

Common Sense Strategies for Keeping Students, Educators and Schools Safer

An Interview with Michael Dorn

Randy: I did a presentation a few years ago where the underpinning message was if you feel unsafe, you probably are. So today's conversation will be about whether you, the frontline educator, the teacher or the principal, can do in your classroom, in your school to promote a physically and emotionally safer space for learning. So I'd like to, in a minute, introduce to you a professional colleague who might be able to help you a lot. Michael Dorn is the founder and executive director of Safe Havens International. Mike and I actually met while we were both presenting at a workshop for school resource offices now a number of years ago. And we've been doing various types of collaborations ever since. Mike has published many books, presents and trains regularly all across the world on safety-related issues in schools, including bullying, threat assessment, scenario-based crisis management simulations, catastrophic events such as active shooters and much more.

My name is Dr. Randy Boardman, and I'm the Crisis Prevention Institute Senior Training Advisor. And if you want some common-sense-based practical and effective ideas to help keep your classroom and school safer, please join me for a conversation, common sense strategies for keeping students, educators and schools safe.

So Michael, I know you did a previous similar podcast with one of my associates a couple of years ago that focused on a couple of your books, "Weakfish" and "Staying Alive." So I want to keep our focus today more on frontline educators, the teachers, the building principals that are out there every day, and they might not have millions of dollars available to add technology throughout the school, or redesign an entrance or egress to a

building. I'm also wanting to go to the route that you previously talked about. I want to stay away from a teacher that you once had in a very tumultuous, violent school, who actually carried a handgun. That's happening more and more as well.

That's why I included the words "common sense" to describe this session. Can we start by telling our listeners about you in just a few sentences, your professional background as well as where your interest in and expertise about keeping school safe actually comes from, Mike?

Michael: Yes, sir. I've been in the field of school safety for 34 years. I started as a university police officer, and then 10 years later I was named police chief for the same school district where my teacher felt he needed to carry a gun because of the weapons assaults that occurred there pretty routinely. I then served with the nation's largest state government school safety center here in the State of Georgia. And I've been the executive director for Safe Havens, which is a global non-profit. I've been doing that now for, I guess, about 13 years.

And my focus is actually along the line of what you mentioned, Randy. We're very good at helping schools with security technology, architecture, those high-end things when they have the budget, but honestly, a lot of the best progress that we have seen that could be made in the arena of school safety are the low-cost, they have no-cost practices that may be sometimes fairly simple, but can be highly effective if we apply them the right way, and that's what we like to focus on as well.

Randy: Great. Sounds like you've got excellent experience out there. And let's start with giving me one practical common sense tip that you would offer such as I mentioned earlier, my idea of if you feel unsafe, you probably are. So focus on an example for our listeners — one for teachers, one for principals and one for central office administration — that they can do, keep top of mind today where they will be safer as well as the students that they serve.

Michael: Sure. The first thing is don't take too much what you see on the news at face value. And I'm glad we have a free press. But actually, schools are far safer in the US today than they were when I was attacked with a weapon in 1979. The homicide rate is down. We've actually made a lot of progress. So first of all, look at data, look at evaluation now. As far as some simple things, the biggest thing that we find, that we focus on, that I'll give for an example for teachers and it's actually true for all three groups you mentioned, but we'll get in context with the teacher, is improving student supervision is the most powerful and effective single technique, if I didn't limit it to one, to reduce risk of death from almost anything you can think of. From accidents, medical emergencies, natural disasters like tornado, fire or acts of violence such as an active shooting or terrorism.

So focusing on trying to do the best that you can, as constantly as you possibly can to keep line of sight with your students and being within earshot and be close enough to your students. For example, if you're supervising on an outdoor area, be close enough to hear, see, and act to prevent bad things from happening. That would be my first piece of advice if you're a teacher.

Now, for building principals, I'm going to use an extension of that, and I'm going to say one that we would like to see you do is to have your local police or your state police have a traffic experienced officer come out, and look at your morning arrival and afternoon dismissal procedures. Look at how you supervise your students, and the flow of people and vehicles because the number one trackable cause of death, in other words the number one cause of death that we actually have reliable data for is actually the type of...that we've seen recently, several examples of, this week a child killed in a school parking lot in front of their parent who witnessed them being run over a few weeks ago in Indiana. Principal killed, hit by a school bus in her parking lot. That's 525 deaths in the last 15-year reporting period in contrast to 62 people killed by active shooters for our country during the same 15-year period of time.

