

# SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

## THE SPY WHO HID FOR MONTHS

### How To Save Yourself When No One Is Coming

By Jason Hanson  
*Former CIA Officer*

In the 1980s, there was an intelligence officer operating deep undercover in Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain. To avoid sharing any classified information, I'll call him "Randy." Randy was an excellent officer who was so unassuming that he could walk through a crowded market full of KGB informants and never get noticed. Like most spies, he didn't look like James Bond. He looked like a schoolteacher.

Now, Randy's mission was simple. He was supposed to recruit local informants to help the U.S. understand what the Soviets were planning. But in the world of espionage, "simple" usually turns out to mean "incredibly dangerous."

Every time Randy left his house, he risked arrest, torture, and death if anyone discovered who he really was. Still, he moved forward daily with the mission, gathering film canisters and microdots and transmitting coded radio messages from various locations.

But then everything went sideways. One of the people Randy had recruited got nervous. Maybe he talked too much at a bar. Maybe the KGB had been watching him for months. Either way, within days, Randy's name was on a list. Suddenly, every exit route he had, and every escape route was compromised.

His superiors told him to stay put and wait for extraction. But that extraction never came. So, Randy went dark. He burned his papers, abandoned his contacts, and went "underground" for months and months.

He hid in plain sight, working menial jobs, changing his appearance, and relying on the skills the CIA had drilled into him. And again, he did this for a significant amount of time. When it was finally safe and the wall came down, Randy resurfaced. Everyone thought he had died, and they couldn't believe he was actually alive.



Imagine that, spending months in hiding, living every day with the fear that someone might knock on your door and drag you away. That's the real world of espionage. It's not glamorous. It's not filled with martinis and tuxedos. It's often about survival. And whether you're a spy in a hostile country or just a regular person trying to keep your family safe here in America, the principles are the same.

First, always have a backup plan. Randy survived because he didn't rely on one plan. He had layers of safe houses, disguises, alternate identities, hidden cash, etc. That same concept applies to everyday life. Do you have layers of options to protect your family? What if the power grid goes down tomorrow? Do you have backup lighting, food, water, and cash? Do you know how to heat your home without electricity?

When Randy's world collapsed, he didn't panic and give up. He quickly adapted and went to all of his alternative options.

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Second, you often have to blend in to stay alive. Randy wasn't a big, intimidating guy. He didn't stand out and that was a good thing. He survived by not looking like a threat to the KGB while he was walking around.

Keep in mind, there are times where you want to stand out and other times when you want to blend in. Perhaps you're making your way through an angry mob. As you're going through them, you want to blend in, and you want to pretend you are supporting whatever they support so they don't turn on you. But other times, you want to stand out and not look like an easy victim. For instance, if a mob is descending on my home, I want them to know I have security measures, I want them to know I have cameras, I want them to know (and see) I have lots of guns. When looters are coming to your house, you want to draw as much attention as possible that they better go to another home and avoid yours.

Third, train before the crisis. Randy didn't wait until the KGB was kicking down his door to figure out how to disappear and change his identity. He'd already rehearsed it a hundred times. The same goes for home defense or personal protection. You don't want the first time you draw your gun to be when someone's in your house at 2:00am.

You don't want the first time you test your generator to be during a blackout. Train now. Prepare now. Run your family through a "what if" drill. "What if the power goes out tonight?" "What if there's a fire?" "What if someone tries to break in?"

You'd be surprised how much calmer everyone will be when you've already walked through those scenarios.

Fourth, one of the most important things of keeping your family safe this year is to not rely on anyone else for rescue. If you think help is always coming whether it's from the police, FEMA or any other government organization, you're going to be in for a rude awakening when things really fall apart. You are your own first responder.

And that means having the mindset, skills, and tools to protect yourself and your loved ones. Start with the basics: Have a firearm that you know how to confidently use. Have basic first aid skills. Have your bug out bag loaded. Have plenty of emergency cash, gold and silver, etc.

In the story above, Randy lived like he did because he had to and because he didn't want to get captured by the KGB. You and I should live that way because we're smart enough to know the world isn't getting any safer.

