

CONFLICT MANAGER

Special Edition #1: The Women's

Conflict Manager is the monthly magazine of the Conflict Research Group Intl.

(Draft Copy)

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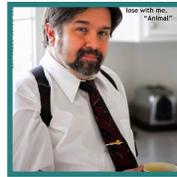
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WELCOME TO THE CONFLICT MANAGER

Conflict Manager is a whole new concept in the Martial Arts and Self Defence world. Completely unaligned to any movement, organization or trend we offer a fresh perspective free from dogma.

The main monthly contributors are the founder members of the Conflict Research Group International but we welcome articles from all like-minded people.

The intention of the magazine is to provide stimulating and interesting articles on all aspects of conflict, macro and micro, without prejudice to help us all in our search for answers and solutions.

Our approach is entirely inclusive and we reject tribalism in favour of our pursuit of the truth.



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THE WOMEN'S ISSUE



This special issue of Conflict Manager magazine is dedicated to our female readers and anyone interested or involved in the area of personal safety for women a/k/a women's self-defense.

Over half of the contributors to this issue are women because we feel that the female voice is under represented in typical discussions and instruction of this topic.

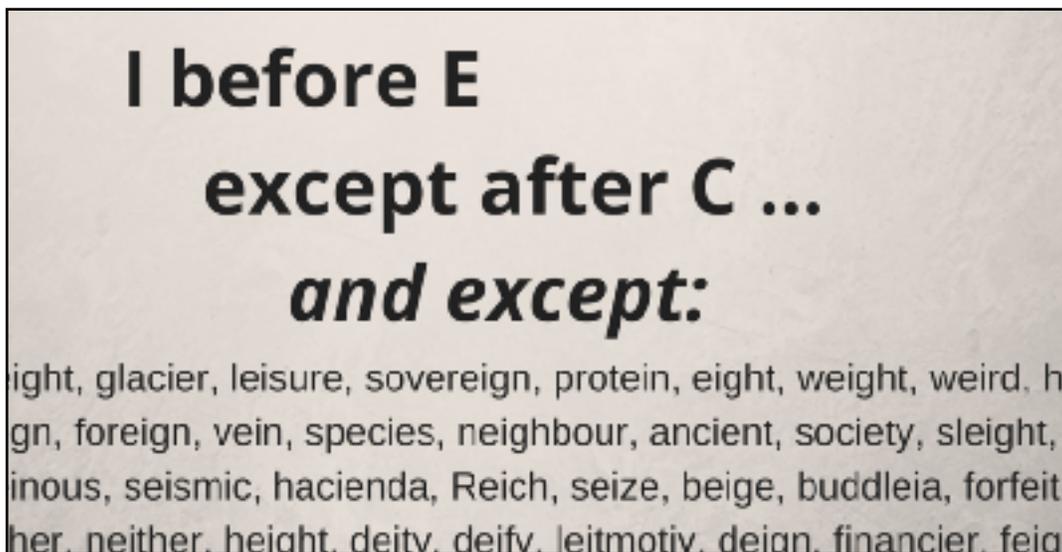
Unlike most self-defense articles for women, you will not see a laundry list of do's and don'ts coupled with instruction on how to execute physical self-defense techniques. Instead these articles will engage your mind and stimulate thinking on the greater view of personal safety arising from knowledge and critical thinking.



RULES DON'T WORK



GERSHON BEN KEREN



Why Personal Safety Rules Don't Work

Many people believe that personal safety is little more than formalized common sense, and that by following a few sensible rules it is possible to thwart the plans of those who intend to cause us harm. They will gladly accept the top 10 safety tips that some magazine posts, and nod as they read each one, without questioning the credentials of the author, and whether these “tips” are the result of a study, or even somebody’s experiences (and experience by its very nature is limited). As long as the advice given makes sense, then it of course must be true.

Whenever I do personal safety seminars and training for beginners, I come up against these rules all the time. New students might insist that you can tell when somebody’s lying to you because they look away, that if you’re talking on your mobile phone you’re safe because somebody knows where you are etc.

Every predatory individual we are trying to protect ourselves from, knows these rules, and has a plan to navigate round them; the pedophile soccer coach who is taking your child to see a professional game, will look you squarely in the eye as they tell you that no harm will come to your kid, and the sexual assailant who is looking to rape you knows full well that



they can commit their assault before the person on the other end of the phone can get to you, or get others to you, etc. Next time you read an article on personal safety (including this one) be aware that there is probably a predatory individual reading it as well, and arming themselves with the same knowledge, but for very different reasons.

Even the rules that we think we would never bend, that we believe we'd always adhere to, can be broken if we are dealing with a skilled social predator. If you asked every woman who had ever gotten into a car with a stranger, let a stranger into her home, etc. and been assaulted as a result, if beforehand she would do such a thing; I guarantee they'd emphatically say no. This is not to blame these individuals for their actions, but to illustrate that these predators understand the rules we work to, and know how to either get us to break them, or to think that they don't apply in the context in which we are interacting with them.

You might think you'd never get into a car with a stranger, and if you're thinking of a situation where a driver pulls up next to you and asks you to get in, you're probably right – however few predators will target adults in such a direct manner, and prefer to create a situation where you would “willingly” get into their car, maybe because it would be socially awkward not to. Imagine that you have met someone on the internet, on a dating site, and have arranged to go out for a meal with them, and towards the end of the meal they say, “This has been a really great evening, I've not had so much fun in a long time, it would be a shame to end the night now. I know a great bar across town, why don't we go and have a drink there?”

Throughout the course of the meal with this charming and interesting guy (yes, that's the profile of many predatory individuals), you've been hoping that he'd ask you on another date, and it seems that he just has. He's got you to want what he wants; something that many predators will work towards. This includes the pedophile soccer coach who wants to take your child to see a professional game – you'd love to take them, however you simply don't have the time to do so, but fortunately this guy does and wants to and because of this you are willing to bend a few rules that you wouldn't think you'd be prepared to do – why should your child lose out on this experience?

Getting back to the date scenario – as you walk out to the parking lot/carpark to get your car to drive to this bar, and have a final drink, your date says, “Tell you what, let's take my car. It's not the easiest place to find, and I can be designated driver.” You want to go with them to the bar and it would be awkward to refuse the ride; after all, they might be offended if you're insistent about taking your own car. It would be very easy to convince yourself that your rule doesn't really apply in this situation; is your date really a stranger?



They seem so nice, and you have already spent the better part of an evening with them, with no ill result. With this reasoning, you may well find yourself getting into a car with a stranger.

Personal Safety Rules, just don't work. Skilled predators can quite easily get us to convince ourselves that they don't apply to a particular situation. Also, the more times we break a rule, and there is no consequence to doing so, the less relevant that rule seems to be. Let's say you move to a new house, and there are two ways to access it: one is a well-lit route, enjoying natural surveillance, whilst the other means you have to go down a dark alley – the advantage being that it takes you half the time to get to your house.

Normally, you take the hit on the time and use the safer route but one day, because you're in a hurry, you chance the dark alley. On this occasion nothing happens. You still prefer, and believe you're safer using the other route, but you've broken your rule of, "don't walk down dark alleyways" without suffering any consequences. After several more occasions of breaking your rule, you conclude that the dark alleyway is actually safe, and it becomes your default route; and it is safe, until the time it isn't, and that's the time you get assaulted.

Our society is generally safe, and that allows us to do unsafe things, a lot of the time without disastrous endings, and the more times we break the rules that we believe will keep us safe, the more we become convinced that the rule doesn't apply to us or our/a particular situation.

There are also times when it may be in our best interest to break a rule. Imagine that you are walking home, and just before you get to the entrance to the dark alley (that you have yet never taken, because you favor the well-lit route back), you notice that a large scale fight has broken out on the street that you normally walk down. You now have a choice, you can go down the dark alley, or you can keep walking towards the street fight. In such a situation – although it may be somewhat contrived – it makes more sense to ignore your rule of not walking down dark alleyways, rather than to blindly stick to it.

In this instance you will have ignored the rule, and made a dynamic risk assessment of the situation that you have found yourself in, and this is how we should deal with all our personal safety issues and concerns. Rather than blindly following rules, we should seek to understand the situations that we find ourselves in, and understand the processes that violent predators use.

Armed with this knowledge, we don't need to rely on our flawed common sense and specific rules, for our personal safety. We can question why a single male in their mid 20's is so interested in taking our child to a soccer match that we can't, we can understand why



our date is so insistent, and is working so hard to get us into their car. It takes effort to make risk assessments, and it's not as simple as blindly following our common sense (a skilled predator will be able to make everything make sense to us), but it's the only way of truly ensuring our safety. On the one hand, we are fortunate that the relative safety of our world allows us to get it wrong so many times when we follow our rules, without suffering any consequences, however this does not mean that we or our rules are right, or should be trusted.

When you make a dynamic risk assessment, you need to first consider whether you are facing a **High Risk** situation, or one that contains **Unknown Risks**. If you have to make a risk assessment, then you are not in a low risk situation, and thinking in terms of low risk, will only get you to drop your guard. If it is a high risk situation, how can you mitigate these risks? Could you go with your kid to the soccer match (personal safety does take effort) or take them to another one? If it's somebody offering you a ride, assess your relationship to them – do you know how they will act and behave in this situation? If you've just met them, then the answer is definitely no. Forget the rules, and think about the risks.



WHAT IF...?

ANDREA HARKINS



What If....?

What if you are attacked?

What if someone sticks a knife in your back?

What if you don't know how to defend yourself?

"What ifs" are terrible. They are projections of situations and scenarios that may never happen. They increase fear and make you anxious and leave you feeling uneasy all the time. There are many ways to teach self-defense and many angles from which you can draw information and conclusions, but none include the elusive "what ifs."

I've been a "what if" person for a long time. It just comes naturally. "What if my car breaks down? What if I can't afford to pay that bill? What if I get sick? What if I get lost?"

Finally, one day, I realized that I was projecting a great amount of fear and negativity into my life by thinking about events that were just in my mind. In some cases, I think I even subconsciously jinxed myself in order to achieve my relentless, contrived negative



prophesies and predictions. Negativity can work that way. It starts to impose on your life and builds up so much momentum that before you know it, you know no other way. Your guard is down.

Another way that “what ifs” work against you are examined in the questions I posed in the beginning of this article. These are self-projections that are not set in fact or fiction, but in fear. When you struggle with fear, you automatically lower your defenses and expose your vulnerabilities. People do not realize that “what ifs” create *undue* fearful emotions that hinder real self-defense. These “what ifs” strategically replace awareness and self-confidence with worry and anxiety. I can tell you right now that neither worry, nor anxiety, has ever saved a person’s life in an attack situation.

Think about how you feel when you are scared; or, even more importantly, how you look. Your face contorts almost unknowingly. In the eyes of a perpetrator, you become the perfect victim. You’re “what ifs” that you thought were preparing you, were actually bathing you in fear and working against you. A perpetrator can use this to his advantage because fear is noticeable, and he will immediately target you as a potential, easy victim.

Those self-absorbed with fear have difficulty standing their ground when the time comes. Emotions and thoughtless reactions work in unison to welcome defeat; the better equipped individual is the one who takes *action* to eliminate unnecessary fear, and strengthen his awareness. Instead of injecting fear or playing out scenarios that may never happen, it is best to take control of vulnerabilities by doing something that makes sense.

Take action.

The actions that can take place, that will better prepare someone for defense than “what ifs,” are many. If you are an instructor, or someone who just cares about solid safety values and a strong mindset, here’s exactly what you should share with all who have not thought through how to be prepared through “actions” and not “what ifs.”

Take a Self-Defense class. Self-defense is inherently different from martial arts, although some martial art techniques may filter through. The difficulty with self-defense classes is that women are afraid of them! Yes, they are fearful of not knowing what to expect, so if the class can be entertaining, refreshing, and right on point about true defense, a woman is more likely to attend. These generally attract non-martial artists, so fitness levels, interests, and reasons for attending vary. This is number one on the list. Fear can be decreased through the actions involved in learning a viable self-defense system.

2. Try a martial art. Yes, they are different than self-defense courses, but they do offer some valuable tools and techniques. I’ve been a martial artist for twenty-six years and



also teach some components of martial arts that include grabs and escapes. I can kick high, if I want, but true defense only needs a good kick to the knee or groin. Discerning where and how to kick, if that is part of your defense strategy, has nothing to do with height or speed, but more to do with accuracy. Wrist locks, head locks, grabs, and other offensive holds all have escapes that can be learned. Plus, martial arts training helps with self-confidence factors and resilience, both of which mean a great deal in defense situations.

3. Utilize Resources. Direct your friends, students, and families to resources that you trust. There may be websites, books, or on-line materials that you've read and with which you agree. There is a plethora of social media outlets these days where questions from simple to complex can be asked and answered. Everyone has an opinion so no need to accept everything as fact, but something might just make sense for exactly what you need. Don't hoard. Give up your great tools and resources to others who can really use them.

4. Practice. Even if you have taken a self-defense or martial art class, they can be for nothing if they are not practiced. Self-defense courses can be short, maybe even a few hours. A refresher each year is a must. A martial art takes a while to really learn. Movements and gestures only make sense after a while of application. The key to strengthening defense here, is practice.

