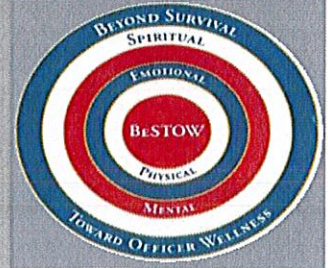


ATTACHMENT B

V.E.S.T. NEWSLETTER SAMPLE

The VEST

Vitality through Emotional Survival Training



The La Mesa Police Department recognizes the need to support, develop, and enhance the wellness of its employees throughout their careers in order for them to provide the highest quality of service and assistance to the community, while learning to take good care of themselves and each other. This need consists of providing an "in house" resource for employees and their family members, to support them in managing both professional and personal crisis, as well as providing proactive training in emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness practices to instruct employees how to most effectively protect and serve our community and each other. BeSTOW stands for "Beyond Survival Toward Officer Wellness".

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To The Entire LMPD Family,

This edition of The V.E.S.T. is a little different than past editions. In the pages that follow, you will find a personal message from each member of the command staff. As always, this edition also includes articles and resources that your Wellness Team hopes speak to the issues and challenges you are facing.

Our agency is made up of many unique and talented individuals, but never doubt that you **are** the agency. Now, more than ever, we need each and every member of this family. We will get through these challenges by looking out for one another, fostering and developing the comradery and teamwork that has long been a critical component of law enforcement, and by enhancing a culture of wellness at our agency.

To do that, it is incumbent upon each of us to practice self-care. Self-care is not selfish; self-care is about survival. Our community needs its guardians to be healthy on all levels (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually). Perhaps more importantly, each of you deserve to live a happy and healthy life. This profession has and will continue to take a toll on all of us. How we respond to that toll is a question for each individual and for us collectively as an agency.

Your Wellness Team recently met to discuss how the team can take a more proactive role in your recovery, resiliency, and health as we move forward. We are committed to your wellness and we will be rolling out several ideas in the near future. We also want to hear from you; if there is something the Wellness Team can do to improve morale, organizational wellness, or your personal wellness, we are actively seeking your input. The Team is committed to bringing this family together as we navigate our future. Until then, please take care of yourselves and take care of each other.

Your LMPD Peer Support/Wellness Team

Ray Sweeney

La Mesa Family,

While the past several months have been extremely challenging, I wanted to take a moment and tell you how proud I am of each and every one of you! On May 30th, we experienced a peaceful protest turned into a riot. You all answered the call and responded as you were trained. We came together as a team and although there was mass damage throughout the city, not a single officer or citizen was killed or seriously injured. You continued to answer the call through the next few months in extremely challenging conditions.

I know that this, along with all of the other issues currently facing La Mesa and our Department not only affects you, but also your family. With that said, I want you to know that we will get through this together and please do not be afraid to reach out for help. Officer wellness is critical to surviving this career and we have many resources available to you.

La Mesa has always been about family and it is what our agency prides ourselves on. Take care of your family members both here and at home. I'll end this the way I began it by telling you again how proud I am of all of you! I want each of you to know that you play an important role in this great agency and together we will continue to succeed.

Sincerely,
Ray

Matt Nicholass

The year 2020 has tested us as individuals, families, department members, communities, and the nation. From the beginning of the year, we started off learning about the Corona Virus as it blanketed Wuhan, China, and started developing in the United States. It quickly evolved from discussions to reality. By March, it changed the world around us in ways never imaginable. In our profession, we had to adapt to ever-changing conditions, from instituting new personal protective equipment protocols to safely interacting with the community. Our policing strategies and patterns were thrown off balance. Outside of work, we saw our children sent home from school with no daycare options, a lack of personal supplies at local stores, family members, and friends out of work. All of these abnormalities caused confusion and stress. We were tested not only as public servants but as human beings.

May 30, 2020, is a day that La Mesa will never forget. The City of La Mesa saw the most violent riot the region has ever seen. This was when evil fought hard to burn down our police station with you inside. It was the day when all your training and experience were tested. This was a day when you had to rise to the challenges to maintain order and protect one another. This was the day every one of you fought to keep us whole. For that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

It didn't stop there...The aftermath of the riot continued to test all of you. Some media coverage portrayed a negative image of us, and community members questioned our ethics and integrity. Not to mention the psychological impact of continually seeing pictures of the destruction. All of this took a toll on you as it did me. Some of you have questioned your desire to remain in law enforcement and whether you are supported in the course of your duties. I hope I can answer that by saying absolutely! You are supported, and your calling is here. Every single member of this team is extremely valuable to our success as an organization. You are here because you care about each other, our department, and the city we swore to protect.

Let me close by saying, I am proud and impressed by each and every member of this organization. You have endured circumstances beyond imagination, and we will become stronger as a result!

Respectfully,
Matt

Christine McMillen

I can't begin to describe how proud I am of the resilience, flexibility and commitment shown by the La Mesa Police Department Communications team over the past six months.

It started in March with the coronavirus pandemic. Not only did you have to learn about all things COVID, incorporate new screening questions into your call-taking, and handle numerous calls with questions and complaints about COVID issues; but as essential workers, you did not have the luxury of remaining safer from virus exposure at home. You continued to report for duty every day, even though you might have been worried about contracting the virus due to our shared workspaces and around the clock work environment, adding additional stress to an already stressful occupation.

Just when we thought 2020 couldn't get any more strange or stressful, the events of May 27 hit. Our department received nationwide negative publicity from a viral video of a police encounter. This resulted in numerous hateful phone calls from people all over the country, which continued for weeks. As the frontline for anyone calling the police department, you all had to take the brunt of these terrible calls, and you did so with grace and professionalism.