Remember, Randy didn't survive because he was the strongest or biggest guy in the room. He made it because he was patient, prepared, and aware... and that's how all of us should be. So, here's my challenge for you this next 30 days. Pick one area of your life where you're vulnerable whether that's your power supply, your home security, your savings, etc. and make it more resilient.

The fact is, you never know when your own "extraction" in life might fall through, and when that day comes, the only person you can truly count on is you.

## SureFire Headlamp

Having a headlamp with your gear always makes things easier so that you can go hands-free. And as someone who loves hiking, I've been on plenty of hikes late at night where I wore my headlamp, and if you don't own one, here's one you may wish to add to your kit.

It's the SureFire Minimus headlamp. It runs on a single CR123A battery and produces between 5 and 300 lumens, giving you lots of options for different brightness settings.

One of the most unique things about this headlamp is that it has a rotary dial on the side. So, instead of cycling through preset modes, the brightness adjusts smoothly with a simple twist. It's also easy to adjust even if you have gloves, so it's not a small knob that is a pain to deal with.

The body of the headlamp is made from aluminum, and the headband is low-profile but plenty comfortable for wearing hours at a time, if need be. It also includes a small red filter for preserving night vision.

Anyone who knows SureFire flashlights knows they are quality and aren't cheap. So, this will cost you around \$200 or more. But it will last forever and will be able to take a beating. Even if you don't add the SureFire to your gear, make sure you have at least some type of headlamp in your emergency kit.

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# EXPOSING "OPERATION FOOL'S GOLD"

## The Costs Of Buying Counterfeit Precious Metals

By **Forest Hamilton**  
*Universal Coin & Bullion*

When you buy precious metals online from unknown sellers, you're stepping into a marketplace where trust is assumed...but rarely verified. Fake gold and silver are no longer crude, laughable knockoffs. These are sophisticated replicas using correct weights, convincing designs, and even magnetic properties engineered to fool basic tests.

Some gold knockoffs are plated tungsten cores nearly identical in density to gold. The fake silver is often silver-plated copper, a solid copper core struck with the Silver American Eagle design and then electroplated with a microscopically thin layer of real .999 silver.

Unless you have a Sigma Metalizer (a precious metals verifier that runs around 3k), or an XRF Analyzer (between 30k and 50k) you are rolling the dice with gold and silver items purchased from eBay and similar sites.

I've seen counterfeit bars sealed in fake "assay cards," counterfeit coins in convincing capsules, and even fake slabs with forged grading labels. And here's the kicker: many of these fakes come with positive seller feedback because most buyers don't discover the problem until months (or years) later, when it's time to sell.

eBay disputes are great when you're returning a blender. They're far less helpful when you discover your "investment-grade .999 gold" is actually a very expensive paperweight. Precious metals often fall into gray areas of buyer protection, especially if time has passed or the seller has disappeared, which happens far too often.

Words like "rare," "investment-grade," and "estate find" get

thrown around online like confetti at a parade. These terms have no standardized meaning in peer marketplaces. A coin described as "mint" might actually be cleaned, damaged, or improperly stored, all things that can destroy its value instantly in the professional market. Grading, authentication, and provenance matter. Vague, intentionally misleading adjectives can't replace those.

I've even seen the exact certified gold coins that I rejected for not being high enough for the grade, show up on eBay at cheap prices, causing people to feel like they are getting a good deal when they are really just buying a reject that dealers would pay much less for.

Online platforms exploit our desire for a bargain. But in precious metals, "cheap" is often code for "problematic." The market is remarkably efficient when it comes to real gold and silver. If a deal looks too good to be true, it usually is. Many buyers assume eBay prices are cheaper because there's "no middleman." In reality, you're often paying inflated premiums for uncertified products, plus shipping, plus sales tax, plus an expensive education in fraud.

Certified metals purchased through established dealers solve this problem perfectly. Professionally graded and authenticated products trade in recognized markets with transparent pricing and consistent demand. You know what you have, you know what it's worth, and you know someone will buy it when the time comes.

As Jason has told me many times, in the spy world, you verify sources.

In survival planning, you test your gear before you need it. Buying metals should follow the same disciplines. Trusted dealers stake their reputations on authenticity, pricing, and long-term relationships. Anonymous sellers stake nothing, they just disappear when pinched

and reappear under a different name...with 100% positive reviews.

