

# ARTICLE

## Finally. . . A Way To Eliminate The Aversion To Recoil

### Symptoms

We have all seen instructors utilize the shots on a student's target to diagnose the common problem of having an aversion to the recoil of the gun. Generally instructors do a fairly good job identifying the physical manifestations that are causing the error but do not usually dig into the root of the problem. The correction of the symptoms never cures what's ailing the shooter.

(In the example below it will be assumed that the gun is properly sighted-in, the student understands sight alignment, his dominate eye has been properly diagnosed, the gun fits his hand, his finger position on the trigger is correct, and he has the ability to achieve focal acuity on the front sight.)

A classic example can be demonstrated by analyzing a shooter's groups that are low-left. This is generally interpreted as "jerking the trigger", causing the muzzle to dip low and to the left. The shooter is diagnosed as having anticipated the recoil. The anticipation of recoil is a symptom. It's a manifestation of what's going on in the shooter's mind. The symptoms manifest themselves physically, but don't always indicate the cause of the problem. An example can be made in the treatment of a festering blister. If an antiseptic is applied to the blister you would be treating the symptom. If you were to look further into what's causing the blister to fester, you might find a splinter imbedded under the skin. Until the splinter is removed, the blister will continue to fester. Although the antiseptic may temporarily reduce the redness and discomfort, the physical manifestation will continue to resurface until the root of the problem is addressed.

The same is true in diagnosing a shooter's error. While the instructor may accurately diagnose that the shooter is anticipating the recoil, he must look deeper. The instructor must look into what's at the root of the problem, what's causing the anticipation, and then treat the source of the problem rather than the symptom. As an instructor you are dealing with a behavioral problem. The focus needs to be on what is causing the behavior.

If you tell the shooter he is anticipating the recoil and needs to work the trigger back smoothly without disturbing the sight alignment, you have just told the student the obvious. It is like a doctor saying; "If you don't press hard on the blister, it will feel better." In doing so, he has ignored the real problem. The shooter will become aware of the instructor's directions and will override the symptom temporarily with conscious effort, but the shooter will eventually loose conscious attention to the instructor's directions and revert back to the undesirable aversion to recoil.

### Root Problems

When the shooter anticipates the firing process he experiences fear and anxiety which creates a build-up of emotional tension. It's important to realize that fear is the anticipation or expectation that something is going to cause discomfort or pain, either emotionally or physically. The question becomes "How to eliminate the fear?" Let's face it; if you take all the emotions out of the shooting process, achieving accuracy would be extremely easy. This is why it's important that we focus our attention to the unconscious mind and not directly on correcting the physical behavior. To understand and demonstrate how emotions affect our ability to think, visually focus, and perform simple motor tasks; we would like to coin a metaphor we adapted from Jeanne Boylan, author of

the book: "Portraits of Guilt".

Imagine you have a \$.50 piece in your hand. The image on the coin is very clear. If you throw the coin into a pool of water 8 feet deep and look into the pool, the image of the coin becomes distorted. The deeper the water, the more distorted the coin appears. The water represents our emotions.

The secret to shooting accurately is having a clear image in your mind of what you want to achieve. The reason most shooters struggle to shoot accurately is because it's difficult for the shooter's brain to send clear messages to the trigger finger, especially when the mind is pooling in all these emotions at the unconscious level. The messages become distorted and the resulting behavior and performance is distorted proportionately to the depth of the emotional pool.

## **Instructors Tool Box**

One of the most important tools in an instructor's tool box is their ability to sculpt the student's emotions throughout the learning process. Most instructors use their power and authority to direct the learning process and the student's behavior. The "Drill Sergeant" approach to teaching and inducing stress during the initial phases of learning will inhibit the student from learning the process. Returning to the metaphor of the \$.50 piece at the bottom of a pool of water, we would like you to imagine how difficult it would be to see the coin if you stir the water and all the sludge at the bottom of the pool becomes agitated. Stress makes the communication very murky and makes it almost impossible for the student to succeed. We know some of the instructors reading this article may be saying to themselves; "I don't have time to waste on niceties, I've got a job to do!" Yes, you have a job to do; how well do you want to do it? What is more rewarding to you? Do you get more satisfaction in the way that you teach or from seeing a student you taught shoot with absolute precision accuracy?

