical skills encompass the techniques of operating the gun and executing all of the skill sets that allow an officer to deal with 1 to several adversaries, clear malfunctions, reload, move, and use cover. (Flat range and basic tactical drills training)
- Tactical skills involve how to apply those technical skills in appropriate combinations to the context of the environment and circumstances of the encounter in a logical manner that outruns the bad guy's OODA Loop. (Live fire scenario and scripted role-play)
- Decision making (OODA Loops) involves everything from shoot/don't shoot to when and how to move to the most effective cover, use cover wisely and communicate (all of the previous, plus reality-based scenario testing).

CSAT courses accomplishes this through a systematic progression. The methodology teaches the gun handler how to train to not only survive deadly force encounters but builds the confidence and competence to thrive in such battles.

Regardless of the context or tool, professional trainers must understand that we are training our performers to attain the highest level of capability. We are preparing the brain to make quick and accurate decisions and to command the body to execute those decisions. In many cases, it could mean the difference in coming home at night or not.