

“Real Life Experience”: As you will learn, I am very big on sharing these with you, to make a point and bring you something to learn that comes from real life. This month I want to share a small moment that changed life forever, for a couple of people at my workplace.

Three of us were standing around talking, after our lunch (dinner for the rest of you), when from around the corner a woman screams as loud as possible, “OH MY G-D, OH MY G-D” spaced by ear piercing screams. The three of us look at one another with disbelief and misunderstanding, wondering what the heck was going on. Now this woman, who was yelling rather loudly, is known to be fairly loud in general and known to get excited from time to time, mostly in gest. So at first and for a while we thought she was playing around, if anything. Not long after this started, the sound came in our direction, from down a side hallway. We listened to the sounds coming our way, and out from the hallway came this woman with her right hand in the air, being held by one of our supervisors. The two of them rounded the corner, went away from us about 15 feet, then turned around and headed back the same way they came. To us it appeared that they were playing, and we followed them down the hallway to see what was going on. As we entered the room where things had happened, the two of them headed through and out of that room on the other side. All the while she continued to voice how she felt. In the room where things took place we found a number of co-workers standing around and milling around, with looks of surprise, blank stares, and bewilderment on their faces. Well, our building is located a ¼ block from Northwestern Hospital, the supervisor and she headed directly over there.

At this point, with them on their way to the hospital, that left the rest of us to go over what had happened. This woman had come into this area and had a conversation with a couple of co-workers. One co-worker began to do some work for the 10pm news show, and requested some of the conversation to be taken out of his immediate area. This woman in leaving the room made an effort to close the door behind her, but as we know, those doors are hard to close, let me say, very hard to close. You can hear doors slamming throughout the day because of this. Anyway, apparently she tried a couple of times to close the door, unsuccessfully. So the worker in the room, said, I’ll get it, and he slammed the door. This would be when the screaming began. At first, even he thought she was kidding, but in opening the door, it was quickly understood, the seriousness of the situation. She had caught her hand in the door jam. The result of this, was, the lose of a section of the underside of her middle finger, and later to learn she crushed a couple of others. I can point out that she has lost the finger down to the first knuckle and is out of work for sometime to come.

So, long story, but setting it up is very important to understand what to learn. I have taken a number of First Aid and CPR classes, with work and GWRRA, and little by little I have to admit, some of it is actually sinking in. So the questions are these, what would you have done if you were the supervisor, within arms reach of this whole thing, or what would you have done if you were where I was, on the peripheral of the situation, or what would you have done if you were the one who closed the door on her hand!!!

Assessment of the situation is the first step. To actually understand what is going on. The second step is to determine if you can help, but not get yourself into danger. The third step is to make sure that someone is contacting 911. The fourth step is to try and secure the area and the people in it so no one else gets hurt and those with proper training can assist those that need it.

In this case, the supervisor grabbed the woman and made an effort to control the injury and urge her to the hospital for medical attention. That decision was made based on the quickest way to get that help. Waiting for an ambulance would have taken three times as long.

911 was called, rather quickly, but the situation was not well understood, and that person didn’t really know what to say to 911. That could have been done better. Many were still glazed for the sounds and actions of the event and milling around. Not much direction. No one was really in charge of the area at that

time. When I came in, I found some splattering of blood, and instantly called the building for cleanup and to explain what took place. That put into motion their response which included taking pictures of the area for legal reasons before the clean up. In addition, we accessed those standing around and tried to calm everyone down and move into groups for discussion of the events for clarification and understanding. This practice did well for calming people down and reducing the stress of the moment. Management was notified and they went directly to the hospital. Later returning to inform us of her condition.

Things were settling down and all seemed to be returning to a more normal atmosphere. But wait, had anybody, considered the state of our worker who slammed the door that started this chain of events??? Did anyone see how he had reacted to the whole thing? I understand that he picked up the small piece of the finger and handed it to the supervisor before they headed to the hospital. That had to be a very difficult thing to do. Well in our classes, the victim is not always the one that gets hurt, many times it can be the person who causes the accident, and even more surprising, it can be anyone who just witnesses the event. Emotional stress is experienced in many different ways, and what doesn't affect you, may be paralyzing to another in the same situation.

I went in to talk to this co-worker, he was trying to work and keep his mind on other things, but you could see that it was not working very well. As I put my hand on his shoulder, he was shaking from head to toe. It was obvious that he was very shaken by all the events. It was just as important to address his needs as it was the woman who got hurt. Too often in these situations we become narrow focused and miss those affected by these incidents.

I said that this will affect them forever, in her case, she has lost the tip of her middle finger and it will be a long time before she can work. Right now she can not even look at herself, and wonders what that will be like, when the bandages come off. That remains a very emotional time for her and something she will be reminded of forever. He, has to live with what he caused, even though an accident and no one blames him, at all, he has his own scar to carry.

As someone that can become involved in an accident while riding motorcycles, you need to educate yourself. Learn and understand what to do when a fellow biker goes down. At the very least, learn these steps if you are riding along and there is an accident to a fellow rider:

1. ***Get yourself and bike to a safe place, that doesn't interfere with the accident scene.*** I can't stress this point strong enough. You will be of no service if you don't follow this rule.
2. ***Access and secure the accident scene.*** As quickly as possible understand what happened and what the present situation is, in regard to the condition of the person injured and the surrounding area. Someone needs to be giving directions to others in the area to secure the scene, to keep any danger from affecting the scene, and to get your ***first aid*** kits out.
3. After accessing the injured, ***call 911*** and be able to give them your location and the facts on the situation and the condition of the injured.
4. Post someone at both ends of the road to ***control traffic*** and be able to direct emergency vehicles to the scene.
5. Finally, pay attention to the ***emotional needs*** of the people in your group who witnessed and helped to take care of this accident situation. All involved will be affected in some way, and sometimes that might not be readily visible. So be sensitive and observant.
6. ***Take a class***, First Aid, CPR, Co-Rider, all these will give you some ideas of what to do out on the road when something goes wrong.