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Omni Cedo Domus

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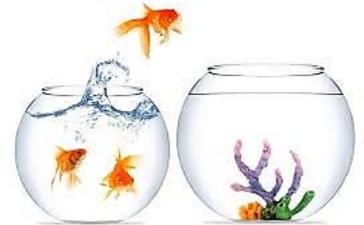
Keeping Up or Slowing Down

By Ronny J. Coleman

Who wrote the following words?

I have sometimes almost wished it had been my destiny to be born two or three centuries hence. For inventions of improvement, and beget more of their kind. The present progress is rapid. Many of great importance, now unthought-of will be available to be procured; and then I might not only enjoy their advantages, but have my curiosity satisfied in knowing that they are to be.

If you guessed Steve Jobs, then you might be part of the “computer generation.” If, you guessed Benjamin Franklin then you might be part historian or just plain traditional. When I found this quote among Franklin's papers I was amused. My reason for the amusement centers on the fact that the fire service is considered to be a really traditional occupation yet one of our founding fathers was on record as stating that he was looking forward to all the changes that were likely to occur. It has now been over 300 years since Franklin participated in developing the political philosophy of this country. It has also been over 300 years since bucket brigades were replaced by hand pumpers; then they were replaced by steamers; and today we have modern firefighting apparatus that would startle Franklin if he had a chance to see them perform. I bet he would be excited.



Where does that place all of us? Are we merely observers of change, or are we the creators of change? That's not a simple a question as it may seem. Conceiving of new ideas, turning them into realistic proposals and advancing the state-of-the-art in the fire service often takes on the shape of conflict and controversy. This can easily be proven by reviewing past practices of the fire service and comparing them to some of the changes being proposed impact our industry. I wonder what the fire service is going to look like 300 years from today. The one thing I know not to do is to predict that it will be the same as today, in spite of resistance to change. The next thing I know not to do is to try to predict exactly what it will look like, because there are forces at play in the creation of civilization and our culture that have yet to reveal he had reveal their respective impact on how we do business.



Clipboard (Cont.)

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If you look up the term "state of the art" it refers to the highest level of general development, as of a specific device, technique, or scientific field achieved at a particular time. It also refers to the level of development (as of a device, procedure, process, technique, or science) reached at any particular time as a result of the common methodologies employed. The operative word in this paragraph is "at a particular time." I entered the fire service in 1960 and still have memories of technology that today is sitting on the shelf of fire museums. I strongly suspect that most of the chief officers who are operating at a high level in service delivery today are absolutely required to be familiar with the next new thing.

The essence of this column is to emphasize that one of the tasks of a leader is to lead the process of change. It is a dangerous, exciting and convoluted path that can often result in conflict. So, what is the chief to do in reacting to new ideas as they emerge as part of this change process?

There are a couple suggestions that are appropriate here. The first is that nothing changes in the fire service without it being thoroughly vetted before it is accepted as a general practice. We can go back and see how that process has worked in the acceptance of specific technologies. One of my best examples is the adaptation of the steam fire engine. That was a technology that emerged from the industrial age. The fire service didn't invent steam. Nor did the fire service invent steam engines. They adopted them.

Histories that were written of the fire service about that same time clearly indicate that the idea was unacceptable to the fire service in general. The devices were considered dangerous, if not outright deadly. Yet, we adopted steam technology; put it on the road using horses, which were soon replaced by the internal combustion engine.

There is a continuum of engagement regarding technology and it often plays itself out in the decision-making process. The following are conditions that we all need to be aware of if we want to adequately deal with emerging changes. By the way, I'm not just talking about technological changes. I'm also including philosophical changes. This also includes methodological changes. The first comment I would make about this continuum is that there are two opposite poles with regard to dealing with change. The first is the idea that a person is totally unaware of a proposed change and therefore is likely to fear it.

We often call these people resistant to change; or traditionalist.

The second is the idea that a person can be extremely aware of a proposed change and is actually a proponent of change. We often call these people change agents. Believe it or not there is a very extensive continuum of behavior that fall in between these two extremes. For example a person to be aware of something or some type of change, but have absolutely no knowledge of the specifics. There is another behavior where you can have knowledge of a change but not have any interest in pursuing it.

The continuum goes on to where a person can be fully engaged with the check proposed change but has concerns about its consequence. Have you recognized yourself yet?

Clipboard (Cont.)

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Ronny J. Coleman

The best strategy that all chief officers should adopt is to be fully aware of proposed changes, followed up by a desire to develop knowledge and competency in that proposal. In the organization individuals should be sought out who can develop a level of expertise about the change and contribute to its adaptation process internally. In other words, your behavior as a leader in not outright rejecting an idea before it has been fully vetted is a skill set that you might have more influence over change than merely resisting it.

Franklin, in spite of his perspective on seeking change did not invent the word state-of-the-art. It was not created until 1910. It was coined by Henry Harrison Uplee, and engineering graduate from the University of Pennsylvania when he was describing the design and construction of turbans operated by combustion gas. Somewhere in the fire service community right now there is an individual who is ready to create a new idea that could change our vocabulary in the future. The real question for all of us in the fire service is how soon we can embrace change that will allow us to remain relevant to the level of public safety at all of our communities.

Combs Cartoon

Beat It



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Last Alarms

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Last Alarms

The USFA reported 62 line of duty deaths in 2020. The following line of duty deaths were reported since we published our last issue:

Eric Ellis ♥ Salmon, ID	David Closs, Sr. ♥ Avis, PA	Thomas Searcy 🟢 Houston, TX
Bryant Anderson 🟢 Converse, TX	Steven Tower ♥ Goffstown, NH	Lee Holbert ♥ Carrollton, TX
Joseph Liedel ♥ Monroe, MI	Thomas Duffy Belgrade, MT	2020 Totals ♥ 24 (38%) 🚚 7 (11%) 🟢 17 (27%)
Brian Smith St. George Island, FL	Diane Jones 🚚 Summerville, OR	♥ Indicates cardiac related death 🚚 Indicates vehicle accident related death 🟢 Indicates COVID19 related death



TCoOO Update



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Taking Care of Our Own

There are currently nine DoD firefighters in the Taking Care of Own program.

Taking Care of Our Own invites all DoD F&ES personnel to donate ONE HOUR of annual leave to DoD F&ES members in need to enable them to focus on recovery rather than financial distress.

