



Photo courtesy of Tamara Keel

In Pursuit of Better Practice **An Interview with Claude Werner**

by Gila Hayes

Claude Werner, the Tactical Professor, recently published an eBook full of drills for self-guided practice and skill development,

which we'll review a few pages further into this edition of this journal. Werner is known for encouraging regular practice, both dry practice and live fire, and this is the focus of his new book.

While admonishments to obtain documentable training are common to these pages, not as much is said about practice to maintain skills learned during training. Werner's book focuses on challenging ourselves to accomplish high but measurable standards through practice. His drills blend fundamental skills with focus challenges to also hone the mental aspect of using a gun. How far, I wondered, could the armed citizen proceed in his or her skill development through self-guided practice alone? This and other questions prompted a call to the Tactical Professor. The discussion was so interesting that I think our readers will also find it beneficial.

eJournal: I read your eBook last weekend and wondered about several aspects of self-guided practice. First, though, can we tie down the correct terminology? Two words, "training" and "practice," are used extensively. How do you define each? What are the differences and where, if at all, does practice overlap into training?

Werner: To me, training is done under the auspices of someone other than ourselves. You go to take a class like MAG-20 (<https://massadayoobgroup.com/mag-20->

classroom/)-well, that is training. Practice, then, is what we do after training, or in some cases, we might practice on our own, without training.

The dictionary definition of practice is "repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it." I really like the way James Yeager put it years ago when he said, "Training is just a down payment." It is like buying a car. You put a down payment on a car, but you have to keep making the payments to keep it. In my mind, the practice that you do after training are those payments.

I completely differentiate between training and practice. That is why, for many years, I have always given my clients something to take away to practice after the training. Now, that may be a fairly simple thing. For a long time, mostly what I taught were short courses at an indoor range of about a two to three hours duration. For practice after class, I gave those clients the NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program (the MQP), because it was structured and it was fairly attainable. I had everybody shoot the first level of it at the end of the class so I knew they could do it. The MQP is a progression of shooting, then adding some skills, then adding some more skills. It is a good, structured program.

Trainers need to provide that kind of thing for practice after people leave a class. When I went to Mid-South they had a very distinct program that they gave you when you left. When I took Intensive Handgun Skills from Greg Hamilton at Insights, he had a very extensive program that he gave us to practice after the class.

eJournal: You specified that you teach "clients" not "students." Why do you draw that distinction?

Werner: Trainer/student in transactional analysis has the connotation of a parent/child relationship. A client

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relationship is between two equal adults. I think the parent/child relationship comes out of the trainer/student terminology leads to this concept that we're making cookie cutters of ourselves and forcing people into our mold the way the military and law enforcement does—although it has to. In the private sector, it is much more important to understand that the skills that we give people will have to be applied in the context of their own lives and it may look radically different from what we teach them.

eJournal: That relates to the word picture you drew of training as a down payment with practice as the installment payments needed to keep the product you purchased. That implies that we are interacting with a second party. Can training happen solo without a second party?

Werner: No, not in the way that I describe it, but I do think education can, and that is the third term we should identify. When the Network gives members a book and the DVDs, you are providing them with an educational resource. If they take that and practice it on their own, then you might say they had training that is sort of solo, but it has been guided by the materials that somebody else provides. I don't think training is ever a solo activity, but it may look different under different situations.

eJournal: I am mentally forming the image of a triangle with education and training as the base and at the top, the practice element through which we solidify and habituate what we learned from an instructor. If we were to say that the foundation is education and training but practice completes the triad, then we must make sure our practice is productive. What, in your viewpoint, are the defining characteristics of good practice?

Werner: The best practice is structured and measured. A while back, Greg Hamilton said something that I agree with completely: "Without testing, there has been no training." If we apply that to the concept of our practice, without structure and measurement, it is just what John Farnam calls ballistic masturbation. I agree 100% with John because I see it all the time here at the club, and back when I was teaching at an indoor range.

I tell you, Gila, that one of my most valuable experiences as an instructor was spending about four years as the primary instructor for an indoor range. I saw where 99% of the population that owns guns were at—assuming they ever even shot their guns. At the indoor range, I would

watch people. Their whole concept was to get a B-27 target, and set it at the minimum allowable range, and they'd shoot at it. Maybe they would hit it or hit the target carrier or the lights. You know that deal!

They did not have structured and measured practice. That is one reason I like the Marksmanship Qualification Program because it gives people a structured and measured program that they can practice on their own.

eJournal: While reading your book, I wondered if we rely on self-coached practice, how do we avoid self-delusion and thinking we are better than we really are?

Werner: I believe the solution is measurement. Keep in mind that as adults, the psychology of this is enormously important. All adults, and in this context, gun owners who shoot, need to learn to distinguish between a report card and a status report. A motivational guru I follow is Steve Chandler who wrote the book *100 Ways to Motivate Yourself*. One of the 100 ways says that most people never leave high school and that is where the report card comes in. When you are in school, your report card is a measure of your worth as a teenager. As adults, we need to get past this feeling that measuring things is going to reflect on our worth as individuals.

Just take it as a status report, a measurement, no different than measuring how much air is in your car tires. If a tire on your car goes down to 26 psi, does that make it a bad tire? No, it just means that there may be a nail in it that you need to fix or maybe that the weather got cold. When we measure things—and that is why I put so much measurement in the book—we have to get used to the fact that it just is what it is. It does not mean that we're better or worse people if we can shoot a four-inch group or if we cannot. It is irrelevant. It is just a status report and we say, "OK, I need to work on that."

eJournal: If I'm following your reasoning, the adult response to good performance is not, "What a good boy—or girl—am I," but if I am determined to improve it should rather be, "Now I need to practice skills that I do not do so well."

