

## **Keeping Alive the Drive**

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**By Brian Ward**

I spent the last week in Indianapolis at the recent FDIC. The activities and opportunities to take away various training materials were endless. You can't help but to feel great about the fire service as a whole while being around 27,500 similarly enthused firefighters. It didn't matter what class that I took; whether it was Salka, Gracia, or Dugan's presentation, it was great because everyone wanted to be there.

The challenge that we all are going to face... How do we take this motivation and enthusiasm and keep driving it home once we get back to our departments? Some of us are going to fall back into bad habits and let the station dictate how we act. Others of us are going to go back and dictate how the station acts. Which individual will you be? Can you be that catalyst? Regardless of rank, seniority, or status anyone can be that individual that has the drive and desire to succeed. It should be every firefighter's goal to make sure that Everyone Goes Home after the shift. This goes from the rookie to the shift commander. But, what does it take to make that happen?

- 1) Devote an hour to training every day on the basic skills and on a skill that you are not familiar with.
- 2) Attempt to learn something new every day.
- 3) Spend 15 minutes reading something fire related.
- 4) Develop or locate a quick training drill to be completed by your station.
- 5) Never forget the importance of caring about your crews family.
- 6) Make the decision and commitment that you will be the catalyst that drives your department.
- 7) Look at the big picture and broaden your horizons. Look into a different occupation; see what we can adopt from a similar but different background.
- 8) Expand your personal knowledge base by taking a class.
- 9) Be a mentor to the younger firefighters and be a mentee of the veteran firefighters.
- 10) Remember the Risk Management Concept. Make the commitment to truly understand the Risk vs. Benefit concept. Know that fine line between what is worth risking our life for and not risking our life for.

Stay motivated and stay enthused about what you are doing for your department and the fire service as a whole. Never let anyone take away your motivation to do right. This is a behavior that only you can change, for the good or for the bad. Make it your decision and not someone else's. Stay safe and train hard.

**BIO:**



**BRIAN WARD** is a firefighter/acting officer with Gwinnett County (GA) Fire Department. He is a past training officer and chairman of the Metro Atlanta Training Officers. He is a State of Georgia Advocate for Everyone Goes Home and the Membership Task Force Co-Chair for ISFSI. Brian was recently awarded the National Seal of Excellence from the NFFF/EGH. He has an associate's degree in fire science and is completing his bachelor's degree with the University of Cincinnati. He is the founder of FireServiceSLT.com and Georgia Smoke Diver #741.