Name	Location	Point of Contact
Kevin Stuebs	DLA Columbus, OH	Brent.Moreland@dla.mil
Steve Holekamp	Tinker AFB, OK	Thomas.Trello@us.af.mil
Alfie Soyosa	Metro San Diego, CA	Nicole.Stacy@navy.mil
Andrew Swick	USAG Yuma, AZ	Daniel.P.Goodwin2.civ@mail.mil
Robert Viafranco	NAS Corpus Christi, TX	Matthew.Sedgwick1@navy.mil
Ronald Wells, Jr.	JEB Little Creek, VA	Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil
Patrick Hammer	Kirtland AFB, NM	Joseph.Rivera.33@us.af.mil
Christopher Bishop	F&ES Gulf Coast, FL	Daniel.Chiappetta@navy.mil
Philip Eubanks	F&ES Gulf Coast, FL	Michael.S.Glover@navy.mil

The TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN initiative was launched in October 2004 to provide a support network among DoD Fire and Emergency Services personnel to help members suffering from a personal crisis resulting in a need for leave donations.

Please contact your service component chief if you haven't seen this information recently.

Back in the Day

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U.S. Navy Mack B Model Pumpers

By Tom Shand



During the fall of 1954 Mack Trucks introduced their new B model fire apparatus cab and chassis which would replace the venerable L model that had been built for the past fourteen years. The rugged looks of the B model with the long hood and chrome radiator shell became a popular choice for many departments. While some of Mack's competitors had introduced cab-forward models into fire truck production, Mack Trucks believed in the conventional, engine ahead design and produced 908 B model fire apparatus over the years.

Major municipal departments including Boston, Chicago, Seattle and Washington, D.C. operated B model apparatus in their fleets. During 1960 Mack built the first diesel powered pumper for Hamilton, Bermuda which complimented their engine offerings which included both Mack and Hall Scott power plants. The prominent Mack engine was the ENF707C which was rated at 276 horsepower, while west coast departments preferred the larger Hall Scott model 1091 engine that could produce 324 horsepower.

In 1956 Mack Trucks produced forty one pumpers for various branches of the military, including fifteen for the U.S. Navy. This was a significant order for Mack as this was the first time since 1942 that they were awarded a contract for Navy fire apparatus. These pumpers were powered by a Chrysler industrial engine rated at 204 horsepower with a five speed non-synchromesh manual transmission and were designated as model B475CF.

The pumpers were designed with an open cab with windshield wipers provided to clean both sides of the glass area to make runs during inclement weather a little more tolerable for the crew. They were devoid of any chrome or bright work with the exception of pressure gauges at the pump panel area. Built on a wheelbase of 168½ inches these rigs were very maneuverable with an overall length of just 23½ feet.

These pumpers were among the first Navy apparatus to be provided with enclosed body compartments rather than the traditional open running boards and were quite popular with the crews assigned to them. The apparatus was equipped with a Hale two stage pump rated at 750 gpm, along with a 300 gallon water tank.

Back in the Day (Cont.)

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Tom Shand

All units were provided with a top mounted booster reel, three lengths of hard suction hose, with four pump panel 2.50 inch discharges which was somewhat unusual given the 750 gpm fire pump rating.

The Navy continued to prefer the open cab design for their structural apparatus and did not acquire closed cab units until the early 1960's. Fire Department's at that time believed that the open cab apparatus provided a better view of the fire ground when arriving for building size up and apparatus positioning. This theory worked very well for those located in a year round warm weather climate, but was not so great when you were riding on the back step during sub-freezing winter conditions.

Installations that operated these Mack pumps included the Naval Air Station in Brooklyn with property number 73-01242, the Norfolk Naval Station with number 73-01215 and the Naval Air Propulsion Center in Trenton, NJ with number 73-01268. Another Mack B model pumper was assigned to the Naval Weapons Station at Earle, NJ which was modified by department members with the installation of an Eastman deck gun over the fire pump with bumper mounted bell and hand tools above the body compartments. Navy property number 73-01263 was the first pumper completed by Mack and was assigned serial number 1001.

Structural pumpers acquired by the U.S. Navy after this point reverted back to the use of commercial, two door cab chassis using predominately GMC and International models. Back in the Day, one of Mack's advertising slogans was "Built like a Mack Truck". Some of these vintage vehicles are still on the road today in the hands of collectors, a testament to how well they were built.

Photo from the collection of Scott Mattson

DoD Answers the Call



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All DoD Task Force on Sheep Fire



Units from MCAS Miramar, Camp Pendleton, Metro San Diego, and March AFB comprise OES Task Force 6900 on the Sheep Fire in Susanville, CA

On the Job - Texas

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Poly-America Mutual Aid Fire

By Samson J. De Sessa, Assistant Fire Chief



We have all heard the expression, “Don’t cross the streams! It could be bad.” as quoted by Egon Spengler, PhD of Ghostbusters fame. However, the NAS Fort Worth Fire Department did just that while answering the call for immediate assistance from the Grand Prairie Fire Department and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). NAS Fort Worth JRB Fire and Emergency Services Department sent Unit 1242, an Oshkosh T-1500 Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Apparatus (ARFF) to provide foam and water to a massive industrial chemical fire. Firefighters Blaine Cockrell, Nicolas Juarez, and Dusty Woolsey responded to the scene. Deputy Fire Chief Roger Green joined the team as a Safety Officer and brought 200 gallons of much-needed foam. “Once we received the official request from TDEM and approval from our Installation Commander John McLean, we responded.” Chief Green stated.



Fort Worth, Dallas, DFW Airport, Addison, Irving and Cedar Hill answered Grand Prairie’s request for aid as well. The fire began when a high powered line came loose and fell onto rolled plastic sheets. The fire was being fueled by highly flammable polyethylene and petroleum-based items like kitchen trash bags, drop cloths, plastic sheeting, and vapor barrier film which are manufactured on-site.

The NAS Fire Team was assigned to work side-by-side with DFW Airport Fire Crews to utilize their ARFF foam trucks to protect exposures, including railcars with hazardous materials on a railroad track after a railcar loaded with paint exploded near the burning warehouse. The fire was initially reported just after midnight on Wednesday. NAS Fire remained on-scene until 12:30 pm.

History Lesson

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Treasure Island Fire Department Dive Team

By Stu Cook

In August 1965 the Naval Station Treasure Island Fire Department of San Francisco, CA established the department dive team. This team was primarily founded to extinguish fires under the many wooden piers on the naval station. They were also involved in underwater rescues and recovery of personnel in automobiles that ran into the bay from piers and roadways.