Werner: We are back to that parent/child relationship. I work really hard at trying to avoid that both personally and in my classes. I am an adult, my clients are adults and the people who read my book are adults, and so I

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am determined to treat them as adults so they then see themselves as adults.

eJournal: Adults accept personal responsibility and we work to improve. So, moving to skills improvement, if we employ some of the measurable skill tests from your book, how are we, on our own, supposed to identify and eradicate incorrect—or even more seriously, unsafe—elements that creep into our performance of, for example, the physical skills of drawing, acquiring sight picture, trigger press and follow through?

Werner: There are two parts to this answer. One, the very process of measurement helps us with the incorrect actions. That is in both live fire and dry practice. That is why I included some of those dry practice sections, like that half-circle drill.

The Half Circle Dry Practice Drill uses a small half-circle on a sheet of paper. Place this sheet of paper on a safe wall with the half-circle at nose height on the safe backstop. Extend the pistol and place yourself so that the muzzle is approximately an inch or two from the half circle. Align the sights on the bottom of the inner white half circle. You will be able to concentrate on the front sight and the inner half circle at the same time.

Press the trigger smoothly and follow through. Because there is no bullet impact, you should not be tempted to lift your head to see where the bullet went. This ingrains your understanding of proper follow through. If the front sight drops out of the outer gray half circle when you press the trigger, concentrate on pressing the trigger more smoothly.

We need to have a program, view what our results are and have immediate feedback. Bill Rogers is one of my inspirations. Bill is big on the idea that we have to have drills that provide instant feedback, not feedback after the fact, because we don't learn as well after the fact. When you have something like the half circle drill and you see yourself jerking the trigger—assuming you keep your eyes open—then you know that you have to stop doing that. You can at least recognize, "I have got a problem with yanking the trigger."

In terms of unsafe aspects, I suggest video. If somebody knows that they are not supposed to have their finger on the trigger until the gun goes parallel to the ground, and they take a video and see, "Oh, as soon as the gun comes out of the holster, I have got my finger inside the

trigger guard." Then they say, "Well, I don't want to do a Tex Grebner and shoot myself, so I had better stop that."

How many people now do not have smart phones? Not that many! The latest phone that I got only cost me around \$60 and the video and pictures that it takes are amazing. I have a tripod and selfie stick with a receptacle for the tripod on it that I use to video myself both for practice and to make educational videos for my YouTube and Instagram followers. Part of that is just feedback for me.

Now, people need to have the right idea ahead of time, so that goes back to the education aspect and having a correct foundation of the proper way. I really give people credit for being smart assuming they have the right basis to work on. They can figure things out on their own. "Oh, look at that video. I have got my finger on the trigger where I am not supposed to. Well, that is unsafe. I had better stop doing that." I think video is a really wonderful solution, and most of us have the tool already available.

eJournal: Mentioning video brings up an option I hadn't envisioned while reading your book. Imagine a self-learner in a remote location or someone for whom getting to classes is next to impossible. With video, that person can watch, for example, the correct sequence of drawing and firing. So, this person watches your video, memorizing how your dominant hand grasps the gun in the holster, where your support hand is as the gun comes parallel to the ground, and then, let's say she or he compares video of a dry practice draw and live fire practice, perhaps, and they see, "Oh, I need to adjust where I have my support hand" and they update their draw stroke accordingly.

Werner: Yes! Exactly! They might say, "I need to get the support hand back to my body, not hanging out in front so I don't shoot myself!"

eJournal: Video adds an educational resource to our self-learning experience. It's a way to identify and correct deficiencies or even safety violations. Identifying our own mistakes was my biggest worry about self-guided practice before we began talking.

Werner: Now, the downside of You Tube videos is that there are so many of them that are so bad! I don't know

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the solution. Our community needs to talk about how to evaluate instructors. That is a topic that has popped up periodically over the years.

Another question is how should we evaluate social media? This just came up again with a newly released video in which the target is not shown. One of my beefs is that very few You Tube and gun TV videos will show you the target. Two people I give a lot of credit to for showing their targets is Ken Hackathorn and Larry Vickers.

Their videos show them shooting and then in all one continuous shot, show the target. I remember one specific instance where Larry said, "Well, I blew that shot!" Well, if someone is posting on social media and they will not ever show their target and a timer, that shows me that the shooter is not "all that and a bag of chips."

eJournal: We're unable to determine if a great target is the results of the shooting sequence we just viewed. I think of Hemingway's paraphrase of the Bible verse, "By their works shall ye know them," but we're cheated out of the proof if video only shows the action and not the results on target. That is a good starting place for evaluation, and it's a good challenge to social media posters to follow Hackathorn and Vickers' example, to help viewers separate educational footage from mere entertainment. The video viewer might be a beginner, mimicking only the action steps shown without knowing the outcome.

Werner: Right.

eJournal: Some shooters are perfectionists and perform at a glacial pace in order to turn in a good target. How can our practice include a reasonable speed element to a skill focused on defending against violent attack?

Werner: The timer and the target—oh, the tales they weave! I have moved away from the idea that we must use shot timers other than in a par time mode. I think the timer is a seductress, just like in real life, the seductress can make you do things that you really do not want to do! I was thinking of Dennis Tueller's article, *How Close is Too Close?* and I transmuted that into asking, "How fast is too fast?" I think that happens sometimes working with a shot timer, trying to get that sub-second draw or whatever.

When I was at Rogers Shooting School, we had a lunch time dry practice period during which the targets were running. That course was meant to be run from what we called extended ready or low ready and what I now call the mid-point of the draw stroke. The targets were pretty fast: they ran between half a second and three quarters of a second. Because I had access to them all the time, I could hit 50% of those targets from the holster. I had about a three quarters of a second draw.

