



Creating the  
**THINKING**  
first responder.

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway  
Fire Chief (ret.)

Situational Awareness Matters

[www.SAMatters.com](http://www.SAMatters.com)

Copyright © 2016  
Richard B. Gasaway  
Gasaway Consulting Group, LLC  
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

The contents of *Creating the Thinking First Responder*  
is the intellectual property of:  
Richard B. Gasaway, Ph.D.

Gasaway Consulting Group, LLC  
1769 Lexington Avenue North  
St. Paul, MN 55113-6522  
Phone: 612-548-4424

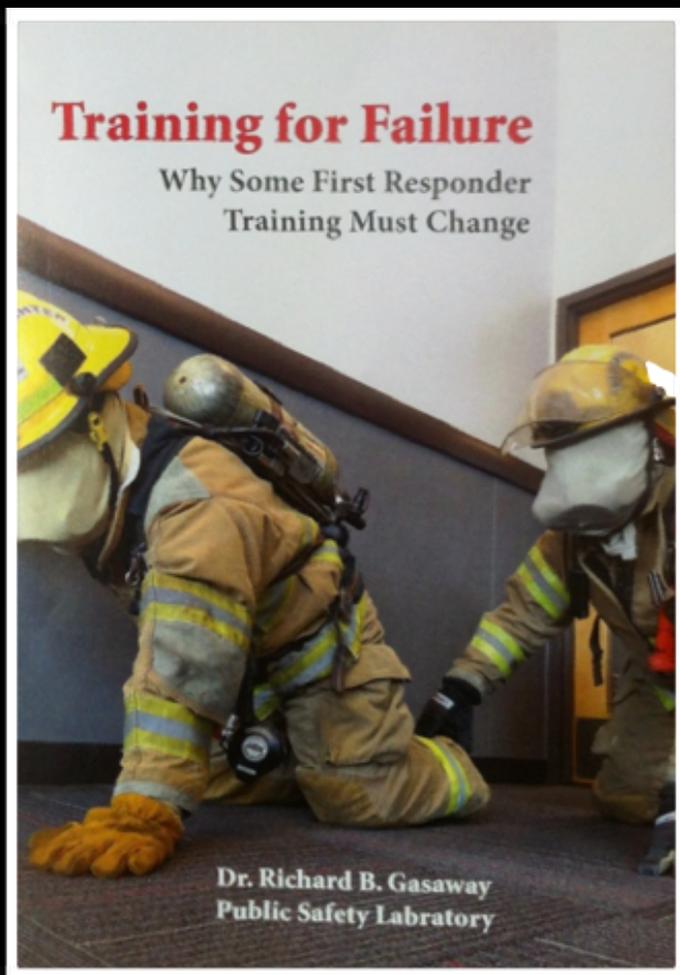


If you are interested in  
hosting a program  
please contact  
Dr. Gasaway at

[www.SAMatters.com](http://www.SAMatters.com)

Phone: 612-548-4424

[rich@RichGasaway.com](mailto:rich@RichGasaway.com)



This program based  
on the highly popular

Training for Failure DVD.

If you are interested in  
purchasing it:

Click the “store” link on the  
[SAMatters.com](http://SAMatters.com) website

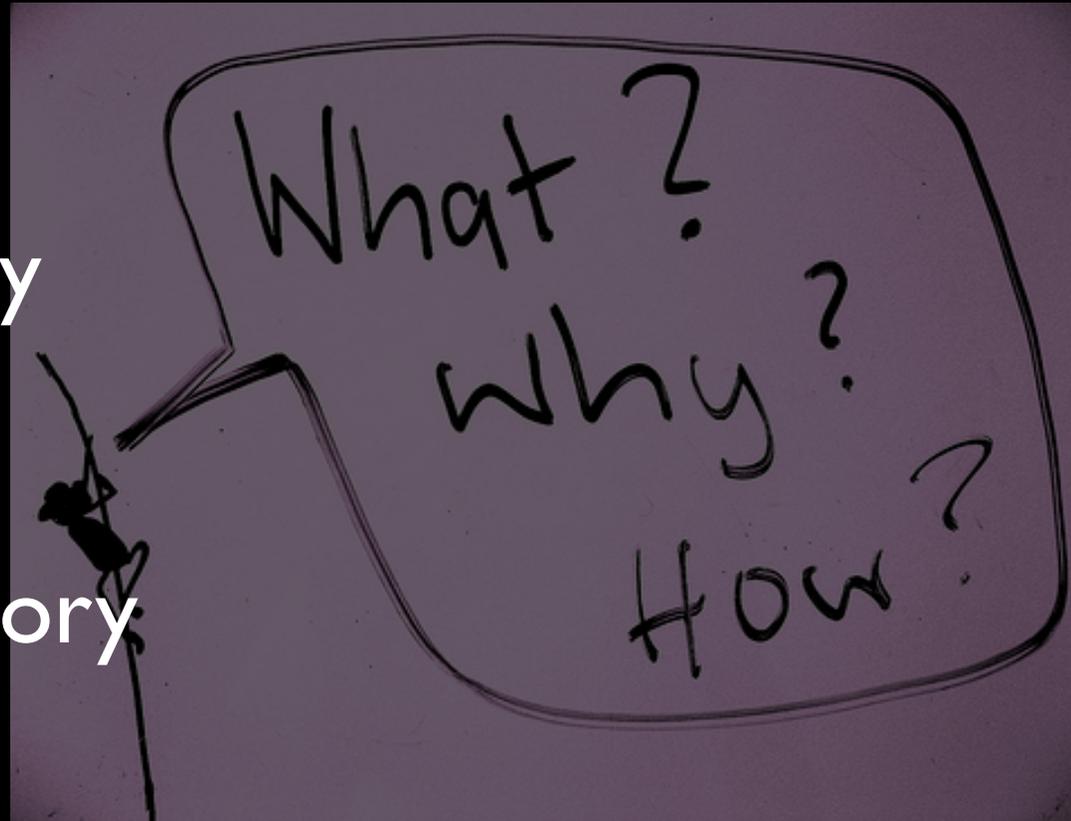
# Training develops two types of memory.