Dive Team demonstration at California State Fair & Cal Expo

The piers and wharves were constructed of heavy wooden pilings, wooden decks and wood structures on them. Most piers were constructed without under-deck fire stops. This created horizontal flues that rapidly spread the fire. Most piers were provided with removable hatches, approximately one foot in diameter and spaced 25 feet apart running the length of the pier for cellar nozzle water curtains.

Advanced fires on wood piers are extremely difficult to extinguish by land based fire companies. Treasure Island attacked these fires with distributor nozzles, cellar nozzles and deluge guns to cut off the spreading fire. Mutual aid from the Navy Tug boats and the San Francisco fireboat Phoenix helped provide under pier fire streams which were beyond the reach of the land based companies.

TIFD Dive Team researched and experimented how to fight fires directly beneath the pier. The theory was simple; get a hose line and firefighter underneath the pier. Using a hose and nozzle attached in some way to a float a scuba diver could guide under the pier fire to extinguish it.



Scu-Daddle preparing to do under pier firefighting

Experiments were conducted to see if charged hose lines would float. They found that both empty and charged lines floated. It was found that only the brass couplings had a slight negative buoyancy. They supported the brass couplings by attaching plastic gallon jugs every fifty feet. This also made it easier on pump operators; the number of jugs in the water told them how many fifty foot lengths were out, so the pump pressure maybe increased or decreased for the length of hose deployed.

To protect the divers under the pier it was found that 3/16 inch thick neoprene wet suit would protect from radiant heat and hot tar droppings. To protect their heads a helmet similar to what are worn now days for confine space rescue.

Next was a float that a nozzle could be mounted on. It was found that blocks of Styrofoam covered with two layers of fiberglass worked well. Firefighters, inventors came up with the "Scu-Daddle".

History Lesson (Cont.)

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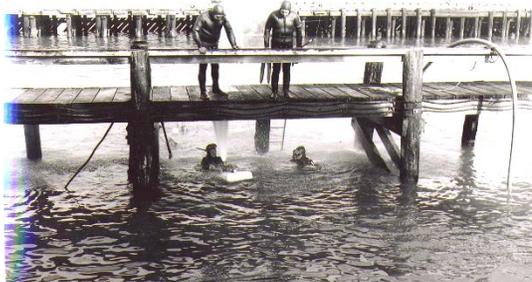


The floating monitor was nicknamed Scu-Daddle for the way it Scu-Daddled in and around the pilings located under the piers. The unit is propelled by water pressure funneled through two rear pipes with mounted control valves. The water pressure is maintained at 110 psi at the unit is provided by a landed based engine company, tug boat or fireboat. This unit could reach speeds of 7 knots thrusting forward.



Scu-Daddle with floating 2 ½ inch supply line

The Scu-Daddle has a front mounted nozzle for breaking up fuel fires on top of the water and for knocking down initial flames down under piers up to a 45 degree angle. As the unit moved directly under the pier, the top mounted nozzle was charged to extinguish fire on the hard to reach underside of piers. The unit is maneuvered left, right and forward by the diver manipulating the two jet stream valves located below the waterline. One 2 ½ hose line supplies the water source to the monitor. When the diver wants to back out from under the pier, he simply places the jet valves into the off position and opens the front mounted nozzle which forces the unit backward.



Scu-Daddle under pier training

The Scu-Daddle saw plenty of action over the years both on base and mutual aid responses. The Pier 23 fire in October of 1966 in the City of San Francisco brought the team great praise from the Mayor and Fire Chief of the city. The team trained many major west coast city fire departments in the use of the Scu-Daddle and the pier firefighting strategy and tactics they had developed.

The Treasure Island Dive Team was disbanded in the 1984 due to budget cuts and the majority of the new piers being built of concrete.



Divers aboard Yard Tug L-R, Unknown, Paul Fennel, Gene Carmody (Navy F&ES Hall of Fame Fire Chief) and Paul Wallace

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Growing in CNRMA

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Pursuing Development, Achievement Milestones



L-R Navy Region Mid Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services Assistant Chief (Paramedic) Shannon Pawlowski, Heavy Equipment Mechanic (EVT) Todd Martin, Assistant Chief (Paramedic) Jason Kinlaw

Employee development is essential for growing your team, for succession planning, and for maintaining employee engagement and retention.

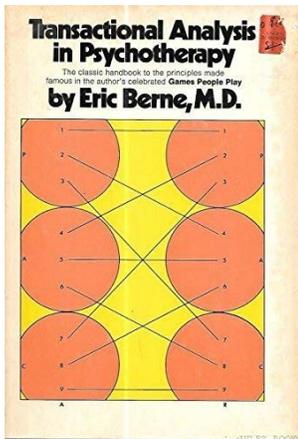
Assistant Chief Shannon Pawlowski has been accepted into the current Navy/Graduate School USA Executive Leader Program (ELP) cohort, which runs through May 2021. The program provides a combination of residential training and distance learning, developmental work opportunities, needs assessment and career planning tailored to the Federal environment and providing skills, experience and exposure for GS-11 to GS-13 level managers, and those with high management potential. The program is designed to enhance leadership and management competencies with an emphasis on leading people. Shannon is Navy Region Mid-Atlantic's Training Program Manager.

Heavy Equipment Mechanic Todd Martin has been accepted into the next New Leader Program, a six-month program designed to prepare employees for management and leadership positions that provides practice in the team skills that are central to modern management. The program focuses on executive core qualification competencies utilizing individual development, experiential learning, and assessments during in-residence education at Graduate School USA in Washington DC, a 30-day developmental assignment, a three-day shadow assignment of a senior manager, and a variety of writing assignments designed to elevate written communication skills. Todd is a certified Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) based at Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Service's Norfolk, VA apparatus shop in the department's Support Services Branch.

Assistant Chief Jason Kinlaw has successfully completed the process that awards the professional designation of "Chief Fire Officer" (CFO). The Commission on Professional Credentialing met on 5 May 2020 to confer the designation. Chief Kinlaw becomes one of only 1,439 CFOs worldwide. The Designation program is a voluntary program designed to recognize individuals who demonstrate their excellence in seven measured professional components, and uses a comprehensive peer review model to evaluate candidates seeking the credential. The CFO designation is valid for three years; Chief Kinlaw also maintains designations as Chief EMS Officer and Chief Training Officer. Jason is Navy Region Mid-Atlantic's Emergency Medical Services Officer.