So take a minute, and let's evaluate traffic safety and supervision of students at those critical time periods in the morning and afternoon.

Now, for the cabinet staff, superintendents, headmasters, folks at the top and strategic level, what I will say is be sure that you don't overly focus your efforts on active shooter. And Randy, I really appreciate CPI's evidence-based approach and logical base to school safety. We need to have passion about what we do as your folks and ours and the people who are listening. But we really do need to be sure we're looking at data. And when you look at the roughly 2,000 deaths on school property in the US from 1998 to 2013, we see the vast majority of those, less than 70 of those deaths are from active shooters.

So the bulk of the deaths we're having are actually from other things. So look at the data. We have 129 suicides on school property in the same time period. So do we have an evidence-based suicide prevention approach? Do we have a solid student threat evaluation and management approach which is proven to be very effective at reducing the risk of violence? So are we using data, and evaluation, and assessment to drive our school safety, and security, and emergency preparedness efforts? That's my message to the strategic level folks that lead our schools and school districts.

Randy: Wow, I love the emphasis on supervision and being out and around. And I'm going to jump in and add one more thought to that. And the spinoff of that that fits hand in hand with supervision is just the relationship piece — have relationships with the students, have relationships with the police and community members. And that whole visibility is so strong in terms of deterring bad things from happening; so great practical ideas.

For the next part, could I ask if you could speak toward some general ideas and thoughts around threat assessment? I know that's an area of expertise, and I know you've done a lot in that area, but a good, common sense suggestion for teachers, for

principals and again central office folks in the area of threat assessment.

Michael: Sure. And for those that want more detail on this, and Randy, if you want you can post this on your website, we've got it on ours. But the Littleton Public School System had 12 of our analysts do an evaluation of an active shooter event they had in 2013. And it's amazing how many lives were saved by their emergency preparedness. They were definitely in the top flight in that arena. And they had a better threat evaluation process than the vast majority of public and non-public and charter schools that we've worked with around the United States. But they did have a child murdered after they had done a threat assessment. And so we've got a complete report, the details, what went well, what was in place, it was good. And the Littleton Public Schools want to share that to people. So if you want more details, please look at that.

But the first thing is making sure that you have a multidisciplinary approach. And by multidisciplinary, what has been most effective since it was first used to stop a planned school shooting in the early 1990s in my school system and stopped quite a few actually after that, because I worked in a very high-risk setting. We were just ranked one of the 10 highest crime cities in America just recently. And so we had a pretty high threat level, but we had tremendous success by having a school district police officer which might be a local police officer, a school resource officer in other communities, and mental health professional and an administrator, all three of those disciplines represented in the assessment team.

And that's where the model actually comes from is the Bibb County Public School System in Macon, Georgia where they stopped a series of events. And we began teaching around the United States, and now it's become much more refined and much more advance.

As to the teaching staff, I would say go back to what you mentioned earlier about, Randy, that close connection to students. Not just knowing their name but knowing who they are

and developing a sense of trust where they will come forward to you and talk to you, that's something that's extremely important for every school employee — the teacher, the custodian, front office, staff member, to have that connection, because it's a lot harder than a lot of people realize for students to come forward with the information.

At the district level, one thing I would say is, is your process defined in writing, backed up by formal training that you can document? If you look at the Littleton case, they went far above what most districts have in place. But some things didn't come through in the application step. So even though they were well ahead of most of our much larger districts, they had a gap there which they've moved to address by being so open to external review like this. But you want to make sure that the process that you think you have in place is actually what's going on, that you actually have quality controls in place and district level review for the assessments that are done at the building level, with both building and sometimes district and maybe even community personnel.

Randy: Excellent, excellent. That whole emphasis reminds me of a piece I wrote a few years ago called "Behavior Management by Walking Around." It's that same piece of just being out and having relationships, staying connected. And I love your emphasis on data and evidence-based practices.

