**Protection through education**

I started out my life as Zig Ziglar said, “As a wandering generality and not a meaningful specific” In 2002 I decided in my heart to become a “Meaningful Specific”

I contemplated the issue, asked for advice and prayed a lot. It was not until I made the decision to enroll in the Police Academy that my life work began to come into focus. I graduated the Academy and began my career as a Beach Police reserve officer then soon after in a full time capacity.

In time I got married, bought a small house and then I decided to apply to the Bay County Sheriff’s office. It wasn’t until I came to the Sheriff’s office that I was able to discover my true calling which is law enforcement education and training.

Being immersed in the culture of quality and accountability at the Sheriff’s office made me raise my personal standards. Being constantly reminded to “do the right things” and “do things right” caused me to explore ways to grow both personally and professionally.

During this time I came to the realization that the lessons learned from my life path and wrong turns could actually be valuable to others. These lessons, losses and triumphs became the building blocks that made me the kind of person capable of being what most consider an effective, kind and impartial law enforcement officer.

I began taking specialized and advanced training at every opportunity. I oftentimes paid for the training out of my own pocket, just so I could get better at my job. Firearms training, Crisis Intervention Training, Public Speaking, Safety, the list goes on and on, and on. I have racked up over 800+ hours of specialized, advanced and instructor training in the Law Enforcement and Public Service arena.

I currently serve at the Sheriff’s office in the Community Services Division as a School Resource Deputy. My normal duties include school safety, enforcement of Florida statutes, interacting with parents, staff and students along with a myriad of other ever changing tasks, including all general law enforcement functions as needed.

But over and above my normal duties I am often given the opportunity to make presentations to community groups, churches and schools at no cost to them and I also teach civilian and law enforcement classes in about a dozen topics.

I take pride in sharing knowledge and facilitating training with the public and my fellow officers. By helping others, they get better, and I in turn get better and become more effective. So it is a win-win situation.

I have been blessed with several positive awards over the years. I have received a medal of commendation for my work with women’s safety, two letters of recommendation for my volunteer services and a beautiful award from the Sheriffs Explorer program and a plaque for three years of work with the Florida Youth Ranch in south Florida. But my favorite awards are the hundreds of positive evaluations I have received from my students, both civilian and law enforcement.

I must be clear that all law enforcement officers and first responders are heroes. We ALL take risks, work long hours, put others first and train hard. Plus, there are many people who have attended the same classes as me and there are many law enforcement trainers that educate the public and their peers. So in all reality other than my deep desire and heart for training, I am not totally unique in any way other than having bad vision.

With that being said, the teaching and training I do is encumbered by my eye glasses. My poor vision is a detriment to my peak performance as an Instructor, a student and as a Deputy. I would ask for your consideration in this matter to help me to be a little more effective and safer in my duties.

I personally believe that by promoting education, empowerment and strong positive community relations I can do a little extra to help make Bay County a safer place for everyone.

Maybe I can prevent a bad guy from ever being, or maybe an officer gets to go home at night, because of something I shared with them or maybe I can prevent someone from being a victim, maybe even you!

Mario Lupica