4. Read Inspiring Tales. Nothing hits home like reading a true story about someone whose self-defense saved their life. What happened? What did they think? How did they react? What kind of confidence erupted? Learning from others, being inspired and motivated by their situations, can quickly kick-start self-defense thoughts into action.

Final words of advice to share:

Take action and remove the crazy "what ifs" from your life. Arm yourself with simple but strong self-defense concepts. By increasing self-confidence and controlling fear, you become more aware of who you are and of what you are capable.

I don't know how you plan to proceed, but my goal is to eliminate "what ifs" from my thoughts. They are detrimental and stifling and don't allow me to clearly see the opportunities I have to learn more about self-defense and awareness. If you are an instructor of self-defense or a martial art, you have a responsibility to give your students a fighting chance. Help them to know that real concepts, real actions, real defenses, can help them; but, "what ifs" will always hold them back from understanding awareness and self-protection, and maybe even prevent them from saving their lives. Instead, do the one thing that will really help.

Take Action.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW COULD HURT YOU

TEJA VAN WICKLEN



What You Don't Know About Women's Self-Defense Could Hurt You

Let's admit it, women's self defense is old and tired, it can't take care of itself, let alone anyone else. What ails it? A dependence on ancient techniques? A blind spot in society? A disconnect between teacher and student? Reluctance to go back to the drawing board? Or all of the above and more.

Two thousand years ago women's empowerment, self-actualization and freedom of movement weren't high on the agenda. That doesn't explain why we are still stuck. Why aren't female instructors doing more? And why isn't there more of a demand? Many women are still guilty of thinking that self defense is the same as kickboxing, or that if the police would just do their job, we wouldn't need all this crazy violent self defense talk and we could just live our lives.

With a modern overhaul women's self defense could be a grand tool of autonomy. With kids learning from their parents, or early on in school, we could see a drastic decrease in



violence against women, epidemic the world over. If we thought of self defense as a series of mental and physical tools that directly addressed the realities of crime today, we might see things change for the better.

I see a class where, through role play, women, mothers and daughters learn the simple tells and tricks of emotionally unstable people and hardened criminals, so they can identify behavior before it becomes a problem. Students would learn that a man who insists on helping and won't give in is disregarding their authority and that any self-respecting person responds to the word "no". Girls would know the many ploys a criminal might use to begin a conversation, get her to share a ride, or borrow her cell so he can call himself and capture her number for a rainy day. A freshman letting loose her first weeks in college would know that no matter how good-looking a man is he may still be a predator and that although he says he knows her friend he may just be a good listener. A woman would know how to fight like a pitbull using every object in reach as a weapon should anyone ever pull a knife and try to coerce her into a car. She would know the statistics are loud and clear that once she's in that car she's going to a place of the criminal's choosing and there's very likely no coming back.

Unfortunately those who really need self defense training aren't getting it. Women only look for answers once they've been attacked and need to regain a sense of autonomy as part of the healing process. Or they go to a kickboxing class for exercise and a quick infusion of empowerment. For the record, kickboxing isn't self defense. Kicking in the air is nothing at all like kicking a man who's fighting back. Most guys barely notice it when I kick them and I have 30 years of training and break six inches of pine with my side kick.

The study of physical movements without an understanding of context, can be dangerous. False empowerment can cause us to jump into situations we aren't ready to handle, and a lack of understanding about the before, during and after of an emergency, can mean we get in too deep before realizing we had other options. There is so much more women can do to protect themselves and their loved ones than kick and punch. We need a four-dimensional view of self defense – the mental, emotional, temporal and then finally, pointed physical options as a last resort.

Many instructors will talk about self-defense being ninety percent mental, but that's not what you get in class. That's because learning to listen to your own brain whizzing away and cultivating the self awareness that enables you to fix things about yourself that get you into trouble, are much more time consuming and complex than any physical technique could ever be. And because this kind of thinking is difficult to teach, it isn't being taught. Some of this kind of knowledge is available in sports and military endeavors – a team mentality, watching each other's backs, understanding aggression, quick decision making



in which injury or death is at stake. As such, mostly men have had access to it.

There are an infinite number of possible crime scenarios. No number of physical techniques will answer all the variations. Chess players know there are more combinations of chess pieces on a board than atoms in the universe. Crime is an ever-changing game of strategy that requires constant adaptation. And, life is even more complex. We have to learn to think, to see and to make quick, constructive decisions sometimes under intense pressure.

Women are not only smaller and weaker than their attackers, they are conditioned to react to asocial behavior, like threats, with social behavior, like kindness or self deprecation. A woman might be pregnant or responsible for multiple children. Gangs and fraternities work in teams against unsuspecting and weaker individuals. For all of these reasons women's self defense can't just be a different version of men's self defense, it needs to be a different species.

In business, we find our niche first and then create the product around that niche. In architecture, we build the building for what it has to do and the people who have to live or work in the structure. We don't build a hospital the same way we build an apartment building or a library. The very specific issues women face mean that, to increase our leverage, strength and skill in protecting ourselves, to reach the heights we need to reach to be safe in the world as it is now and to excel, women don't just need a taller ladder than men do, we need wings.

Here are some things that are wrong with women's self defense in general:

Martial arts – the origin of self-defense – has been created by men out of ancient war arts often involving often antiquated weapons and/or horseback, and handed down mostly unchanged over generations. Many so called self-defense styles have failed to evolve with the times.

Self defense has been retrofitted in an effort to suit the needs of modern women, but really it was built for something entirely different. Modern self-defense classes tend to spend a majority of time training for fair fights. When a man attacks a woman, it is rarely a fair fight. Fighting fair can put you at a fatal disadvantage.

When Instructors do discuss or attempt to recreate unfair attacks, a number of things go wrong. They either spend a very small percentage of overall time on the complex issues, oversimplify the dangers, or extrapolate from their own situation and training and come up with answers based on the false premise of man-on-man violence or matched size



violence. Instructors also tend to focus on altercations between people who are facing one another, rather than one blind-siding the other or using charm or the element of surprise to get into position for a crime.

Today's self-defense is often disconnected from everyday realities, like kids, strollers, overwork, physical handicaps, lack-of-sleep, age, illness, arthritis, depression, distraction, travel, traffic, pregnancy. Life!

For reasons such as insurance premiums and convenience, self-defense is almost always practiced by people in comfortable clothing on smooth floors. No obstacles, no furniture, no cars, wind, rain or darkness. All of these things must be part of your consciousness or it will be like learning to drive by playing a video game.

Due to the popularity of stunt-heavy Hollywood movies and sports martial arts, we often see a lot of cool, creative moves I call Finesse Techniques that are more acrobatic than practical. These techniques might work for someone somewhere under very particular circumstances, but a self defense technique you depend on to save your life should be like a good doctor – reliable as much of the time as possible.

Self-defense is often unhealthy for our bodies, which is in direct conflict with safety, since bad health and injury put us statistically more at risk than most other things. Martial arts and self-defense classes are often more about following a leader than expanding our own minds. And what could be safer than seeing and understanding more?

If you ever find yourself in a martial arts class – or a relationship of any kind – where you are discouraged from thinking and asking questions, don't just get annoyed, get out. Most people think kicking and punching is the main aspect of self defense.

In general, modern self-defense is primarily concerned with the moment of the attack and neglects the Before and After. It leaves out all the things we can do that will diminish our presence on the criminal radar and neglects the aftermath, where stress can affect us adversely and cause us to make things worse.

Self defense is more about good decision-making under stress than any other single idea or physical technique. Self defense is about empowerment. That's a big word these days. We all want to feel empowered to be who we want to be and to take the world by storm. But HOW we do it is important and rarely addressed.

Blind or reckless empowerment can get you in trouble if you think it means being assertive out of context. Not that plenty of people aren't better off for having learned a few moves, but I think we can do a lot better. We love to hear about the grandma who fought off an attacker who tried to take her purse, but the fact is there are hundreds of other versions of this story that went badly.



New Women's Self Defense should...

...have aspects of martial arts, but also psychology, sociology, health and fitness, among other things.... include the study of trickery, goal oriented and criminal behavior.

... cover attacks the way they are most often perpetrated against women or whomever the class is meant to address. Men, women and children are attacked in different ways, under different circumstances.

...be based in reality. It should take into account the kids, strollers physical handicaps and other craziness life is made up of.

... be simple to perform and to remember. When your mind and body are under extreme stress they respond very differently than they do in a class under controlled circumstances. Time both slows down and speeds up. You freeze, you fail to hear someone right next to you calling your name, you drop things involuntarily. You're unlikely to be able to remember, let alone execute, a series of intricate movements, even with years of practice.

...involve strengthening muscles and improving coordination and range of motion so our bodies get stronger and work better. What point is self defense if you are your own worst enemy, daily grinding yourself into dust.

... encourage us to think for ourselves and to question everything. An instructor should be a guide and a roll model, not a disciplinarian. A roll model should NEVER discourage us from forming ideas about our own protection.

...cover the Before, During and After of a crime event or emergency, rather than just the During.

...instill a healthy form of empowerment so you can be a big dog in spite of your size. You shouldn't feel you need to bark right away. You want the space and peace of mind to sit back, watch and evaluate before making your decision. This is the essence of true empowerment. Self-defense should be a place women can draw strength from.

...include knowledge, tools and games women can pass on to their children, for obvious reasons. Imagine a daughter who won't give a good-looking but predatory guy a second look, or who won't allow peer-pressure to cause her to drink or have sex when she doesn't want to, or who will never accept a drink she didn't see the bartender mix. Imagine a son who has the decision-making skills not to do a favor for a friend that might get him into trouble. Or a son who stands up for his female friends even if it might cause him to lose face with his peers – a son who sets standards rather than following dysfunctional ideals of manhood.



I..give us the means to practice daily in our heads or in small moments since we cant always get to a regular class. In other words self defense training should be scenario-based so it isn't dependent solely on practicing physical techniques but on mental prowess and an understanding of situations, danger and how emergencies form. We need to cultivate the ability to extrapolate and learn from the mini dangers we experience every day.

...be about anxiety mitigation since worry and anxiety make us more susceptible to crime. Self-defense needs to help us name our worries and fears, put them into context and then remove the unproductive ones from our daily plate. This also makes real dangers easier to identify when the worry noise isn't so loud.

...put Preparation in an exulted position as part of a daily routine. Preparation for the day, contingency plans, CPR training, etc. can all be made part of basic knowledge and life training.

If the highest goal of self-defense is to learn to protect yourself and your family from violent crime and the threat of death or severe bodily harm, then clearly it should train and utilize mental skills above all else, since avoidance is always preferable to survival and healing after the fact. Staying out of trouble first, getting out of trouble only if the first fails.

Protective Offense, The New Self Defense

Let's take this concept of self defense even further and give it a new name. "Self defense" is how you describe to the judge why you hit him with the baseball bat. Let's reserve it for legal matters. The "self" in self defense leaves out others we are responsible for and the word "defense" is too reactionary. What we want is something inclusive of the people who need us that is both more proactive and more powerful.

Protective Offense is the term I've been using for about ten years now-Offense with the emphasis on "Off". When I hear Protective Offense, I think offense for the purpose of self-defense, "Offense" as in Chess or football, seeing and thinking a few moves ahead, projecting your desired outcome and being able to map a course and make changes on the fly, being aware of patterns.

When I did TaeKwonDo, in my teens and twenties, I attracted more than one drunken doofus. As it turned out, what I really needed then wasn't a stronger side kick, but a brain. Actually, what I needed was for the guy not to be bothering me at all, but that goes more to a discussion of effecting culture. Looking back, the guy who came at me in a club when I was 19 and wouldn't let go, was pushy, not dangerous, and by kicking him I could have escalated the situation to something physical when I would have done better by keeping my emotions at bay, smiling, telling him I needed to go to the bathroom, and then disappearing. After I



