

Situational Awareness



aka Vigilance for today & beyond

Old Man River's Timeless 'Bathroom Reader'

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Introduction

It was Thursday morning, April 11th, 2019 and it felt so good to be back home. Yesterday (the 10th) we were fortunate to get through the start of the April blizzard that we beginning to roll across Minnesota. The highway conditions were quickly getting worse and worse as we – and so many others were caught in a growing mess. Cars, trucks and semis were crunched up and backed up for miles. Although we got delayed for awhile, we were able to finally get going again and got home safely.

Oversimplified – it was a lot of slow going and very nervous driving because of the worsening snow, icy conditions and too many drivers that were either reacting poorly (and causing the various accidents) or others being banged up because they were in the wrong spot at the wrong time as vehicles were sliding out of control. For some – prepared and cautious, for others – not.

Which made me think, should we be better prepared?

*So here you go – **OMR's** aka Gramps' pondering on this (with help by – and a big thanks to – Bill Watterson & Brian Kesinger).*

Seven Thoughts (upon Situational Awareness)

It was Thursday morning and with coffee in hand and my morning breakfast completed, it was time to start catching up on the *Our Daily Bread* devotional writings that we had missed while being down in Texas. The first one I read was from April 3rd and it was titled "Situational Awareness." As I read what was shared, it reminded me – as it intended – that we all need to be more aware of the environment that we are in, what is happening, and are we alert as we need to be?

As I paused, my first thoughts were of the day before – during the white out conditions that were happening, of the mess on the highway and of my desire to drive slow and careful . . . and in being leery of the other drivers (would their reactions be good or would their poor reactions cause them and us to go off the road?).



I then liked how that they (*Our Daily Bread*) closed their brief story with the Apostle Paul's words of encouragement, to be able to discern what is needed for our daily lives.

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." *Philippians 1:9-11*

It was then as I continued to get caught up on reading the days we had missed, that I found myself jotting down some notes as to how should we look at what situational awareness is. I was thinking that we should



never underestimate the challenges in life and in faith, that we should be vigilant as best we can. But what does that mean or what should we consider?

I started down this path. Would you agree?

1st - Danger: This might be the easiest one that triggers our 'on guard' status.

It can be anything from bad weather, scary driving conditions, threatening behavior by others or something unfolding that just does not feel safe. I assume you agree but the challenge is the what do we think and do as these challenging situations unfold?

The old 'fight or flight' reaction is what happens most often but do yourself a favor and ponder this a bit. Are there thoughts or preparedness actions you would like to pursue for then?

2nd - Tragedy: This is one that many would think is very close to danger but in reality is significantly different. How? It is because in tragic situations that unfold and we are caught up in, we usually are in a **'state of shock'** status. Our brains are trying to process what has happened and we may be in dazed mindset. Our challenge. Instead of thinking tragic things will never happen to us, we should start thinking . . .



it can happen so how do I enable myself to be prepared as best can for then?

3rd - Surprise: Yes dangerous situations or tragic events can surprise us but we have already shared words above for you to start addressing those. This is to raise the awareness to those times when we are '**caught off guard**' . . . not so much in a bad or sad situation but for the unexpected situations. Have you had those happen and were you okay with how you reacted? Some



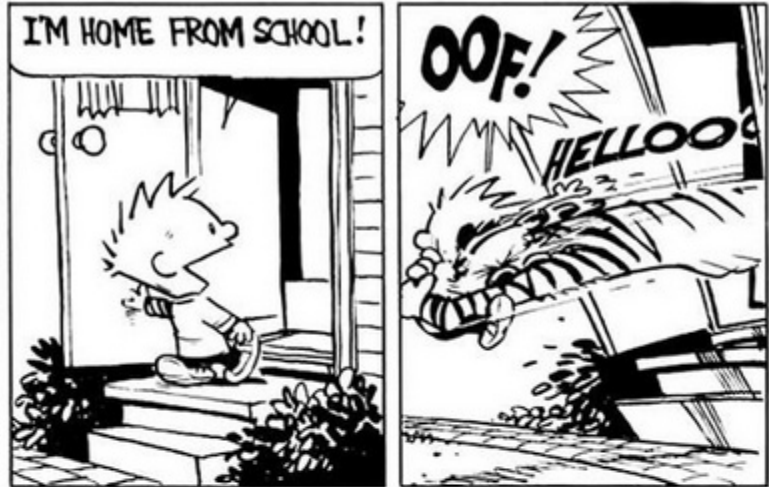
get through those as best they can but afterwards, they are not happy with either what they said or did (basically being caught in a 'I wish I would have acted differently' situation).

So yes, there are no easy recommendations for this one. These situations arise often as our years roll on. For those that

have happened, for when your reactions were not as you wished, you need to ask yourself - what did I learn from those? If we don't make the time to think about what we have learned, we will never truly learn from those times. So then . . .

are there things you can think of and learn from to help handle those surprise situations better - that may yet arise?

4th - Apathy: Now this one may not have come to mind as you ponder these situations so let me share these thoughts. When we are busy in our day to day actions, we often can get into a routine and we may find – and not realize, that we are not really paying attention to the goings on around us.



Basically we have made the decision to be focused on what we choose and not of the environment around us.