Transactional Analysis

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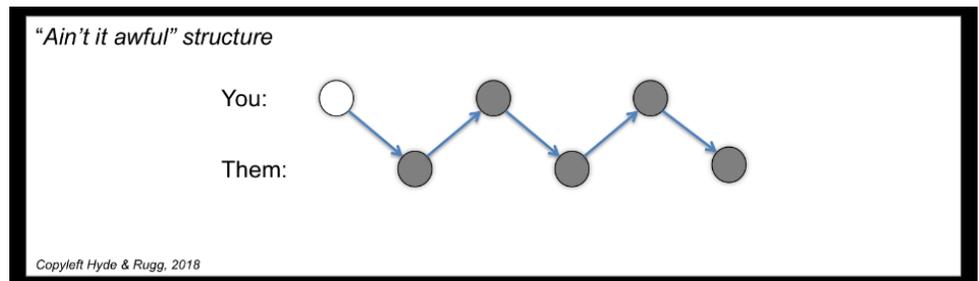
Mental Models, and Games People Play

By Gordon Rugg, copyleft Hyde & Rugg

There are patterns in the ways that people interact. This article is about those patterns, and their implications.

I'll start with a pattern known as "Ain't it awful". In this pattern, the other person wants you to agree with them that things are awful. I've shown this diagrammatically below. The interaction starts with you saying something; I've shown this with a white circle. They then respond with something negative, represented by a grey circle. For instance, you might tell them that you're thinking of buying an electric car. They react by saying something about problems with electric cars.

They now want you to respond with something negative; for instance, "That's the trouble with new technology, you can't depend on it". The interaction is then supposed to follow the same pattern of "Ain't it awful" in a nice, predictable way, as shown below.



This may be nice and safely predictable for them, but it's not so nice for you if you don't want to be told about things being awful, and it's not so predictable for you if you're expecting a different type of interaction.

In the rest of this article, I'll look at ways in which interactional patterns can play out.

The pattern names in this article come from Eric Berne's work, in books such as *Games People Play*, and *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?*

A central feature of Berne's transactional analysis (TA) approach is that it uses a very accessible style, with names for the patterns that come from everyday life. It's also very practical and hands-on, as regards the implications of the patterns, and what to do about them. He uses the word games rather than patterns; this makes sense in the context where he was working, but it can give misleading impressions in other contexts, which is why I'm using patterns. The TA approach is in essence a subset of script theory, couched in everyday language.

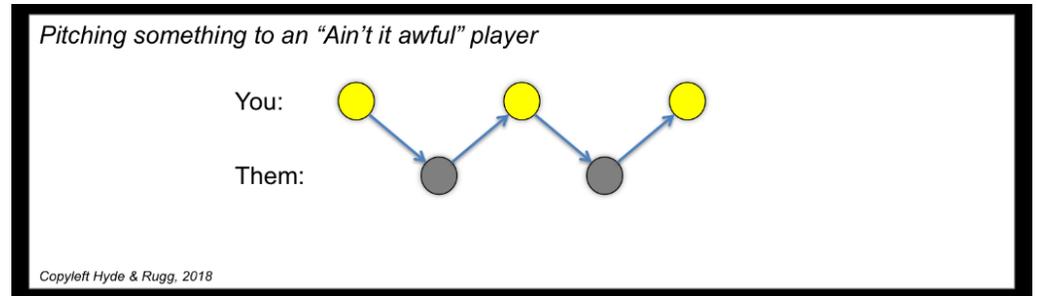
Here's an example of the Ain't it awful pattern leading to problems. In the diagram below, you're trying to pitch something to an Ain't it awful player. They may be a potential customer, or a client with problems that you're trying to solve. You start by suggesting something that could make their life better (yellow circle). They respond with something negative. You try again with something positive; they respond negatively.

TA (Cont.)

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You try again and... and at this point you've probably lost them, because you're not following the pattern that they want you to follow.

There's a very similar pattern called Why don't you...? Yes, but... whose name sums up the strategy pretty neatly. In this pattern, you make helpful suggestions, and they come up with objections each time.



The Why don't you...? Yes, but... pattern can lead to a lot of problems for two main reasons which are diametrically opposite to each other.

Sometimes it causes problems because you don't realize that the other person is following the pattern, and you waste a lot of time and effort trying to fix a problem that they won't let you fix. Other times, it causes problems because the professional thinks that someone is following this pattern and writes them off as a time waster, when in fact the person is genuinely trying to get the problem fixed, and the obvious solutions to the problem have all failed.

Once you're aware of this issue, you can learn ways of telling whether you're dealing with someone following this pattern, or with someone who has a genuinely difficult problem. You won't always get it right, but you'll at least improve your overall success rate.

The two patterns above can be frustrating and can waste a lot of time, but they're usually not actively harmful. The next pattern I'll describe, however, can be dangerous. It's known as Now I've got you, you son of a bitch, or NIGYYSOB for short. It tends to catch people completely by surprise the first time they encounter it, and to leave people shaken and distrustful for a long time after that first encounter. Here's how it works.

You're dealing with someone, such as a client. They make a friendly first response, and invite you to be less formal (light green circle). You respond in kind (darker green circle). This pattern repeats, luring you further and further into informality, until suddenly they respond in a completely different and very negative way (black circle). A classic pattern is the client saying that you don't need to bother with formal documentation for something, and that a verbal agreement will do, starting with something small and then shifting to bigger and bigger issues by gentle steps. Then, suddenly, they query your invoice for a large amount, and you don't have the paper trail that should have protected you.

Why anyone would want to behave like this is an interesting question, and is the reason that Berne spent much of his life developing his approach to making sense of human behavior.

