



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

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This time of year in Colorado, we see a lot of crazy things centered around the ski industry. Recently, a very happy couple, struck with love for each other, couldn't have cared less about the world around them. They were solely focused on each other. Staring deep into each others eyes, his arm behind her back and playing her her hair as they ascended the mountain upon a two person chair lift. They smiled. They giggled. They nuzzled together in the cool breeze. They were so caught up in the moment, they even forgot to get off the lift. Around the top of the mountain they went and they started back down again before the lift operator could stop the chair and fix the problem they had created. A problem of little consequence, but the creation of another funny lifetime memory together.

for star kissed lovers, being caught up in the moment is almost always a good thing. For police making critical life and death decisions, being caught up in the moment is rarely somewhere you want to be. The problem is we actually train ourselves to be caught up in the moment. We spend countless hours training the OODA loop out of us. We're taught to respond because taking time to think could get us killed. We reserve the thinking for training time and after thousands of repetitions, we learn to respond faster than if we had decisions yet to make. A great model for so many aspects of our job. For example, if someone presents an imminent and deadly threat to us, thinking about our response could cost us our lives. It's time to respond with lethal force and muscle memory.

There are times however when removing the thinking piece as we have been trained to do can be a fatal decision in and of itself. I would argue that any example that does not fall under the category of immediate life

preservation as stated above, would then fall under this category of "slow down and think." I know as you are reading this article you're already thinking of a handful of instances when there was not time to slow down and think, and maybe they were not immediate preservation scenarios. I would ask you to continue reflecting on those times you have in mind and really ask yourself, "Was there no time to think, or have I convinced myself I had no time and needed to act?" We have done a fantastic job at training ourselves to be fast for a lack of time, when the reality is in most circumstances time is on our side. Have you ever had any of the these thoughts? "I should be the one to get the violator." "I am right on their heels." "It's my job to bring them in." "It has to be done right now!" - The old adage "work smarter not harder" could be inserted here and save police lives.

A traffic stop is initiated. The violator fails to stop. Our blood begins to boil. Our brain begins working in overdrive. Suddenly the situation changes. The car comes screeching to a halt and the violator bails. So do we. It's off to the races, now doing what we do best. We're in our element. Running the radio, giving commands, closing the gap with every stride and obstacle the foot pursuit has to offer. Like a dog chasing a frisbee, we're all in, caught up in the moment. So much so that we can get tunnel vision and miss critical information to our safety. Where the star kissed lovers made a great memory, we could make a fatal oversight. Slow down. I don't mean physically necessarily. I mean take a second to make good tactical decisions. If that means slowing your feet, then do that too. We have time if there is no gun pointed at our heads.

This can apply to a number of street contacts where we find ourselves caught up in the moment. It doesn't matter if you are seasoned, or if it's your first week. As a matter of fact, much of the time the old dogs are still playing under old rules and need reminded that the rule book has changed many times over since their academy days. Some time back now, I was in a vehicle pursuit of a stolen car. The driver hit an alley and bailed into an old abandoned house. We had a perimeter set up very

quickly and knew without a doubt the perp was still inside. I was holding at the door the perp had run in through, and my commander came to my side. I expected sound decision making, calming and reassurance from him. Instead I got, "Are you ready?" with his gun at the low ready and his body leaning eagerly towards the open door. "Whoa commander. Hold up." We talked it over and determined there was no reason for us to go running in to this house guns blazing. Instead we used time, and the perp we found armed, was arrested without harm to anyone.

Time is 99% on our side. The thousands of hours of training we have put into cutting decision making out of our equation is absolutely critical for the 1% that it is not, but could be the death of us for the rest.

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