
Turning Wheels of Bulawayo Rotary Club

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Gordon Geddes A Programme Officer in Bulawayo

At the District Governor's assembly for the Bulawayo Rotary Club in October, I was asked to provide a brief contribution on what it takes finding weekly guest speakers over 3 years. High profile speakers are difficult to source in Bulawayo and I always relish the task of my fellow programme officers in Harare where I am sure it must be easier.

Having started off totally cold, I realised the mission of a programme officer was to provide a speaker who would be more interesting than the lunch in order to maintain a high attendance of fellow Club members. You have to achieve a balance of keeping your ear close to the ground, mixing extensively and relying on fellow Rotarians of an equal gregarious nature. Some of my speakers I have persuaded to come from outside of Bulawayo include the US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, British High Commissioner, Advocate Adrian De Bourbon on the Rule of Law. Some outstanding individuals would be Trevor Ncube of the Independent Gazette "Stand Up And Be Counted" and Nigel Chanakira of Kingdom a true entrepreneur in the financial business. Home-grown speakers include CFU, economist Eric Bloch, Lynn Pearce on Bushman Outreach, a commissioner of the Constitutional Committee, CZI, National Aids Committee, past president John Chirumbani a past speaker of Parliament and Judith Todd on previous support to the war veterans since 1980.

We also had a sprinkling of Rotarians such as past president Phil Whitehead on his GSE tour to California, past president Gay Miller-Cranko on South West friendship exchange of UK, Rotarian Alan Cooper on a cruise ship in Russia, and exchange students.

I have difficulty following the requirement of supplying a diary of some 6 weeks in advance of speakers as I find preference of 3-4 weeks is sufficient to enable a contemporary speaker to be slotted in at short notice. On average it takes between 8-10 telephone calls to ensure that the speaker is in place and members of other Clubs are aware of a particularly interesting subject. I personally encourage speakers to be brief and to the point and restrict their talk to 15 minutes with another 5 minutes for questions. You can judge the success of your speaker by the number of questions asked.

Anti-Hijacking Tips from the E-Mail

(Caroline Mugwanyo, the Customer Services Manager of AfricaOnLine sent these to all her subscribers. - As published in AAZ Magazine, Vol 6, No 4, 2000)

- Whilst driving always leave your window approx. 5 cm open - if the window is fully closed it is easier to break.
- Always put your bag under the passenger seat or in the boot - do not grab for your bag when getting out of the car. The hijacker may think you have a gun, and could harm you.

- Hijacking is now taking place at some petrol stations, so do not frequent these after 9.00 pm.

- Keep your cell phone clipped to your belt or somewhere on your person so you can call for help when out of the vehicle.

- Stay aware of vehicles or persons around you.

- Don't race to the robot when it is red. Rather glide in so that there is a shorter period of waiting for it to turn green. Hijackings generally take place when your car is stationary.

- Take care driving under bridges - some hijackers will drop stones onto your car forcing you to stop.

- If a gun is pointed at you, raise both hands and face the hijacker in order that he can see you do not have a weapon.

- Be sure you know where your nearest police station is on all your trips. If you believe that a person pulling you over is not a bona fide policeman drive straight to the nearest police station to report the matter.

- It takes us at least three weeks to form a habit, persist in your hijacking awareness programme until the habit is thoroughly instilled.

- Vehicles currently popular with thieves and hijackers are: Double Cabs, Toyotas, Rustlers, Sunnys, and BMWs. Owners of these vehicles should take extra special care.

- And of course, always keep all your car doors locked.

Avoidance through Vigilance by Don Gold

(manMagnum, November 2000, 26-28)

Nobody in their right mind wants to be the target of a violent attack - the odds are always stacked against the defender. My years in the intelligence, law enforcement and security fields have offered ample evidence that, when you have a choice, avoiding confrontation is always your best option - and is by far the safest and cheapest.

To avoid a 'worst case' scenario - suddenly having a gun held to your head - you must be alert and reduce, to a minimum, your exposure to potential danger. Wild animals are constantly aware of this, but humans are notoriously casual about alertness. It is extremely difficult to catch a wild animal or bird. Learn from nature, watch a bushbuck feeding - it takes a mouthful of food and immediately raises its head; eyes scanning, ears and nose twitching, totally relaxed but with all senses sharp and alert. Immediately it senses you, it moves off to avoid danger - real or potential.

Wild creatures rely on their built-in vigilance, their keen senses, and some species gather in herds to multiply the available eyes, ears and noses. Humans lead very different lives, but we can learn (in today's South Africa, I believe we must learn) to be constantly vigilant and aware of our surroundings - without becoming paranoid about it.