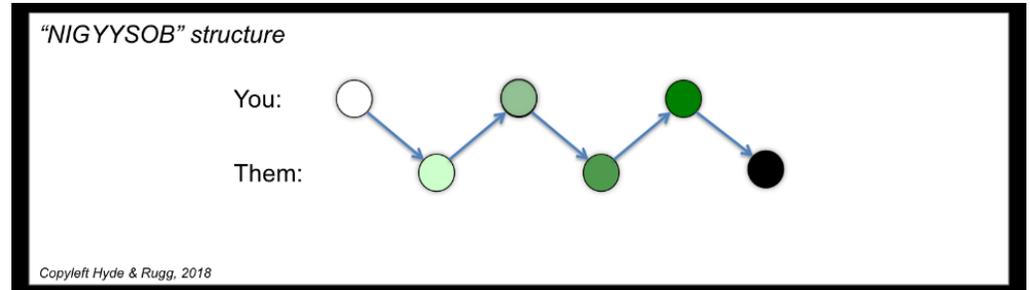


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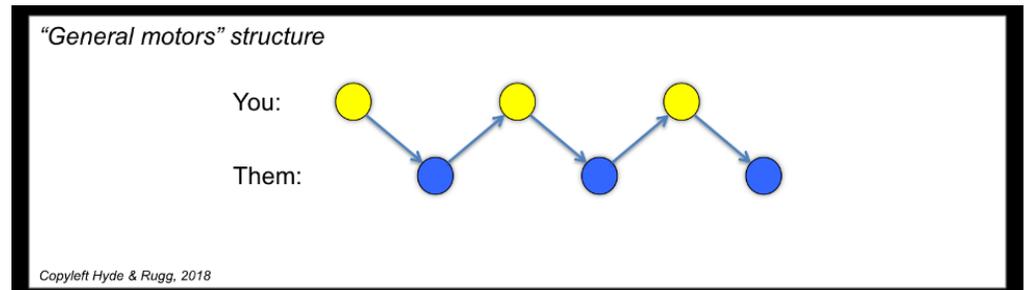
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I won't go into that issue because it goes far beyond the scope of this article. Instead, I'll cut to the lesson from this pattern, which is that once you know about NIGYYSOB, you can protect yourself from it by simply following a clear, consistent policy that stops you getting sucked into the pattern. If you meet a NIGYYSOB player, they'll usually lose interest pretty fast when they realize that you won't let yourself get dragged into their pattern.



I'll end on a happier note, with another pattern that may waste your time, but that is unlikely to cause actual harm. It's called General Motors. This pattern involves comparing different types of car (or music, or superhero, or whatever). A key point is that it's not supposed to end with a decision about one being better than the other; it's supposed to be an open-ended structure where people can talk in a nice, safe way about a topic of mutual interest.

This can lead to misunderstandings if you're trying to tell someone about the advantages of your solution, and they think that you're playing General Motors.



The pattern that you want to use looks identical to the pattern that they want to use, with you talking about the advantages of your offering (yellow circle) and them comparing it to the advantages of their favored option (blue circle). At first, you think that they're genuinely considering the pros and cons, and that they're open to being persuaded to buy what you're selling; eventually, you realize that this isn't going to happen, and you give up in frustration. On a happier note, if you realize early on that this is the pattern, you can at least have a well-informed conversation about a topic that you love with someone who enjoys discussing it with you...

If you want to find out more about this approach, Berne's books are very accessible and practical, easy to find, and very reasonably priced. You don't need to buy in to his underlying psychological theory; you can use the behavior patterns on their own terms, independent of his model.

This approach interacts in interesting ways with the concepts of instrumental and expressive behavior, but that's a topic for another article, another time.



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Training is Key

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Your Training Does Not End

By Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Groth, CNRSW Fire & Emergency Services, NAS Lemoore



In order to certify our team, we train and evaluate them to the minimum professional qualifications standards in accordance with NFPA. Although this is a good foundation to build upon, it should not be the endgame by any means. We honor candidates with a certification upon successful completion of these standards. This is just the beginning. We need to continue to challenge and motivate the team. We need to understand there is a difference between being certified and qualified. We should never be content with mediocrity. We should strive for and aspire to higher standards. After all, we are not stocking shelves at the local grocery store nor are we flipping burgers at the local restaurant. As important as these occupations are, they are not in the business of life safety. WE ARE in the business of life safety. The fact that we lose nearly 100 firefighters a year is a testament to the risks, dangers, and hazards associated with our chosen profession. We need to raise the bar, set higher standards, and challenge our team to meet those challenges head on. The Navy Seals have a coin phrase that is applicable here, “The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war”. Although we technically are not “at war”, the fire-ground is a battleground. We need to be battle ready and prepared. I believe that firefighters are top tier, tip-of-the-spear, best of the best, cream of the crop, Navy Seals of firefighting, and walking textbooks of knowledge. Firefighters are the prime cut cross section of society. We serve in the public trust. We protect and serve the veterans, and in their absence, their families. Those veterans, often times serving half way around the world, need peace of mind knowing that their families and loved ones are well cared for and protected. Additionally, the fiscal value of the assets we protect are well into the millions if not billions of dollars. We owe it to our customers and ourselves to be at the top of our game. We owe it to our families because they need us to come home.

Firefighters love fire engine red, diamond plate, and gold leaf. The nostalgia of a turn-out coat hanging on the handrail makes for the perfect picture. The roar of a growler on the front bumper is music to a firefighter’s ears. An Engineer once showed me the hand rails on the side of the engine. He told me that new firefighters had to hold onto these rails and run a long side the truck until they earned the right to ride inside. He was joking of course, but the message he was trying to drive home is that riding on these trucks is an honor and a privilege. Climb up into an ARFF apparatus and you get to operate the biggest squirt gun ever. It’s like driving a giant Tonka toy truck. Operating the turrets on a crash truck is fun stuff! Operating the aerial device still has me grinning from ear to ear! Love this stuff! An Assistant Chief once told me that training tends to get repetitive and boring. Since we have reduced frequency of structure fires, firefighters feel like their practicing for the big game, but never get to play. The reality is, the real deal could be a tone away.

Training is Key (Cont.)

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The training should be challenging, yet fun, progressive, professional, and attainable. For example, anyone can tie knots with a rope in a classroom. Once the students get it dialed in, challenge them. See if they can tie the same knots with bulky structural gloves on. Then up the ante and shut the lights off and have them tie the knots in the dark with gloves on. Take the students out of their comfort zone, make it challenging. We apply the same concept to pilot egress training. Students identify cockpit controls, pinning locations, and egress procedures without looking at the controls to build confidence in their knowledge of the aircraft (we perform this training on a ground level mock up for safety reasons). Even donning structural gear and an air pack. Students are expected to don an SCBA in under a minute, we train them to don their structural gear and air pack in under one minute with a target time of thirty seconds without errors. Firefighters are competitive and love the challenge. The challenges need to take the students out of their comfort zones, it should be physically arduous, strenuous, difficult, yet attainable in order to give them that sense of gratification and success upon completion. We need to challenge and test students mentally as well to foster and promote a positive and progressive culture of heightened acuity.

This training should be used to strengthen weaknesses, but never be used to degrade or embarrass a firefighter. Every member of the team has something to offer. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Reinforce and share your strengths and strengthen your weaknesses through repetitive conditioning. You have to condition yourself to deal with your personal failures. Failures are inevitable and an opportunity to progress and evolve. Firefighters are notorious for a “never give up and never back down mentality!” Firefighters don’t like the taste of failure, and they will typically roll up their sleeves and go to work to overcome the barriers of failure and fear. The firefighter that never gives up will earn the respect of their peers. Give up and walk away, and it will be a long, hard road to travel for that firefighter to regain the trust and confidence of their peers.