I don't any more. My draw runs about a second and a half now. It is under two seconds, so I don't care. I don't think that it is that important because if we are not figuring the aspect of visual recognition into how fast to draw, we may outrun our mental program. The timer is useful, but only up to a point. We have to understand and we have to put the timer in its place.

That said, as I mentioned in the book, there are now apps that you can put on smart phones that provide a pretty good par timer and the one I use was free. I plug my phone in, and with either electronic ear phones or a set of ear buds under ear muffs, the phone tells me "start" and "stop." Although we laugh at some of the police qualification courses, I think many are a good benchmark and a good start at least, for people to avoid perfectionism. If you can shoot a good group, that's great, but if it takes you longer than it takes a police officer to draw from a Level 3 security holster, you probably need to speed things up!

eJournal: Because solitary practice lacks any comparison against other shooters, outside standards against which to measure our performance help. It seemed to me that drills in your book presumed that your reader has been trained sufficiently in shooting fundamentals to pick up where the drills and exercises start. Can the average gun owner get a good start at their local indoor range?

Werner: It varies a great deal. I've actually seen some pretty good instruction at indoor ranges and I've seen a number of instructors do a pretty good job. At the same time, the worst and most dangerous class I ever participated in was at an indoor range.

At one facility at which I taught, not one instructor there had ever read a book about shooting beyond the NRA manuals. When they told me that, I bet I looked like a fish, because my mouth was falling open and closed and
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nothing was coming out. I said, "I have 400 books in my library and I'll loan them to you." They said, "No thanks." That is a problem.

There is a wide variation of what's available at public ranges, both indoor and outdoor. A lot of indoor ranges are staffed by former law enforcement and former military personnel and they get into that parent/child relationship that they were taught in the military or police. I don't blame them; they use the only system that they know, but that is not necessarily a good system for other people.

eJournal: How far can self-directed learning, without outside instruction, take the shooter?

Werner: Cooper was once asked, when will I know that I am proficient enough? His answer was when your attacker is in more danger from you than you are from him. I believe that level can be attained by a normal person through self-directed training. In fact, I am sure of it because it happens every day. The downside is bad things also happen pretty regularly from non-training, non-practice, non-education.

I do not think that we in the firearms industry teach people enough about how to avoid negative outcomes. We focus on the positive. What do we want to achieve? Good groups, that smooth, efficient draw. We teach people how to do that but I don't think we do a particularly good job of teaching people how to avoid the negative outcomes of shooting yourself or shooting someone else. I'm just not sure we do a good job of teaching people how to think and that is something else people don't learn in a self-directed environment.

eJournal: I did notice that some of the later drills in your eBook add a component of conscious thought, matching the number of shots with a number on a target, adapting to a new shooting order in mid-stream, and other distractions from the basics of sight picture and trigger press. Some were quite complex! It made me curious, because we have the basic edict to keep our eyes on the sights and yet to identify the right target. Are the two at odds?

Werner: As Paul Markel said years ago, we've got to learn to teach people to think with a gun in their hand and that is the object of those drills. In a book, I can't teach you to make shoot, no shoot decisions. What I can

do is get people into the idea of not being entirely focused on the gun itself.

The way I envision this, Gila, is that we have to be able to rapidly shift back and forth between the gun and the target. In the shooting community, we have two opposing camps. We have got target focus and we have got front sight focus. The fact is that the answer lies in an overlap of the two. We don't teach the overlap very well.

The object of my decisional drills is for the shooter to ask, "Did I fire the right number of shots? Did I make the right number of hits?" Well, if I didn't then I go into a branch of the drill and have to go back to the front sight to start making my hits. I have to learn to do that quickly, going back and forth. I think the decisional drills are embryonic. I am sure somebody will come up with better ways of doing that. I wanted to at least start the ball rolling and give people the idea that this can be done.

Literally thousands of times when running competitions, I've watched people's faces and as soon as the timer goes off—and sometimes even before—I can see that the conscious mind has shut off. That is a problem! That is a big problem! Decisions—even those made in split seconds—are by nature conscious thoughts. Decisions are not reflexive. If we are not teaching people to be able to engage their conscious mind as part of the process, then that is a problem.

Years ago, Skip Gochenour and I had a conversation in which Skip said, when we do multi-day training, it should be one day of live fire, then the second day take the guns away and give them blue guns (non-firing replicas) and have them work on the decisions, and then the next day go back to live fire and then the next day go back to the blue guns.

I thought, "You know, Skip's hit this nail on the head. Skip's a smart guy." We are not integrating thinking. The police and military have wonderful simulators. The average person, living out in the middle of nowhere, has no access to a simulator. What can we do to help them learn to do this skill?

I think it is important to learn the skill of getting off of the front sight, look at the target, figure out what is going on there, and then get back on the front sight if necessary. This is a necessary skill!

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eJournal: As you said, we need to overlap both seeing and shooting. That requires a mastery of both and calls for dedicated practice to mix them effectively. Can we do this on our own? I'm not sure. You are very dedicated to your training. If you were king of the world, would you require mandatory minimum training for having a gun for home defense? For carrying a gun for personal defense in public?

Werner: No! I don't believe in that on a number of levels. For one thing, I think it is anti-American. Another reason is that if training is not followed up by practice, after 90 days, its value is gone. The Army Medical Department has proven that in several studies. If you don't follow up training with practice, you might as well not take the training at all.

I live in the State of Georgia where you go down to the probate judge, file your application and if you don't have anything on your record, you get your license to carry. There is no evidence that approach yields any more problems than in states with training requirements. For example, Texas used to have a two-day training requirement. Illinois still does. There is no evidence that solution is any better or worse than Georgia's, so why should we impose a training requirement on people? I just do not believe in it. I would like for everybody to take training and I would like for everybody to practice, but as a formal requirement, I do not believe in it at all.

eJournal: We have to, then, shoulder training and practice as a matter of personal responsibility. This brings us back to standards and measurements. In your experience, do most people overestimate their skills with firearms, or are we conservative in our self-evaluations?

