











# COOPER'S COLOR CODE

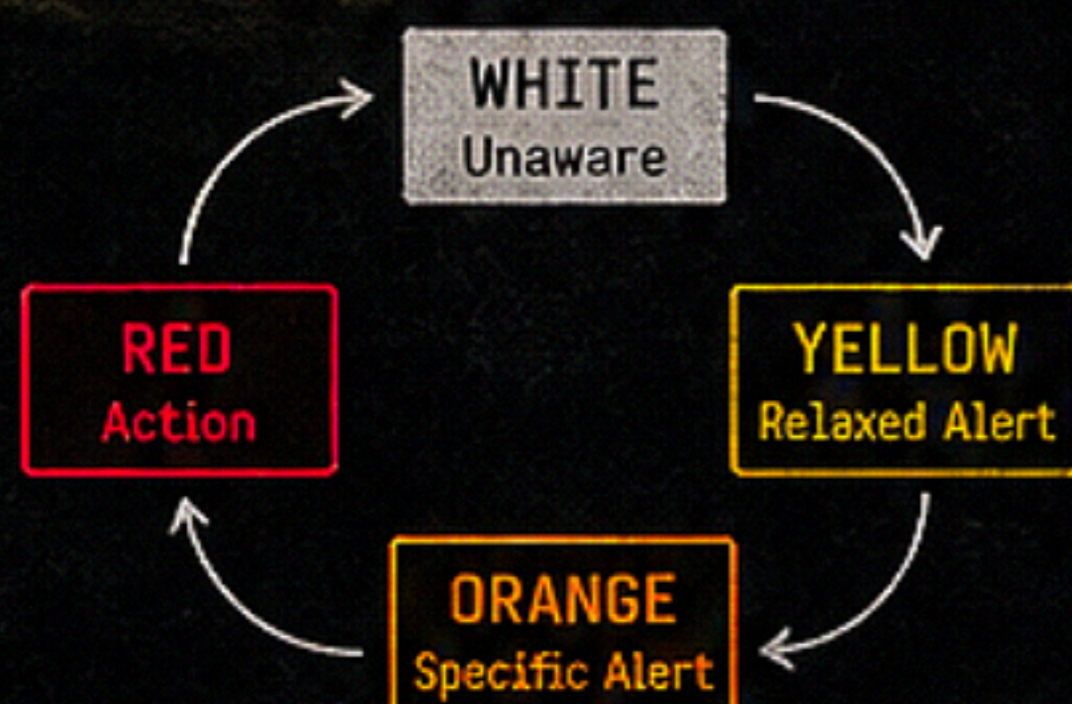
LT. COL. JEFF COOPER'S FRAMEWORK FOR  
COMBAT MINDSET & SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

A mental state model describing the degree of peril you are willing to do something about—and how you move from one level of mindset to another.

## THE FOUR CONDITIONS | INTERNAL STATES OF MIND

COLOR	CONDITION	DESCRIPTION	MINDSET	TRANSITION
	<b>WHITE</b> UNAWARE & UNPREPARED	You are oblivious to your surroundings and potential threats.   If you are attacked in White you will probably die unless your adversary is totally inept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unaware</li> <li>No mental preparation</li> <li>Default / complacent</li> <li>Highly vulnerable</li> </ul>	Move to Yellow as awareness of potential risk increases. 
	<b>YELLOW</b> RELAXED ALERT	No specific threat, but aware that the world is potentially hostile.  This is the baseline you should live in.	<b>MINDSET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware &amp; observant</li> <li>Scanning / processing</li> <li>Prepared, not paranoid</li> <li>In control of environment</li> </ul>	Move to Orange when you identify a potential specific threat. 
	<b>ORANGE</b> SPECIFIC ALERT	You have identified a potential threat.  Mindset shifts to: "I may have to defend myself against that person today."	<b>MINDSET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on specific threat</li> <li>Assessing intent, opportunity, and capability</li> <li>Set a mental trigger: "If X happens, I will do Y."</li> </ul>	Move to Red when your mental trigger is tripped. 
	<b>RED</b> ACTION	The mental trigger has been tripped.  You act.	<b>MINDSET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act decisively</li> <li>Execute your plan</li> <li>Manage the situation</li> <li>Maintain awareness</li> </ul>	 After action, assess and return to appropriate state.
	<b>BLACK*</b> BREAKDOWN	Added later by Massad Ayoob (not Cooper). Denotes catastrophic breakdown of mental and/or physical performance.		AVOID. RECOVER OR GET HELP.

### HOW IT WORKS



Continuously assess. Recognize change. Move up as needed. De-escalate when safe.

### KEY PRINCIPLES



#### AWARENESS IS SURVIVAL

See what's around you before you need to.



#### MENTAL PREPARATION

Decide in advance what you will do, before you have to do it.



#### DECIDE, ACT, REVIEW

Act with purpose. Review outcomes. Improve every cycle.

### NOT A SIGNALING SYSTEM

Cooper's Color Code describes internal mental states—not external markings.



Do not confuse this with marking systems ("hobo signs," tradecraft, or dead-drop indicators). Those are different tools with different purposes.

### RESOURCES

- Cooper, Jeff. Principles of Personal Defense. (CAP Publications)
- CAP MI-135, Combat Mindset
- IncoDocs: Cooper's Color Code
- Massad Ayoob: Awareness/Color Code Addendum

### REMEMBER

You cannot control everything around you. You can control your level of awareness and your response.

*J. Cooper*

### OPERATOR NOTE

Your life may depend on the state you choose to live in.

**LIVE IN YELLOW.**