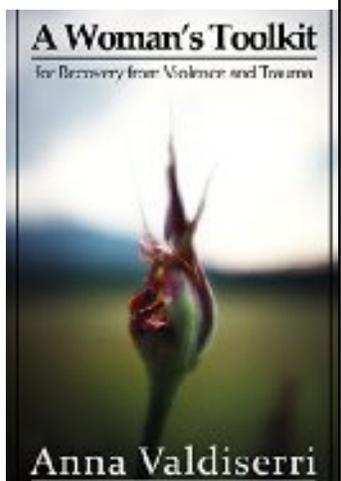
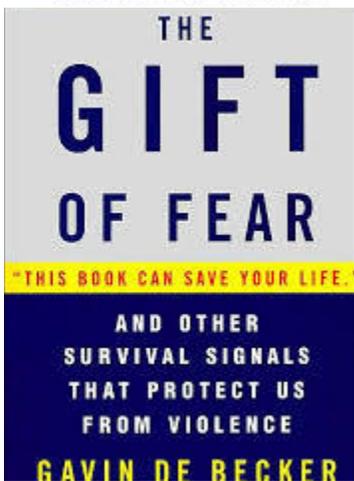
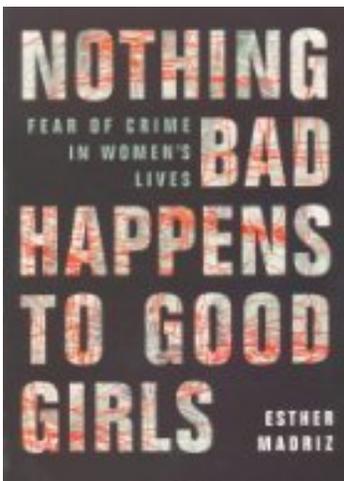
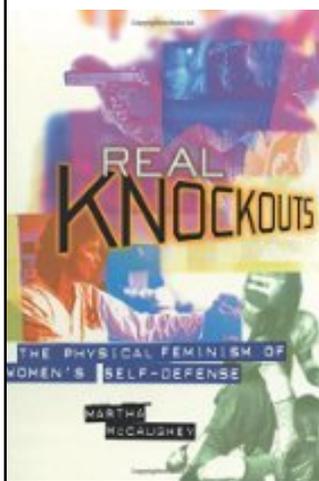
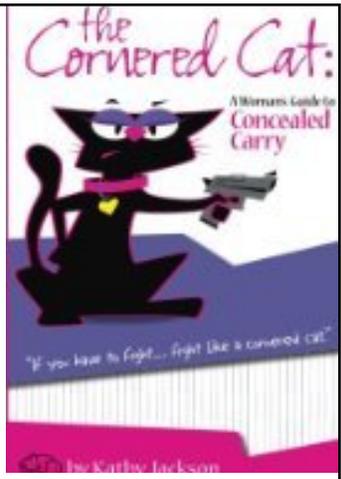
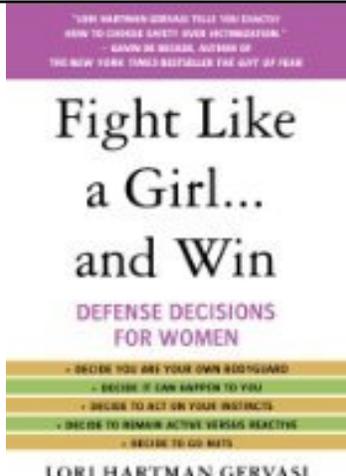
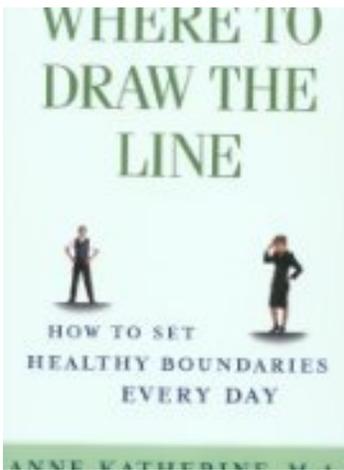
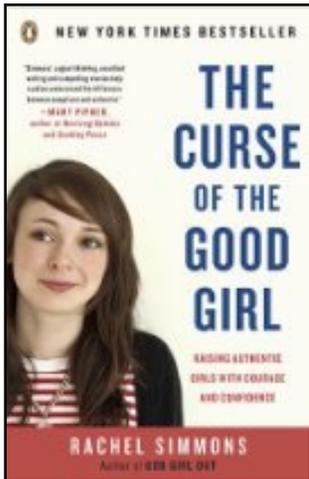
pointed him out to the bouncer.

My good friend Karim Hajee like to say, "Trouble doesn't happen to us, it happens because of us."

If strength were the only important resource we would all be out of luck. The bigger, stronger person would always win. And that isn't the case. Things like instinct, determination, will to live and resourcefulness play a huge part in survival. In the wild, smaller animals scare off and outsmart larger, stronger ones all the time. Dealing with crap is part of life and dealing with it physically is not usually the best way.

Since women are rarely stronger than men it's a good thing we have lots of other resources to draw on. We need to get back in touch with those skills and hone them. Civilization supplies us with HGTV and heated seats, but an unfortunate side effect is that we put way too much responsibility on others for our safety and decision-making. Police, lawyers and doctors can all do their jobs better if we do our part.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS



SOCIAL CONDITIONING



Tammy Yard-McCracken



Social Conditioning: Women & Violence, Part II

An opening disclaimer is important: research, hard science, is difficult to find on this topic. Ethics as they are on human research prevents us from setting up attacks on a randomized sampling pool of unsuspecting, uninformed women. The ethical guidelines on human research are there for a reason. The result? What follows is based on anecdotal evidence, personal reports, my experiences and campfire stories passed along by people I respect. There will be bias in these words.

Setting the Context

A few years ago the news reported an 18-year-old woman fatally shooting a male intruder. She was at home with her infant when the home invasion began. She barricaded the door, called 911 and 20 minutes later, two assailants finally made entry. Just before they broke through her barricade, she asked the 911 Operator if it was okay if she shot them if they



came through the door. Dispatch couldn't "advise", but when they made it inside her home, she fired and killed one. The other one took off (Gast, 2012).

Side Note: the dispatcher was not new on the job. She crafted her words carefully to avoid giving advice while telling the frightened woman to do what was necessary to protect "that baby". Good on her.

A few weeks later a mom in her late thirties hid in a closet with her 9-year-old twins after calling her husband to say she thought someone was trying to break into the house. The intruder made entry, rummaged through personal belongings, and eventually opened the closet door. She fired. 5 times (Reese, 2013). As the events unfold the husband is calling 911 while he keeps his frightened spouse on the phone. He is recorded by the 911 Operator saying:

"She shot him. She's shooting him, she's shooting him...again."

"I heard him pleading...He was screaming."

These are examples of armed responses to violent action and imminent threat. Look past the use of a firearm and look at the behavior of these women. Retreat. Hide. Call for help. Wait. *Ask for permission to act.*

There is a decent correlation between the rate of adrenalization and gender. Women adrenalize more slowly than men as a whole, giving women time to plan before the higher level thinking skills go off line. Tobi Beck (Beck, 1992) gives credence to it in the book, *The Armored Rose*, and those anecdotal and personal experiences I was talking about back her up. If the correlation has a biological underpinning, it may partially explain the WHY both women delayed in using lethal force. It does not adequately explain the WHAT in their tactical choices. These women were armed and they chose to:

Barricade/buy time
Call someone for direction
Ask for permission to act
Retreat
Hide
Wait

Here are a few more.

Mother of two walking to her car. Sunday afternoon, sunny day, "good neighborhood". Two men are in the area of her vehicle. One smiles, *is this your car? Can I ask you a question about it?* She smiles back, even though she doesn't feel friendly and says she's in a hurry but *"what's your question?"*

Gun drawn, kidnapped and carjacked. Twelve hours later in a sudden stroke of something resembling a conscience one of them let's her escape.

18-year-old woman trying to untangle herself with polite smiles and excuses about being poor dating material gets pulled down on his knee. Unnecessarily strong grip holds her there. *Sit here, be my good luck charm in the poker game, baby.* Forcing a smile, she



complies and then leaves as soon as she can do it *without making a scene*. Quietly tries to slip out of the party and gets to her car. He's there too, asks for a ride home. She knows something isn't right *but he's stranded, his buddy is passed out drunk and he's gotta' get up early for work*.

Gives her directions to a remote neighborhood and rapes her.

One more (although there are thousands of these to be had). Pumping gas in her personal vehicle mid-morning after her run as an elementary school bus driver, a distressed woman approaches. The woman has a black eye and looks a little frantic. *I'm so sorry, I know I look horrible. I'm running. My boyfriend beat me and I'm trying to get away. I have a bus ticket but can't get to the station – I almost have enough for the cab. I need, like 5 bucks...can you help?*

Suspicious, but doesn't want to be one of those people who looks away. A sister needs help. Nods and reaches into the car for her purse. Something hard slams into the side of her face and knocks her to the ground. The forlorn female in distress grabs the purse and takes off.

How and Why It Matters

These three incidents share commonalities and together with the two home invasions, the five cases help to highlight social scripts and cultural rules that drive female behavior in most post-modern societies.

Defer

Wait

Be polite

Smile (when she doesn't feel like it)

Appear cooperative

Be helpful and compassionate

Subjugate personal need and intuition to someone else when the two conflict

Bullet list #1 + Bullet list # 2 =

Physical/Violent Action requires permission from an outside authority

Deflect, defer, wait, buy time, retreat

Be polite even when it isn't warranted.

Smile (you're so much prettier that way, anyway)

Be helpful



Be cooperative

Be compassionate

Be quiet (and hide) Everyone else's needs/expectations are more important

Welcome to the Cliff Notes review of *How To Be Female in Western Society, 101*.

Martially trained women, if you are reading this, a part of you may look at the above list and argue. "No, not me. I know better." Intellectual awareness and physical training will not override a couple decades of social programming if you refuse to acknowledge it lives in your thinking. If you won't consider it, if you are certain none of the bullet points could possibly apply to you, it is a dangerous blind spot.

Force professionals, you may be tempted look at these examples with an eye toward identifying all the places each of these women screwed up. You are ticking off the behaviors that made her the perfect mark and the voice in *your* head may say, "*she should have known better*".

And that's the point. The behaviors and underlying beliefs that make a female an easy target are created by the social rules and expectations she has been marinating in from moment of her birth. This isn't news and people like Gavin DeBecker have been writing about it for years (DeBecker, 1997).

End Part I.

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PART II

Rabbit Trail

I suspect there is an intellectual drift in our thinking as professionals in the world of violence. Whether it is as force professionals, martial art instructors, self-defense instructors, or etc., human nature is to normalize what we learn from experience and training. Once normalized, there is an unconscious judgment that wants to wiggle into our thinking. If we know it, then it must be common knowledge.

Really? *Why?* Remember how it is that you do, in fact, know better.

The social rules, the subconscious expectations many women follow unconsciously every day, have some obvious and significant implications when women face a violent encounter. These same rules will show up on the mat and on the range if she decides to train for personal protection. (How and what that looks like is better left to a different dialogue.)

These five case examples can be easily used to highlight how social rules set her up as a perfect target. If we stop there, the implication is pretty damning. Up side? There are a couple of hidden superpowers tucked inside what looks like a perpetual-victim default.

Here's one, and it comes with a hell of a lot of gravitas. *Once she slips the leash, she is all in.*

I have a theory on this.

She grows up on social rules that can make her a pretty good mark. The flip side? She does NOT grow up with the social rules defining how a fight is *supposed to go*. She doesn't spend her days wrestling and playing King of the Hill. She doesn't get socialized on the football field and she doesn't learn what a tap-out means on the wrestling mat. She is chided severely if she attempts to solve conflict the way 10 year old boys do by throwing a couple of wild punches and rolling on the ground. She doesn't play with green army men



who blow each other up with mud bombs.

If she does, it may be because she grew up in a neighborhood like mine where most of the kids my age were boys. If I wanted to play, I had to play the games that were running. Even here, she will hear comments about 'letting the girl play' and it will be the exception, not the rule.

She does not know the rules to male conflict and violence because she doesn't grow up playing the games *teaching* the rules. If she played those games, she will understand it was by special permission and it really isn't her game. She is only a guest. Consequence? She won't generalize the rules of war to her own belief system.

These rules are not built in to her internal infrastructure. When she goes physical – she is in uncharted territory and she will do whatever has even the slightest chance of keeping her alive– there are no rules to follow because she was not socialized to the rules. There is a better than average chance her Threat expects her to follow the social rules of being female: acquiesce, be polite, hesitate, ask for permission. There is an equally decent chance the Threat does not expect to encounter a rabid chipmunk, or as one of my students recently said "an unleashed crazy-bitch".

If she is armed? Like the first two case studies, she is far more likely to fire until the magazine is empty than she is to get off a couple of rounds and stop to see if she hit her target.

Unarmed? If there isn't anyone nearby to pull her off, she may blow right by the boundary of when a "reasonable" person would disengage. Particularly if her children have been threatened. She will risk her own life without a moment's hesitation to save her tiny humans.

Earlier, I mentioned a correlation between adrenaline rates and gender. We need to revisit it again. Rory Miller posits a theory for the gender-based adrenalization delay; it resonates (R. Miller, personal communication, 2015). If his hypothesis bears any credence, combining the two theories has a doubly deleterious impact on women when a physical solution becomes necessary.

Here's my summary of Rory's theory on why women experience the adrenaline delay. When we were hunter-gatherer tribes the able-bodied men would be gone for weeks at a time following herds for enough kill to feed the tribe into the future. Left behind are the aged men, the children, *and the women*. Turn this into the able-bodied men leaving the village for war, in both circumstances if a Threat gets to the tribe, the women are the last line of defense.

It is on her to ensure the next generation lives to a reproductive age. Knowing this, she will



go physical with an unfettered, vicious ferocity.

One theory is rooted social psychology; the other is rooted in evolutionary need. In both, once she goes physical *she is all in*.

I have seen a full sized dog high-tale it in the opposite direction when attacked by a 10-pound cat that thought her kittens were in danger. One good bite and the cat would be done, but the dog was uninterested in the risk it would cost to try. Superpower number one in action.

Superpower number two. She is smart. Not that men aren't, this is not a comparative dynamic so if you are itching to argue – take a breath. The center of the brain that processes fine details and retains them with attachment to meaning has more neuronal connections than the average male brain (Brizendine, 2006). A Cornell study (Wong, 2013) is a little less definitive as to the *why* women have this capacity but the science in the Cornell study may be a tad more sound than Brizendine's suppositions.