Cognitive

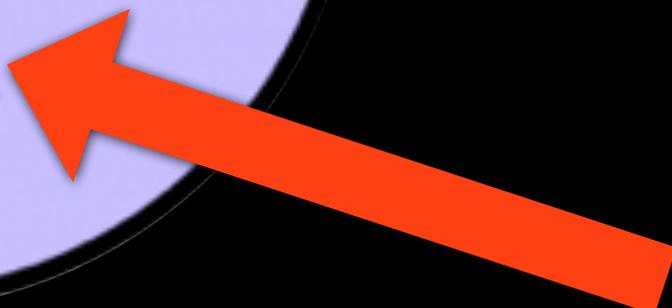
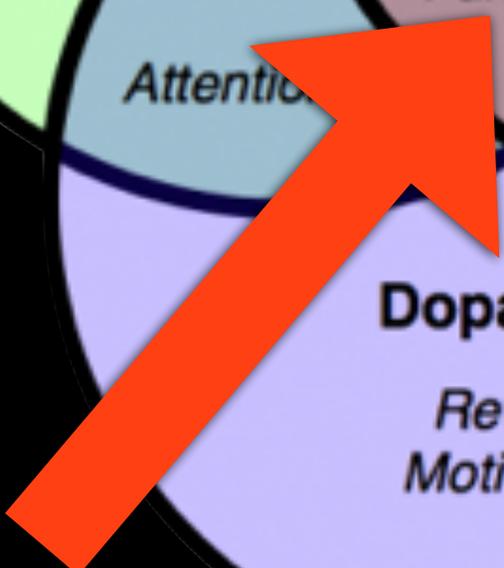
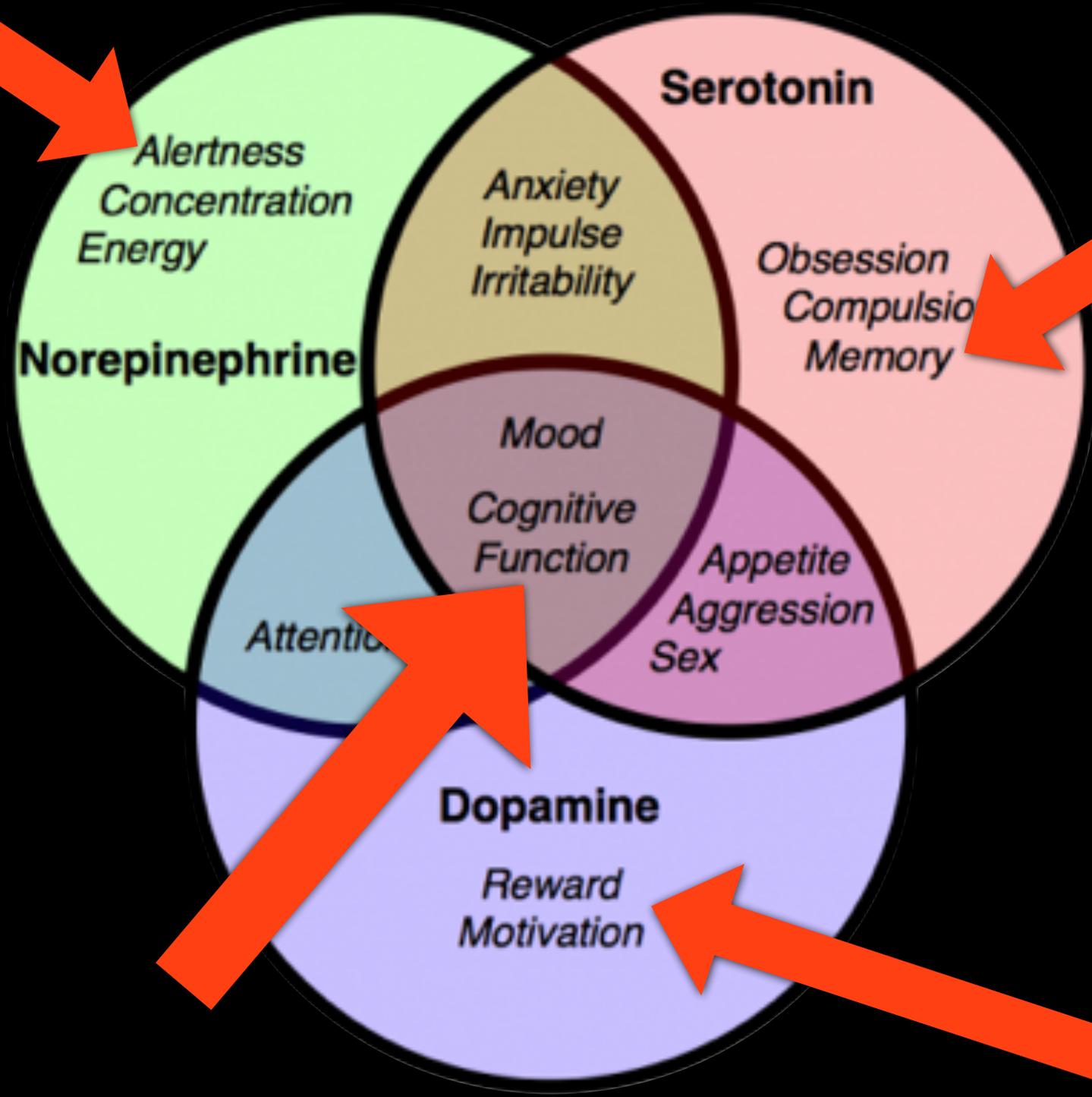
- Thinking memory

Kinesthetic

- Movement memory



Drugs play a big role in  
thinking and movement memory.



Practice  
makes  
permanent.

- 
- ✓ Get out of bed
  - ✓ Make coffee
  - ✓ Drink coffee
  - ✓ Take 'cat' nap
  - ✓ Go to lunch
  - ✓ Drink more coffee
  - ✓ Head home!
  - ✓ Switch to beer

# Routines

Improve muscle memory

# CREATURE OF HABIT



Stress induces automatic habitual performance.