Werner: People overestimate their skills, because in many cases they have no benchmark. One time I was talking with a lady who was sort of bragging to me that she liked to go to what she called the gun range and shoot and she said she was pretty good. I thought that was interesting, so I said, what do you consider pretty good? "Well," she said, "I hit the target most of the time." I'm sure when she said target, she meant the whole paper, not just the silhouette of the B-27.

She hit the whole paper most of the time. Well, I am in favor of a self-directed, 100% standard for accuracy. I don't believe in a 70% passing score. If you think about it, if someone who has been indoctrinated to think that 70% is good enough shoots six shots at a burglar, that

means that two shots go into the neighbor's house. If I am the neighbor, I am not too happy about that.

eJournal: That came through clearly in your book, but you also gave practice drills initially that could be passed at 100% and then you provided drills of increasing intricacy that are a lot harder and require a lot more work to achieve scores of 100% so we realize we want to improve our abilities, too.

Werner: Exactly. You have to ask, where can I get 100%? Several years ago, I gave a lesson to a fellow who was a former member of the French Foreign Legion. One of the exercises I had him do was to make a hostage rescue headshot. I said, you can do this from any distance that you want, but you have to be able to do it five times in a row, at 100%. Not too long ago, he posted on Facebook and told me, "I remember doing that drill with you! I remember that I had to get really close, but I knew that at three feet, I could make that shot 100% of the time." He then said because he practiced and because I gave him a benchmark, he had now gotten better.

When people have no benchmark, they do not know what "good" means. That is the problem. Although Cooper's response was kind of philosophical, we do have to measure things. So, I give people a benchmark—like you ought to be able to hit a 12-inch circle at seven yards 100% of the time with five shots in 15 seconds. Once again, that's the MQP and it is a concept I really like.

eJournal: You've answered a lot of the questions I had while reading your book, but those arose only from my own viewpoint. What discussion points have I missed that you had hoped we would talk about?

Werner: I really would like to emphasize two parallel concepts. Training is not an event: it is a journey. We need to have self-directed standards and know our limits and know our capabilities at any given time.

eJournal: That is key to avoiding what you've called negative outcomes. We should also aspire to higher levels of skill, and you've given us a set of exercises and drills to help reach those goals, too. Meanwhile, although we're working toward higher goals, we must

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also realistically acknowledge the measure of our skills today.

Werner: Exactly. I need to know what my status report says today. Do I have a full tank of gas or do I only have half a tank? Do I need to hit the gas station at the very next opportunity? That is all an evaluation is—a status report. Get out of the report card mentality. That is the parallel to knowing that training is a journey.

eJournal: Thank you, Claude, you've given all of us an optimistic way to continue to improve.

Werner: I am an optimist at heart. I look for the good in things and for the possibilities in things. That is the way I would like for people to look at their own personal progression. I would say, "What is possible, given my resources?" Think about someone who is a self-directed shooter who can afford to go to an indoor range once a month with 50 rounds. Are they going to be able to learn to shoot at a level where they could pass the Rogers Basic Test? No. On the other hand, can they learn to shoot at a level that would allow them to defend themselves and their loved ones? Yes.

I would like for people to think about the possible outcome for their circumstances and resources. Once

you've seen what is possible, then figure out how to achieve it.

eJournal: Your new eBook is a great guide, and in a few pages later into this journal, I'll give some details from the book itself in this month's book review. Thank you for discussing how self-guided skill development works. You've answered the questions I had while reading your eBook and I know your work will help many Network members, too.

About our source: Claude Werner is the popular internet blogger and Atlanta, GA firearms instructor, the Tactical Professor. His background combines extensive work in the military, self-defense training, and white collar financial services communities. He is a retired Army Captain, with 10 years of service in Special Operations, former Chief Instructor at the elite Rogers Shooting School and he has won numerous IDPA competitions at the State and Regional level.

You can buy and download his eBook for \$9.95 at <https://tacticalprofessor.wordpress.com/2018/07/18/concealed-carry-skills-and-drills-the-book/>

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President's Message

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

We are now 19 for 19. That's a world class record, in anyone's judgment. What am I referring to? I'm talking about fulfilling the Network's mission, of

course. The part of our mission which entails making sure our members have legal representation after a self-defense incident. We do this either through introducing the member to an attorney and then paying the attorney's fees if the member wants to hire that lawyer, or the member choosing their own attorney and the Network paying that attorney's legal bill.

The reason I bring this up now is due to my recent experiences assisting two members of the Network who were either attacked or about to be attacked and they were forced to shoot and kill an assailant. Of course, I am not going to share details, but suffice it to say that neither was arrested after the incident, which bodes well for the long-term adjudication of the use of force, legally speaking.

Let me take a moment to explain one set of circumstances and how we worked to hook the member up with a well-respected attorney within a couple hours of their phone call. One morning, about 8 a.m. Pacific time, a member called to relate that on the previous day he had been involved in a fatal shooting. He was claiming self defense and since he had not been arrested or charged with a crime, those were the facts I needed to push the "go" button to pay for legal representation. He was feeling some urgency, because he had an appointment that afternoon with a police detective to go over the incident. Yes, I would say there was some urgency!

Our member also explained that he was very concerned about the deceased's family coming after his family, so we wanted to make sure he remained free to protect them. He worried that if he did not cooperate with police, he would be arrested and jailed, so he wanted to go to the appointment with the police detective. For our part,

we wanted to have legal representation in place for him during that interview.