Wong and Brizendine agree with an important bottom line: women attend to, retain, and recall details at a remarkable level of accuracy. As a natural process, this ability is far more dominate in women than in men.

A possible explanation for this reality ties into Rory's suggestion about evolutionary need. Village and tribal life puts her on her own for long periods of time with others to provide for, to feed and nurture. Considering sociological anthropology as a perspective, there are probably a few men in the group and hances are, they are elderly or otherwise unable to physically endure the rigors of a hunt. If they couldn't hunt, they are not going to be much help to her if violence shows up on the village's metaphoric doorstep.

If she's trekking out to the berry patch she may have tiny humans in tow and one strapped to her back. Running and fighting in the event of a stalking predator (animal or human) is automatically compromised by her circumstances. Her chances of survival, and the survival of her offspring goes way up if she notices the tiny nuances of the well-worn path that are different than they were on her last pass. A new print in the dirt, blades of grass bent the wrong direction, absence of prey animals, birds fall quiet or take to wing behind her...a soft sound that wasn't in her hearing a moment ago...

For this information to matter she must have three things available. She must have a context for what the information means (prior learning), she must notice the fine details, and she must do the math (match memory to the context).

Dial this forward to lifestyles that are more common to us in 2015, how many of you can relate to this?



Him: What? You never told me your mother was coming in this weekend! It's your mother (or whatever the situation is), I *guarantee* if you had told me that I would have remembered.

Her: Really? Seriously? How can you NOT remember this conversation! You were standing with your hand on the fridge door looking for something to eat in that blue shirt I bought you for your birthday two years ago. You looked at me and rolled your eyes and then you said _____. Then you shrugged your shoulders and went out to the garage to work on the lawn mower.

Him: Silence – thinking...*what the hell? What blue shirt?*

Or, try this one.

Him: Hey, do you know where the charger to my old mp3 player is?

Her: When did you last have it?

Him: I don't know, I can't remember. You know, the old one.

Her: *Silence, thinking.* Look in the drawer in the hallway or on the shelves in the corner of the your closet. If it's not there, it's probably in your.....

And she is usually right, isn't she?

She remembers the details, stores them and assigns meaning to them. She does this with people and behavior too. If you have read DeBecker's work, or you work in an industry like mine where you get to hear story after story of victim events, you know this:

Her intuition told her something was wrong.

This intuition is not magical. It is biological. It is this powerful capacity to manage details, remember them and use them instantaneously, unconsciously. She cannot always articulate how or why she knows what she knows, but she knows. This makes her capable of a marked degree of tactical intelligence.

And the question that wants to be asked next is this: *if she is naturally, tactically intelligent, why doesn't she use it? Why did she get raped, stalked, why did she ask permission to fire?*

Both superpowers can get tangled in the sticky web of social conditioning; sometimes to the degree she may not be able to access them at all. This doesn't mean her superpowers disappeared. Slowly, over a lifetime of experiences, they have been lulled into a deep sleep.

That's the good news. If those superpowers are still there and they are only sleeping, we can wake them up again.

NO WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE HERE



AMANDA KRUSE



Why I Stopped Teaching Women's Self-Defense

In my mind, self-defense should be of interest to anyone and everyone, as it concerns the safety and preservation of our selves and those we love. It makes sense, then, that everyone would want to have some knowledge on the subject, right?

My experience starting a self-defense business providing self-defense workshops has shown that people do not put self-defense as a top priority, at least not until they feel they "need" it (i.e. creepy neighbor, daughter heading off to college, traveling overseas, murderer on the news).

The idea for the business began after I was on a field trip with a group of 4th graders. We were on a city bus when a man approached a group of girls and asked to take pictures of the girls. Thankfully I noticed this interaction and stepped in to stop it. All ended well and the girls were fine, but I could not get the situation out of my head. I knew that these girls



were trying to be polite to this guy, despite their obvious discomfort, when what they needed to do is say “no”, get away, and get help.

In my mind, a logical way to deal with the experience was to provide the girls with some basic self-defense and safety information to help them better deal with similar situations they may encounter. With the help of my tae kwon do instructor, I put together a 4 week class for these girls at their school. We focused on prevention, deterrence, and general safety, along with some simple physical techniques. This class was a huge success. The class filled to beyond capacity, plus the girls and their parents wanted more!

This motivated me to start a business teaching safety/self-defense classes to teens and adults. With the results I had at this first class, I didn’t hesitate to pursue additional training and research and continue to move forward with the business idea. My idea for workshops were different than most self-defense classes, as I included a good deal of information/discussion on prevention, education, deterrence and boundary setting, which I hoped would help set me apart and provide a more well-rounded education.

Securing contracts with local community education agencies to put my classes in their catalogs was easy. At the time, I considered this another success. My first community education workshop came and went with mediocre attendance and I had gotten a few private groups set up. As scheduled classes came and went, with attendance of anywhere between 2 and 6 participants, I realized that this may not be as easy as I thought. I attributed this to being new and people just not knowing about the unique workshops I offered.

As I was losing hope in the Fall of 2014, I had some media exposure that I was certain would change things. I was interviewed for a front page article of the major local newspaper, complete with an online video with the interview and demonstration. This exposure was followed by an television appearance on the local morning show. I was swamped with emails soon after, but only booked two private classes out of all of the publicity.

So, why not take a self-defense workshop? I have several theories, but the following quickly come to mind:

“It will never happen to me”. Bad stuff only happens to other people,*right?*

“The thought of having to use physical self-defense techniques is scary”. In many of my workshops, several participants have said, “I don’t know if I could do that”. First, just the thought of an attack makes them uncomfortable. Second, and this is particularly true of females, it is difficult to consider causing injury to another person, even in self-defense



"I would be uncomfortable practicing any physical techniques in front of others". An understandable reason, particularly classes that may involve complex techniques and a high level of physical fitness. Self-defense classes should educate on all of the ways we can prevent violent situations and give the confidence that simply putting up a fight and aiming for vital targets may be enough to escape.

"I don't have time to attend a self-defense workshop". People's lives are packed full, from work, kids, home and activities. Self-defense just isn't a high priority until there is a perceived threat.

"I live in a very safe neighborhood where crime rates are low". Living in a small city in the Midwest where people tend to leave their doors unlocked overnight, I hear this on a regular basis. Safety is an illusion. There is always risk, whether it is violent crime, street harassment, rape, domestic violence, or bullying.

For a time, I tried to address some of these theories in an attempt to get more business. I made workshop times and locations convenient. Workshops were marketed as educational, with a focus on prevention, targeted at all levels of fitness. But I always refused to "sell" self-defense workshops by using scare tactics and play on people's fear.

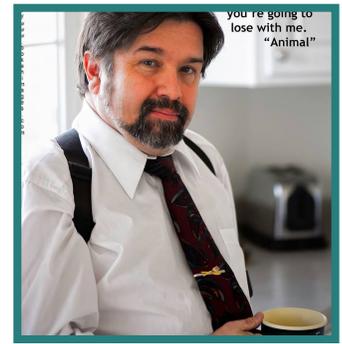
When the danger of violence seems near or is more visible (i.e. the news, college sexual assaults) is the time when people think of self-defense as a priority. Parents of female high school seniors heading off to college is a great example, in my experience. In July and August, I had parents calling me with fear and a bit of panic in their voices as they wanted to book last minute workshops for their daughters prior to their departure to campus. Prevention doesn't seem to be on people's minds otherwise.

The amount of time I have put into my self-defense venture never did pay when you run the numbers, but I had a strong desire to get the information in my workshops out there to those who wanted it. I thoroughly enjoyed the process and interaction and, in many cases, walked away feeling as if I had made a difference in participants' lives. On the other hand, in classes that only had a small number of non-participatory attendees, they sucked the life out of me, leaving me exhausted, frustrated and continually questioning how badly I really wanted to continue.

Although the business is coming to an end, I have no regrets. The people I met throughout the process were supportive and provided me with resources that have been invaluable, not only for the self-defense workshops, but also for me personally. My plan is to continue to volunteer on a limited basis, providing information and education on safety and self-defense to larger numbers of people, such as schools and community groups. I still believe self-defense education is essential.

THE VICTIM BUBBLE

MARC MACYOUNG



An idea I've been working on is what I'm calling the 'isolation bubble.' As in people going through modern life as if they are in a mental/emotional/ physical force field that keeps everything at bay and they don't have to interact with others. This is endemic. It has — in fact — become a new form of social etiquette. (How do you behave in a crowded elevator surrounded with strangers?) One can argue isolation has become the modern version of being polite.

When this bubble is breached many people ... well get offended is one way of saying it. But another is when people are 'forced to have to interact with others' many consider it an imposition. They use the fastest social script possible to end the situation.

The problem is how many people have decided that 'this' is all they have to do. That nothing else 'should' be required of them. Part of my 'fuck victimology' attitude just clarified in a conversation with [Rory Miller](#). Basically it's the different mindset of pre vs. post technology. And the idea can be understood in the lowly thermostat.

For millions of years of human existence we had to adapt to things we couldn't change. Cold? Put on a sweater. Why? Because we only have so much wood chopped and stored



and we needed it for when the hard freeze showed up. Comfort was way down the list when issues like survival and long term sustainability were priority.

Now, with modern technology all you have to do is turn up the thermostat. You don't have to adapt (change your behavior) you change your environment to fit your comfort zone. Since survival is not an issue and if your utilities are paid for — fuck it, comfort gets priority.

Now there's a huge tangent about people fighting over who 'should' control the thermostat, but that's another issue. I'm seeing an increase in the attitude that people 'shouldn't have to' step outside their comfort zone. (This in tandem with the belief that the entire world operates with some kind of mythical thermostat that they can control).

The key point here is the belief that all you should have to do to stay in your comfort zone is minimal effort (nudge the thermostat).



MASCULINITY & VIOLENCE



SHARMI GOWRI-KRISYK



Masculinity, Emotions, and Violence

Have any of you heard the saying "*Boys will be boys*"? As a parent, I have been trying my best to guide my son (Dino-Lover, 10) from a very young age to always use an empathic, compassionate and respectful approach whilst dealing with others. No matter what. Even if it is just "for fun". To try his best to be thoughtful of others and be mindful of the emotional and physical boundaries of others.

As a result, he does never hit back physically or put anyone down emotionally – including towards children who can behave in an unempathic or insensitive manner at times. On the other hand, this has often resulted him in being perceived as weak. There are negative consequences he faces as a result of this, e.g. children calling him "girl", "baby" or "wimp".

That often makes me reflect on this issue is not the behaviour of these children but what I hear the adults say in the aforementioned circumstances, e.g. "Boys will be boys". I hear



this over and over again. Is it even healthy and appropriate to normalise aggressive or inconsiderate behaviour? What messages are we sending to children? To the next generation of adults?

My son recently told me that there was a particular cartoon (movie name excluded) where one of the cartoon characters cries and then says to himself: "Real men don't cry" and then stops crying. My son concluded: "Even children are brain-washed, through the cartoons they watch, to believe that expressing emotions is inappropriate for boys and men"

This makes me wonder if violence starts in childhood itself, especially the violence towards women. "For many young people, male aggression is expected and normalised, there is constant pressure among boys to behave in sexually aggressive ways, girls are routinely objectified, there is a sexual double standard, and girls are pressured to accommodate male 'needs' and desires," says Dr Michael Flood, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Wollongong University.

So why are ingrained community attitudes so important in male-on-female aggression? "Attitudes are crucial to shaping wider social norms and cultures," says Dr Flood.

"Boys are taught in subtle ways to push past girls' resistance, that women are good for only one thing. This is reinforced by the media and by pornography, which is easily accessible to young people, and treats sexuality as violent and violence as sexy."

It is tragic that our society has unfair expectations towards males and labels them as unable to feel or connect to the same degree that females can. Empirical evidence show that there is not much of a difference between boys' and girls' capacity for empathy during their period of infancy (Suttie, 2015). However, according to neuroscientists the reason for the empathic skills of females being far advanced than males is not because of any differences in their ability but simply a result of environmental factors; for instance, findings show that some of these environmental factors are that females are being allowed to express their emotions and to identify and understand both their own and others' emotions (Eliot, 2010).

This indicates how society shapes males into human beings that struggle to be authentic with both themselves and with others. According to the study by University professor Niobe Way (2013) teenage boys began to "internalize society's masculine norms by equating close friendships with being gay, a girl, or immature." It was also noted by her that boys' levels of loneliness and depression began to increase during this time.

We live in a culture of violence that promotes male aggression such as through movies, music videos, video games, toys, lyrics (Miedzian, 2002) – and even recreational activities



like sports involve subtle level of violence. “It is our culture that distorts both boys’ and girls’ natural capacity for empathy and emotionally intimate friendships. This is not a boy crisis but a human crisis of connection” (Way, 2013) – and one that negatively impacts our families, our schools, our communities, and our political and economic institutions. We, as a society has the responsibility to ensure that, whether boys or girls, we influence children in a positive way; having a positive impact on the socio-emotional development of the next generation. Just because the majority do something, it doesn’t make it right. We need to be authentic and not blindly follow the crowd by falling into conformity. Instead, we could be critical thinkers with a vision that focuses on making a difference. Towards a better world; towards compassion, respect, kindness, peace and integrity.

