



And a hearty hello to all of you visiting the Safe Call Now website. And I thank you in advance for your interest in and support of this great organization that will truly make a difference in Washington public safety, and undoubtedly will be replicated in other States, Provinces and geographic jurisdictions. I was asked to give you my thoughts on the value of this site – and to thank you for your continued support. So where do I start?

25,000. There is a number for you. I was watching a commercial on TV recently – trying to encourage me to visit Michigan – and the theme of their advertisement was that you have 25,000 “mornings” on this earth – and make the most of them by spending some of them in Michigan. And indeed, there are some beautiful places in Michigan.

But beyond the beauty of Michigan, the “finite” nature of the number “25,000” made me pause and think. 25,000! So you are born on day one and you are now down to 24, 999. And you start to grow up and by year 20 you have “expended” 7300 mornings. And (generally speaking) at some point in these twenty years you start to get focused and figure out what you want to do for a career.

And a number of women and men choose to go into public safety – as I did and many of you did – and you start to see things and experience things that most “regular” people never see or experience. Not to bore you, but I saw death on “night one” in 1973 and I saw it again on night two and regularly throughout my career.

And while seeing the deaths was troubling, there was also the rapes and the murders and molestations and the one I will always remember – the screams of the young child burning to death in a fully engulfed car northbound on the Harbor Freeway in Los Angeles – and there was nothing that anyone could do. That single event still haunts me some 30 years later.

You and I know that these “stresses” and “pressures” add up over time – and frankly – many public safety personnel are not prepared for the cumulative effect of the tragedies that we see too often in this line of work and sometimes this “accumulated weight” starts to negatively impact the “protectors”. And sometimes, the “protectors” will “cope” with these issues by doing things that they would have never done prior to day 7300.

The end of the story is that too many of our brothers and sisters end up at the bottom of a slippery slope – and make decisions that either end their career – or their life.

As I prepare this piece, we are all mourning the deaths of the three Pittsburgh officers. Three young men – brutally murdered and forever gone. And you are acutely aware that not too long ago four Oakland officers were similarly murdered. And these brave men should never be forgotten – for they paid the ultimate price of being a cop.

But think about this. Around America during the period of time from March 21 through April 4, 2009 – fourteen days – we lost many more cops who took their own lives – on average one every eighteen hours. And if you do the math on that – we lost (annual average) 18 cops during that same window of time – from suicide!

And this is only one of the nasty consequences that can occur when the burdens become too great! Divorces, suspensions, terminations, alcohol and drug abuse, severe depression and internal investigations are but a few of the other consequences that occur when bad behaviors go unchecked. So what can be done?

I have been honored and privileged to have made presentations to public safety personnel for the last thirty years. And while I speak on a lot of “specific” topics – my focus has all been on the management of risk – what can we do up front to prevent bad things from happening?

Finally, someone is doing something to address this serious “risk”. My hat is off to all of the Board of Directors of Safe Call Now for their vision – and their action – in creating this organization that will help people who are on that “slippery slope” and in route to tragedy. Those who suffer from the combination of life’s burdens and those they carry daily in their public safety job now have another option – Safe Call Now!

I implore you to continue your support for this great organization. It is classic “risk management” – doing something up front to prevent bad things from happening. Particularly, I want to thank the Board of Directors – and those behind the scenes of this organization – for all their work in making this happen. We all are forever in your debt.

25,000. When our young men and women sign on at day 7300, none of them are thinking of anything less than 17,700 more mornings. They are entitled to a full life. “Safe Call Now” will help maximize the number of mornings that each of our brothers and sisters in public safety deserve to enjoy. Thanks for your great work on this most important issue.

Gordon Graham
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