For the next section, I'm going to briefly summarize the direction we go and I go in my trainings. And I'm always talking when I do trainings with instructors about what can we do before a person escalates to that moment of crisis or that meltdown? What could we do during the moment to keep ourselves safe? And then that afterwards, after an episode, what could we do to improve our strategies, our approaches for next time?

So if you could just apply that before, during, and after thinking to a larger potential school safety event, what can frontline teachers, principals and administrators do before that safety episode evolves? During the incident to keep everybody safe? And

afterwards, to assess what do we need to do next time? And again, I recall from your book, "Staying Alive", you so clearly stated and emphasized that if someone practices or rehearses just one time, what if? If it's about a boiler, or a tornado, or a fire, or about even an active shooter, they increase their chances for surviving a situation immensely.

Michael: Sure. And what you're referring to, Randy, is a very well-grounded research that if you calmly, not in a frightful way, just periodically picture different types of events — a child not breathing, a tornado, a fire, a person with a weapon, an aggressive animal — if you just periodically ask yourself, "What would I do if that happened?" visually picture it in your head, your rate of survivability goes up for almost anything, from a bank robbery to a terrorist attack or something that's as catastrophic even as a commercial air crash. So that's the technique we can use but I want to break down. They're so much over emphasis, as you alluded to before, on the rare but catastrophic events that capture our hearts and our compassion, and it often causes a great deal of fear. But what most people don't realize is for every one of those events that you see before in the news, there are thousands of smaller scale events. They might not make the national news but they're quite frightening and sometimes quite harmful, and sometimes even very deadly to the people that are involved.

And so I'm going to take the more typical types of assaults that we see in the school setting and walk through some things very quickly. The first is that connectivity we've talked about does what many people that might hurt you reduce the likelihood that they will attack you. It's harder to attack people that you like and especially respect. But if the level of the teacher, the person, the field, the concept of pattern matching and recognition is very, very powerful, it's evidence-based. And in some, it's noticing behaviors that are incongruent for the people, the context and the setting. So your awareness of students and other staff...and when you notice that something doesn't feel right, don't just ignore it. Be aware of what's going on around you.

Now, the next thing we see is when, let's say it gets to that point where we've got the irate individual in the office or at a classroom, or in the school bus driver's door. And now you've got somebody...we teach people. When you've got people yelling and screaming, using profanity, if they are intoxicated or under the effects of drugs or maybe improperly medicated, what if they've got exhibiting signs of emotional...they're not emotionally in control of themselves, those can be indicators that things could escalate to a point where it's dangerous, and that's why we're so very impressed with your training because we've seen and we've got many clients who've got data to back up.

And one that comes to mind is John Heiderscheidt from U-46 District on the outskirts of Chicago. They've had a dramatic reduction in violence towards staff, expulsions of students, through the escalation training that you offer so that we can now calm the situation down so it doesn't escalate to a point where somebody might be harmed. Now beyond that, the next thing we could caution people is that we need to be able to implement a variety of protective actions.

If that doesn't work or things happen too quickly for that, being able to implement on your own without direction from a building principal...if you're a teacher or building principal not having to confer with somebody at district's office...being able to implement emergency protective actions. The most important ones are room clear, clearing out a room of students and staff quickly, not evacuating a whole building, but clear out a classroom, auditorium or lunchroom. Reverse evacuation, to get back into a building quickly if there's danger outside. Of course, lock down, fire evacuation, shelter for severe weather. If you know those emergency procedures and you think about them as we said at the beginning of this little segment, you're a lot faster and more accurate at applying those when they're appropriate in an emergency.

Randy: Excellent, excellent. Well done. That conversation reminds me, again, of a day that I was an elementary principal. I got a call from the police, and they said, "You may want to have a bunch of the

kids that are in the playground come in because someone robbed the bank just across the street and they're going to be on your playground shortly." And we moved into some protocols we'd practiced, we survived the day. The bank robber went on his business, was caught. And at the end of the day, I had several staff tell me and talk to me. They said, "Randy, we've not practiced that but how could you stay so calm?" And I said, "Well, I had to be calmer today than most any other day in my career because that will affect how people react or overreact to any situation."