May 30, 2020. For the La Mesa Police Department, this is a date that will never be forgotten. The protests, which devolved into violent riots, were like nothing ever seen before in our region, much less in La Mesa. As public safety employees you are used to dealing with all manner of emergencies, but this time, with our station under attack, WE were the victims of the emergency.

Throughout the chaotic events of that evening, you continued to perform your duties with a calmness and strength that didn't reflect the chaos happening just outside our door, or the fear that you were feeling. You were forced to adapt and overcome, whether you were working in the station, or working remotely when conditions were deemed too dangerous. You have risen to the occasion several times since then, with the uncertainty that each new protest event brought to our department and to the community.

I have been in this profession for over 30 years and have worked for other agencies. La Mesa Police Department dispatchers rival any other department for teamwork, dedication, and professionalism. You are truly the best I have ever worked with.

24/7/365, you are always there, and always ready. So proud of you all!!

~Christine

Chad Bell

I will say when asked to write this article, I only thought of one word:

GRATITUDE!

Every day, each member of the La Mesa Police Department represents the law enforcement profession in an exemplary fashion. In the past 9 months especially, I have witnessed fortitude, humility, bravery, honesty, integrity and loyalty. It has not gone unnoticed and it has been extraordinary to witness.

After the riot of May 30th, all of you came to work knowing what we were up against, a volatile and untraveled path, yet you still came. You left behind your families and answered the call. There have been ups and downs (mostly downs), but each of you have pressed on and continued to hold your heads high with pride and integrity. You continue to fulfill the critical mission of serving and protecting this community. Regardless of all the noise nationwide, our community need us out there. I am grateful to serve with you as we work to fulfill that mission. This is truly a noble profession.

I have the utmost respect and most of all, GRATITUDE, for each of you. I thank you for what you do for this Department and for the citizens of the community we serve!

With gratitude,

Chad

Brian Stoney

Each and every day, more than 800,000 police officers, all across the nation, stand along that Thin Blue Line, shouldering the responsibility for keeping our communities safe, helping those in need, and running towards the danger that your average person runs away from. That is why a career in law enforcement has long been viewed by society as the noblest of professions. And yet, here we are in the year 2020, and a ridiculous national narrative has emerged in which police officers-no matter the color of their uniform or the shape of their badge-are no longer seen as the “good guys”, but instead we are made to look like the “bad guys.” If you believe what you see on the nightly news, you might think that we are the actual problem, versus being the inevitable solution to the problem. If you believe that... you'd be wrong.

While we can all agree that there are many major issues surrounding police work in America nowadays, all of which are worthy of serious discussion and a commitment to address those issues; I can guarantee you that 99% of the law enforcement professionals themselves, are not the problem. “To Protect and to Serve,” requires courage, strength, and dedication. Not to mention ethics, integrity, accountability and honesty. The list goes on and on. Working for the police department...simply put, it's not easy. Never has been, never will be. If it was...anybody could do it. But they don't. You do.

The vast majority of the nation's police take on this risky assignment because they are committed to keeping America safe. The men and women of the La Mesa Police Department are no different. You are well trained, trustworthy, and of sound character. You have a very difficult job to say the least. You make tough decisions in high-pressure situations, sometimes with life and death consequences. The demands of this job, day in and day out, can take a toll on a person. However, unless you've worn the badge yourself, or have had a family member who has; you will never understand that a career in law enforcement can and does come at an emotional cost to the men and women who pursue it. We cannot expect you to continue to do the impossible, without recognizing the physical and mental challenges that you face. I know, this is going to sound strange coming from me, but you must take care of yourself and of each other.

You have been asked to do more in the last five (5) months, than any group of law enforcement professionals has been asked to do in recent history...far more than any group in the history of La Mesa PD. While the rest of the world sat at home, you went to work, fighting an invisible enemy in the middle of a “global pandemic.” As if that wasn't enough, an inherently stressful job was made that much worse by a constant undercurrent of distrust and negative public opinion, that ultimately erupted in civil unrest all across the nation, including right here in the City of La Mesa. And, unfortunately, it's not over yet.

To say that these are challenging times would be an understatement. Trying to find a way protect the constitutional rights of others while maintaining some semblance of public safety...dare I say, law and order, is not easy. But you have proven time and time again that you are up for the challenge. No matter what we have asked you to do...you've done it. For that and so much more, I want to thank you...the men and women of the La Mesa Police Department for all that you have done and will continue to do, to protect the community that we serve. They appreciate it. I appreciate it. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed. Each and every one of you, are what makes this Department so incredible. Each and every one of you, are what makes that Thin Blue Line so unbreakable.

Much Respect, Stoney

Greg Runge

It is hard to believe that we are already sitting here in the month of September. To say that this year has been difficult, challenging and... for better or worse, memorable... would definitely be an understatement. As I try to sort out my thoughts on the past 8+ months, there is one in particular that constantly resonates with me. And that is how immensely proud I am of every member of this Department.

Through the unknowns of COVID-19 and the physical, verbal, and most importantly, the emotional attacks on you, your Department, and your profession, you have all stood tall and taken care of business with the utmost of pride and professionalism. For many of you, the stress doesn't end when you leave work as there are things like ill family members, loss of income, and adjustments to virtual schooling for your kids that take a huge toll on your physical and emotional resources. Trust me, I know how hard it has been to navigate through this year. But, in the end, you have all come to work in the face of the adversity and performed admirably. I cannot thank you enough.