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TRAINING STUDENTS WITH TRAUMA



JEFFREY JOHNSON



"The body is the armature of the self, the physical self around which the psychological self is constructed." -Psychologist Nicholas Hobbs

Trauma can alter the relationship between the psychological self and the physical self. A violent event can turn the body into a foreign place, with all human interaction becoming somewhat distant and strange. Martial arts training, traditionally conceived as a mind-body practice, has helped many people to bridge the gap between their psychological selves and their physical selves. As a professional with experience counseling survivors of trauma and teaching self defense, I am proposing a method for self-defense instructors to approach their students who may have experienced trauma, as well as a subject for therapists and counselors to explore as a means of helping their clients to reclaim their bodies and heal.



This is intended as a brief introduction to the topic and the proposed approaches. Understanding fully that self-defense instructors are not clinical therapists, I am not suggesting that a person attempt to take on more responsibility than they are professionally qualified to handle. I am hoping to help instructors to empower their students and avoid re-traumatizing vulnerable individuals.

Trauma

How trauma impacts people can vary from person to person. What can prove to be a debilitating emotional experience for one person can easily be shrugged off by another. Everyone is composed differently, so professionals should be careful not to rush to judgment over how a person has internalized the event(s) they have experienced. We don't get to qualify or disqualify the magnitude of a troubling event or series of events in the life of another person. We don't get to tell them to "get over it." Not if we are trying to help them.

I have had to develop a thick skin when hearing the stories. Vicarious trauma can occur when we internalize the stories of trauma survivors, but it can be a bigger problem if those survivors' residual behaviors cause distress for us. We begin to emulate the psychology of those we have been tasked to help. Know what your limits are with regard to how much help you can give and where it ends and the help from other professionals (domestic violence centres, rape crisis centres, etc.) begins. Know when to step back from situations beyond your expertise and abilities.

Trauma can affect the brain in similar fashion to a blunt force injury. The brain will often re-wire itself in an attempt to cope with the injury and the "new reality" of danger and fear. Trauma survivors (note that I avoid the term "victim." How we frame events and our definitions of ourselves has a lot to do with how we cope and heal) may experience a range of emotions connected with the trauma, such as depression, anger, feelings of hopelessness/helplessness, hyper-vigilance, and any other emotion or combination of emotions. Again, most self-defense instructors are not clinical professionals, so know the limits of the assistance you can effectively offer.

Triggers and reenactments are things that a person with no personal trauma history will not easily understand. A smell, a spoken phrase, a noise, or any other seemingly random and unrelated stimulus or bundle of stimuli can cause (or trigger) an emotional response that acts like an echo of the original traumatic event. One might assume that the males in the room are planning to physically harm him. Or one might tighten her fists and breathe rapidly anticipating an attack. The first response is a paranoid hypervigilance while the other is a physiological response. I have seen re-enactments run the whole gamut of wild



possibilities at work, but thankfully nothing overly dramatic at the dojo. Having a sense of what may trigger a student is important, because we don't want to re-traumatize (essentially recreating the traumatic event, causing even more emotional damage) anyone. For instance, a person who was robbed at gunpoint may not be immediately ready to do gun defense techniques. I am not saying that a trigger is always reason to avoid necessary training. I am saying that it may take some time and finesse to help a student reach that level of trust with you and comfort in their own readiness to deal with body language, object reference, and maybe even phrases that replicate a very bad experience.

Teaching Method

The challenge for all self-defense instructors is to help students become stronger, more competent, and more confident people with each class. To succeed at this, we have to do a lot of listening and observing our students, cross-referencing what we see and hear with what we know and have experienced. We mustn't make anything up to fill gaps; we are obligated to give the best of what we know to our students because someone's life and person may depend on what we have taught. A trauma survivor may come to us with "pieces" of their narrative missing or damaged due to physical, emotional, or sexual assault/abuse. We are trying to help them to fill in their own gaps on their own terms.

We are dealing with disturbing behaviors of a criminal element. This means I have had to explain to very young children that they have to establish safe boundaries, always tell trusted adults when these boundaries have been crossed, and what to do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. This means discussing even what to do if someone attempts to touch private parts or other such disturbing and inappropriate behavior.

I can't pull answers out of thin air. I have had to read books by professionals who work with children dealing with this same disturbing subject matter. I have had to discuss with professionals what the best practices are for dealing with what children report. All of this applies to adults, whose stories have been, in my experience overall, more terrifying and disturbing and more psychologically damaging. Knowing something about the best practices regarding what your students might report to you (i.e. A child reports that a cousin has kissed him on the lips and made him feel embarrassed or a woman reports that her ex-boyfriend has been showing up unannounced at her home. These are stereotypical examples, I have heard far more bizarre and disturbing stories and I advise instructors to learn what they can to help their students) is key and aids students and their loved ones tremendously since very few people have any idea how to handle these situations. In other words, I know where my role ends and where a rape crisis worker's, or police, or a lawyer's begins.



Training methods can be very fun, very rewarding, and very empowering for students and instructors alike. Survivors are pretty brave already if they are coming to your dojo/gym to learn how to overcome the events that they are struggling with, and we have an opportunity to help add strength to that bravery. There are some major keys to remember when developing your training methods for these and all students:

DO NOT EVER give someone the “you should have” lecture. In my experience, survivors have said “I should have...” and I listen first, but I always encourage them not to beat themselves up over how the events occurred. Sometimes my advice-my good, tried and true advice, like don’t hang out with people known for unsafe, reckless behaviours, or don’t continue dating someone who has little respect for your boundaries and tends to be controlling-is grounds for my students to feel guilty and ashamed.

They replay events and can see and hear what I am describing in vivid clarity. I might say, “you did the best you could given what you knew then. Let’s plan for the future and use what you know now to help you make the best choices for you and your family.” Trauma can steal a person’s faith in the future. I try to get them thinking ahead, using the past as a learning tool only. Know your students. I try to anticipate their feelings when we run a new or difficult drill. I try to use some emotional intelligence to get a sense for how relaxed, stressed, tired, etc., my student is. All of this can impact how they feel about their own ability to perform, which of course alters performance.

If they are having trouble, I slow down. If they apologize, I encourage them to forget the need to apologize and focus on being here NOW. If they are survivors of trauma, they may be experiencing strong feelings of insecurity, defeat, embarrassment, and their self-consciousness can cause them to pack their things and leave in the middle of a class (I have seen this happen).

We instructors like to yell to get the energy up in a group. Some students don’t need yelling, but instead our confidence in them to improve with every class. In my experience as a behavioral counsellor, I used a “10 to 1 ratio” rule for encouraging statements to corrective statements.

Most people don’t need 10, but some people do. Know who needs some more attention and encouragement. Breathe-I incorporate breathing from Qigong and Tai Chi for my more nervous students (I also use this for my hyper kids. It helps them to focus in the same way.). When I run a drill where they have to close their eyes and wait for me to attack them with the pad, they practice the breathing I taught them so that they can get some control over their adrenal and fear response.

It worked for me in a lot of situations as well. It didn’t mean I had no fear or that the



adrenaline stopped pumping. It just took the edge off enough for me to still be able to think and observe during a crisis. A student may experience a reenactment during intense drills and not tell you. I had that happen with a woman whose ex-husband used to turn the lights off and beat her. This I learned after running the “close your eyes” drill I mentioned above. I would not have run that drill if I had known that at the time, but thankfully she reported feelings of empowerment since this was the first time she’d ever confronted that memory.

In getting to know her, I always knew when she was getting nervous, filling up with disturbing memories. We would take some time to breathe together, every class if we had to. It helped to get her focused on pushing through the drill. Push students to a level just above their competency.

My intention isn’t to make it too easy, because then they don’t feel challenged. I also don’t intend to make it too difficult, because that is defeating. Defeat for some trauma survivors is so familiar that it can be a default emotional space, entered in to upon the mere scent of impending failure. If I know they can give me 10 palm strikes, I might have them give me 2 more at the end. If I know they can give me 5 strong knee strikes, I ask for 2 more at the end. If they say they can’t, I respond that they can, it will just take some time and effort. Most people get it during class, some might take one more class to get the mechanics of a technique or drill.

I assure them that I look and feel just as foolish when first learning something new. I have to relate my own power to them as something they can attain to. Ask for permission. You don’t have to literally say, “can I grab your wrist for this technique?” as obviously they have given you an automatic degree of permission just by signing the waiver for class.

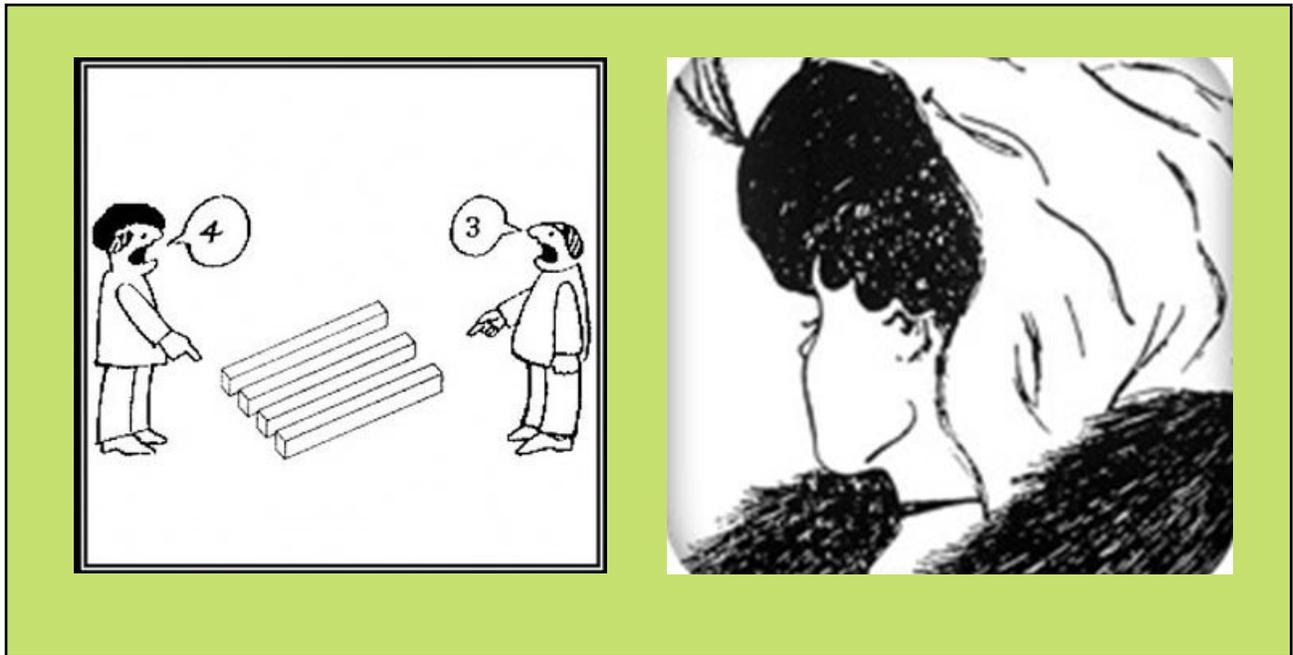
What I mean is making sure you are checking in with them when it is appropriate to make sure you aren’t pushing them so far in to their discomfort that it is harmful. Some people will quietly suffer, assuming your word is law because you are the authority and they want to be respectful. Encourage them to speak up about their boundaries. I used to tell the kids I taught that not even I had permission to make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable with themselves.

I hope this serves as a good starting point for many instructors who will certainly have some students coming to them seeking help in regaining their wholeness. Reiterating that we can only do so much in our roles as self defense instructors, I encourage the counsellors among us to explore the potential therapeutic benefits of realistic self defense training from quality instructors.

PARADIGMS OF VICTIM BLAMING



ANNA VALDISERRI



Four Paradigms of Victim Blaming

Allegations of victim blaming are becoming a serious issue in the self-defence world. It is becoming increasingly difficult to provide self-defence advice, particularly to women, without being accused of victim blaming. This not only significantly impacts risk reduction strategies, but also causes intense frustration in those who are genuinely trying to help people keep themselves safe.

I believe the problem is that people can approach the subject with completely different points of view, yet can end up saying similar-sounding things. Although their meanings and intentions are very different, it's easy to lump them all together, particularly when emotions run hot. I personally classify these points of view under four different categories, depending on the paradigms they generate from and their intentions towards survivors.



There are people who absolutely believe in the righteousness of Victim Blaming. They believe that people who 'misbehave' deserve to be punished. To them, it doesn't matter whether that punishment is meted out by a society's judicial system or by vigilante justice. The key factor is that that person 'had it coming' because they broke certain rules. These rules may have their origin in religious beliefs, societal mores, or personal idiosyncrasies, and they may or may not reflect those held by mainstream society.

This may sound utterly abominable, but most of us subscribe to this point of view in some extreme cases. For instance, if a parent were to find their toddler in the hands of a rapist, many of us would forgive any ensuing retaliation and feel rather unsympathetic towards the rapist-turned-victim. Alas, there are people out there whose behavioural code may be infinitely more restrictive than ours. For instance, they may believe that a woman who dresses 'provocatively' or behaves 'inappropriately' may 'deserve' not only a sexual assault, but even death for her shameful behaviour.