I later looked around my campus and noticed that there are actually three banks within one block of my facility. I had not noticed that before; so good stuff, very practical.

Let's talk a little more about the bigger picture. If a district does have financial resources or grants on a large scale or part of initiatives to improve overall safety in a site, what are one or two critical steps, top of mind, first couple things they should do if...or if a teacher could even make recommendations to their principal and others to keep folks safe. Those top two or three things that if you do have money that you can allocate, where would you push them toward?

Michael: I know this is going to sound crazy to a lot of people, but there's a lot of data to back this up, too. And that's as we do some of the things I'm going to talk about to enhance security and emergency preparedness, and I'll get to those in a second, you want to make sure you're using the evidence-based approaches of crime prevention through environmental design. It's called CPTED, crime prevention through environmental design. A key component of which is what we call "positive territoriality". And we're doing a lot of work with the Ministry of Education down at Trinidad and Tobago where they've got about 10 times higher homicide rate in the country than we do here.

And over the years, the schools have taken on rather a prison-like appearance; 12 foot concrete walls, there's razor wire on top. And one of...we've advised them...we've got a lot of data to show that

increases not only fear but of crime at and around the school. And by appearance, that actually increases crime.

Randy: That actually increases crime because it looks like and feels like a prison. Wow, that's messed up.

Michael: Absolutely. When you put people...there's a lot of research to show if you put people in an institutional setting like a prison that you can create some very negative outcomes from that. So while we're doing some things we need to for security, let's make sure we spend some money on artwork. Let's look at the flooring schemes, let's look at paint colors, murals, artwork. You want the school to look in every area — restrooms, hallways, stairwells — like a school, not like a jail or a prison. And it can be something that's simple. It doesn't have to take barbed wire or tall fences. It can be just the wrong color choice.

So if you look at the hallways in your school and it reminds you of a jail or prison, that's not good. So with that as an important backdrop, creating good access control, getting staff to understand how very dangerous it can be just to not keep exterior doors secured. Getting staff to understand that all adults in a building on normal school day, every administrator, staff member, needs to wear a photo ID. And if you don't require that and you don't require visitors to come in to be ID-ed with time-sensitive badges, I can assure you, and I've got a lot of clients who will back this up, we can come to your elementary school and leave with a child typically within 10 minutes more than 90% of the time.

And that's because we're not creating the structure that people know who belongs and who doesn't. So good access control, good visitor management. Good emergency communication is very important. The ability to teach or to call the office if they have a problem, if they're on the playground, having a radio for example, the ability of a principal or other administrator or office staff to be able to key a microphone and talk to everybody inside and outside of the building is critical for almost any type of emergency where people could be at risk at a facility. So those are some of the ones that we focus on a lot with our clients.

Now, there are many good technology solutions, lots of good training concepts that can be added to that short list I gave as some examples. But make sure that school remains a school. When I went to Israel for training, I'll never forget a general saying, "We realized long ago that if we turn our schools into military installations, that we would lose. We would take school away from our children." So you actually do not see, contrary to popular belief, there are no soldiers assigned to schools in Israel even with the number of terrorist attacks they've had on school targets there. They have not gone that direction because they understand we lose the whole process and experience of education if we turn our schools into installations, fortresses or prisons.

Randy: Wow. I love your emphasis on being practical. I love your emphasis on research and data. I could talk to you for hours, but we're going to talk at about 45-50 minutes. I had wanted to stay away from active shooter situations because I know from research, although these catastrophic events are in the media and horrific, that their probability, as you mentioned earlier, is quite low. But I also don't want listeners to conclude that those attacks can happen at their school. And I am constantly and routinely asked at programs, at trainings even out socially, "Should we be arming teachers with weapons?"

I actually saw a news report today of a school district that bought 10 automatic weapons for their police officers they have on site, or other safety experts who are out advocating "Attack the intruder". What's your experience, your expertise and research? Summarize that regarding those more visible approaches. You alluded to it a little bit in the physical structure, but what's your take on those? Because I get asked by parents and family members and people in my church, those kinds of questions.