I have personally heard the warnings from some of you that there is an urgent morale issue on our hands at our Department. For some of you, that crisis may already have arrived on a personal level. This is understandable given all that you have been through. Please know that the difficulties you have endured are not lost on me or the rest of the Command Staff, and that we will do everything we can to acknowledge your sacrifices, address your concerns and support you as we move forward.

Although it may be difficult to maintain a positive outlook right now, I am confident that we will get through this and grow as an organization. Your community overwhelmingly supports you and what you are doing- you only need to remember the outpouring of meals, cards, posters and drawings that we have received these past months to see the proof. Try your best to ignore the negative rhetoric and focus on all of the awesome reasons you decided to join this profession.

Last but certainly not least, don't forget to take care of your own physical and mental health. Your Peer Support Team is here for you, and in addition, excellent professional services are available through Dr. Catherine Butler and the City provided Employee Assistance Program. Information on how to access these resources can be found in the Code 7 room, or by asking any Peer Support Team member.

Thank you all again for your hard work and dedication!

Greg

Katy Lynch

To the Men and Women of the La Mesa Police Department,

At the beginning of May, I sat down to write each of you the following note:

In April, I reached the 15-year mark of my career at LMPD. As I reflected on that fact (where did the time go?!), I was also confronted with an astounding reality: the work you do today is far more challenging than it was when I was a baby cop. There is a myriad of reasons for that: AB109, Prop 47, legalization of marijuana, case law decisions, 5150's, homelessness, social media, and last but not least, COVID-19!

The law enforcement profession has always had to face and address new challenges and change. While I don't know what the future holds, there are two things I am absolutely certain of: 1) there will always be more changes and new challenges and, 2) cops are incredibly resilient and adaptive human beings (meaning we will figure out a way to work through those challenges).

With all of that in mind, there is one thing that does not change: the why of our job. Why did any of us want to become cops in the first place? Whether you believe this profession is a calling or not, I personally believe in the great nobility of police work. We do what others cannot do and we go places others will not go. Because at heart, we are guardians. Despite the threat of COVID and despite our inability to book pretty much anyone into jail, you continue to put on the uniform and go out there. Because it's not what we can't do that drives us, it's what we can do. Remember that you serve in a noble profession that is sometimes all that stands between the weak and anarchy. Remember the why each and every time you put the uniform on.

And then, May 30th happened. When I wrote the above note, I never imagined that our resolve and commitment to this profession would be further tested. I never imagined that you would literally be the only thing standing between the weak and anarchy. For me personally, coming into work became really difficult. And then I remembered my "why" and discovered I had two "why's":

I still believe in the silent majority. I believe in the 99% of the population that needs us, appreciates us, and knows we are all that stands between them and those who would do them harm. I know that's hard to remember, especially in the really tough moments. But I know they are out there. They are my why.

And most of all, I put on the uniform every day for each of you. I have seen each of you step up, stand up, and hold the line. Not because you were ordered to, but because your brothers and sisters were standing next to you. You stood for each other. And so, I will stand for you. You are my why.

"He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." Remember your why each and every time you put the uniform on. Be proud, of yourselves and of each other. I have never been more proud of you than I am today.

Never doubt that you are ESSENTIAL.

With deep respect,

Katy

Emotional Armor

Dr. Catherine Butler, LMFT

2020 is pretty much an ongoing nightmare.

Between Covid-19 arriving in March, and the world shutting down, kids coming home, many missed events and cancelled plans, May 30, protests and riots, anti-policing sentiments, the kids are *still* at home, and now, politics and fire season, it can feel like a hopeless and helpless situation.

Just remember: It's not what you can't do about all this (fix it!)...it's what you **CAN** do. In order to come through this unprecedented time intact, happy and healthy, it's important to evaluate your positive options and opportunities. You all work for LMPD, but you are also living in your own life outside the department and that's so very important as well.

Every time you go out to work, you put your gear on. Each component is critical, or you wouldn't carry it around. Once you are dressed or are available for the next 911 call or customer contact, you also put on emotional armor.

It's invisible, but it's there. It's how you manage the sadness of what happens to people out there, or the anger about what is going wrong. Emotional armor helps protect you from the ongoing demands of the job: it attempts to separate you from the pain or the violence and protect you from feeling vulnerable or exposed in any way. It serves to keep you calm, in control and in charge.

But, as you all know, from time to time, it overflows and all that negativity can literally spray all over someone near to you, either personally or professionally.

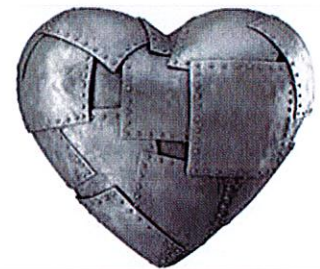
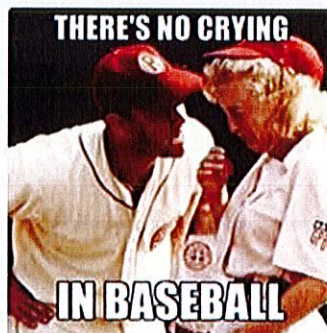
And it can be very challenging to clean up.

The "Rule of Four"

It takes four positive statements to begin to undo one negative. Think about your last negative encounter with your spouse or child or friend. Was it too harsh, or over the top? What you said might have been correct, but how was it delivered? You can say you are sorry all you want, but if the negative comments keep flowing, pretty soon, sorry just won't matter anymore.

What eventually happens is that emotional armor becomes too difficult to take off when you go home, and it is an intimacy killer.