After nearly three decades in this industry, I can tell you this: When it comes to measuring quality, I've

never met someone who regretted buying verified, professionally sourced gold and silver from a reputable dealer. I have met plenty of people who regretted trying to save a few bucks online.

Gold and silver are about certainty in an uncertain world. They are financial tools meant to reduce risk, not add to it. So, my friendly, slightly battle-scarred advice is to vet and confirm your sources. Don't take shortcuts, it's definitely not worth it when it comes to your financial protection.

Also, know that you can reach out to me directly if you want to see if your gold and silver coins are real and I'll test them with the Sigma Analyzer in my vault or the XRF Analyzer Gun that costs more than my car! Either way, I'll make sure you have peace of mind and own real gold and silver.

**[Publisher's Note:** For questions about buying gold and silver coins you can contact Forest Hamilton directly at [foresthamilton@universalcoin.com](mailto:foresthamilton@universalcoin.com) or call 409-926-7001. Please know, if you purchase any coins from Forest, we don't receive any compensation from him. We simply know he's one of the good guys in the business that can be trusted.]

**"The fake silver is often silver-plated copper, a solid copper core struck..."**

# ARE YOU TRULY READY FOR AN ATTACK OR AMBUSH?

## How To Transform Your Training Into Quick Action Reflex

By **Brian M. Morris**

*Master Sergeant (Retired),  
U.S. Army Special Forces*

We rolled out after dark. The mission was resupply—ammo, chow, water. I made the questionable leadership decision to let the camp cook ride along. He'd been begging for weeks to "get outside the wire."

He'd been trained on an M240 light machine gun at Bragg, so I put him in the rear gunner seat of my truck, and gave him a helmet, body armor, and a five-minute safety brief: don't flag friendlies, don't fall asleep, and don't touch anything that looks like it was placed there on purpose.

We took four vehicles: two up-armored HMMV's (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles) and two partner force Toyota Hilux pickup trucks. My truck was in front with the M134 minigun, the other had a "Ma Deuce" M2 .50 caliber machine gun. The two Hilux pickups were both armed with mounted DShK 12.7x108mm machine guns, and manned with 3 Afghan commandos per truck.

We made the 60-minute drive to the main FOB (forward operating base) from our COP (combat outpost) without incident. After filling every free inch of space with cases of bottled water, chow, and Rip-It's (an energy drink) along with mail from home, I gave a quick safety brief in the event we made contact with the enemy, then we started back to our COP.

The night was quiet. The moon hid behind the ridgeline. The air smelled like a slurry of feces and diesel and audio chatter was minimal. We were a few miles from the main gate of our COP, three quarters of the way up a mountain switchback when things went sideways.

The IED detonated suddenly under

the front axle of one of our trucks. White flash. Pressure wave. Instant silence interrupted by high pitch ringing. Cases of bottled water and Rip-It's exploded. The cook vanished in a geyser of liquid and swearing. The truck didn't flip, but the blast killed the engine and snapped the suspension.

We were running red tactical lights (because white light invites gunfire), and under red light, any liquid (which was everywhere) looks like blood. "I'm hit! I'm hit!" the cook screamed. He was sprawled on the side of the road, flailing, and smearing himself in what he was convinced was his own blood.

I called out for a status report. "One up," "Two up," sounded from the dark. I was three; the cook made four. Miraculously, all four of my guys were accounted for and no one was hurt.

No attack came either, which meant the enemy left the IED and took off. The rest of the vehicles dismounted and formed a perimeter. I got on my MBITR (AN/PRC 148 Multi Band Inter/Intra Team Radio) and called in a TIC (Troops In Contact) to the FOB and then switched to our team frequency being monitored at the COP to call for a QRF (Quick Reaction Force).

Then, I did a quick full-body check on the cook. No holes. No arterial spray. No missing pieces. He begged me not to let him die. I leaned in close and said, "Relax. If that was your blood, you'd already be dead and significantly quieter." (It was just water from the exploded bottles of water.)

We held security for what felt like an hour but was probably more like ten minutes. Engines off. Weapons up. The cook sat there hyperventilating,



soaked to the bone, staring at his hands. When the QRF finally rolled up, they hit the cook with a white light. No blood. No injuries (beyond a bruised ego). The water absorbed the majority of the blast, and we were thrown from the vehicle, sparing us injury beyond nicks and bruises.