Michael: Well, first of all, so the first part of your question I guess is important. There is no school in any country that cannot have a mass casualty shooting. I mean we've seen this People's Republic of China, they have the death penalty for possession of

ammunition, let alone a firearm. They've had a number of school shootings and mass casualty shootings. And so the notion that this is just a uniquely American problem or a modern problem is...the first active shooter event occurred at a Catholic school in upstate New York in 1871, I believe it was, the late 1800s. Two in Canada right around the turn of the century, one in Austria in 1905. And I can come up to more modern examples, but there is no school anywhere in the world that is immune from the threat of active shooter. And as we've seen, there have been a lot of mass casualty attacks with knives and other weapons, as many as 14 people killed, for example, in a Chinese school, individual with a butcher knife.

So that risk is always there and has been. The first mass casualty attack at a school in what we now know is America was actually in 1764 in a one-room school house. It was a horrific attack. So that risk is here, it's present, it's been here. And it's in every 25 countries we've worked in. But we, again, need to balance that with...the world is not coming apart at the seams when it comes to these attacks. They've been occurring for many years, and we, again, don't want to forget other forms of violence as we address it.

Now, there's actually a surprising number of educators in the United States that now carry weapons. I was recently teaching in Ohio and learned that they've trained and certified now more than 10,000 educators in Ohio to carry a firearm at work. Now, nobody knows how many actually carry a gun. We do know of one actual shooting that was prevented through that, and it was during actually a home visit. A teacher pulled his weapon when a student pulled a rifle on him, and he was able to persuade the young man to drop the weapon. But it's not something that we typically recommend especially in the US.

And again, I go back to the data. When we look at the things that are causing death in school, are we really addressing all the things rather than some situations that are very frightening to us because they're just of such catastrophic scale? But they are indeed rare. So we want to make sure we have that balance.

There's a number of these programs. It's called the Options Based Active Shooter Training Programs. We are deeply concerned. We know there are millions of dollars' worth of staff injuries every year. We had \$1 million in medical bills just for one insurance carrier paid out for injuries that occurred in a 22-month time span for one active shooter training program just for the State of Iowa.

We've got active litigation right now for some of these programs. None of these programs, by the way, have been validated it's effective. There is no testing and evaluation to show that any active shooter training program is effective. So we urge caution. We're seeing a lot of fear, we're seeing teachers quit because they're so frightened by the way some of these programs are presented. And we have seen in our testing and evaluation, which is pretty rigorous, that people who've been through those types of training programs actually perform worse than other staff in the same school organization that have no training at all. It's just amazing to watch how poorly people function when they go through a lot of these training programs because none of them are really grounded in testing and evaluation. At least none that we have seen so far out of the 10 or 12 programs we're familiar with.

So we've cautioned people. We tell school superintendents and headmasters, "Be sure you check with your insurance carrier," because insurance companies are now sometimes sending policies to underwriting because of all these injuries that we've been seeing in lawsuits. So be sure you check out carefully before you go with that type of route.

Randy: I'll quickly interrupt, too. I appreciate you not mentioning any...because it's something we often talk about. There are good programs, there are good trainers across all array. And I guess the thing that I recall most, too, from some of your readings and some of your research, you suggest that unless a person has been through specific military or police training to disarm someone with a weapon, they actually can increase their chance of injury to self or others. Am I getting that correct, as I recall that?

Michael: Yes. And what we're saying is, for example, we use...and you offer these on your website, the scenario videos, and we have over a hundred school crisis scenarios that we video tape. We've got audio simulations. And so some of them we use in our testing and evaluation. We've got quite a few depicting somebody threatening suicide, taking hostages, or doing something with a weapon that is not an active shooter then. And what we're seeing is that people of every active shooter training program that we've tested people, if they've seen any of the videos or been through a lot of training, we get a startling number of people who for example, when we depict a student threatening suicide with the muzzle of a gun touching their temple, finger on the trigger at 10 feet, they attack that student. They see him or her as a gunman, and they attack. That's a very serious problem.