Continuous exposure to trauma can lead to a hardening or numbing of feelings and emotion. On the job, emotion has to be put aside so that the job can be accomplished. Showing or feeling emotions at work, aside from humor, is summed up courtesy of Tom Hanks' character in the movie "A League of Their Own".



Emotional Armor Continued

When you do this job long enough eventually it becomes just easier to stay in the role of a rescuer and support everyone else but reject support for yourself. Over time this results in loneliness, isolation and resentment. It can also make having an affair very easy to do, because that creates a false belief that someone new can fill in the pain and the real people in your life just don't understand. Hiding behind the emotional armor that you never take off will guarantee nothing gets close, hurts too much, or feels overwhelming.

The irony is, your partner, the one you might think doesn't understand or care, can also develop emotional armor. But they develop it so they don't appear as complaining or not supportive. They can become stoic, distant and emotionally strong...and equally disconnected.

Too much of this means that both partners may not feel able to share and listen to difficult emotions. And then the children also learn that it's better to shut down (or act out) in an attempt to manage all the feelings. Brushing over difficult or unpleasant emotions just increases feelings of disconnection and criticism.

These are crazy times we are living in. Divorces, suicides, overdoses are all on the rise. Mental illness is increasing as unemployment, housing, education issues, financial concerns and health concerns continue to grow. It is so important to keep your home front as a sanctuary away from all the noise the world is generating right now.

Here are a few ways around the wall that might just help keep a good conversation open up instead of shutting down:

"That's a little hard to hear, but I want to. Give me some examples."

"You're really upset and coming at me with guns flaring. I can hear you better if you can deliver this in a calmer way. Can you?"

"I have a different version of what happened. Do you want to go first and then I'll go second, or the other way around?"

"That statement really hurts. If you can help me understand where you're going with this, I can listen better."

"Can you help me understand what has happened between us that is making you respond this way?"

"I can't hear what you need me to because of the way you're saying it, and I want to. Can you present it with less need to blame me? I want to get this, but my defenses are getting in the way."

Remember: anger is really worry turned outward. When someone is angry, chances are they are really frustrated, fearful, anxious or concerned. When you can find out what the real issue is, you can keep talking. You may not be able to fix it, but you can hear it and acknowledge it, and that will go a long way to foster love and intimacy.

There are many options the department has for you to help you and your family stay afloat and thrive in this era. Don't hesitate to use them. Work smarter, not harder, and remember, you got into policing to help in difficult times...it's time to use all your self care resources and start by taking care of yourself and your relationships and leave the emotional armor in your locker when you head home. People are waiting for you!

If You Could See—by Ret. Chief Michael Cloutier, adapted from PoliceOne

If you could see what I have seen, maybe you'd understand,
It takes a special kind of person, who opts to make a stand.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd have a ringside seat to life,
It is not always full of sugar and roses, often there is strife.

If you could see what I have seen, the holidays aren't always merry,
We labor day in and day out, always to protect your family.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand the cost,
That consumes a loving mother, when her 2 year old is lost.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand their pain,
When you tell his parents in the middle of the night that his death was not in vain.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand the grief,
The entire family suffers from what he injects underneath.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd opt to go in,
Because you know that someone is trapped from within.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd know a family's care,
Reading the last message on her cell phone, knowing she is not there.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd recognize it in her eyes,
When that child speaks, you're the only one not surprised.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd chase him near and far,
For what he did to that little boy, left a huge emotional scar.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand the truth,
The media paints a picture that is erroneous and uncouth.

If you could see what I have seen, you might choose other work,
Because you'd feel that this one takes much more than it is worth.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd experience the uncertainty,
While my family waits to hear from me, knowing it's often dirty.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd help to lead the way,
Hoping to ensure that everyone goes home that day.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd know there are miracles all around,
And realize your daily sacrifice, helps communities abound.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand his will,
When a 9 year old loses his father, the impact is forever still.

If you could see what I have seen, the stories are all true,
But the scars are not always visible, not even to you.

If you could see what I have seen, you'd understand what I do,
It's not in vain, the reason is simple; I do it all for you.

Dedicated to the modern-day guardians dressed in blue.

The Badge and Budget Investor

By Danny Budget

It's easier than you think! You can and will succeed.

Each person holds so much power within themselves that needs to be let out. Sometimes they just need a little nudge, a little direction, a little support, a little coaching, and the greatest things can happen—Pete Carroll

What did you envision when you joined the law enforcement family? Whether you were 2 or 12 or 22 years old at the time... what was on your mind? Catching the bad guys? The thrill of a car chase? Or solving a murder? I bet the last thing on your mind was...how much will I make? When will I retire? Will I have enough money to retire? And even as you started your law enforcement career, I bet you were thinking, I can't wait to graduate the academy? NOT—I can't wait to save money for my retirement! Really, we make choices now that will change our lives in the future.

To protect & serve is our #1 priority for our law enforcement family and our community! BUT think about your own family! What is your #1 priority for them? To protect your family by providing for them should also be on your mind, and the sooner the better. As you'll learn, compounding is your BEST friend and lack of time is your enemy!

Do you fight about money with your significant other or your self? I know I do, I have, and I will. My wife is an MVP member! I know, I know, what's an MVP member? An MVP member stands for Most Valuable Prime member! Prime, yes Prime, the Amazon Prime...does anyone else come home after a long day of work and just want to find their 'magic chair'!

Oh yeah, but wait, what is that on the front porch step, no, I don't believe it, another package. I see it—a package, the creases lined with that hideous black tape with writing in light blue stating, "Movies and tv streaming, Prime." With that little half smiling arrow symbol. The symbol mocks me.