I went to work trying to find him a good attorney. The problem was that the incident occurred in a city where we had no attorneys close by. The closest one was an hour and a half away, but since there still remained about five hours until the meeting, I placed a call to that attorney to see if he was available. Unfortunately, that attorney was tied up with appointments and other matters and could not speak to me. I was told he would call me when he was free.

An hour passed, and when no phone call came, I got my creative brain working, and tried to figure out how to find a local attorney for our member. I remembered that we know a prominent industry figure living in that part of the country who is also a Network member. I called and he picked up the phone. After swearing him to secrecy and without naming names, I then told him what was going on. I asked if he knew a good attorney in the area that might be able to help a fellow member in need. He said he knew an attorney and offered to make a phone call.

Unfortunately, the attorney he knew was now a sitting judge. Fortunately, I was able to talk by phone with this judge, but he told me that he could NOT assist our member in any fashion. However, he said, he knew a fellow...

The judge placed a phone call to the attorney he had thought of and hooked me up with him. The recommended attorney practices in the area in which the member's self-defense incident occurred and since it happened the day before, he had already heard about the case in the news. The local attorney is a former prosecutor who knows all the people in the local DA's office, and he agreed to take the case. That was contingent, of course, upon our member wanting to hire him. This is an important principle: While we can help make connections, the Network does not appoint attorneys. The member and attorney have to agree to work with each other. In this situation they did, so within about two hours of his phone call our member had the legal representation he needed.

Then, just when we had solved the legal representation problem for our member, I got a phone call back from the first attorney I'd tried to contact. I was able to tell him thanks, but that I did not need his help after all. I think he

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was very busy so may have been a little relieved, but he also emphatically stated that he was there if needed.

And that, folks, is the power of the Network. I have always stressed that together—and we now number 16,700 –we have tremendous power. That power derives not only from the 1.4 million dollars in our Legal Defense Fund, but also from the vast array of human resources the Network encompasses. In this case, a member helped another member find an attorney, and the Network gained a local affiliated attorney in a large city where we had none before.

The second fatal shooting happened only a few days ago. Within an hour of speaking with the member by phone, we introduced a Network Affiliated Attorney to the member and our member now has legal representation. In fact, in each of our 19 member-involved incidents where legal/financial help was requested, the Network came through and paid an attorney to help.

Not all the incidents members have gotten involved in could be resolved favorably for the member, as in a couple of cases, members have made poor choices and suffered the consequences for those choices. In one

case, I had to decline Network involvement when the member explained that he broke into his ex-wife's residence and confronted her and her new boyfriend at gunpoint. I mention that to clarify that Network assistance is reserved for self defense.

So, there you have it, folks. The Network is not flashy. We don't bombard you with e-mail after e-mail or flood the Internet with video of us screaming at the top of our lungs about how the world is a scary place and unless you join, you are going to go bankrupt paying attorneys or lose your first-born. Neither do we promise you the moon as do so many competitors, distracting potential members with promises of reimbursement for crime-scene clean-up costs, psychological counseling or replacing a self-defense firearm held as evidence.

This is what we do: We make sure members who have been involved in a self-defense incident have legal representation as quickly as possible, and if a member needs to go to trial to clear his or her name, the Network is there with its checkbook. That is the principle the Network was founded upon, and on that principle, we will continue into the future.

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Attorney Question of the Month

This month's column is the completion of a question posted in the past two editions of this journal by a Network member and firearms instructor who asked--

If a Network member is accompanied by a friend or family member at the time of an armed self-defense incident, is it preferable that the 9-1-1 call be made by the associate? Why or why not? What information should the associate provide to the police dispatchers?

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As with most legal responses, it depends. The 911 call is incredibly important as it essentially identifies victims and perpetrators. The law enforcement system typically operates under the assumption that the first person to call 911 is the victim of a crime, and also demonstrates no consciousness of guilt on behalf of the caller.

Therefore, as soon as it is safe to do so, it is important that you or your designee call 911 from the scene of a defensive shooting. Only leave the scene if it is not safe to stay.

The question of whether you or an associate should make the 911 call will be dependent upon a myriad of issues such as your medical situation and/or whether you have to continue to deal with a threat from the perpetrator(s). Remember, before you can address the legal fight, you must survive the physical attack.

Assuming there are no obvious medical or safety issues that would have a bearing on who is going to make the 911 call, you should consider the ability, demeanor under stress, and degree of training of your friend or associate. Remember, 911 calls are recorded, and the dispatcher will likely try to illicit as much information as possible from the caller. The public may hear the 911 call through the press, which could establish context for your potential legal case. Also, the recorded 911 call will most likely be heard by the jury if there is a jury trial. As a matter of fact, the 911 call may be a way for you to

provide limited testimony to a jury without being cross-examined by a politically-motivated prosecutor.

Given the obvious significance of the 911 call, I would personally be very reluctant to delegate the responsibilities of that call to another individual. Other than my wife and two adult sons who have undergone significant training, there are limited people that I regularly interact with that I would have confidence in to make the 911 call in what would most certainly be a very chaotic situation. The bottom line – I recommend that you plan to make the 911 call yourself and know ahead of time what associates and/or family members you trust if the circumstances dictate that it would be best for someone else to make the call.

With respect to the information you or an associate should provide to the dispatcher on the 911 call, I would suggest you communicate the following information: your name, street address, a request for EMS and police, and establish that you are the victim during the call. For instance, "I was attacked, and had to use my firearm to defend myself." Also include where you are specifically located at that address (i.e. "I will be standing in front of a 2009 white Ford truck"). Last, and for safety purposes, give a specific description of yourself such as your clothing, height, weight, and age so that the police can readily identify you as the "good guy or gal" at the scene. It is also very important to know what not to say on the 911 call and to limit the information to something very similar to what I have outlined here.