And I could go on with a lot of examples of that. But it's like taking medical school and trying to make it six months, you just can't do it. I had 80 hours of very advanced, close quarters combat training, which is things like disarming somebody with a weapon as a police officer when I went to training. And I've had to do it. I was attacked by an individual with a weapon when I was off duty and stupidly did not have my service weapon with me. And myself and the person he was trying to kill, who was an ex-girlfriend, we both almost died that night. And I will tell you that the 80 hours of training that I had, it did not work. And I got a lot heavier dose of much better quality training than any of these programs we're seeing, and I found it inadequate.

And we interviewed Tom Sadley [SP], who, if you've ever seen the movie "Blackhawk Down", his actions are depicted in that movie, six-time recipient of the bronze star, combat experience at four countries as a member of the US Army Delta Force. And he said, with six months of training, he has seen special operators who were unable to do those same techniques under actual combat conditions. So [inaudible 00:29:05] to ask to put somebody through a 10-minute video or 3 or 5 or 6 training program to be able to make the judgement as to whether this particular situation, you should try to disarm.

And keep in mind we've had six school employees killed so far in the US trying to disarm people. So there's a time and a place for it, but it's not a stock approach. At this point at least, we don't see any training programs that are reliable or tested. So you're correct.

Randy: All right. Excellent. All right, thanks for talking about that. And again, I want to stay away from it, but with the current media attention that exists, we can't. Let's talk a little bit. I know you did a podcast on "Weakfish" and bullying a little bit ago with this. But bullying is such an important topic. Could you speak briefly to one or two comments and suggestions around bullying? What can a teacher do to help keep that student physically and emotionally safer from all of those types of cyber and other types of attacks? A couple suggestions for the classroom teacher.

Michael: Sure. First, to reiterate two things that you and I have talked about — the student supervision and close connection. To me, those are a strong foundation. They will reduce the frequency and intensity of at least bullying that occurs on school property. But they'll also make it more likely that a child reaches out to help. I know when I was severely bullied...it's a lot harder for me to talk about being bullied than it is actually to talk about when I was raped as a young boy. I know that may sound strange to people. My experiences may not reflect those of others, but I know the bullying that I experienced was just extremely traumatic.

And so I think most people don't know how hard it is for a child to come forward. So first of all, be that person that can come to be accessible to them. And then next for the teacher, take the time to learn the signs and indications of bullying. That's, I think, a big one, is you know the definition of bullying and know what the indicators are. So there's one problem we have in this society, is we like to label things. And we're seeing a lot of things being labelled as bullying that are not. Sexual assault is not bullying. Stabbing somebody, beating somebody severely, those are criminal acts.

And so we do need to know what bullying is and is not so that we're taking the right responses. That would be my advice to the rank-and-file school teacher.

Randy: Excellent, excellent, well said. Educators and teachers that I know, administrators that I've worked with are constantly being asked by parents and community members questions such as, "Well, how safe is your school? How safe are my children that attend your local school? What are you doing at your school to keep students safe?" Can you share a few thoughts for teachers, principals that they can tell parents to reassure them that their children are in a physically and emotionally safe place and space for the six, seven hours a day at elementary schools and so many more hours in that at the secondary schools?

Michael: Sure. And it's a really good question. The answer that I'm going to give may be a little surprising why I think it's so important. But there are a couple of reasons. The first thing is don't react with a normal gut reaction. A lot of educators would feel to say, "Our school is a safe school. We do this, we do this. Your child is safe here." First of all, that can cause some very significant liability concerns if you're ever litigated for a safety event which can happen in the best run of schools.

Secondly, it doesn't bear credibility to the average person when we say that. So what I tell people to say and what we always say is, "Look, there's a certain amount of risk anywhere and our school is no different from that. We have taken what we feel are significant measures to enhance safety of your child. Here are some things we have done." And ask the person, "What do you think we should do? Do you have any suggestions?" And say, "We're not saying we're going to do them, but we'd like to hear you out."

That type of dialogue in my experience has been the most effective. I've seen a lot of school officials lose a lot of credibility overreaching with statements about the level of safety they have. And it's been very problematic. We had a school district here in my state. At that time, clearly the best funded district in Georgia,

and their superintendent made some statements like that in the news and they paid for it for years. I mean the media, every time something happened, it was highlighted in the media. And it lacked credibility when the superintendent said, "We have this..." and this is the type of thing never to say, he in a public meeting said that they had the safest school system in America.