Really, more Amazon packages on my door step. I pick up the package wondering what was so important that it needed to be ordered and delivered so quickly, Two Day Shipping, uhhh. My worst nightmare! You and I know better, we don't want to fight we want to win, so let's figure out a win, win situation!

I reached out to and spoke to Dr. Kevin Gilmartin after reading Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement for the second time. Through his encouragement and a slurry of back and forth emails I took action. The following email is from Dr. Gilmartin: "DG. Thx for the email. You hit the nail on the head Marine. Financial Survival is something cops totally miss. I have seen many retired cops living marginal lives financially, after 25-30 yrs of employment in good paying jobs, free of lay offs. Keep up the good work. Get your info into the hands of as many cops as you can. Be safe Semper Fi, Kevin G."

I firmly believe that not one single person in our honorable profession should be left financially behind. So here we are. Our finances don't have to be our worst nightmare, they can and will be enjoyable. We just have to pay attention to them and spend a little time with them. We must be proactive in our approach to money planning. My goal for The Badge and Budget Investor is to—Reduce Debt and the Fear of Being Debt Free.

I truly believe that you are the best of the best, and I want your finances to be the best of the best. In order for this to happen in our financial lives, we must be actively engaged in budgeting, saving, and investing. I hope to motivate and inspire you to be the best performing financial you that you can be. The website is meant to be educational, informational and a place where you can be coached free of judgement. I hope you will join me in improving your financial future and the financial future of all cops!

Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming—John Wooden

Thank you for taking the time to read this I hope you will visit my site. You can also find me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. [The Badge and Budget Investor AKA: Danny Budget](http://www.badgeandbudget.com) (www.badgeandbudget.com)

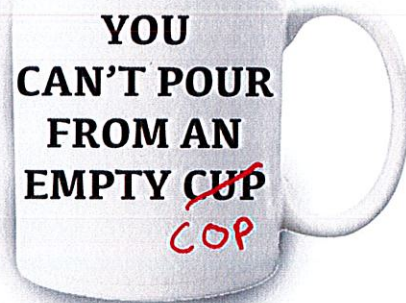
You Cannot Pour From an Empty COP

Adapted from LawOfficer.com, article by Jonathan Hickory

As a cop, I *live* for my days off. And when I finally get to my first off day—the day that I had planned to take on the world, Walmart, the gym, and that moldy stuff in the back of the fridge—I just want to disappear in between the cushions of my couch and not come out for days. But it's so rare I ever really get a day off—between court, mandatory training, and that irresistible last-minute OT assignment, it seems like I'm always working. Sound familiar?

Man, this job can really suck the *life* out of you. I know you know what I'm talking about. Sure, it's part of the job. But it can wear on you, and that can lead to problems. Big problems. Problems like compassion fatigue, exhaustion, depression, withdrawal from people, destruction of personal relationships and home life, drinking, more drinking, even suicidal thoughts or worse. We have all been affected by it, we have all seen it. We all know fellow cops who have burned out, let their personal life fall apart as they chase the job, or even worse, died by suicide because they felt they had nowhere else to turn.

As a cop who has been through the darkness and overcome it, I want to share some good news with you. By reading the rest of this article, you can learn the secrets I found for leading an **actively balanced life of resilience**; the key to surviving a career in law enforcement. Below are 7 practical, easily applicable tips to help you pour back into yourself—because you cannot pour from an empty cop.



YOU
CAN'T POUR
FROM AN
EMPTY ~~COP~~
COP

RESILIENCE STEP ONE – REST ON YOUR SABBATH DAY

Great warriors always return from battle and rest. Soldiers take time off between deployments. Cops don't regularly have that ability, because at the end of your short break, you are back on duty. *It's imperative to give yourself a day to recover.* Once you get to that first day off, remember it's okay to accomplish very little and maybe even binge some Netflix. You've been hypervigilant and taking care of everyone else's problems and conflict for the past several days, now it is time to rest. For those with small children at home, this isn't always possible, but don't be afraid or too "tough" to take a nap when your little one does.

RESILIENCE STEP TWO – DIVERSIFY YOUR FRIENDS

After raising my right hand and swearing to the oath, I quickly began to live and breathe everything law enforcement. All my non-cop friends didn't really seem to "get it." Not to mention, the same question that they always have ready to ask, "So, what's the craziest call you've ever been on?" Or, "Have you ever shot anyone?" *Eye roll.* So I started hanging out with *only* cops, on and off duty. Every time I was trying to do something fun with my fellow officers, like a barbecue or fishing, our conversation always went back to work—and talking about work all the time can really drag you down. It's great to love your job, but it's not great to *become* the job.

If you ever have that really crappy call, the one involving an abused child or worse...and you just can't shake it...cops are about the worst people to have in your rolodex. They will often laugh it off and tell you to suck it up. And if you can't, you just might think there is something wrong with you. I have lived this and now I am so thankful for the men in my church's men's group. These men listen to me, pray for me, and check up on me. And I'm okay with that. I love my police brothers and sisters but they should not be my counselors in life. So, choose some friends to do life with who don't wear a badge. Heck, even a firefighter will work as a friend—I mean, if it gets really bad (grin).

You Cannot Pour From an Empty COP—Continued

RESILIENCE STEP THREE – FIND YOUR THERAPY

Remember all those cool things you used to do before you were a cop? Remember the long weekend rides through the countryside on your Harley? Remember when you used to bring home trout by the bucketful? Remember when you used to play the guitar in that garage band? You need to find a *passion* to pursue. There is more to life than being a cop. Find what soothes your soul. Art, music, writing, motorcycles, horseback riding, archery, fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, skydiving, snake wrangling (nope)...find your therapy, and make time to pursue it.