The medic eyed the cook. "What happened to him?" he asked. "He drowned," I said. The cook never asked to go outside the wire again. He flipped eggs with renewed humility and told people he'd "seen combat." I didn't correct him. Everybody deserves a war story.

The lesson here is that regardless of how "prepared" you think you are because you trained one time a few years ago, you're not always ready. True preparation requires continuous training. Remember, in the heat of actual life-or-death combat, you don't "rise to the occasion," instead you fall to the "level of your training." If your training isn't ingrained and reflexive, you're "cooked."

# PAY A THIEF?

## This Saved Me From Cartel Bandits

By Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,  
DIA, NSA*

I was overseas, tasked with casing an area in advance of an extraordinary rendition operation to capture and return to the U.S. a known, convicted in absentia, Narco-terrorist. I was not going to be on the “Snatch and Grab” team. My job was to move about in the area and determine if there were any local suspicions or chatter about anything unusual.

We learned that there were so many leaks in virtually every one of our previous attempts that this time we needed to get ahead of them by observing the local area, its population, routines, customs, and individual demeanors in advance of our planning stage. Changes to the environment between the time before the operation was decided upon, and then after we notified local authorities of our plan, would indicate a leak. The foreknowledge of a leak well in advance of the actual operations could prevent another operational failure.

I have a compulsion for this kind of work because it's the only thing I can do well. I am not cut out to be a doctor, lawyer, stock trader, mayor, employee, or much of anything else. My self-worth comes from solving the niche problems that require ingenuity, courage, and just enough stupidity to jump into.

We recognize that no matter how smart we want people to think we are, at the end of the day, any schmuck who is willing to break into a secure facility to get a thumb drive that might have secret data on



it, while risking capture, torture, and execution, cannot be all that bright, right?

On this mission, I was not assigned to break into any place or steal government secrets or anything sexy like that. I was measuring and monitoring the local population, looking for any discernible changes.

I did this by walking the streets and chatting with people for two weeks before the US government brought

the plan to the target country's leadership, who then instructed their local authorities to cooperate fully.

We buy the cooperation and feigned assistance of the national government and the local militia/police/army with hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid. They may hate us and want to protect the cartels, but just like our American politicians, cash beats loyalty every time.

I had been down there about ten days when I went back to one of my favorite watering holes to chat and enjoy some horchata. As I was leaving the quaint little cantina and going around the side of the building, I was approached by three men who did not want to chat. They called out, “Hijo de puta, your money or your life.”

While I acted confused, startled, and a little bit scared, I was not. I had trained on this action many times. I “reluctantly” lobbed my wallet at them and ran away. But what I actually threw down was my “toss wallet.”

A toss wallet is something you should certainly create and have, too. Here is how to build a toss wallet. I use one of my well-worn leather wallets and fill it with everything an everyday wallet has. For instance, make sure you have some cash showing, about \$30-\$50. Use \$5s and \$10s so it looks like more. Or, if you look like someone

**"I was approached by three men who did not want to chat."**



who should have \$200 in your wallet and tossing that to a would-be mugger is tolerable to you, keep that in your wallet. Better to give him/ them a few extra bucks than have them try to cut your wedding ring off your finger.

The amount of cash needs to look, at first glance, like it's worth their time, and they don't need to beat a few more pennies of pleasure out of you. The considerable caution is not to include too much money. You don't want them thinking they have hit the jackpot and take you to an ATM to clean you out. Just enough cash for them to go buy a hit of drugs.

Also, have a few canceled credit cards. For the credit cards, I apply for gas or other small-limit credit cards and then report them lost/ stolen a few weeks later. I scratch my name off of them.

The value in doing this is that as soon as the thief tries to use the card, it is already in the system, and hopefully, the store surveillance will capture them in the act. Include a photocopy of your driver's license

(or even an AI-generated look-alike photo) with your address and true info blanked out. Get it laminated so that it looks and feels authentic at first glance.

Add in a few used gift cards for Applebee's/Cabela's/Starbucks, etc., and any other items that are of no value and do not have identifying info, but make the wallet look genuine.

