

WIN – With Good Decision Making

The fifth tenant of Below 100 is **WIN – What’s Important Now?**

Many of us practice decision making every day without stopping to think about the steps we take to achieve our goals. That is true whether the decision relates to what we eat for breakfast, what route we take to work, what the priorities are in our schedules, how we operate our vehicles, or other everyday tasks.

In the law enforcement and corrections environment we must train to address not just those mundane, every day decisions. We also must train to make life and death decisions in nanoseconds – decisions that impact not just the decision maker and their agency, but the families’ of those involved and, in some instances, entire communities.

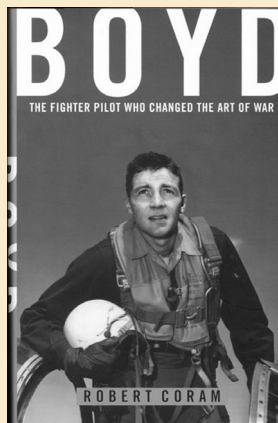
Many law enforcement and corrections officers have had to react so fast in confrontations they don’t recall that they went through a decision making process which led them to the action they took in response to the situation, but they in fact did.

WIN is the first step in good decision making

which can reduce the risk of liability, accidents, injuries, and death in the law enforcement profession. In analyzing losses of our members we have observed several common denominators that take place when things go bad. Too often severe liability, personal injury, and death result to one of our own or a citizen from being in a hurry to

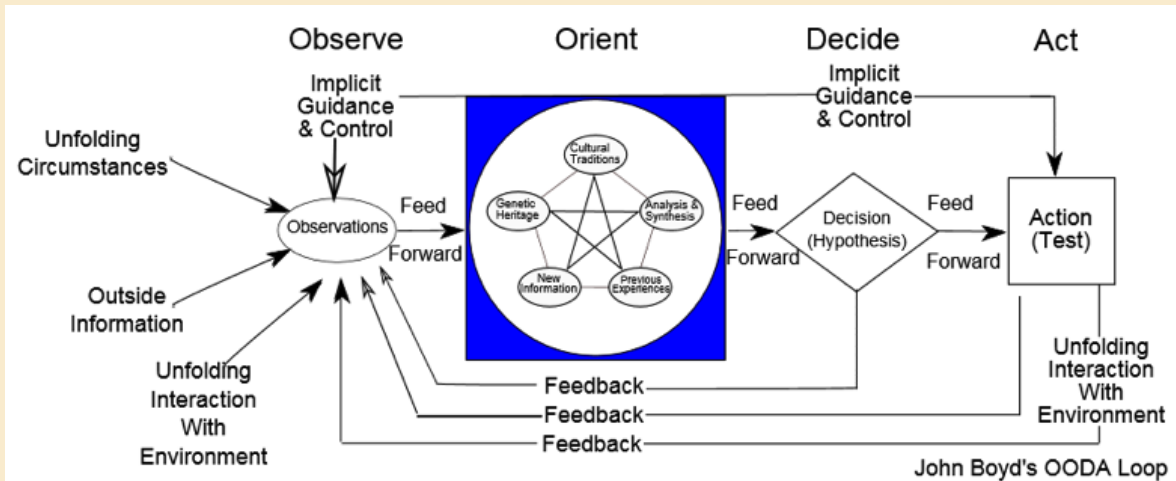
bring a situation to an end when time is on the officer’s side. The choice not to buckle up, wear a vest, rush into a search or arrest situation, operate a vehicle while distracted, speeding or in an unsafe manner for conditions are examples of poor decision making.

Many trainers are familiar with former U.S. Airforce Colonel John Boyd’s decision making model he developed for air combat called the OODA Loops. The model has been adopted by businesses, law enforcement agencies, and even sports teams.



The sequence begins with OBSERVE and then proceeds to ORIENT, DECIDE, and finally ACT after which it loops back to Observe. During the entire sequence the observation of unfolding events, new information, feedback, known influences, etc., allows the decision maker an opportunity to adjust responses as each step occurs. (See Chart on next page)

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When we OBSERVE we are gathering all of the available information from what is unfolding and what the influence and environment are around us. We are also evaluating ourselves to determine if we are in control of our emotions or acting out of anger.

When we ORIENT we are weighing previous experience in dealing with similar matters and what we learned from prior outcomes giving consideration to applicable policies and law as well as how the end result will be perceived. For example, consideration should be given to whether you are in a sensitive community with recent negative response to a law enforcement action? Is it necessary to act now or can the particular action

be delayed to a better time and place? During the entire process the decision maker should continue to reorient at every step until there is a resolution.

DECISION time is when we take the accumulation of information and choose our response. This will remain fluid as we continue to cycle through the decision making process as new influences continue to alter our actions and thoughts.

The ACT is the actual implementation of our decision(s). This is also the time at which we will see the results of our actions and how they have influenced the issue or opponent. Their response starts the decision making process again and dictates further response.

You can hone your decision making skills and preparation as to how you will engage different challenges by rehearsing or playing “what if” while keeping the concept of **WIN** in mind. This process will make you aware of how different similar events can progress when influenced by different internal and external events and how to plan and adapt accordingly.



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