And it just wasn't true, and you can't really quantify a thing like that. So don't overreach in how you respond. Just understand that the public realizes that you're not perfect and you can't do everything perfect, but they just want to know that you're frank about it and you are taking it seriously and you're open to input. In my experience, people react very well to that type of approach rather than trying to assure them that their child is safe.

Randy: Excellent. I love that. It reminds me of conversations that's been a number of years ago when we added the school resource officers into our school setting. And I was out in community groups and around town, and I had people saying, "Well, has the school gotten that bad that you have to bring the police in?" And I always took the conversation toward, "It's the reasonable, responsible thing to do at this time. And we want to help so it doesn't get that bad," and whatever they meant by "that bad." But we had things we could do. I love being upfront about it. But that's great advice about not assuring people that bad things can't happen because they can.

So before we move to closure on this session, I like to offer presenters and speakers like yourself, like Bing will offer a free space. So I'm going to give you one more chance to answer or offer any secret or suggestion for parents, for students, for teachers, for administrators, anybody associated with schools in terms of what can we or individually and collectively do to promote physical and emotional or safer places in those classrooms on the front line? So free space for Michael Dorn.

Michael: I would say tailor your approach to fit your particular situation. As a classroom teacher, being in one part of the building could have different connotations of being in another part. Being in one part

of a community could be different than being in another part of the same community. So be sure you tailor your approaches to safety to fit the uniqueness of your building, your programs, the way you teach. And that those approaches center around supporting your mission of education.

It is very striking to us. We've now performed security and safety assessments for over 6,000 K-12 schools. So we've assessed schools in Alaska, Florida, Maine, Texas, Colorado, as well as in Nigeria, Kenya, Vietnam, and a lot of other countries. And one of the things that we see repeatedly being a problem is this cookie-cutter approach. We want to download what we call "a can and a plan," a canned crisis plan, or we want to boil down active shooter to something like run, hide, fight.

In our approach, trying to over simplify things and just have a cookie-cutter approach is very dangerous. So take the time to learn what your risks are. And one of the best ways for a district or a school, an independent school, or a non-public school, or charter school is to have a proper assessment done before you go making major changes. That's not cost-effective in our experience. We didn't just buy a bunch of things. So however you approach it, just make sure you tailor the solutions that you come up with to fit your situation and don't assume that just because another district across the state or another school across town does something, it's going to work just as well for you. It may, or it might not. It just depends on whether it's a good fit for your situation.

Randy: Excellent. Same thing in the area of curriculum, a neighboring school down the road adopts a particular academic curriculum. That may or may not be best for your students in your part of town, or in your school district. And people have that tendency to see something on the news and suddenly we've got to do it because someone else does. So tailoring it, wow. I love you your ideas. I love your practical suggestions, and we're going to move to our little bit of closure.

So I'd like to thank Mike for sharing his time and his insights. I love the idea, the valuable common sense ideas you've offered. That was where we were going when we structured this interview. And I also don't want this to be an infomercial or a commercial, but if you want to learn more about Mike, his resources, CPI does carry several of your resources, your books, "Staying Alive" and "Weakfish". We also have that video training series available, "The First 30 Seconds" and that is just fabulous and just exceptional. And all those are available on our website.

Also, after this session, people could download a great article that you wrote for us, and we really appreciate that. Any other listeners, I'd also suggest to contact me directly, Dr. Randy Boardman at CPI, 414-979-7084. I could try to point you to our other resources. Mike is available at Safe Havens International, tremendous resources. Please use him. One thing I appreciate about you over the years, beyond your expertise, is you always call back. You always respond back to me and point me in directions that I need to go.

So if there's anything else we can do for those of you that are listening, I'd like to say good luck during the rest of the current school year, and planning and preparations for next year. Thank you for making a difference, thank you for all you do on a daily basis to keep our school a school in a learning setting where people can be physically and emotionally safer.

Michael Dorn, thank you for your time.

Michael: Thank you, Doctor. It's been a pleasure.