**"They cannot use it to find you, your home, your family..."**

You can include whatever else you want, such as business cards from various places or other items. Be creative, but do not include anything with your true name, address, or photo.

The purpose of your toss wallet is not to get them caught. Giving them your toss wallet allows you to hand it over without resistance because you already know what is in it and you have decided it's worth surrendering.

But the most excellent value of a Toss Wallet is that you know, for sure, that they cannot use it to find you, your home, your family, your workplace, and they cannot run up your credit cards.

Keep it very available. Practice slowly reaching for it and "tossing" it to them. When they bend over to get it, that is your chance to run. No point in fighting them for a few dollars and some used gift cards. Just get away and have a story to tell.

That's what I did during that operation. I chucked my toss wallet, and as it hit the ground, I turned and ran the other way.

Thankfully, I was able to finish my mission. Our team captured the criminal, and he was brought back to America to stand trial. As for the punks who got my toss wallet, I laughed for the next several days imagining them digging through it to find a few pesos and a little note that I tucked in the flap that said, "¡Hasta la vista, pendejo!"



**SAVINT**  
**YOUR MONTHLY SAVINGS INTELLIGENCE**

Don't forget to grab a Flashbang Flashlight since we now have more in stock. The Flashbang is very versatile and was built for self-defense. The 230-lumens of light can easily blind someone and the 16-inch length is perfect for stopping an attacker. To see pictures and the video of me running over the flashlight in my military Humvee, visit [www.FlashbangLight.com](http://www.FlashbangLight.com).

# MILITARY METHOD FOR TORCHING CALORIES AND BUILDING STRENGTH

## The Easiest Exercise To Fortify Your Body At Any Age

**By Dr. Omar Hamada**  
*Special Operations Physician*

As a physician and someone who's always advocated for practical ways to build both physical and mental toughness, I'm a fan of military-style rucking. It involves loading up a backpack with weight and going for a walk or jog. It builds endurance, strength, and grit.

From a medical standpoint, it's a full-body workout that combines cardiovascular exercise with resistance training. It helps with weight management and reduces the risk of obesity-related issues like diabetes and heart disease.

Studies show that weighted walking can burn up to 30-50% more calories than unweighted equivalents. But it also builds functional strength. Your legs, core, back, and shoulders all get engaged as you carry that load, mimicking real-life demands like hauling groceries, luggage, or even helping a buddy move. For those over 40, it combats sarcopenia (age-related loss of muscle mass) and improves bone density to ward off osteoporosis.

Mentally, rucking forces you into a rhythmic, meditative state that clears the mind. It's like therapy on the move. Soldiers use it to build mental resilience under load, and you can too. Pushing through discomfort teaches discipline and perseverance, qualities that spill over into daily life. Plus, it's low impact compared to running, reducing joint stress while still delivering aerobic benefits. If you're prone to knee issues or recovering from injury, this is a smarter alternative to pounding the pavement.

Proper form is crucial to avoid

injury. Stand tall, shoulders back, core engaged. Pack the weight close to your back, and high in your ruck. Don't hunch under the weight but lean slightly forward and let the weight propel you forward. Also, stride naturally with arms swinging for balance. Some even adopt a shuffle-gait to improve speed and enhance effort. Breathe deeply and rhythmically, in through the nose, out through the mouth.

**Pace yourself:** Begin at a brisk walk, around 3-4 miles per hour, and focus on consistency over speed. Flat roads for beginners, hills or trails for added challenge. If you can, ruck 2-3 times a week, alternating with rest or lighter activities. Progress gradually and don't go from zero to hero. Track your sessions with a fitness app to monitor distance, time, and perceived effort.

You need a sturdy backpack designed for load-bearing that hugs your back and doesn't bounce. Consider something military-inspired like a tactical pack with padded straps, a sternum strap for stability, and a belt to keep the pack tight to your hips.

Brands like 3V Gear, GoRuck, or surplus military-issue bags work well. They're built to last and distribute weight evenly across your back and hips. Look for one with a capacity of 20-40 liters, depending on your needs. Inside, secure your weight properly to prevent shifting, which can throw off balance and cause chafing.

As a doctor, I recommend beginning with 10-20% of your body weight, so around 20-40 pounds for a 200-pound man. Use sandbags, weight plates, or even books wrapped in towels for padding. Avoid loose items that could bruise your back.