RESILIENCE STEP FOUR – GET INTO NATURE

Getting out into nature has incredible therapeutic value. Nature therapy can often be combined with the passion you pursue from step three above. If your therapy doesn't involve getting outside and enjoying Creation, make sure you take the time to get into nature. Go for a run, or walk, or a hike in the woods. Kayak or canoe in the calm waters of a nearby pond or lake. Hop on the ATV and blaze some trails. The key here is getting away from the busyness out there and resting in the beauty that quietly and peacefully surrounds us every day.



RESILIENCE STEP FIVE – TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

I'm not going to preach about diet; I eat too many donuts as it is. But, realize that what you put into your body has a lot to do with the way you feel. Eating good food (and not garbage) helps you to not feel like garbage. Exercise (running, lifting weights, etc.) produces endorphins that combat depression and anxiety. Avoid alcohol. Make it a priority to get a healthy amount of sleep—at least on your days off. Your mind is part of your body, and if your body is feeling well, you are more resilient.

RESILIENCE STEP SIX – DON'T BE A CONTROL FREAK

There is a difference between being *prepared* and being in control. One of the most mind-freeing things for me has been to realize that I have only so much control over the world around me. A wise pastor I know recently said, "After 30 years in ministry if there is one thing I have learned, it's that God will be God and *people will be people*." Well said! You may make a difference in someone's life of domestic abuse only to see them fall right back into the same abusive relationship. You arrest the drunk driver and he may never drink again...or he may get arrested again next week for the same offense. People are responsible for the choices they make, and while you can be a positive influence in their life, don't think you can change them. Find peace in knowing that ultimate control is above your pay grade.



RESILIENCE STEP SEVEN – YOU GOTTA HAVE FAITH

This is where it all comes together for me. Reconnecting with my faith and having a relationship with God has given me long term resilience and new purpose in serving others. I have the support of my church family and I have an outlook on life that helps me to have compassion for others which makes me a better cop. At the end of the day, I realize God can use me if I let Him, and this helps me to push on knowing I have a greater purpose than what I can see. Faith in God gives me hope in a world filled with hopelessness.

Fellow officer, deputy, trooper, or dispatcher, you were meant for *more* than mundane. I swear by all of these steps as they took me *years* to learn. Any one of these steps will help if you're not feeling like tackling the whole list. I hope you can apply at least some of these steps to your life and live the life you were given. If you are struggling and you need an ear, I sincerely encourage you to please reach out to me, a Peer Support member, a Chaplain, or a counselor. I am easily found on Facebook or you can email me at breakeverychainbook@gmail.com.

A Note to All The Sheepdogs

Since we have several new LMPD family members, and since it's been awhile since our last edition of this newsletter, I wanted to take a minute and share our vision with you. The goal of your Wellness Team has always been to have this newsletter be a product that you enjoy and learn from. Whether it's highlighting resources or sharing articles that pertain to wellness, we want The V.E.S.T. to be worth your time and we want it to be meaningful to ALL our employees. We have tried to pull from your experiences and your knowledge base, to include articles written by members of our LMPD family, to highlight the successes in our personal and professional lives, to inspire, encourage, and promote wellness in each of you.

I am always looking for articles or content to include in The V.E.S.T., so this is my invitation to you: send me your thoughts, your ideas, articles that you come across, or articles that you have written. Print it out and put it in my mailbox, email me a link, email me something you have written (you can keep it anonymous if you're feeling bashful). If it relates to wellness (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), I want to see it.

In the past I've had several requests from your family members to send them a copy of this newsletter. Your significant others seem to be under the impression that you will forget to print out a copy to bring home to them. Admittedly, having everyone print out a copy to take home is probably killing more trees than necessary and contributing to global warming. So, if there's someone important in your life (someone who is part of your support system at home) please print this page and write their email address (or addresses) below. Throw it in my mailbox and I will add your important people to an email list and email them each edition of The V.E.S.T. Keep in mind, a lot of the material we try to include in this newsletter can help your loved ones better

understand what you do and what you experience in this profession. So, even if you aren't the best at "using your words" and "talking about your feelings," maybe we can help them better understand and better take care of you.

With grit and grace we go forward.

Take care of yourself and take care of each other—Lt. Lynch

Email addresses to add to The V.E.S.T. mailing list:

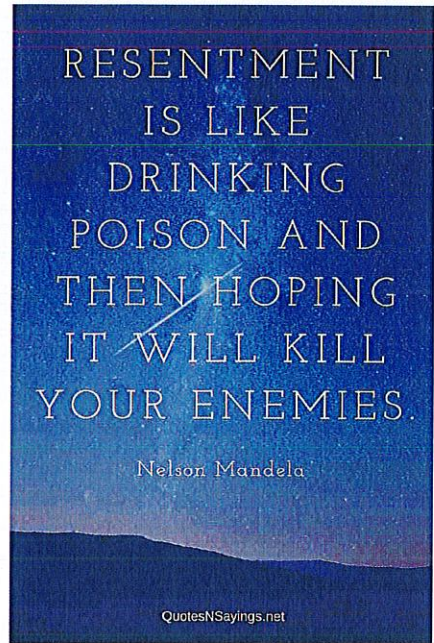
10 Tips For a Police Spouse—Being married to a police officer is totally different from being married to an average Joe

I've had the experience of being married to a "regular" hubby and we went about our daily business as two individuals who did their own thing, loved each other and cohabited. Until we didn't. I am grateful every day that we didn't make it because I adore being married to my Boy in Blue.