# Automatic Performance (robotic action)

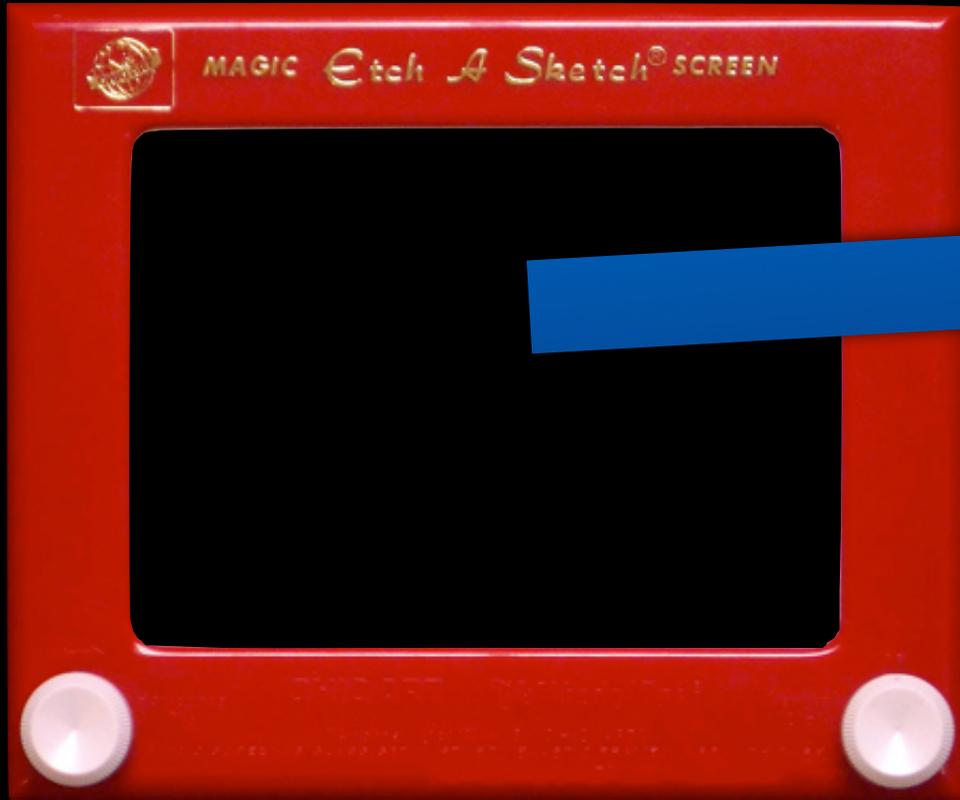


# Subconscious Programming

HABIT



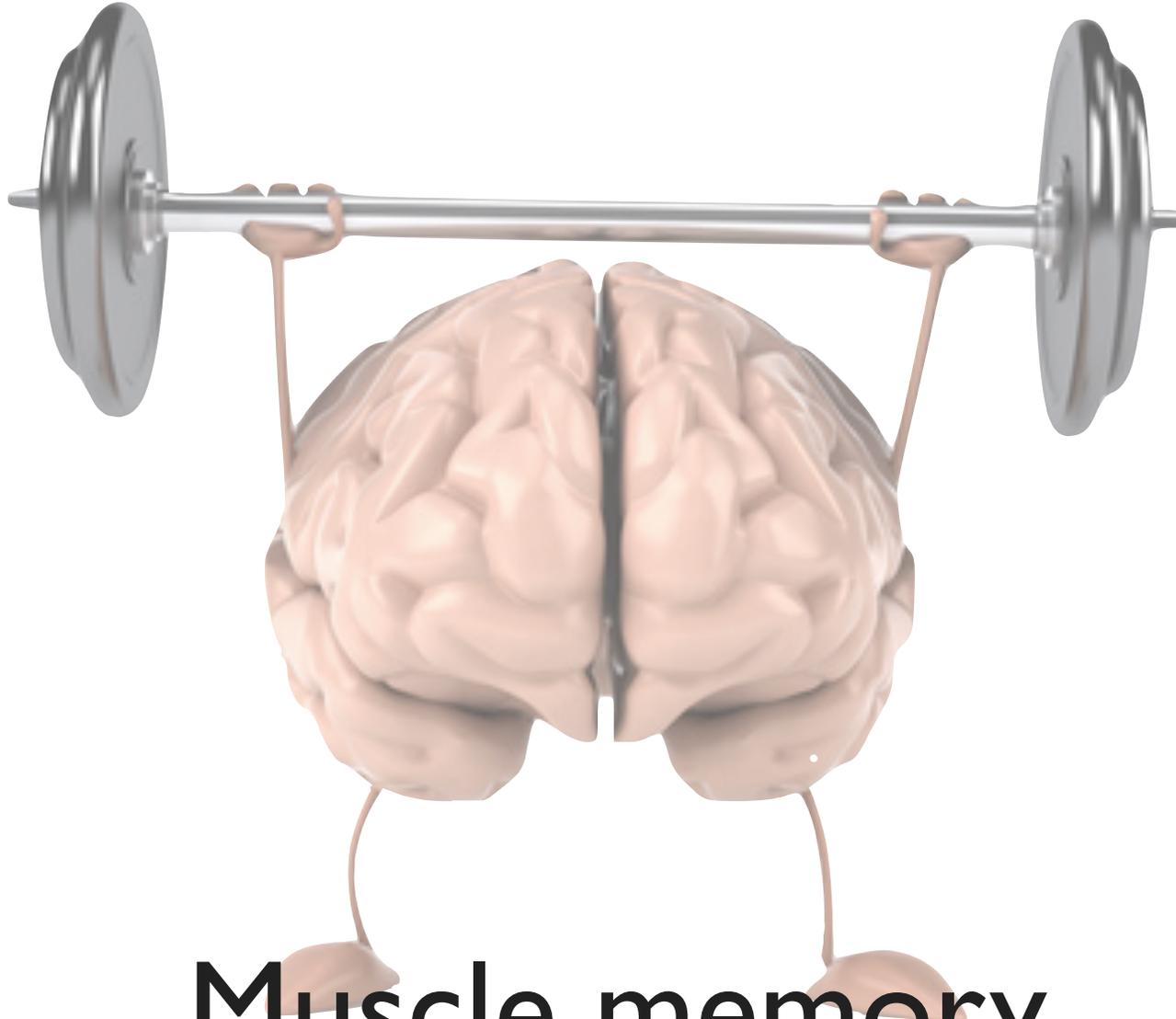
Automatic actions  
that occur without  
conscious awareness.



Performing an undesirable  
action automatically...  
without conscious thought.

Acting... without thinking.

Physical performance of tasks  
are often based on...



**Muscle memory.**

An example of how training routines, stress & muscle memory can lead to acting without thinking.



FOX 9

EXCLUSIVE • FOX 9 EXCLUSIVE • FOX

AMY HOCKERT / KELCEY CARLSON

FOX 9

9:00 21°

# ACCIDENTAL SHOOTING CAUGHT ON TAPE

# My Confession

Examples of how some responders may be trained to act without thinking.

# Let's talk patient care.



Every responder should  
ensure a scene is safe  
prior to engaging in  
patient care.

What are the two most likely ways a firefighter will die while inside a residential dwelling fire?

Flashover

Collapse

**Let's talk flashover.**



Prior to entry into a structure fire, every firefighter should have concern for a flashover on their mind.



**Let's talk collapse.**

Prior to entry into a structure fire, every firefighter should have concern for a collapse on their mind.

# Let's talk size-up...



Prior to entry into a structure fire, the first arriving officer should conduct a size-up.

The size-up becomes the foundation for situational awareness.

# Let's talk Go or No-Go



The decision to go...  
or not to go...  
should be made by  
first-in officer or IC.

# Let's talk Hoseline selection



The decision for hose line selection should be made by the officer leading the crew or the IC.



My first  
training  
fire...

Let's talk vertical ventilation.



A fire example of  
acting without  
thinking.