Obviously, although beyond the scope of this question, there are other safety concerns and legal concerns that will have to be addressed as the police arrive. Take a look at ACLDN's DVDs or look into the concept of the "three rings of safety," which is the term Massad Ayoob uses to describe the message that needs to be conveyed to police as they arrive on the scene to keep everyone safe.

A big "Thank You!" to our affiliated attorneys for their contributions to this column. Please return next month when we have a new topic of discussion to take up with our affiliated attorneys.

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Book Review

Concealed Carry Skills and Drills A Guide for Average People

By Claude Werner, The Tactical Professor
© 2018 Claude Werner, Firearms Safety Training LLC
Downloadable 84-page eBook, \$9.95
<https://tacticalprofessor.wordpress.com/2018/07/18/concealed-carry-skills-and-drills-the-book/>

Reviewed by Gila Hayes

Last month Claude Werner released his new eBook, *Concealed Carry Skills and Drills, A Guide for Average People*, a self-coaching skills improvement book that maps out a substantial series of practice sessions designed to bring structure and measurability to individual practice. This is a great program for the armed citizen intent on building up his or her skills with a handgun.

Generally, armed citizens go to training classes where instructors teach and correct errors in gun safety and shooting technique. That is great as far as it goes, but physical skills are perishable, and few maintain practice on their own as much as is really needed to maintain readiness. In his introduction, Werner explains, "What [this eBook] can do is help you to become a safer, more competent shooter who can focus your cognitive abilities on the situation, instead of the gun, during a criminal encounter. It is also an excellent reference for more experienced shooters providing informal training to new shooters."

Werner details about three dozen various drills, the more complex building atop easier exercises, and in quite a variety of approaches, for an interesting and thus sustainable practice regimen. He focuses the practice exercises on the skills directly bearing on using a concealed carry gun for self defense. Most of the drills address several necessary skills simultaneously, especially as the progression grows more demanding.

Werner comments that, "The vast majority of Personal Protection incidents are simple, if rather frightening, events, and are quickly solved...the issue is that if an incident goes wrong, it tends to go horribly wrong...The



odds are low but the stakes are very high." He tabulated reports from the NRA's The Armed Citizen column between 1997 and 2002, but notes that the column focuses on best outcomes, so negative consequences to the armed citizen, as well as later legal consequences, aren't reported. From this sample, he drew lessons including:

1. "Be aware,
2. Be willing to fight,
3. Have a weapon accessible,
4. Be familiar enough with the weapon to employ it without fumbling,
5. When ready, communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, to the attacker that resistance will be given, and
6. If the attacker does not withdraw, counterattack without hesitation."

Analyzing a sample of reports from 2017, he adds that about a quarter of the incidents reported were resolved without shots being fired, so he includes exercises including verbal challenges, drawing a holstered gun compared to grabbing a gun stored off body and reloading, all the while underscoring the necessity of safe muzzle direction and trigger finger discipline. He closes this section by emphasizing, "Firearms are remorselessly unforgiving of even the slightest lapse in attention."

Werner suggests that training commonly approaches defensive gun use from law enforcement or military perspectives which have "radically different" mission parameters. This creates problems, he writes, because, "Aggressive action, in excess of what is allowed by law, is often illegal and almost always inadvisable." Law enforcement is forced to focus on avoiding liability, too, he adds.

Another dangerous artifact from law enforcement training is the 70-80% acceptable passing score for qualifications, a subject Werner addressed in the lead article of this journal. Other off-range realities include knowing that self defense may not provide a backstop clear of innocent people or an unoccupied space between oneself and the attacker. Other realities

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discussed in *Concealed Carry Skills and Drills* include moving attackers at different distances, and even dog attacks that entail targets of different sizes and orientations, he explains, adding, "A small target coupled with non-threats downrange can present a difficult marksmanship problem, even at close range."

Werner recommends viewing armed self defense through the Can/May/Should/Must lens used by attorney Steven Harris in his columns on the [Modern Service Weapons website](#). Werner focuses much of this book on "Can" because the mechanical intricacy of gun use too easily looms so large in the mind that during an emergency the "May" and "Should" aspects of defensive gun use are eclipsed—to the armed citizen's great and disastrous misfortune. "By focusing on CAN in practice, a degree of Unconscious Competence with the pistol develops. Unconscious Competence makes a larger portion of the user's cognitive abilities available to deal with the situation, instead of mechanical operation issues," he explains.

Werner gives practice drills to perfect basic skills—the foundation of unconscious competence—explaining that when armed citizens fail to hit accurately, most often a first shot hits very low. "The number of hits in the legs on criminals in actual situations is noticeable. It is less likely these result from the desire to wound than simply because of extremely poor marksmanship in the forms of not seeing the sights and yanking the trigger," he advises. His book, as a result, puts a lot of emphasis on one- and two-shot drills.

Werner categorizes various drills into Skill Builders, Evaluations, Decision/Thinking Drills and Standards, which include both live fire and dry fire. He focuses on distances out to 15 yards in the evaluation exercises. The Decision drills, he explains, are designed "to break the shooter's attention from the gun itself in order to look past the gun and quickly analyze a situation with a conscious mind. It is mental training.

Having a conscious mind about the situation will allow the gunowner to make better decisions should a criminal attack occur," he explains.

Werner's first skill builder drill is untimed but performed at distances from five to ten yards and includes malfunction clearing followed by a reload without firing. Next, he recommends one shot drills to isolate the skill of sight alignment and smooth trigger press which are elemental to an accurate first shot after drawing.