## **Eliminating The Emotion of Fear**

We know that the aversion to the recoil or the firing process is fear based. Fear is a very powerful emotion.

The 5 Types of Fear we are dealing with:

1) **THE UNKNOWN:** When you don't know what to expect visually, auditorily or kinesthetically it creates apprehension and fear. When something unexpectedly happens it causes us to jump. This is why we don't like the linguistics of the "Compressed Surprise Break". We don't want to pre-load the student's mind that it's going to be a surprise. The surprise of a loud "BANG" is usually associated with scary types of surprises. If every time you released a shot and it was suppose to "surprise you" with a BANG you'd be a wreck by the end of a days shooting. We try to suggest to the student: "You know it's going happen; you're not sure when it's going to happen; so you just allow it to happen." Sometimes the student will share with us after they release a shot that they allowed to happen, that it was a surprise. We immediately reframe their statement with: "A pleasant surprise!" to take the negative implication of the surprise out of the equation.

2) **DURATION:** If you don't know how long something will last, it will create an emotional bubble. Emotions build pressure, and the only way to release the pressure is to take action. A long trigger pull or a trigger pull that requires alot of poundage to release the shot will create an anticipation within the shooter and cause them to "jerk the trigger" so they can release the buildup of emotional pressure. There is a very simple and easy way to overcome the aversion to recoil so every student can shoot 1-Hole groups "instantly". By using the A B C D formula; (A) Absorb attention, (B) Bypass the

conscious mind, (C) Create the state of detachment, and (D) Direct the Behavior, we can virtually eliminate the emotional bubble that "time duration" causes. Refer to the Article in the IALEFI magazine Issue #47, The Neuro Psychology Of Peak Performance. [CLICK HERE TO REVIEW THE ARTICLE](#)

**3) SEVERITY OF HARM:** If the student doesn't know the degree of harm or felt discomfort that will be caused when the shot is released the student will experience the emotion of "dread". We will demonstrate to the student how a .45 caliber pistol can be held with just the web of the thumb and the trigger finger, and how we are still able to shoot a precision shot without any ill effects. Then after the student releases a shot, we check-in with the student and ask: "Are you hurt? Did you feel any discomfort? Are you safe?" and reinforce that they are safe and secure with every shot they shoot.

In our 2-Day Advanced Law Enforcement / Military program; The Neuro Psychology To "Instant" Precision Accuracy, we spend several hours teaching Instructors the methods and techniques that will eliminate the fear from the shooting process so they can keep all their student's emotions under control.

Only after you are able to keep the student's fears and emotions are under control will they thoroughly benefit from your training and shoot with absolute precision accuracy.

**4) FEAR OF LOSS:** It is important for everyone to have self esteem. We all like to be looked up to. In the realm of law enforcement and military the gun is the ultimate symbol of their authority. We are often judged by our ability to perform especially when it pertains to our accuracy. This causes performance anxiety. If we fail to perform with the ultimate symbol of authority we will experience a LOSS of status. We need to reassure the student that a "miss" is NOT a failure. It is an opportunity to refine the skill.

Performance anxiety can be a real road block for many students. This is why it's so important to get "every" student shooting 1 inch to 1-1/2 inch groups starting with their first 5 shots. Anytime you allow a student to throw a single shot, the student has the potential to adapt negative beliefs about their ability which feeds into the emotional pool of fear. These negative beliefs can create doubt and a lack of confidence. This creates a cycle of negative behavior and inaccuracy.