This type of thinking was brought to public attention by the documentary *India's daughter*, which caused such public uproar that it was banned by the Indian government. However, it is not restricted to foreign countries or religions. There are plenty of people in Western society who hold these kinds of beliefs. They have no interest whatsoever in supporting survivors; on the contrary, they consider their sufferings as richly deserved. From a survivor's point of view, they are utterly poisonous.

Another group of people are genuinely sorry that the act of violence took place, and certainly do not wish the survivors any further sufferings. However, they also do not prioritise the survivor's needs.

Our society has made it possible for many people to live their lives without encountering violence. This is a great achievement; however, it also means that those people often never develop the necessary skills for dealing with violence. I am not referring only to the physical skills needed during an assault, but also the emotional and psychological skills to handle the aftermath.

While it may be true that their lifestyles prevent them from coming into contact with many types of violence, it doesn't and cannot ever make them 100% safe. Unfortunately, many people are either unable or unwilling to accept that and instead end up living in an imaginary 'safety bubble'. Their lack of exposure to violence leads them to hope or believe that 'that sort of thing just doesn't happen around here', or that 'bad things don't happen to good people'.



When a bad thing does happen to somebody in their circle, their 'safety bubble' is at risk. To admit that violence can penetrate the bubble would rock their world. Seeking to preserve their tranquillity, they launch into a personal inquisition to find out 'what the victim did wrong'. This is not a search designed to find out how to decrease personal risks, or how to help the survivor avoid a repetition of the event. It is not aimed at finding the truth. Its sole goal is to preserve the 'safety bubble'. Once the Wrong Thing is discovered, or made up, these people can rest soundly, safe in the illusion that their little world is as safe as ever.

Meanwhile, the survivor has just been put through the wringer. In the aftermath of a violent incident, this is hardly helpful.

A third and entirely separate group of people aims to help, but doesn't always get it right. Many people who have experienced violence know how truly horrifying it can be. Their main goal is to prevent it from happening. For this reason, they want to educate innocent people in risk reduction. Their aim is to teach people how to keep themselves as safe as reasonably possible – they know that nobody is ever 100% safe, but they also know that our behaviour and lifestyle choices can make us harder targets.

Unfortunately, the information they produce can sound surprisingly like the venom spouted by Victim Blamers, or the dross spewed forth by people living in a 'safety bubble'. This is particularly the case around issues where victim blaming has been or is a very real problem, such as sexual assaults.

Sometimes the misunderstanding is caused by clumsy presentation – although the intention of some statements is purely risk reduction, they come out sounding accusatory. Sometimes the issue is purely that the listeners are so primed for conflict that *anything* said about the subject is a red flag. Sometimes there seems to be a problem of focus. Those interested in risk reduction want to reduce people's likelihood to become victims. Other people are mostly focused on sparing the feelings of existing victims. The two attitudes are often at odds.

There is another group of people who believe that violence is so abominable that it is not justified under any circumstances. Their ideal is a world in which violence is completely eradicated. Unfortunately, their path to this better world is strewn with victims.

The logic seems to be that if people were incapable of violence, then it wouldn't happen. So we should make all violent deeds punishable, even those committed in self-defence.



We should take away all weapons. All violence prevention should be farmed out to organisations; to schools, employers, the police, or the penal system. We should completely reject our right as individuals to take charge of our own safety. It doesn't matter that this penalizes the honest (criminals don't obey laws – it's part of their job description) and the weak who find themselves deprived of equalisers. The focus here is not to protect possible victims, but to change the world.

By removing the permission and means of self-defence, in the short-term these people are making violence effectively inescapable: if it comes our way, it's going to trounce us and there's nothing we can do about it bar call the cavalry. I believe this is why these people are particularly vicious in their accusations of 'victim blaming' raised at anyone trying to teach risk management. Risk management entails that we accept and process the risk of violence, and take steps to reduce its likelihood. It's all about agency (the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices) and an understanding of reality. As this belief system hinges on ignoring reality and depriving people of their agency, risk prevention is clearly anathema.

Where does this all leave us? I guess that depends on where our beliefs and priorities lie.

Personally, I have seen enough violence to believe that reducing people's chances of becoming victims ought to be the priority. Helping survivors during their recovery is a very close second. Anything that stands in the way of these two goals I class as anathema – but these are my beliefs, my priorities.

It would help if we could all chill the fuck out. We are becoming so entrenched in fighting our positions that we're losing sight of the fact that there is a huge middle ground, with most people in it. Hell, fighting for the righteousness of their position seems to now be many people's overarching priority—more than saving people, more than helping them get better. If that's not fucked up, then I don't know what is.

WARRIOR LEGEND

KATHY JACKSON



We tell our children myths and fables. These are very powerful stories that carry the messages and core values of our culture. That's how cultural knowledge passes from one generation to another. Humans are motivated by stories. Those stories, those fables, those myths, those legends – they all hit something at a very visceral level. They hit your gut.

Within the firearms and self-defense training community, we have often benefited from the Warrior Legend. This cultural myth hits something deep within the heart of every good man. It is the story of the strong head of household who defends his family. It is the story of the warrior who protects his people. It is the story of the knight who rescues the princess. The Warrior Legend hits a very powerful node in the best and the strongest among our men. And that's good!

We have often used that goodness to our advantage within the self-defense training



community. When we use the word “tactical,” that’s one of the words that strikes this same chord. We have lots of words and phrases that activate the same feeling: Sheepdog. Fighter. Warrior. Soldier. Protector. The man who runs to the sound of the guns. Or puts his own body between his beloved home and the war’s desolation. The strong man loves his woman and he faces danger for her sake. That’s the story we tell, in short form, when we use those words.

Within the training world, we’ve gotten very good at hitting that button, hitting it from a lot of different angles, over and over. And it’s been very effective in motivating male students to buy classes, to pay attention in class, to practice what they learn, to drive forward and learn more. It’s a very powerful message that draws many students into our schools and motivates them to continue their efforts to learn.

The problem is, this message – as powerful as it is – is not one that resonates with the average woman in western culture. Little girls don’t grow up being told that someday, they can ride up to the castle and rescue the enchanted prince. They aren’t encouraged to dream about slaying dragons. Nobody tells their baby girl, “A real woman stands between her husband and any danger that would threaten him.” That’s just not a message we give our daughters.

So this powerful legend that drives men into classes won’t necessarily hit potential female students in the gut. Nor will it encourage them to take their training as the serious business that it really is, or drive them forward to learn more. Culturally, women just don’t hear that message in the same way that men hear it. We’re more likely to react to it as a legend (a fantasy, a myth, a fairytale, an un-reality) than we are to be motivated by the emotion it’s intended to provoke.

Boring

Here’s the awful truth: effective self-defense training is ... boring. For those who want to use firearms for self-defense, we spend a lot of time drilling the basics. That’s sights, trigger, follow through. We spend time working on a consistent grip, on a safe and smooth drawstroke, on being able to access the gun from a variety of positions, on good gunhandling and efficient reloads. Students should learn these fundamentals to the point of automaticity. Simply being able to handle the tool without thinking about the tool itself goes a long way toward establishing good preparedness for everything else that follows.

When talking about the humdrum, practical matters that make up the bulk of reasonable self-defense instruction, firearms trainer John Farnam wryly observes, “Everyone wants to know when they get to jump out of the flaming helicopters.” So, thinking about the Warrior Legend that motivates good men, we write class descriptions in terms that would attract



the people who want to jump out of those flaming helicopters. We do this because it works very well to attract adrenalin junkies and strong-hearted men, who make up the bulk of the self-defense community. We appeal to the Warrior Legend.

But then we're surprised and a bit sad that more women won't come to our classes or learn the skills that would help them learn to protect themselves. Don't women *care* about staying safe? Don't women *want* to have fun learning cool new skills?

We don't write our class descriptions thinking about boring, mundane things like, "This will help you stay safe and keep your family safe." That might be true, but it isn't sexy. It doesn't give the reader an adrenalin jolt and it doesn't promise that they can be the hero of their own legend. It's the steak without the sizzle.

Who needs this?

The problem is, strong men and adrenalin junkies don't derive nearly as much benefit from defensive training as the people who *aren't* motivated by the Warrior Legend.

The message that women want to hear and need to hear is that serious self-defense training is *practical*. This training will help you do the things you want to do, in the ordinary happy life you live right now. These skills and this mindset will fit into your everyday life. We don't train, and we aren't inviting you to train with us, just because we want to fulfill some virile fantasy, but because we're concerned about simple reality. This is where the rubber meets the road. This will make your actual day to day life better. That's the message that women need to hear, and in some ways, it's almost the opposite of how self-defense training has traditionally been marketed.

So we need to find more ways and better ways to get this message out to good women as well as to good men: Training is not a fantasy or a game. It provides you with important knowledge and experience on a very practical level that can help you take better care of the people you love. The hard work of learning how to defend yourself will help you enjoy the life you want to live. Learning how to protect yourself will help you stay safe and keep your family safe.

When we get that message to our potential students, they come to class. Better than that, they learn how to protect themselves and the people they love.

KUNG FU MATH



JEFF BURGER



Talking with Sifu Lam about the importance of skill and strength and skill vs strength and how to prioritize my training and he gave me this.

I call it "*Lam's Equation*"

10 skills = 1 strength

10 strengths = 1 will

I understood the 10 skills = 1 strength piece. You simply need a skill advantage to beat a larger stronger opponent. If you don't think size and strength are factors then you are living a dangerous misconception.

I was confused on will, I took it as meaning heart.

A fighter who has heart just keeps going, tired, hurt, losing ... he presses on, but that's not what he meant by will.

He said it meant having a real reason to fight.

I was teaching a women's self defense seminar when one woman walked away from the



practice and just sat down.

I asked her if she was OK, she said *"I'm fine, I just don't know why I'm here. I'm never going to be able to beat a man, they're just stronger."*

I said *"What if he is trying to rape or kill you?"*

She replied *"Read the papers, women get raped and killed everyday."*

The group had heard this and I could feel the moral drop.

I knew this woman personally and knew she had two daughters (8 & 10) so i asked her

"What would you do if someone was trying to rape and kill one of your kids?"

She pretty much snapped, her posture went from defeated and hopeless to something unstoppable and crazy, scary and said *"I'd ****ing kill them."*

OK, so what happened to change things? Why is it what she couldn't possibly do for herself was something unquestionable for her kids? Not to sound cheesy but the answer is unconditional love for her kids, she had a real reason to fight.

So I told her *"Think about what would happen to your kids if someone killed you. How would your death effect them? Who would raise them ?You need to tell yourself I'm going to be there for my kids, I'm going to watch them grow up and be there for birthday parties, Christmas present, graduations, get married and I'm going to hold my grand kids and nobody is going to take that away from me."*

I took a few things away from that experience.

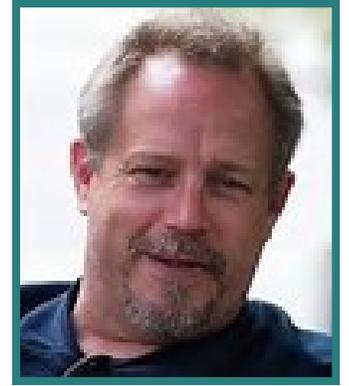
1. Don't fight unless you have a real reason, if only for the fact that you wont fight your best (not to mention legalities).

2. Why couldn't she tap into that for herself ? My thought is she (we) don't love ourselves unconditionally.

Why? I don't know. Maybe because we know all our short comings, even the stuff we'd probably never tell anyone, so maybe we feel unworthy of it. As for your children, well they can have all kinds of faults and we still love them unconditionally.

3. How could she (we) tap into that strength? You tell yourself this person has no right to take you away from your family.

MEN AND WOMEN, BIG AND LITTLE



RORY MILLER



Men and women are different. A lot of that is biological, a lot of that is social conditioning. And a lot is psychology created in the interaction of biology and social expectations. It doesn't serve anybody to pretend it is not true. It also doesn't serve anybody to pretend that it means very much.

Different just means that, given the same problem, you will have different tools to solve it. *Viva diversité*. But if the problem must be solved, you will find a way. That's what humans do, we adapt.

Do men and women have different fighter/warrior/killer instincts? Sort of. Maybe. My experience actually says no. Sort of. One of the questions I ask in some seminars is how many of the participants have ever had to fight a women for real. Few hands go up and they are almost always street cops or bouncers. Then I ask if they ever want to repeat the experience, and they go a little pale and shake their heads. It seems that it takes a lot more to get a woman to cross the line into physical force, but when she does, she has no internalized rules.

So that's two differences, I guess. Generally, women are more reluctant to fight than men.



And when they do, men tend to focus on the abstract, bullshit social construct of “winning” and women are just there to hurt you. That’s what makes them so dangerous that experienced people pale a little at the memory... but grin when they remember the college kid who took a stance and bragged he was a black belt.

But not that much of a difference, because (and this may be my generation whining about “kids these days”) even most men will not engage under even extreme provocation. The biggest coward I ever worked with was a male, former marine, over six feet tall. And the most fearless was a 5’2” single mom.

Are women more reluctant to engage? Sure. If you take any group that, on average, has less muscle density and is smaller, being eager to engage would not be a sign of intelligence. Smart people avoid damage, and hands-on conflict always has the risk of damage. And any conflict with someone who is likely to lose with words and likely to win with fists has inherent risks. So, yeah, just like a small country or the smallest boy in the red neck school a woman (on average) will avoid confrontation. Not because of her gender but because of her intelligence. And it doesn’t take above average intelligence, either.