The instructors really need to acquire a synergistic balance to maintain credibility. Never teach a class if you haven’t prepared for it, it could cost you your reputation. Instructors need to have the knowledge base and reputation as a resident expert, but also an experience base to support it. The experience base needs to be one of evolving and progressive growth. Ask yourself, do you have twenty years of experience, or one year of experience repeated twenty times. The resident expert shouldn’t always be the one teaching the class. Seize the opportunity to mentor others to fill that resident experts boots when they retire.

While conducting a specific training evolution (drill), not to be confused with a CDC practical evaluation, a candidate had failed after several attempts. Collectively, the Captains (evaluators) on the drill agreed that the candidate needed additional training. The candidate became angry and felt as though he was being subjected to a different standard than everyone else.

Training is Key (Cont.)

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Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Groth



The bar needed to be raised and we had to start somewhere. The candidate, although distraught, utilized this opportunity to seek out additional mentoring, coaching, and training. The candidate later passed the evolution. The purpose of the evolution was to subject the candidate to multiple faceted operations to the point of being overwhelmed. The candidate was seared with increased stressors, duress, and pressure. The team was preparing this candidate to remain calm and systematically apply ORM principles, prioritize objectives, and manage them accordingly. I can teach my twelve year old son to

operate a pump panel, it is a reasonable expectation to hold an Engineer to a higher standard. The Engineer should not only operate the pump panel, but exemplify a vast and comprehensive knowledge base and understanding of the nuts and bolts of the operation. The team was preparing the candidate in such a way that the real deal would be a cake walk. The standard still needs to be consistent in the interest of fairness. The intent is to build candidates, not break them. The reinforcement should be positive.

To forge a strong blade and make it battle ready, you need to subject the steel to intense heat and beat it with a hammer (figuratively speaking of course). Then you grind the blade, sharpen, and polish the blade. The end result is a battle ready candidate forged with fire and pressure. This will build confidence. This will build trust. This will build camaraderie. Ultimately, the hope is to cultivate a culture of excellence whereas the candidate will one day become the evaluator.

We, as mentors, coaches, counselors, and teachers lay the ground work on the candidate's pathway to success. We place the stepping stones, pavers, build the bridges, and guide them on their journey; but a rewarding path isn't always downhill. It needs to be challenging, and the challenge is the reward. Honor the flag, the badge, the patch, the shield on our helmets, and the turn-outs on our backs. Honor the history of the Maltese cross. Train with honor and courage as firefighters. Train like firefighters, because it's who we are; it's in our blood.

On the Job – China Lake



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NAS Lemoore Assists NAWs China Lake



Generational Differences

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Is It Millennials – Or Lack Of Mentorship?

By Jacob Johnson, <https://www.firerescue1.com>

Seventeen years ago, I walked out of the fire academy and into a department as a career firefighter and thought I was somebody. I had three years of volunteer experience and expected to be accepted immediately.



A month later I caught my first job and realized I was the true definition of a rookie. For starters, I did not pull the hose correctly. We were fighting a trailer fire, and my captain told me to grab a hook. The only hook left on the truck was a 12-foot hook. Grabbing that hook proved to my captain that I could not think outside the box and could not operate on my own. I was just a dumb rookie.

When I asked the captain how I had done, he replied simply, “You suck.” I went home completely defeated.

I returned to work my next shift and my captain looked at me and said, “Well, you didn’t quit, huh? Time to go to work.”

From that day forward, my captain set my career path down a bumpy but successful road. So now, when I hear the complaints about all the kids hitting the job today, it makes me wonder: What changed? Have the kids changed, or have we lost sight of our role as mentors?

The Real Problem: A Lack of Mentoring

It is easy for those of us who have earned our spot to sit back and say, “That rookie is stupid, send him home” or “that rookie isn’t worth my time, she doesn’t love the job.” But have we ever sat back and thought to ourselves that we were the problem? The words we chose to describe them – millennial, kid, idiot: Do we call them that because of their skill sets, or is it because we haven’t done our job teaching them those skills?

The lack of mentoring is what is killing the fire service today. When we were rookies, those old heads were saying the same thing about us. I promise. The difference is that they would complain – and then bring us to the floor and drill until we couldn’t see straight. They would make us smart, make us worth their time, make us a firefighter, and make us love the job.

There was no choice. They had a job to do as senior members, and they did it. That’s the tradition we MUST keep alive today. More than ever to be honest.

Teach the Love of The Job

Everything has changed in this world, and we must change, too. We must understand that some of these kids are coming to us with no real life experience. Some have never folded clothes, mowed the yard, worked a real job. That’s not our fault, but it is our problem; it is our job to teach them, grow them and show them the ropes.



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Generational Differences (Cont.)

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I developed a “Teach the Love of the Job” test for myself to keep me motivated, keep me working hard and keep me mentoring other firefighters. It’s pretty simple:

1. Make them proud
2. Ask about their life
3. Ask them how they learn
4. Love them
5. Do your job

Following this process, I have seen a difference in how I approach a rookie hitting the station. Let’s go through each item.

Make them proud: Right at the start of shift, after they introduce themselves and put their ice cream in the fridge and the cake on the counter, I make them get their helmet with that fresh wax job from delivery and the fresh orange probie front piece, and sit them on the front bumper. I tell them what it means to be a firefighter, to sit on the front bumper, the stories that have been told, the shoulders that have been leaned on and the gear that has used it as a resting place.



I make them sit tall and take a picture with their helmet. I then explain to them that they do not sit on that bumper again until the crew gives them the right to because they haven’t earned it yet. This starts the shift off right, gives them a piece of history to grab on to, and shows them right off the bat how much YOU love the job and the history of the job.

Ask about their life: After morning checkoffs of the rig, I sit them down in my office. I tell them about my life and my career – what got me to where I am and what it takes to be successful.

Next is their turn. I ask them about their life, what experiences they have, what hobbies they have, how many jobs have they had. This is very important. This is where I get involved in their life. You must learn your people, you must be engaged in them, you must be there physically, mentally, emotionally. You must show them that this is the best job in the world. While they talk, you should be writing, taking notes, remembering the high points of the conversation.

I will warn you that this step usually brings up some awkward moments, but if it’s important to that rookie, then it’s important to you. Ask them for their birthday, their family members’ birthdays (partner, kids), ask them for an emergency contact number for you to have.