Being married to a police officer is different from being married to an average Joe. It is a responsibility, a burden, an honor and a blessing. It is often thankless and throws up many challenges. But it also has its rewards. I often think that it is we who are in the police force, not just him. We signed up; we joined back in January 2007. I wear his badge with honor too. Here are my 10 tips on how to handle life as a police spouse:

1. LEARN HOW TO BE RESILIENT

Especially if you have kids. A LOT of the time you will be solo parenting, and frequently it will be unplanned. The dinner/bath/bed routine that you were counting on him helping you with will have to be done alone. AGAIN. Try not to be resentful.



It's hard, but the call-outs outside of scheduled hours are part of the job and you need to expect them and get used to parenting alone. His job involves putting others' needs ahead of yours. You will most likely be the parent to attend school concerts, sports matches and school assemblies sans spouse, so make sure you explain to the kids about daddy's job so they understand.

Believe me, he would rather be at these events than where he is, too!

2. BE ADAPTABLE

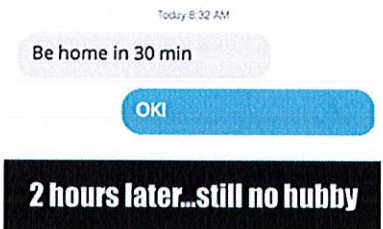
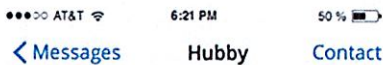
Trust me, that planned weekend sleep-in that you had marked on the calendar for the past month will ALWAYS come after a 2 am call-out and your spouse won't even be HOME to get up with the kids. The Mother's Day picnic you had planned will fall on his day off. He will get a call-out to your neighboring town just minutes before you head out the door as a family. Christmas is a tough one. Usually, they are scheduled for at least a few hours during the day, and your day can be planned and executed successfully and call-outs are rare.

However, our last Christmas, Mr. Point Five worked and was away unexpectedly from 8 am Christmas Eve until 5:30 pm Christmas night; the kids and I were devastated and it was not my finest moment as a police wife as tears were shed.

Again, shelve the resentment, smile and re-plan for the next day or weekend. The last thing our spouses need after an unexpected call-out on what should be a joyous day for them also is to come home to a resentful spouse. Remember, they are disappointed too.

3. CONCERNING POINT 1 AND 2, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND HAVING A ROUTINE

I am up at seven each morning with the kids and I am responsible for getting them ready for school while I leave hubby to his own devices for work. Regardless of his schedule, I prepare dinner for the entire family at 5 pm every night. If he isn't home then, his gets wrapped. The boys go to bed at 7:30 pm every night.



We

do this because even if your police spouse SAYS they will be home, you cannot rely on it. Often I get a text when he is already late saying he will be home in 30 minutes and 3 hours later we still haven't seen him. Have a routine and stick to it because his job is anything but routine. Don't be tempted to stretch out dinner or the kids' bedtime on a say-so text.

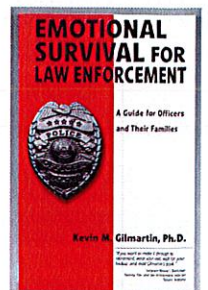
4. RESIGN YOURSELF TO THE FACT THAT YOU WILL NOT BE VACATIONING WHEN OTHER FAMILIES DO

It is really hard to handle the resentfulness as you see pictures flooding your Facebook newsfeed of family camping trips and backyard games. Suck it up and make the most of it with the kids or go away yourself with the kids and create your fun with another family. New Year's Eve is another time you will be spending sans spouse. The only New Year's I've spent with hubby is when he has been on paternity leave after our son was born. Oh, and the last New Year's he was on day shift so that was good, but we were in bed by 10:30 pm as he was scheduled to work at 8 am New Year's Day.

5. TRY TO WRAP YOUR HEAD AROUND THE FACT THAT EVEN WHEN YOUR SPOUSE IS NOT ON DUTY, THEY ARE ALWAYS MENTALLY ON DUTY.

Being a police officer is not a job; it's a lifestyle choice. They are not the general public any longer. They must carry their police ID at all times and be expected to respond to public situations as a police officer – not stand by and watch with no obligation. This results in a general enhanced awareness of their situation at all times. We try and get to the pub on a Friday night to give me a break from cooking and socialize with the town folk a little. I see Mr. Point Five constantly monitoring his surroundings, watching who comes in the pub door, assessing the risks and weighing up various options, all subconsciously.

The books call it hyper-vigilance – officers are so used to having to be mentally and physically prepared for every possible scenario during their work hours to possibly preserve the lives of the public and



10 Tips for a Police Spouse—Continued

their own, that it is impossible to switch off. It becomes part of their psyche. Watch for it, know why they may be distracted, and accommodate it.

6. KNOW THAT BEING HYPER-VIGILANT 24/7 TAKES ITS TOLL

Even when it is subconscious, the constant mental and physical state of flight or fight is exhausting for them. Try to create a peaceful home for them to unwind in. I find that if I pepper hubby the minute he walks in the door with my day's questions and happenings, he gets very frustrated as he needs time to try and stop "thinking" for a while and adapt to being a husband and father where he is safe and not at risk. It is really hard to go straight from being a police officer to being fun daddy, but if we give him some space when he gets home, it happens.