And when you are the smallest in a conflict, there are three ways to win that I know of. **Technical superiority** is the trained option. If you are superb, you can give up a lot in the weight, strength and age departments. But you have to be really good and, more importantly, you have to be really good at exactly the kind of fight that you’re in.

The second is ferocity. Or crazy. Everyone has little internal lines they won’t cross. Even when death is in the air, almost everyone holds back to some extent. There is always a balance between trying to win and trying not to lose and those are incompatible strategies and incompatible worldviews. It’s not always the answer, but if you are willing to go all-in and the threat is not, the threat has a tendency to leave. I think that is why things like nose strikes and groin strikes have been so successful for Leonnie’s WSD students and so dismally unsuccessful in jail fights. The disparity between what the threat expected and what they got became the signal to disengage.

The third is clarity. And clarity doesn’t hurt ferocity and is integral to technical skill. All fighting, anything with an athletic component, is all about efficiency. Efficiency is removing any unnecessary motion whatsoever. Clarity is the mental equivalent. It is knowing yourself– what you are willing to do and not; why you are fighting and that it is worth all it will cost. It is knowing your goal and your strategy. Not some vague “I want to win this fight” but “Get to the door.”

And it’s not a hyperfocus on a single goal. It is clarity also to recognize when the first choice is no longer an option. That allows you to switch. Effective adaptability is predicated on clarity.

TO COMPLY AND GO OR NOT?

ERIK KONDO



To Comply and Go to a Second Location or Not?

The question of whether someone should comply with a demand to go to a second location or try to escape when threatened by a Predator with a weapon is quite common. The scenario is usually some version of the following:

You are approached by Predator with a weapon who is a stranger (NOTE: If the Predator is known to you, then there are different dynamics at work) and ordered to move to a second location. The second location is any location that the Predator wants you to go where he



has more control and privacy. That location could be into an ally, behind a bush, into a car, into a room, etc. Should you comply or should you try to escape?

This question can be examined using a **Cost/Benefit Analysis**.

Cost:

The Cost (risk) of not complying is that the Predator will use his weapon on you (shoot you, stab you, etc) for trying to escape. The Cost (risk) of complying is that the Predator will do unwanted (horrible) things to you in the second location which may also include shooting you, stabbing you, etc.

Benefit

The Benefit of not complying and escaping is that you get away without those unwanted things happening. The Benefit of complying is that you do don't get shot, stabbed, etc *at that exact moment*.

Given that this is a difficult analysis to make given the many individual factors and variables involved, the following is a line of thinking to consider:

In the vast majority of incidents involving a Predator (Resource or Process), the Target is not killed for trying to escape. This is a statistical fact and can easily be verified. One reason for this fact is that the Predator has little to gain and more to lose by killing the Target for trying to escape. The Predator is responding to his or her own Cost/Benefit Analysis. Most Predators are not motivated enough to kill you for only non-compliance in the form of trying to escape. Please note that deliberately goading or challenging a Predator with a weapon is a much different story and is likely to get you killed.

On the other hand, there is a much less common, but ruthless type of Predator that doesn't follow the standard Cost/Benefit Analysis and is willing to try to kill you for trying to escape. In part, because your life is meaningless to him or her.

It makes sense to try to escape from a Predator who is NOT willing to kill you for trying to escape, since you should be able to escape without being killed. His or her weapon is part of the Predator's Threat Display and is not intended for use. This situation is the most common scenario.

That leaves the question of *"should you try to escape from someone who IS willing to kill you for trying to escape?"*



My response to that question is as follows:

If a Predator is willing to kill a perfect stranger for doing nothing other than trying to escape a threat to his or her life, is that the type of person you think is willing to let you go unharmed if you go to a second location with him or her? Is that a “trustworthy” person who will not harm you in exchange for your compliance? Or is this person someone who has such little consideration for your life that he or she is more likely to torture and kill you at a second location?

To put it another way:

If ALL Targets complied with ALL threats by ALL Predators to go to second locations, then MOST Targets will have complied to something unwanted (robbery, sexual assault, or something else) when they could have escaped (Predator is not willing to kill to stop them from escaping), AND some of them will have complied with a Predator that is willing kill them and might want to torture/kill them.

On the other hand, if NO Targets comply with ALL threats by ALL Predators to go to second locations, then MOST of the Targets will have escaped without having complied to something unwanted, AND some of them will have tried and succeeded to escape from a Predator that was willing to kill them and might have wanted to torture them. AND some others will have failed to escape and suffered injury or death.

It is important to note that compliance in the form of going to a second location is fundamentally different than compliance in the form of giving up your valuables or possessions. If a Predator only wants your resources, then you are not important to him or her. Therefore, you don't need to go to that second location, only your resources need to go there. In such a case, you separate from the demanded valuables, and you send them along with the Predator (you give up your wallet, purse, car, etc).

If a Predator wants YOU to go to that second location, then YOU are the resource. When faced with a Predator that both sees you as a resource and is willing to kill you, then you DO NOT want to go with that person to a place of his or her choosing.

In other words, a Predator who IS willing to kill you is NOT someone you can trust to NOT hurt/kill you even if you comply with his or her demands.



FOUR Examples ONE Concept - Erik Kondo



- CLUES:**
- 13 Letters
 - An essential part of boundary setting.

FOUR Examples ONE Concept - Erik Kondo



- CLUES:**
- 11 Letter word
 - Designed to create respect for the rules.

THE SELF DEFENSE CONTINUUM

TEJA VAN WICKLEN



THE 5 DS OF SELF DEFENSE are what you need to know in order to avoid an attack or survive one.

<p>DECIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not to be a victim and to acknowledge the existence of risk. to be informed about various emergencies and criminal behavior and to inform those you love. to learn to spot criminal INTENT by understanding discrepancies in behavior. 	<p>DETER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by preparation. Always have a plan, a map, a direction. by awareness. Notice things, Listen, Respond to the warnings of intuition. Detect Danger. by de-escalation. A calm attitude can disarm aggression. Learn to Deter a criminal INTERVIEW. 	<p>DISRUPT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by leaving, deescalation or even physical means, in order to prevent a criminal from getting into POSITION. Be the calm controller of events. Cause your aggressor to falter in his resolve. Heed your instincts before it gets physical. 	<p>DISENGAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attack your Attacker/s with everything you've got, including improvised weapons, then get away as quickly as possible. There may not be another chance. Move Towards Safety; not just away from danger. Find a well-lit, populated area. He may or may not pursue depending on his REACTION. 	<p>DEBRIEF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to the Police, don't say too much. Preserve evidence (don't shower). Get legal advice. Do whatever you can to reduce the after-effects. Seek support, promote physical and emotional healing.
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Together The 5 Ds and The 5 Stages help us understand the before, during and after of crime or: **THE SELF DEFENSE CONTINUUM**

www.DeviProtectiveOffense.com

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Special thanks to Erik Kondo for creating the 5 D's and to Marc MacYoung for creating the 5 Stages.

THE 5 STAGES OF VIOLENT CRIME are the stages a criminal goes through in order to commit a crime.

<p>INTENT</p> <p>The visible physiological signals that a criminal is ready to commit violence.</p> <p>The criminal has often learned how to mask his Intent behind words and feigned innocence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to spot the signs of Intent. 	<p>INTERVIEW</p> <p>This is where the criminal decides upon your suitability as a victim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the benchmarks of the various types of interviews: Regular, Hot, Escalating, Silent, Prolonged. 	<p>POSITIONING</p> <p>This is the criminal putting himself in place to successfully overwhelm you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid Fringe Areas. Know about the types of Positioning: Closing, Cornering, Surprise, Pincer, Surrounding. 	<p>ATTACK</p> <p>If the first three stages have been achieved, there is no reason for a Criminal not to use force, or the threat of force, to get what he wants.</p> <p>This goes for thieves, rapists, murderers. Until the attack you may not know for sure which one you are confronted with.</p>	<p>REACTION</p> <p>is how the criminal feels after the act. Until he is out of your sight you are at risk of his reaction whether you've cooperated or not.</p> <p>The volatility of the criminal's reaction is another reason it is far easier to avoid violence than to try to safely extract yourself from it.</p>
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This Self Defense Continuum is about perspective and context. It is a tool to help you break something big down into bit-sized pieces so it can be examined and followed and understood. The Self-defense Continuum is a combination of the ideas of two self defense analysts who were, at the time, working separately.

Erik Kondo came up with **The Five Ds of Self Defense**. These are five options you have for avoiding, disrupting or escaping crime in one piece. They are Decide, Deter, Disrupt, Disengage, Debrief.



Marc MacYoung came up with *The Five Stages of Violent Crime*, which represent the stages a criminal goes through in order to commit a crime. They are Intent, Interview, Positioning, Attack, Reaction.

The fact that both men came up with five things that completed one another and formed a natural connection, was opportune and curious. When I looked closer I found they had come up separately and miraculously each with half of a whole.

Together these concepts form The Self Defense Continuum – the time line along which a crime occurs. Thinking of crime as something with a Before, During and After helps us view crime as a process and not just a sudden occurrence we have no control over. It helps us see how moments come together to form events. It helps us see where we fit in and possibly how and where we can affect the outcome. To be able to see a particular crime as a kind of story, can give us more power to affect how we play into it – in naming and understanding the individual moments of a crime, and seeing how one moment follows the next, we gain a bit more insight and potential control over circumstances.

Unfamiliar stories or processes seem to occur out of the blue or too quickly for our reaction time. When we are blind to a process we are unable to comprehend it, let alone, change it. How much time or notice there is before and even during an event has an enormous amount to do with what we perceive to be important information. We only hear or take in that which makes sense to us, and that expands or contracts the feeling of time. The process of crime or event prediction is very much about seeing more than we thought was there.

Let's use baseball as an analogy. Imagine, you're at the batting cage for the first time. That ball is coming at you at 65 or so miles per hour and if you've never been in a batting cage before, that can be reasonably hard core. How are you supposed to put a bat on a tiny thing headed directly at your head like that?

So you start with a formula. Where is the ball coming from? And where is it aiming at? Once you begin to understand the trajectory, you start hitting the ball. This is an intuitive process for some, and a calculation for others. Either way, you have to get it embedded into your reflexes somehow because you won't have time to consciously tell your arms to tense up and swing. It has to just happen.

After you've had a bit of practice, you start to get the hang of it and you find you have time to dig in and get comfortable. Now that you know how it works, there seems to magically be plenty of time to process things and you start hitting a lot more balls than you miss. Hitting them well is another phase of learning, but hitting them at least means they're not hitting you.



The first phase of The Self Defense Continuum is:

DECIDE To Spot Criminal INTENT

This is the Before Stage. Decide is the longest, most important and least explored area of self defense. It is where we live, it is where we work, it is where we have time to fortify our homes, our lives, our families, ourselves.

Once something goes wrong you are in the During phase where you have to act quickly. You no longer have time to prepare, make leisurely decisions or comb your hair. Before a robbery you can choose which locks to buy. You can compare prices. During, you can only make a phone call, fight him off, run, or put out the flames.

Before is where most of the work gets done. Until something goes wrong it is always Before. It is Before, right now. Right now, you are Deciding to read this article.

Decide then, is about Preparation. And preparation is the single most important step you can take before a journey. When you hike up a mountain, what you know and what you take with you are pretty important. When you study for the test, you ace the test. When you don't, you scramble, second guess and reap the rewards of a job poorly done. But never get cocky, that's how we become lazy. Hubris is often why seasoned swimmers drown and professional climbers fall.

Specifically, this part of the Continuum is about a Deciding to learn how to read or intuit the Intent of another to harm you.

The concept of Criminal Intent refers to a person's readiness to commit a crime – a readiness that manifests itself physically in some way, because very few people are able to hide everything they're feeling when something serious is on the line.

Intent is more than a motive. A motive is a reason to do something. We all have good reasons to do lot's of things that we don't do. You could have a good motive to quit your job, but you may not. Intent is imminent. He has moved from motive to plan. The barriers are down.

Why he's chosen you may or may not be important, you may or may not ever find out. If you get away quickly and he escapes, you may have to live without ever knowing. The longer you engage with a criminal, the more you find out about what he's planning. Is he trying to take you somewhere? Has he asked for something? Or does he want to hurt someone? Do you really want to know?

How do you thwart criminal Intent? Well, first you have to learn to SEE it. And the earlier you see it the better for obvious reasons. If your training and your senses are working for you, you may not even know if the situation was really going to be dangerous. He'll be



gone and moving on to someone else instead of you. There's always the chance he was just a lonely guy looking for conversation and that he really is a friend of a friend of yours. But there are cues and clues to what people want and how invested they are in getting it. Everyone has a tell, and unlike the movies most tells are similar.

I won't go into specific behaviors here, Gavin De Becker already wrote the book 'The Gift of Fear'. And Desmond Morris wrote a number of books on human behaviour if you want to go deeper, just look him up. Then there is What Everybody is Saying and Lie Spotting. There is a ton of information on this stuff at your fingertips. Go forth and practice people reading. Do not, however, jump on your beginner abilities and start judging people. Just watch and over time see if you're right about your preliminary thoughts. When it comes to danger it's simple. If something tickles your spider sense, just opt out.