Subsequent drills increase in complexity, adding clearing malfunctions, followed by verbal challenges at distances from three to fifteen yards. Two-handed shooting, dominant hand only and multiple shot drills encompass the increasing difficulty. Move then shoot, head shots, reloading, multiple targets and varied numbers of shots required come in later drills. Partial decks of playing cards introduce random responses in several drills that also include verbal challenges and drawing the gun from a holster. These "thinking" drills increase in complexity as the book continues. Time limits don't appear in Werner's suggested drills until page 50 of the 84-page book when marksmanship exercises add turning, then drawing and shooting a specified number of shots inside an assigned time limit.

Readers should think of Werner's *Concealed Carry Skills and Drills* as a resource like an encyclopedia or a dictionary, and after reading the introduction, jump immediately to the appendices to get a good mental picture of the author's technique recommendations, equipment suggestions, and perhaps as important as any of this material, absorb the *Negative Outcomes* section that heralds a loud warning about gun use without adequate training, without the necessary serious mindset and without knowing prevailing law.

[End of article.
Please enjoy the next article.]



Editor's Notebook

Good Planning for Bad Times

by Gila Hayes

Armed citizens face the conundrum of working hard to avoid having to defend

themselves while also putting in place measures to limit aftereffects if they do have to stop a deadly force attack. I think that is why so many just never get around to implementing legal defense protections to avoid being punished for the crime of assault, murder or manslaughter after doing only what was necessary to survive. Many fail to even compile an In Case of Emergency file folder for loved ones who are called upon to help while the armed citizen is in police custody after a shooting or defensive display of a firearm. Just like briefing your spouse and kids about the reality of self defense, this is a preparatory step that too frequently just doesn't get done. The family may be resistant to talking about self defense issues and besides, it is more fun to go to the range and shoot or to sit back and watch gun videos.

As a result, family members face emergencies with truly inadequate information about how to reach the Network on their loved ones' behalf, how—if the member has chosen an attorney—to get that attorney coming to help, and how to notify the Network so we can pay the attorney a fee deposit to get started defending the member, explore whether bail assistance is needed and make other necessary arrangements.

In addition, an In Case of Emergency file can even include simple safeguards and basic guidelines like "Don't talk to the neighbors or to news reporters about what happened." Others have gone so far as to recommend that a power of attorney or access to a high-balance credit card be part of an In Case of Emergency file to aid in bailing out the armed citizen. While the Network does provide up to \$25,000 assistance with bail, in states where a bail bonding is prohibited (several do) or charges of certain crimes sometimes require the full bail amount in cash deposited with the clerk of the court instead of working through a bail bondsman, these additional protective steps make a lot of sense.

At the heart of the armed citizen's reluctance to compile an In Case of Emergency folder, I think, is the underlying human optimism that wishes, "I don't really believe anything bad will happen to me. I won't ever have to shoot someone." With that message sneaking around the subconscious, it is no wonder armed citizens are so often caught flat footed when taken in for questioning, with family members left lacking even the Network's after-hours emergency number on which to call for assistance.

Armed citizens need to acknowledge that we own guns because we may need to fight to save our lives. I was reminded of that critically important message recently from two respected sources. First, I attended a short class by Tom Givens in which he emphasized the value of that mindset, echoing advice I'd heard him stress years earlier in an interview we published at https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/images/stories/Network_2012-7.pdf in which he said, "You carry a gun because you might have to shoot somebody. You really need to think about that and internalize it." He advised readers to ask themselves, "Why am I putting this gun on today? Because I might have to shoot somebody today. That's why you're putting it on. If you don't recognize the possibility of having to shoot somebody today, then why on earth are you carrying a gun?" he asked.

A few days ago, Tom Gresham's online blog at <https://guntalk.com/news/extras/five-steps-increase-edc-safety> reminded readers of the same truth. "When you put on your pistol in the morning, say aloud, 'This is the day I will need this gun.' Not 'may need.' Say it out loud. Program your mind. It will help you stay alert all day long," he wrote.

These astute gentlemen have both guided my own growth over the years, and I found their instruction resonating in my mind a few days ago while relaying information about a member's critical incident to our Network President so he could arrange for an affiliated attorney to represent a member. I realized that we need to review how members and the Network cooperate in prior preparation so that we are notified of the need in a timely fashion, in order to pay an attorney to protect the member's rights quickly.

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Armed citizens train for, think about and plan for what some have called "The Unthinkable." Using a gun to defend yourself is not unthinkable—it is a necessity some of our number have faced and others will face.

Acknowledge why you own guns and what happens after you have to fight for your life. What will be your concerns after you've survived a violent attack and used your gun to survive?

Members come from a wide variety of situations and locales, ranging from highly restrictive, heavily populated mega-cities to remote rural regions in which the member and his or her attacker may be the only humans for many miles. The post-incident protocol for the urban dweller is profoundly different than what the solitary soul in the desert or mountains two or three hours from outside help will need to do. Post-incident procedures cannot be uniform for everyone.

Members are encouraged to review and adapt the principles taught in Massad Ayoob's video lecture about the immediate aftermath of self defense at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/immediate-aftermath> (member log in required – please call or email if username or password assistance needed). This lecture is also sent to new members on DVD.

The Network is firmly invested in the ideal of individual responsibility, and while we have in the past and will in the future continue to assist members in finding a defense attorney after self defense, we also emphasize the value of getting to know an attorney in advance of needing one. If you've done that, don't forget to periodically check in with your attorney to be sure he or she is still practicing, has not retired, moved, or even as has happened with several Network affiliated attorneys over the years, been appointed or elected to serve as judge.