As highly stressed troops do not fight well, military commanders are always searching for ways of reducing stress. Let's see if we can use some of their techniques in our everyday lives. First let's look at the 'colour code' introduced by the US Marines during the Pacific Campaign of WW II to categorize danger awareness levels. The colours are White, Yellow, Orange, Red and Black.

When you are in Code White, you are oblivious to what is going on around you. You are unready and unaware - an 'accident looking for a place to happen' - a hijacker's or mugger's or rapist's dream victim.

In Code Yellow, you are in a state of relaxed alertness (like the bushbuck). You are tuned in and aware of your surroundings. You know that you may be attacked but you will never be taken by surprise. The teachings of karate master, Gishin Funakoshi - "Your attacker must always be present in spirit" - were, strangely enough, very well used in the classic Peter Sellers 'Pink Panther' comedies. Kato, Inspector Clouseau's faithful valet, had standing instructions to attack his employer anywhere, anytime - in order to sharpen the Inspector's senses and keep him vigilant. This comedy carried a serious and relevant message.

Code Orange is a state of specific alertness. You have now focused on a developing problem which you have identified because of a sound, a movement, a smell or just an uneasy feeling. Do NOT ignore the signals as being too slight or imaginary. Open your 'toolbox' and consider your survival options. If you have been alert enough, you should still have time to avoid confrontation - lock your door, call the police (?) ...; talk your way out of it; find an escape route and run away from confrontation; or prepare to fight to survive.

In Code Red you are in a state of full alarm - you are mentally and physically ready to act.

If Code Black applies, you are in mortal danger. Rapid application of lethal force is required to ensure your survival - you have been caught with your pants down. Your attacker holds all the cards - you have to react to an already commenced action - you are therefore coming a poor second.

Train yourself to choose the correct awareness level - make sure it is appropriate for your current environment.

During Operation Desert Storm, every allied officer was taught the 'OODA Loop'. Jet fighter pilots found it particularly practical and effective. OODA stands for Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action. Early assessment of the situation and fast reaction, ensure survival. With vigilance as our early warning system, the sooner we sense trouble brewing the more time we will have at our disposal to develop and deploy our options. Time = Options - when we run out of time, we run out of options.

Let us examine the OODA Loop segments in more detail:

Observation - All your senses are working and you are paying attention to what they are telling you (including intuition and instinct). We must be the only animals on this planet that often tend to remain passive, even whilst the action is busy going down.

Orientation - Like Code Orange this is a state of selective awareness and focus. We have identified something by feeling, sight, sound, intuition (man loitering, smell of burning, twig snapping).

Decision - Avoidance or Confrontation? Depends on your limitations (training, experience, wisdom). The longer we have to observe and orientate, the more options we have for decision. Too many men in this country have died because they felt that their 'maleness' obliged them to do something, in spite of not having had the training or experience needed to confront the foe.

Action - When we effect the plan we decide on. Important: Once we have acted, the situation has changed and we must re-enter the OODA Loop. Always check and confirm that your action has been successful and that the danger has passed. Never assume - if you do, you'll make an ass out of u and me.

To make the OODA Loop work for you, you must know that potential attackers also go through the loop - they will Observe (you), Orientate (themselves), Decide (how and when) to Act (attack you). Your loop must rotate faster than that of your attacker - so that you can act while he is still in observation mode.

It is up to you to choose which 'code' or technique to use (there are others). The (too often fatal) mistake people make is not that they have any difficulty recognizing the importance of being a step or two ahead of the bad guys, but of not making a habit of being alert, vigilant, aware ...

Being vigilant gives you the time to create a reactionary gap, allowing you to make choices. In this beautiful but troubled country right now, you need a substitute for vigilance - locked doors, watchdogs,

'hard' perimeters, security gate/guard, fence, another pair of eyes and ears.

In all the violent incidents I have researched, the warning signs were there before the attack but the victim chose to ignore them because of denial, embarrassment or inconvenience - yes, inconvenience!

Denial is a major human failing. My friend, well-known authoress, inspirational speaker and rape victim, Alison, acknowledges (with hindsight) that she had many opportunities to escape the two scumbags that violated her - but she kept denying to herself that she was in danger.

An elderly gentleman was murdered - he did not feel the need to investigate the 'movement' he had seen passing his window.

A farmer was shot dead through a window whilst watching TV with his family - he chose to ignore the frantic barking of his dogs.

Countless hijacking victims have admitted that they knew what was going to happen at a stage when they could have avoided the attack but chose to ignore the danger signals because of denial - "it only happens to others" or - "it's probably nothing".