Sounding the roof

# Let's talk victim search.

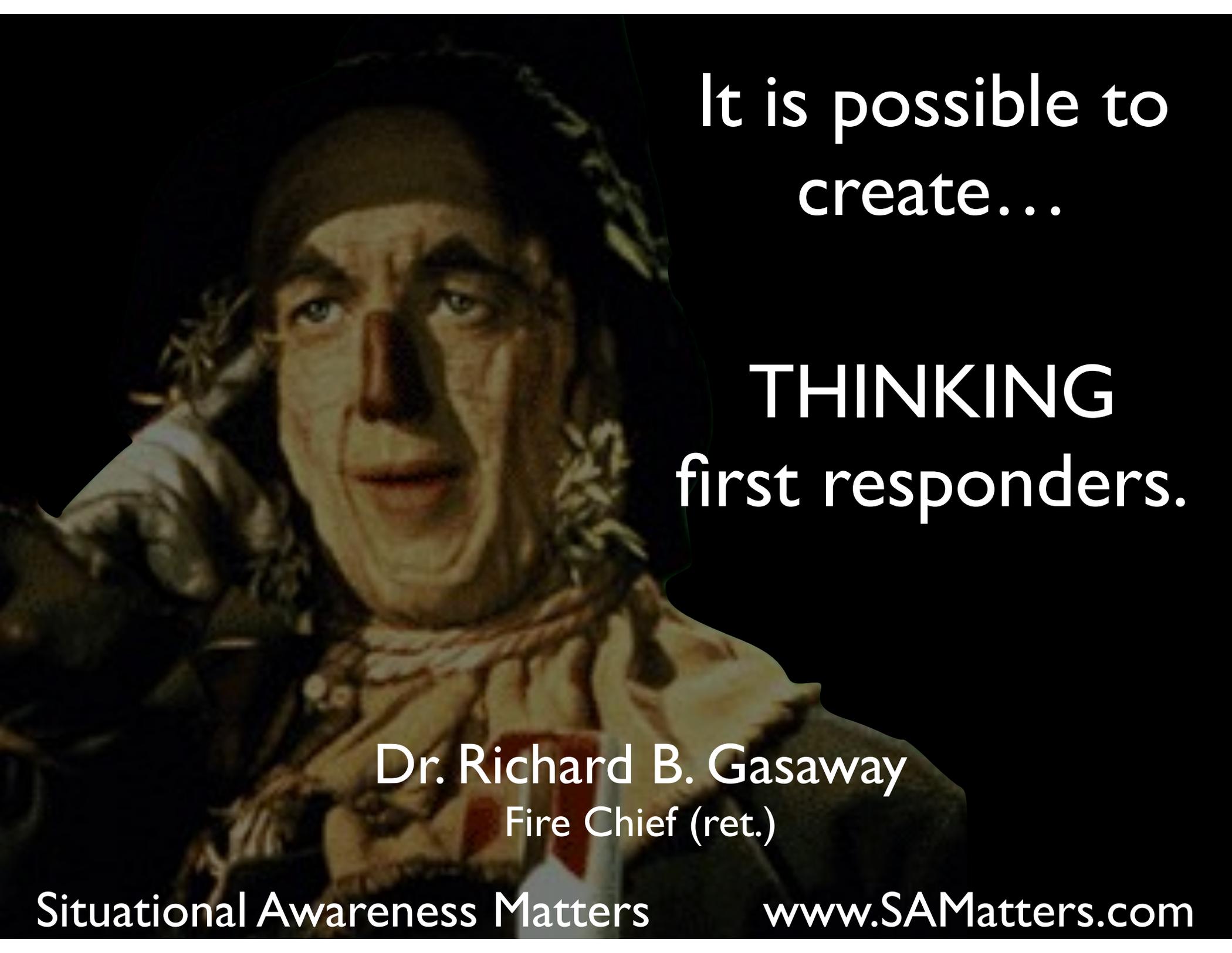


Size-up

Think

Decide

Act



It is possible to  
create...

**THINKING**  
first responders.

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway  
Fire Chief (ret.)