Build up slowly. Add 5-10 pounds every few weeks as your body adapts. For distances, newbies should aim for 2-3 miles per session, 2-3 times weekly. Intermediate ruckers can push to 5-8 miles, incorporating intervals like faster segments or hill repeats. Advanced folks might go 10+ miles with heavier loads but listen to your body. Pain is a signal.

Invest in quality boots or trail shoes with good cushioning, arch support, and a wide toe box. Military-style boots like those from Belleville or Danner offer durability and ankle stability, especially on uneven ground.

For urban rucking, cushioned hiking shoes from Merrell or Salomon suffice. Break them in gradually to avoid hot spots. Go for moisture-wicking merino wool blend socks, brands like Darn Tough or Smartwool, and consider a nylon or even silk inner sock liner. They reduce friction, keep feet dry, and minimize blisters. Never forget to hydrate well and carry a water bladder in your ruck for easy access. Fuel with balanced meals: Protein for muscle repair, carbs for energy.

Post-ruck, stretch your calves, hips, and back to maintain flexibility. Foam rolling helps with soreness. If you have pre-existing conditions, consult your doctor first. Weather-wise, layer clothing: Moisture-wicking base, insulating mid-layer, and a waterproof shell.

Military-style rucking is a cornerstone for building capable, resilient, strong individuals. I urge you to lace up, load up, and step out. Start small, stay consistent. It will strengthen both your body and resolve.

# HOW TO ESCAPE BEING GRABBED

## This Causes Instant Pain

By Matt Numrich

Head Instructor Of Spy Black Belt

When someone grabs your arm or wrist unexpectedly, your response needs to be fast, effective, and easy to remember. Many traditional self-defense classes emphasize joint locks and wrist manipulations. While these techniques can work, they often require practice, strength, and timing—three things that may not always be on your side. For seniors especially, there's a smarter approach: go straight for vulnerable targets and use strikes that interrupt the attacker's control immediately.

If you're being grabbed, your goal isn't to perform a technique that takes multiple steps, it's to get away as quickly as possible. That's why it makes more sense to focus on what works instantly, without having to remember a sequence or rely on upper body strength. Simple moves that create pain or shock are often more effective in real situations than trying to outmaneuver someone's grip.

One of the most effective ways to disrupt an attack is to go for the eyes. A quick jab with your fingers can cause enough of a reaction to cause an attacker to let go. This move doesn't need to be precise or powerful, just immediate.

The natural reflex is to protect the eyes, so they'll usually let go or at least loosen their grip, giving you a chance to move away. This is especially useful if you're not physically strong, because it shifts the attacker's focus from you to their own discomfort.

The groin is another vulnerable



target that can stop an attack fast. A solid knee strike, even from a smaller person, can cause serious discomfort and give you time to escape. You don't need to overthink which leg to use, just go with the one that's best positioned for the strike.

Whether the person is grabbing your upper or lower arm doesn't matter. What matters is that you shift your weight and drive your knee upward quickly. This can be especially useful if you're caught off guard and need to act fast.

Additionally, when the attacker's hands are occupied with holding you, their legs become an easy target. A stomp or step-through kick

to the side or front of the knee can disrupt their balance and make it harder for them to keep control.

The best part about this move is that it doesn't require flexibility or speed. Just stepping through their leg with force is enough to throw them off. Whether you use your front or back

leg depends on your stance, as either can be effective if used with purpose.

The eyes, groin, and knees all have one thing in common: they trigger an automatic response when struck. You don't have to overpower anyone if you go after these areas. A few quick moves can break the attacker's grip and give you a window to escape.

This approach is especially helpful for seniors or anyone who wants a practical way to defend themselves without needing years of training or intense physical conditioning. The goal isn't to "win" a fight, it's to stop it before it escalates and to give you enough time to escape to safety.

To help you internalize and use these moves, I've created a video for you where I demonstrate them and show you how to apply them to a real-world attack scenario. You can watch the video at this link: [fearlessstreetfighter.com/grab-escape/](https://fearlessstreetfighter.com/grab-escape/). Hopefully, you never need to use this, but anything can happen at any time.

**"It makes more sense to focus on what works instantly."**