7. ACCEPT THAT YOUR SPOUSE MAY COME ACROSS UNSAVORY CHARACTERS THAT HE MAY HAVE ARRESTED/HAD DEALINGS WITH WHEN YOU ARE OUT IN PUBLIC

This happens frequently if you live in a small town. There have been a few times where Mr. Point Five has suddenly ditched us at the shops and we find him a few stores down, or when we were having a family day at our town swimming pool and he suddenly leaves. These things happen and it is for the safety of his family that he does it. He doesn't want the scumbags knowing who his family is and then possibly targeting us when we are without his protection. Maybe have a chat about the possibility of this happening and have a back-up plan such as a place to meet while shopping or calling each other's phones.

8. REALIZE THAT YOUR ACTIONS AND OPINIONS ALL AFFECT YOUR SPOUSE BY CONNECTION NOW

I try very hard to monitor what I say in public and on social media concerning any polarizing opinions I may have, as people may assume my opinion as his. Police officers must be impartial in their dealings with the public and I would hate for anything I say on social media to come back and haunt us. My private social media is my own space to be me, but even then I try to be cautious.

9. ACCEPT THAT THE JOB IS DANGEROUS

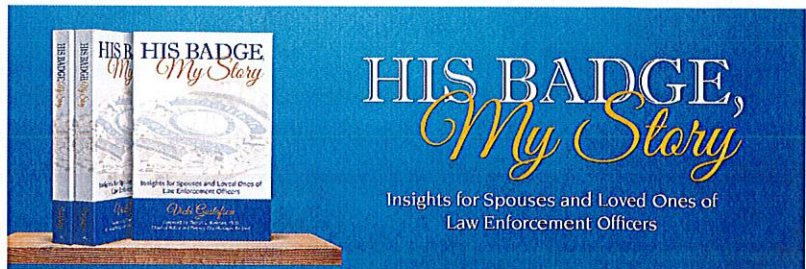
Try not to worry. I know it's hard when the only words you manage to overhear on that 2 am call is, "Shots fired," but worrying robs you of happiness and is a futile emotion. Officers have the training and the tools to come home alive. When they get called out to god-awful jobs, they need to know that they can rely on you to hold the fort and that you aren't at home worried sick and falling apart. You need to have their back, be their rock. A depressing fact is you are more likely to lose your police spouse to suicide than anything dangerous that they may encounter in their line of work. Something to think about. When they come home from a tough job, offer your support and a listening ear should they need it. Perhaps not to tell you all the ins and outs of the job, but how they are feeling and how they are coping. Encourage them to debrief their emotions and be a safe harbor to do so. They may not be able to tell you many details, but they will appreciate the emotional support.

10. EMBRACE YOUR NEW BLUE FAMILY

The camaraderie among the officers and their families is amazing. Soak it in and enjoy. It's like making friends in most places; some you will click with better than others, but the underlying unity is there. I am willing to bet that in 10 years your best friend will be a police spouse. It's a really nice way to live. I am glad our boys will grow up to respect and love the boys and girls in blue and know that they are to be trusted and can be counted on in times of need.

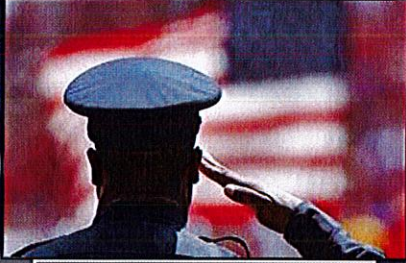


Based on author Vicki Gustafson's over three decades of personal experience as a law enforcement officer's wife, *His Badge, My Story* is filled with her suggestions and guidance. Her wisdom accumulated over 36 years offers comfort, hope, and insights for the journey ahead. Vicki touches on common issues, which include communication, the struggles of scheduling, balancing the career with family life and society, sacrifices, and raising children.

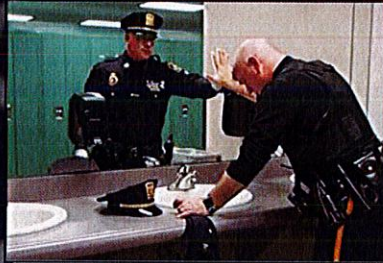


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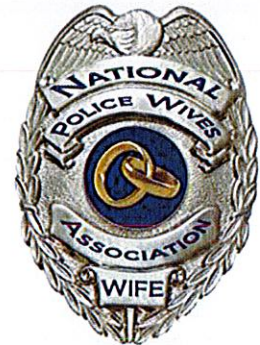
PEER SUPPORTED

Peer Support Resource List

Greg Runge	858-395-4011
Katy Lynch	858-245-5523
Travis Higgins	415-609-0919
Kathy Norman	619-772-3078
Tim Purdy	760-613-4512
Colin Atwood	619-944-0545
Eric Knudson	619-922-5241
Todd Snyder	619-807-1926
Dan Paugh	619-600-1644
Julie Jensen	206-714-9573
Carlos Gaytan	619-213-4514
Jen Buckel	858-442-5589
Peter West	760-693-3435
Jeff Chambers	619-710-5838
Chaplain Womack	619-244-5130

Look around in your department and at least one person in the room is hiding a secret life of alcohol and/or substance abuse.

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If you need a resource not listed here, just ask us. We will get you the resource.

Dr. Catherine Butler is a Marriage and Family Therapist contracted with LMPD to provide free confidential counseling services for all members of the department for up to six sessions per issue. She treats all manners of life related issues, from the most traumatic to the changes in life that create stress.

She can be reached at 619.644.1788 or at Catherine@butlerttherapy.com The office is in the rear of 4582 Palm Ave-