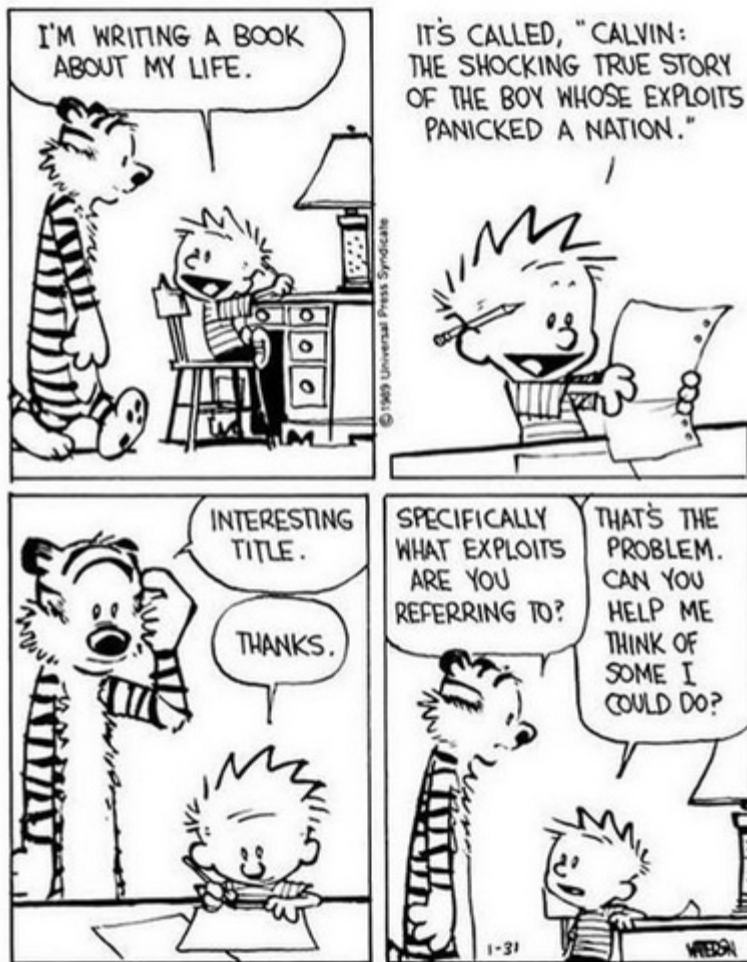
These are the times when we need to be careful. A car coming at us from across the street, someone sneaking up behind us or whatever. Our challenge, find a way to see when your 'apathy' mindset is on when so, danger is close by.

It was after jotting down those considerations – that I paused to think of what else would I add to that list. That is when as my reading unfolded, I had jotted down this Bible verse . . .

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

Which brings us now back to you. **What is your take away on apathy – are you engaged, aware, ready as you need to be?**

5th – Opportunity: By this I mean those that we see and do not see. For when we are paying attention to what is happening around us, we can better see when opportunities arise and for



those of us who like to pursue opportunities, this is goodness. Contrast that to when we are distracted or apathetic and we are missing possible opportunities . . . that is unfortunate. But what of those who are watching and of who are wanting to take advantage of us? When you make the time to think on this, **I hope**

you would agree that being situational aware has your own 'sensors' turned on and you are better prepared for anything.

6th - Honor: This one I added because your '**character**' mindset (integrity, compassion, etc) should always be operational. For when we loose our focus on the type of person that we want to be, it is easier to be caught off guard and our actions show it.

Think of it this way, what if everyday, as the day unfolded, you were thinking . . . 'Am I thinking, speaking and acting as I wish?'

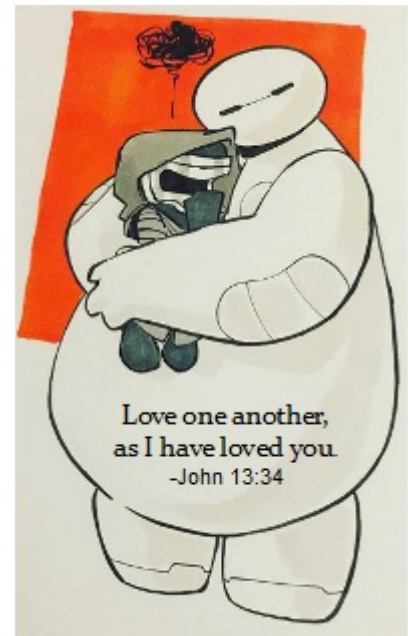


If we all had that mindset in place as our day unfolds – think of the good that could happen more often (and the bad, less).

I hope you would agree, that when we are thinking on trying to be the person of honor that we wish to be, our actions are more aligned in doing so. And wouldn't you also agree that if you're coasting along, day dreaming or distracted, you will be more apt to stumble? Therefore the decision is up to each of us.

7th - Love: And we'll close with this one – which is probably the biggest challenge because in doing it right is easier said than done. Consider this . . . the foundation of everything that God has done for us, is His love for us. It matches up well to the old saying, *'Your life is God's gift to you and what you do with it is your gift to God.'* When you think on this, doesn't it motivate you to be nicer, to try harder, to pursue the right things in life?

And this mindset can not be easily invoked at all times – you have to be thinking, and in trying to live in a way that shows the love that you want others to see. Easy? No but I'll tell you this. When I made the commitment to try and to really embrace my faith, and to work at growing my faith, it seems to me that I am not only trying to watch what I think, say and do . . . but



"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Psalm 23:4

that I also have a greater awareness to the events that are happening around me (as if things are in slow motion). So there you go – seven thoughts tied into the considerations for 'situational awareness.' Were you

surprised by any of the comments or recommendations shared?

I would assume that most of what is in all of the above either made sense or at least triggered your thoughts as needed. It all comes down to – **is anything missing or that you would add?**



And as you ponder that – is there anything else – thank you for considering all that was shared. It is a challenging world that we live in so do what you can to be prepared for what unfolds and know this . . . Take on each day as best you can and let me know if you have some good feedback on any of the above (together we can maybe even make these insights shared better). And in closing, don't forget – when difficulties, despair, dangers, distress and even our own wrong doings can begin to overwhelm us, Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 can help keep us going.

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

Situational Awareness

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