**5) PHOBIA:** A phobia is an uncontrollable and automatic fear response to a situation. If the student has a "phobia" they will re-experience a fear of something that happened to them in the past and project it into the future. We have had many students through our training that have displayed a real aversion either to the gun, the firing process or the noise. Whenever we have a student that is manifesting an excessive abreaction to the firing process we will immediately begin an inquiry of their past experiences with firearms. After peeling back the layers of the student's history we often find that they experienced a traumatic event at some time in their past. We can prevent them from creating a negative reality and aversion by bringing the fear to the surface. We can break the chain of events leading from their past experience that triggered the fear, to their present thoughts; creating a positive belief in their projected future outcome. We use a Fear Removal Technique that re-neurocodes the experience in the mind of the shooter so the past fear and the present act of shooting are completely disassociated. We have used this with several Vietnam veterans that have suffered from Post Traumatic Stress.

Another solution is to funnel the emotion into fixated determination so the desire to shoot accurately overrides the existing fear. You can also combine the emotional conditions with sudo-logic and weave them into the solution using the A B C D formula. The key is to enter our student's world so we understand what they are feeling and from there we can find the valve that will drain or put a plug in their emotional pool.

## **Create The State Of Detachment**

It is important to teach the shooter how to achieve the required emotional state for shooting precision shots. The key is to create the association of the required emotional state to the process of compressing the trigger.

The required emotional state for achieving precision accuracy is one of "detachment." If the state of "detachment" is properly instilled at the unconscious level, the emotional experience of shooting "live fire" will be identical to shooting "dry fire". The state of "detachment" is the "Dutch Boy's" finger in the dyke which prevents the flood of emotions.

One way the instructor can help the student create the state of "detachment" is to have the student identify a point in time when they felt emotionally detached.

- It may have been a time at a doctor's office when receiving a shot in the arm. He would have to give up control, detach emotionally and allow the doctor to administer the shot. *(Don't use this metaphor if the student has a phobia of needles.)*
- It may have been a time when someone else upset him and he disassociated from that someone. He put up his walls and became void of emotions.
- It may have been a time when he faced an emergency situation and shut off his emotions and he responded in a very perfunctory manor or auto pilot mode.

You can also use a "machine metaphor" to trance-form the shooter into a machine. Request the student to take on the persona of a machine. Ask the student: Does a machine have emotions? What would it feel like to be a machine? Have them visualize or pretend they are a machine. Lead and pace the student using a presupposition; "That's right, now you're void of emotions and that's the state you are feeling as you gently compress the trigger." Anytime you ask a student to "pretend", you Absorb their Attention, you Bypass the Conscious mind, and you Create the state of detachment by using the persona of a machine. Now, you can Direct the Behavior of compressing the trigger so that it's associated with the state of detachment.

Once the student understands what it feels like to be detached, we condition the process of entering a detached emotional state by firing off an anchor. (An "Anchor" is a hypnotic trigger to create the required emotional state.) This causes the shooter to remember what it feels like to detach as part of the process of compressing the trigger.

This will assist the student in emotionally detaching from the firing process and the outcome with every shot. They become void of emotional feelings as they compress the trigger, allowing the gun to release the shot. Within a few short minutes the student will be shooting all of his shots into a 1-hole group.

## **Integration**

Once the student can shoot precision shots with consistency, the next step is to use a progressive methodology to reinforce all the elements of the shooting process and "Engage" the student in different situations. This tests the focus of the student and the strength of the programmed skill.

The key to integration is to use a formal closed eye hypnotic induction. By taking the

student into trance we can program the skills required for precision accuracy so they can be generalized into any application. This experience will create a resourceful pattern of behavior that empowers them. It will create a positive expectation of success at the unconscious level, when on the range or on the street. If we can create the required emotional state in the student's unconscious mind to guide the shooting process, the student will shoot with machine like precision accuracy.

## **Conclusion**

As you can see, students need more from instructors than a simple diagnosis of the symptom. They are depending on the instructor's ability to properly diagnose the root problem of their inaccuracy and provide a successful intervention technique that will eliminate or drain their emotional pool.

To learn more about how to diagnose a shooter's problems, eliminate the fear and aversion to recoil, integrate the principles of hypnosis into your training program and get ALL your students shooting 1-hole groups "instantly", join our 2-Day Advanced Instructor Course, "The Neuro Psychology To "Instant" Precision Accuracy." If you have any questions or would like more information on this process, please contact us.

Respectfully Submitted,

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