The best thing is that you are doing all these things, and that kid just thinks it’s because you’re the boss, but that’s not true, is it? No, it’s not! What you’re doing is setting their foundation to allow them to love the job and be engaged. It is key to their success. Without taking the time to understand their back story, you do not truly know what you have to work with.

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Ask them how they learn: This is one of the most crucial parts. This is what will make that kid succeed or fail. Yes, there are certain aspects of the job that you can only teach one way, but if you know how they learn, then you can adapt that style to the one way of teaching a certain aspect. What gets their clock ticking – hands on, PowerPoint, reading, something else? If you can pass on the knowledge in a way they can pick up, then they will have a better chance to succeed.

Share your expectations. Print them on a piece of paper and have them sign at the bottom. This gives them that sense of realness, that point of the first morning where it hits them, “Wow, I am a firefighter. I have achieved my first goal of getting a job.” They need that moment. It’s important.

After you see them staring off for a good 5 seconds, thinking about all this, call them back to earth and ask them for their expectations of you. Yes, I know, they won’t have a clue. That’s perfect! They will say something like, “I just want to learn” or my favorite, “I just want to become a good firefighter.” Bingo, you have made them engaged, because they gave you something.

Love them: Two words that can be the hardest thing to do. These kids will piss you off, run you ragged, make you want to quit, or make you want to fire them. Just remember, you were them once, too. You did all those things to your senior officer.

My guy was Captain Mike Lane, aka “Pops.” He was the hardest of them all – and the scariest. He ran me into the ground, but he loved me, and that motivated me more than anything. He got engaged in my life and made me a better man.

These kids don’t need their hands held, but they do need to hear the words “good job,” “I’m proud of you,” “I love ya, kid,” etc. They need some style of love to keep them going and keep them grinding for the finish line.

Find something they like and dive into it. Go the extra mile. For me, I had a kid walk into the station in 2016. Good kid but a terrible background and life growing up on the streets. During my phases, I learned a few things about him. He had never heard the words, “I’m proud of you” or “I love you.” He loved music, everything about it, from the words to the beats.

Can you imagine the look on his face, after four tours of being drilled all day and night sometimes, when I went to him and said, “Good work, kid, I’m proud of ya.” You would have thought I was Jesus himself! He smiled from ear to ear, and I heard a snuffle or two as we were picking up.

As the training went on, I dove into music. Rap music. Woah! This was tough! I was raised on 70s and 80s country. I knew nothing about it. What I did know, though, was I could not keep a solid relationship with this kid by just saying I’m proud of you. I needed something more, something on an emotional level. So I learned about rap music. Yup, I started questioning him about it and learning, had him set my speaker levels in my truck, listened to new songs, and sent them to him, too. He was shocked – completely taken aback that I dove into his life this much.

Generational Differences (Cont.)

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Jacob Johnson

To this day, that kid is still a firefighter, still growing and still talks to me daily, all because I took the time to invest in him.

Do your job: These kids depend on us. Their families depend on us. The success of their career depends on us. We have a job to do as senior firefighters, so **DO YOUR DAMN JOB.**

Be the cream of the crop. If these kids don't want to love the job, then make them love it. Show them how to love it. Get invested in them so they get invested in the job. It's the only way.

Every kid is owed the opportunity to have a love affair with the job.

Give them their chance, let them shoot their shot, and show them the way!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Johnson is a battalion chief with the City of Pearland, Texas. He began his fire service career with the Katy (Texas) Volunteer Fire Department in 2000, then completed EMT school and later became a career member of the Katy Fire Department. After two years, he transferred to the Pearland Fire Department. Johnson teaches at the Cy-Fair College Fire Academy, and previously taught at TEEX and the Gary A Tilton Rescue School.



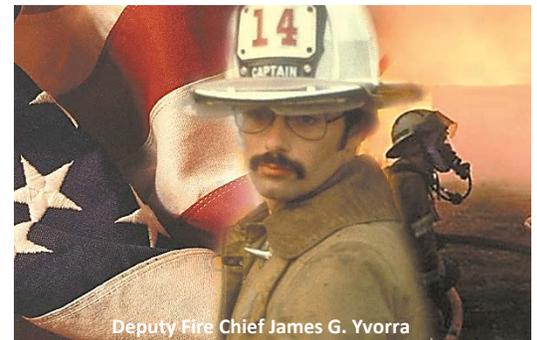
Scholarships



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Scholarships Available for Emergency Responders

The Yvorra Leadership Development Foundation (YLD) is currently accepting applications for its 2020 Scholarships and Special Projects related to leadership development. The awards are in memory of Deputy Fire Chief James G. Yvorra, Emergency Medical Technician Donald E. Sellers, and Chief John M. Eversole. Any active career or volunteer Fire, Rescue, EMS, or Emergency Management member or active duty or reserve U.S. military member who serves in an emergency response position is eligible.



Deputy Fire Chief James G. Yvorra

Annual awards are approximately \$3,000 each and three awards may be issued to U.S. citizens in 2020. In addition to one award for firefighters, there is an award set aside for Hazardous Materials Responders and one for Emergency Medical Service Responders. Special awards of greater value may be issued for leadership development related special projects proposed by individuals or groups.

Since 1989, YLD has awarded \$195,000 to 102 award recipients.

To request an application go to <http://www.yld.org> and click "Applications". The deadline for applications is October 30, 2020 and awards are announced in late December.

SA Matters!

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Big Data Could Spell Big Trouble

By Rich Gasaway

There is a lot being written these days about how “big data” can help emergency scene commanders improve situational awareness and, subsequently, make better decisions. While information (data) is critical to the formation of situational awareness, it is very easy for a commander to become overwhelmed with data.

I say this often during my Mental Management of Emergencies programs: Volumes of data, under stress, is not a friend to good decision making. It is an enemy. Let’s start with looking at how the brain processes information.

Short-term memory

We don’t have to travel far down the neuroscience highway before we come to one of the first potential stumbling blocks of “big data” – short-term memory capacity. The average person (which encompasses most of us) can capture, process and remember about seven pieces of unrelated information (give or take two). This number has been robustly confirmed in research with participants worldwide from all walks of life.

Memory overload

What happens when a person reaches the capacity of their short-term memory? There can be several potential impacts. One potential outcome is a person may simply start forgetting some of the data. This can be demonstrated by giving a person a string of numbers to memorize. The more digits, the harder it will be to remember. Complicate the exercise with additional information interspersed among the numbers, throw in some stress, a little noise, and some flashing lights and watch the performance plummet.

Cant’ Remember? Make it up!