If a Network member has not selected an attorney or is outside their home area when the necessity of self defense arises, the Network's President Marty Hayes steps in and helps the member connect with an attorney as he discussed in his column earlier in this journal. In our 19 member-involved cases, he has made those connections on behalf of members 13 times. Whether Marty arranges introductions between the member and an attorney or whether the member designates his own lawyer, our driving concern when a member contacts us after self defense is that they need to be represented by counsel as quickly as possible. If they have an attorney selected, we ask how we can contact the law firm to

determine how much money the attorney needs to be present at any police interactions, arraignment and related hearings at court if it comes to that, keeping news reporters at bay, and tending to other details on behalf of the member and his or her family.

Here's an easy little assignment you can do now to speed that process if it is ever needed. Make up a file folder or 9x12 envelope and secure it somewhere your best friend, spouse, significant other, mom or dad, adult son or daughter – or all of those relations – can find and use it. The front might read something like this:

In Case of Emergency

Inside write a brief, serious note without hyperbole or social commentary about what may have led to circumstances making these protective steps necessary. It might read something like this:

If I have asked you to obtain legal assistance after use of force in self defense, please do the following on my behalf as quickly as possible:

My attorney's name is ___ and his/her phone numbers are ___ and ___. Please contact him/her and explain what has happened. Next, please telephone the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network of which I am member # ___ and give them my name and the name of my attorney and a brief explanation of my situation.

If you have not selected an attorney, the second paragraph might read:

I do not have an attorney selected. Please telephone the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network of which I am member # ___ and give them my name, location and information about whether I am in police custody or am available for contact and if I can be contacted, what is the best phone number on which to reach me since my cell phone may be taken as part of the police investigation.

Please tell the Network that I do not have an attorney and I need help hiring one. The Network will help us do this and so long as my use of force was self defense, they will pay for an attorney to represent me. Please contact them right away because I need an attorney as quickly as possible.

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Next, members, please log in to the Network website and print <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/boots-on-the-ground>. Precede that page by writing:

Please read the attached directions and phone numbers through which you can contact the Network during business hours or outside of business hours.

We make this journal open to the public as an educational outreach resource, so we can't print the actual *Accessing Post-Incident Assistance* document here since it contains information that is strictly for member use only, so call us if you need help with your log in account so you can access it. It is a concise but important document. If you have not already printed this document and put it where those who may assist you after a critical incident can find it, please do that now.

Thinking back over the years, there are several elements of Network protections for members that we have occasionally been surprised to learn that members hadn't known about. The top three are:

1. Network assistance after self defense is NOT limited to shooting in self defense. Network members have defended themselves with improvised weapons and pepper spray or have displayed a firearm but not shot in self defense and we have paid attorneys to represent them. Our requirement is that the defense tool must be legal and the use undertaken in self defense, so members do need to know the weapons laws where they live and where they travel. Even if using pepper spray or improvising a weapon doesn't seem as serious to you as defending yourself with a gun, in today's world, it would be foolhardy to use force against another person and not have legal counsel before and while speaking with police.
2. A few days ago, a member called to check on the expiration date for his membership. I was surprised to learn that he was unaware of the increase in the amount of funding available as an initial fee deposit to an attorney to get the representation started after self defense. Several years ago, we increased the initial fee cap from \$10,000 to \$25,000, adjusting to increasing attorney fees and the expenses of other professionals they may need to hire to get out

ahead of falsehoods being spread about a member after a self-defense incident.

We never want an attorney to think he or she cannot afford to, for example, hire a skilled private investigator ASAP, so now the immediate deposit against fees can go as high as \$25,000 sent to the attorney immediately, with instructions that if more funding is needed to prepare for trial, the Network will need to see the facts of the case to understand that the use of force in self defense was legal, whereupon additional funding is extended to prepare for and go to trial to defend the member.

3. Some members have been with us for a decade now and may not have kept up with the growth in membership benefits. We also provide, as mentioned earlier, up to \$25,000 available to assist in obtaining a bail bond to secure the member's release in states where that is an acceptable practice.

For our long-time members, it might be a good idea to spend a few minutes reviewing the outline of benefits at <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/learn/membership-benefits> just to be sure you're up to speed on how the Network and its support for members after self defense has grown. When you renew your membership, please also review the documents we mail with your membership wallet card.

I've talked with candidates for membership who comment that they want to buy a long membership for themselves and their adult family members and consider their part done. "I just want to buy it and forget it," one nice gentleman explained. Instead, the Network views our relationship with each member as a partnership with dual duties. We work hard providing assistance to members while increasing funding for legal defense. We ask in return that members study the educational book and lectures on DVD we mail new members (also at <https://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org/members/lectures-on-video>) and take some notes. And please, do take a few minutes to compile an In Case of Emergency file folder or envelope. It is the kind thing to do for the people who care about you—including us at the Network.

*[End of September 2018 eJournal.
Please return for our October 2018 edition.]*

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About the Network's Online Journal

The **eJournal** of the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. is published monthly on the Network's website at <http://www.armedcitizensnetwork.org/our-journal>. Content is copyrighted by the Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc.

Do not mistake information presented in this online publication for legal advice; it is not. The Network strives to assure that information published in this journal is both accurate and useful. Reader, it is your responsibility to consult your own attorney to receive professional assurance that this information and your interpretation or understanding of it is accurate, complete and appropriate with respect to your particular situation.

In addition, material presented in our opinion columns is entirely the opinion of the bylined author, and is intended to provoke thought and discussion among readers.

To submit letters and comments about content in the **eJournal**, please contact editor Gila Hayes by e-mail sent to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

The Armed Citizens' Legal Defense Network, Inc. receives its direction from these corporate officers:

Marty Hayes, President

J. Vincent Shuck, Vice President

Gila Hayes, Operations Manager

We welcome your questions and comments about the Network.

Please write to us at info@armedcitizensnetwork.org or PO Box 400, Onalaska, WA 98570 or call us at 360-978-5200.



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