The feare of embarrassing ourselves in front of others is another human failing. Many a man has met an untimely demise by sticking to the 'high noon' posture when (unmanly?) ducking for cover would have been far more appropriate. During the early 1970s I was often laughed at for carrying a pistol - something the macho would never do for fear of being branded as being scared. Can you imagine their comments when I first wore body armour? Cowardice is one thing - fear is another. It is a signal - our senses are warning us against danger and, whether its is potential or real danger, we must heed our fears.

A common reason for 'becoming a victim' is that many of use, while sensing impending danger, are too 'politically correct' and do not wish to be seen as 'impolite' or even (horrors) racist. We thus avoid taking any kind of evasive action that may be embarrassing to the potential/intending attacker.

An attacker needs the desire, ability and opportunity to have his way with you. His desire and ability are beyond your control but you can and must deny him the opportunity to attack. Apply the OODA Loop, the Colour Code or personalized techniques - they provide the surest and cheapest form of personal security.

Here are a few simple practical examples of everyday vigilance:

- Before walking out of a shop, stop in the doorway and look left and right before stepping out into the street.
- If there are unidentified persons near your driveway gate, do not attempt to drive in or out until you have confirmed that it is safe to do so. Be extra careful if you have to get out of your vehicle to open or close a gate.
- Approach your parked car with caution. Do a 360 degree check to make sure that nobody suspicious is in the vicinity. From a distance, check under the car and as you get closer, try to see the front, rear and both sides of the car and its interior before entering. Be especially careful of panel vans parked next to the driver's side of your car. Tailor your checks to the circumstances. Have your key at the ready.
- If you are certain you are being followed go directly to a safe place - whether on foot or by car.
- If your dogs, which normally bark or create a fuss when you arrive home, are silent or absent - be very suspicious.
- Always sit with your back to a wall, especially when you are alone and in strange surroundings.
- When turning corners on foot, go wide, don't hug the wall.
- Never let people into your space. Keep your distance from strangers - especially when carrying valuables or wearing/carrying a firearm.

A military commander can be excused for losing a battle but never for being taken by surprise. We can equate this to hijack avoidance. Whilst stationary at the intersection, continually scan the side mirror, rear mirror, side mirror, rear mirror, etc. The body language exhibited by a vigilant person tends to deter attack.

Recent surveys conducted among convicts confirm that two-legged predators (like their four-legged counterparts) will mostly avoid anything that might put up a struggle. Chairman Mao (Tse Tung) has been attributed with saying "Shamelessly attack the weak and shamelessly flee from the strong" - he must have got the idea from Mother Nature.

Remember that there is safety in numbers and you are much more vulnerable when alone. Avoid, or at least reduce your exposure to, danger.

In the first 'Karate Kid' movie, Daniel san asks his mentor Mr Miyagi "Sensei, which is the best block?". To which Miyagi san replies "Best block, not be there when punch come". In keeping with this policy, the bodyguard's golden rule of close protection is "Don't get your principal out of trouble - keep him out of trouble".

We would do well to remember this.

December 2000 % Attendance

NAME	M %	YTD %	EXCUSED ATTENDANCE	
Andrew Jack	100	64	Katz Basil	0 0
Barbour Celia	100	91	Munyoro Nehemia	0 14
Bond Laurie	100	100	Stipinovich Joe	33 65
Bond Maureen	100	100	Weeger Fr. Odilo	33 91
Chiponda Charles	100	100	Whitaker Gerry	0 47
Clark Ron	66	78		
Cooper Alan	0	52	CLUB AVERAGE SENT TO DG.	55.7%
De Souza Ali	100	100		
Dlamini J. C.	100	83	TOTAL MEMBERS	39
Downing Alan	66	61		
Dube Kingsley	66	70	NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD	3
Geddes Gordon	100	100		
Ilic Jasmina	100	100		
Johnson Marina	0	55		
Lazarus Charles	66	70		
MacDonald M.	0	35		
Maibvisira Edward	66	35		
Maksimovich 'Maks'	100	83		
Maphosa Norman	33	39		
Matatu Sipiwe	100	100		
Mladenovski Joca	66	35		
Naik M.D.	100	100		
Ncube Nomsa	66	65		
Ndoro Cecil	0	48		
Peters Tony	0	52		
Pool Chris	100	100		
Rensburg Eric	100	100		
Ross Malcolm	0	39		
Scott Rev Noel	100	43		
Shoko Dennis	0	17		
Sinclair Brian	0	14		
Thomas Mark	0	18		
Vaghmaria Sash	66	97		
Williams Alban	33	57		