Another potential outcome, which is a complication of forgetting, is the person may begin to make-up data to replace the data that has been forgotten. Essentially, the brain does not like the confusion that can come from missing data. So, what does the brain do to compensate for this uncomfortable feeling? It starts making up data to fill-in for what is missing. The problem is that the individual won’t realize that the false data being created in the brain is made-up.

Data fatigue

Another complication from too much data is fatigue. It can be very tiring to process the meaning of large volumes of data. Like muscles, when the brain gets fatigued it slows down. The fatigued brain can also start taking shortcuts and expediting decisions because it just can’t take any more data input.

In defense of big data

Big data can be helpful if it can be quickly summarized and culled only when needed in formats that are easy to understand. Big data can also be helpful if the commander has someone who can run interference and only provide the commander with the requested data on an as-needed basis.

SA Matters! (Cont.)

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Rich Gasaway, PhD.

I have attended a number of presentations on technology and big data where much of the data I am being told would be available to the incident commander could be put into one of five categories:

1. Critical and urgent.
2. Important and urgent.
3. Critical but not urgent.
4. Important and not urgent.
5. Not important and not urgent.

As I have been told about the volumes of big data that would be at my fingertips, much of it falls into categories 3-5. So long as access to this information is controlled, the decision-maker may not suffer from the challenges outlined above.



It is vitally important that the decision-maker not be fooled into believing that access to more data will improve decision making. What improves decision making is timely access to critical/important and urgently needed information in a timely fashion. If the decision-maker begins to access non-urgent information when timely and critical decisions need to be made, things can melt-down quickly.

Dr. Gasaway's Advice

When you go shopping for technology to improve access to information and to supplement your good decision making, don't become starry-eyed when the vendor shows you all the layers of information that you will be able to access. Think about what information you need to make urgent decisions. Make sure you can access that information easily without a lot of extraneous data that can complicate your processing and comprehension of the data.

Ideally, the technology that provides you access to big data would be customizable on your end so you can create shortcuts to the most important information that aids in critical, timely decisions.

If your organization has adequate staffing at emergency scenes so you can assign someone to access and filter the big data, that could help reduce the sense of overwhelm on the commander.

Move forward with cautious optimism. Technology is giving us access to data at volumes and speeds unlike any time ever in history. This can be good and it can be bad. Simply because advances in technology allow us to capture and summarize big data, doesn't mean the decisions, under stress, will improve if the big data overwhelms the commander.

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Retirement Tips

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Five Not-So-Fun Facts About Federal Retirement

By Tammy Flanagan, Retirement Counseling and Training www.retirefederal.com

A couple of years ago, I provided [8 Fun Facts About Federal Retirement](#). This week, I thought I'd go in a different direction and present five not-so-fun facts that you should be aware of. I think it's a safe bet you'll be glad to know these important, sometimes elusive facts about your retirement benefits.

Survivor elections are considered permanent.

If you're married at retirement, you must obtain your spouse's consent to choose less than the maximum survivor benefit under both the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees



Retirement System. If it is less than 30 days from the date of your first regular monthly payment, you can cancel or reduce the survivor benefit. After the 30-day period has passed but less than 18 months from the beginning date of your annuity, you can change your election only to increase or add a survivor benefit if you elected a single life annuity.

You must also pay a whopping one-time payment of 24.5% of your annual retirement benefit if you change from no survivor benefit to a full survivor benefit, or 12.25% percent if you change from no survivor benefit to a partial one under FERS. For example, if your retirement benefit is \$40,000 per year and you want to add a survivor benefit that your spouse waived at retirement, the penalty would be \$9,800 (plus interest). And this can only be done up to 18 months from your annuity start date. A similar penalty and interest is charged under CSRS. After 18 months, the survivor election will continue until the marriage ends through death or divorce.

It's important to consider the cost and value of this important benefit choice before you file your retirement application. There will be financial consequences for your spouse if you die first. That could happen even if your spouse is in poor health and older than you. If losing your retirement income means your surviving spouse would have to move, you should probably elect a survivor benefit. The reduction to your retirement to provide this valuable benefit also reduces your taxable income. If your spouse dies before you, your unreduced annuity can be restored.

You'll probably have to pay federal income tax on your Social Security retirement benefit. If you file an individual tax return and your combined income is less than \$25,000, or if you file a joint return and your combined income is less than \$32,000, then your Social Security benefit will be tax-free. But if your income exceeds this amount, you will pay tax on either [50% or 85%](#) of your benefit, depending on your combined income.

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Retirement Tips (Cont.)

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Can employees continue new Open Season coverage if they retire or become insured as compensationers?

It depends. All regular rules still apply for continuing FEGLI into retirement. This includes the requirement that for any types or multiples of coverage you wish to bring into retirement, you must have that coverage throughout your last five years of Federal service, or your entire period or periods of service if you retire with less than five years. Because coverage elected during the Open Season will be effective no sooner than October 2017, this means that if you want to bring your Open Season coverage into retirement, you must retire in October 2022 or later, five years after the coverage becomes effective.

When it comes to deciding about continuing your life insurance benefit into retirement, you have a variety of choices regarding future coverage amounts. Continuing coverage once you are past age 65 comes at a considerable cost. It's important to evaluate whether you need to continue life insurance at the time you retire.

Basic FEGLI and Option A can continue at no further premium once you're 65 and retired, but the coverage will reduce by 2% per month until it goes down to 25 percent of its original value. OPM provides a [life insurance calculator](#) for employees and retirees that can be used to estimate your cost.

If you were born in 1960, your Social Security benefits could take a hit.

More than 4 million Americans were born in 1960. They'll turn 60 this year and be eligible for Social Security two years from now. Social Security [indexes an individual's earnings](#) to the average wage level two years prior to the year of first eligibility.

The [Social Security Trustees Report](#) released earlier this year shows the national average wage index for 2019 at \$53,864. It will be used to determine benefits for people born in 1959. The report includes an intermediate forecast of \$55,642 for 2020. But the Congressional Budget Office predicts the actual average wage index for this year will be much lower due to high unemployment related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This could result in benefits for people born in 1960 being almost 6% less than for people born in 1959. Congress could pass legislation that would fix this problem—at a cost, of course.

OK, enough of the not-fun facts. Let's end with a few genuinely fun ones, courtesy of [Global Animal](#):

- A wolf can eat up to 20 pounds of meat in one sitting.
- Most elephants weigh less than the tongue of a blue whale.
- Bats always turn left when exiting a cave.
- Alligators have been around for 150 million years.



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