A guy once walked straight towards my car window. He walked in too direct a line and smiled the whole time. The smile looked too practiced and he came a little too quickly. My son was in the car. It was getting dark. He held his hand out like he had a question but I didn't see any real question in his eyes. He looked too comfortable standing in the middle of a parking lot. Not like a person with a problem. None of this was thought out, things just seemed off and I responded to the discomfort I felt and the child in the back seat I was responsible for.

I rolled up my window before he got to my car, that's all the time I had. My keys were in my hand but I couldn't get them into the ignition before he was at my window. He said something like, "can I talk to you." I smiled and pretended not to understand. I put the key in the ignition while he motioned for me to roll down the window. I smiled, nodded, and I pulled out.

He didn't need me to roll my window down to talk to me. He also didn't need to get so close to my car. If he had a question he could have gestured, pointed, stated his need clearly from a few feet away. Good men who live in this world know that you don't get that close to a woman, especially one with a young child, especially in dim light or darkness.

I love to help people. If you really need something and I can help, I'm your girl. But those were not the words or the body language of someone in a desperate situation. They were the words and actions of someone with an agenda.

It's arguable, of course. But my son was in the car and that's what my instincts told me. I'll never know, and that's okay with me.

DETER At The INTERVIEW Stage

In the last section, we covered the first part of The Self Defense Continuum and what it

means to Deter a criminal's Intent to harm us. But what is a criminal Interview and what does it look like?

An Interview is the way a criminal, who thinks you have what he wants, makes sure he won't be injured or captured in the process of attacking you. This, by the way, is your last chance to read him, figure out his game and take off. Once he pegs you as a good bet, you will be peeling him off you instead of walking away.

Five Types Of Interview

According to Marc MacYoung, there are five basic types of criminal interview. Get the full scoop directly from Marc at www.nononsenseselfdefense.com). No need for memorization it's the concepts that count. Even if these aren't familiar they will make perfect sense. This is the highly abridged version.

The Regular Interview A criminal will approach you expressing a need—the time, a cigarette, whatever. He's distracting you. While he's talking, or you are, he's checking your awareness and also your commitment to defending yourself.

The Hot Interview is a sudden, usually loud, mind-jarring emotional bombardment. Marc says, "The success of this strategy relies on you not being accustomed to dealing with extreme emotional violence and reacting in a stunned and confused manner." A stunned victim is an easy victim.

In an **Escalating Interview**, the criminal tests your boundaries with behavior that quickly goes from normal to nuts and will increase until it becomes physical if he gets away with his strategy. This is basically a Regular Interview that quickly ramps up to Hot.

The **Silent Interview** is where a criminal watches you. You may never have a face-to-face encounter until he attacks. This is the one that scares people most since they feel they have the least control here. The criminal goes through the Intent and Interview stages as he follows you through the grocery store and into the parking lot, hopefully (for him) without you noticing.

The Prolonged Interview can take weeks or more. Think stalking.

Just knowing there is a bomb is pretty important information. Action beats reaction. Once you see the bomb or hear it ticking, you can begin to disarm it or get away. If you don't know what a bomb even looks like, you are fodder. The five types of interview give shape to your instinctive feelings about a situation.

Gavin DeBecker's work is another very important part of honing the ability to read a predatory interview. If you haven't already, grab a copy of ***The Gift of Fear***. DeBecker writes about the kind of stuff you would usually see in Regular Interviews.

Regular Interviews can be perpetrated by well-dressed people with nice manners. The

Persuasion Predator's motto is, you get more bees with honey. This is true in general, but the Persuasion Predator raises it to an art form. This guy's primary goal is gain your trust and keep you off guard so he can Position himself to get what he wants. This is where being able to think like a criminal can help you out, but you don't have to go quite that far in order to tap into your persuasive side. Have you ever made promises you didn't intend to keep in order to get something you wanted? Or told a lie in order to persuade the officer to let you keep your driver's license?

There are ways to persuade without dishonesty as well. Persuasion Predators use those too. Whatever gets the job done. Of course, not everyone using these methods is a criminal. The key is to use what you're learning to spot groups of signals together. If you spot more than one ploy there may be something more going on.

DeBecker describes Forced Teaming as a stranger implying a connection between the two of you in order to get under your radar, as in "we are in this together". There's a certain natural distance with strangers that only time and trust will change. The idea here is that anyone trying to rush the natural progress of trust should be watched.

Another Ploy DeBecker discusses is Charm, which he explains is a verb not a adjective. People use charm to get what they want. Sometimes all they want is conversation, but sometime they want more.

DeBecker goes on to describe Too Much Information, Unsolicited Promises and others. Go get the goods, it's on Amazon along with everything else.

If there were a 6th "D" it would be **Deescalate**. Deescalation plays an important part in deterring some forms of social crime. Deescalation is about slowing or stopping the flow of energy in an exchange that is gathering heated momentum-starving the fire of oxygen. Staying calm while someone berates you is easy and natural for some and near impossible for others. We can all probably think of lots of times things didn't need to go wrong, but someone lost his cool and the interaction went to hell in half a second. This is a social skill so practice on your kids, on your loud obnoxious neighbor-every day and as much as possible.

Deescalation is a tool you can use to change or redirect an interaction with someone you're starting to recognize as unstable or aggressive.

Peyton Quinn came up with a few things not to do in response to someone's excessive anger. These may seem obvious, but common sense is less than common.

Don't insult him. Insulting is escalation not de-escalation. Usually we only insult people we aren't afraid of, but we all do dumb things in the throws of anger and other high emotions. Marc MacYoung says, "four letter words have no place in Deescalation." Don't tell him to calm down or relax. We all know this never goes well and yet we all say it in

that same sarcastic tone every time. Telling someone to calm down is an insult. You are in essence telling him he is nervous and out-of-control.

Don't challenge him. When you challenge someone with an unstable ego you are forcing his hand. "What are you going to do about it!" can only be construed as an escalation.

Provide him with an honorable exit. Make it easy for him to disengage without feeling like a coward or a loser. This often means you back down first. You have to be willing to stop making your point in the middle, or to apologize even if you're right. Easier said than done, especially when emotions are high. Try phrases like, "I see your point", or "I was out of line." Give him the benefit of the doubt. Get more on Peyton at www.rmcat.com.

Deescalation is about remaining calm in the presence of someone who wants you in an emotional state that makes you less rational and less likely to see the truck coming. Here comes the caveat. Rory Miller says de-escalation techniques don't work with asocial predators. They don't see you as a person anyway, so your apology means nothing. This means you may not know what's going on until you try deescalating the situation, but you will understand what it means when it doesn't work.

Erik Kondo came up with a wonderful concept called the **Goldilocks Principle**, which says any response that is out of proportion to the situation upsets the balance. If you under react you may be seen as weak. Apprehension can look like fear, which can have a galvanizing effect on a predator. On the other hand, if you are aggressive in return you have nitro and glycerin. The Goldilocks Principle is Erik Kondo's way of describing the Just Right Reaction that says, I'm not looking to make a big deal, but I'm not cannon fodder either. You can find more on Erik's work at www.NOT-ME.ORG.

To all this I would add, watch out for the **power of wanting**. When we want things it makes us vulnerable. Any decent predator can use what we want against us, whether it's a good deal on a car, a pair of shoes, or the opportunity to audition for a television commercial. Wanting is the bait on the end of the hook. Always check yourself when you are in the throws of want.

The criminal Interview is one interview you really want to fail. Whether it's up close and personal or from a distance, what you know, how you walk, your general demeanor and awareness and the power of preparedness are your weapons.

There is no award or parade for de-escalation and avoidance or for failing a criminal interview. There is no sign that says, "phew! You just escaped dismemberment by a serial killer." But you do win another day to eat spaghetti in front of the television or toss a frisbee with your kids. And that counts for quite a bit.

Disrupt His Position

"Never let the enemy pick the battle site." ~ General Patton

In past issues of The Conflict Manager we covered the beginning concepts of The Self Defense Continuum. We discussed what it is to Decide to Spot Criminal Intent and how to Deter at the Interview Stage. The next phase of the Continuum is the Positioning Stage which is a particularly volatile point in a criminal transaction. Every step we take in the Continuum removes opportunities for us to detect criminal intent and extract ourselves from the situation.

In the Positioning Stage a criminal puts himself and/or you in place for a successful attack. I should say criminal or criminals, because, remember these guys sometimes work together. The idea that there is safety in numbers goes both ways.

To take a step back, the Interview can take place over the phone, by watching only or up close and personal. An Interview which takes place face-to-face or even in the same room may put a shady character in Position already, unless the room happens to be a police station or is in some other way unsuitable. A criminal with Intent who is already in Position after a successful Interview will Attack unless something pretty significant changes that makes it unsafe for him to attack you. Because of this, somewhere between the Interview and Positioning Stages, will be the last available moment that allows you the space to avoid violence rather than extract yourself from it. Avoidance is to walk away, extrication is to have to exert more energy and undertake more risk. Positioning is the dividing point between Before and During on the Self Defense Continuum. This is why we need to carefully choose who we get into the car with and what the circumstances are. It may be the last choice we make in the Positioning stage. The next stage is quite a bit messier.

We are specifically discussing physical attacks, but this information translates to other types of crime as well. Online the Positioning stage might involve a predator asking progressively more personal questions or sharing something that makes you in turn more open to sharing. He is working you into a Position in which he can successfully ask you to share something extremely personal or even for a live meeting. Again, he or they will use whatever works. Marc MacYoung, who created the 5 Stages, says that a predator, doesn't usually want to fight, he wants to confuse and overwhelm his victim. This goes for both online and in person situations. A criminal doesn't want you to have the opportunity to fight back (or shut down communications) at all. He wants to overwhelm you with charm, force or whatever works best for his purposes, leaving you no time or inclination to reason.

A discussion of predatory positioning would not be complete without a mention of **Fringe Areas**. I am not implying that Fringe Areas are the only places Positioning happens

but they do constitute a large portion of the places violence occurs.

A Fringe area is a place on the periphery or on the way to and from somewhere else, hallways, stairways, shortcuts, elevators, alleys, parking lots, garages, etc. Any place something can happen and no one can hear you or get to you in time is a Fringe Area. Home can be a fringe area for victims of Domestic Violence or during a home invasion. The inside of a house is secluded and private, the way we like it when we shower and sleep. Criminals like privacy too.

Fringe Areas can also be temporary or transient. An office building might only be on the fringe after hours. A bathroom at a club is a common Fringe Area when the music is too loud or everyone too stoned to hear you or do anything. The back of a bus is on the Fringe if everyone is up front or the driver is distracted by a car accident. The closed room of a house during a party is another common Fringe Area.

Criminals are intimately familiar with these places and we are not. They are like fish looking up at bugs on the surface of the water. You can see them there, but only if you practice noticing.

5 Positioning Strategies by Marc MacYoung

What does it look like when a person or group Positions for an Attack? Marc MacYoung came up with Five Positioning Strategies to watch for. These are the most common documented strategies criminals use to get close to you.

Closing

The first strategy, called Closing, as in closing distance, is virtually identical to the Regular Interview we discussed in the previous installment of the Self Defense Continuum. Again, you can see how closely related the Interview and Positioning stages can be. In Closing, as in the Regular Interview, a potential criminal approaches you in need of something like a light or directions.

Obviously, not everyone asking for directions is after you, but at the moment you feel your intuition whispering in your ear and a stranger happens to be either close or getting there, you can at the very least, choose not to be distracted. Your natural alerts should of course be augmented if you are alone, in a Fringe Area, pregnant, in charge of young or disabled people, lost, it is dark or any one of the other environmental or situational arrangements that causes a measure of vulnerability.

We have ways of reading body language and intent. A person who really needs directions does not "feel" the same as a person who doesn't but who is approaching you on that pretext. There are subtleties of eye movement, peripheral attention, expression and determination that can be read if we are aware of our own and other people's cues. This is why it is so crucial to the practice of self defense that we learn to articulate our

instincts and apprehensions.

Cornering or Trapping

The next Positioning Strategy is called Cornering or Trapping. The potential criminal approaches you from a direction that traps you between him and a large object, like a wall. This usually means he is blocking an exit as well. He has thought this out while you were shopping.

For obvious reasons you want to be especially savvy about this strategy, which requires general awareness of where you are and where any and all exits are. An accomplice might be waiting behind one of the doors. Know where all the exits are, not just one.

Surprise

The Surprise strategy is that 'holy crap!' moment of the movie where the guy appears in the back seat of the car or the closet. You don't see him until it's too late.

Notice covered and concealment. Avoid the hiding spots or keep your distance, especially when you are alone. Don't walk too close to parked cars or doorways, walk down the middle of the sidewalk.

Pincer

The next positioning strategy is known as Pincer. We know that criminals sometimes work in teams or gangs and Pincer is an effective strategy when they do.

Pincer takes several forms:

Two or more people suddenly split up as they approach you. You may have seen this when kids split up to harass or bully another kid. It is highly disconcerting to engage several people at once, one of whom is behind you. One thug engages you from the front using the first positioning strategy we called Closing, and the other blindsides you or grabs your bag. Two guys face each other across a narrow walkway so you have to walk in between them.

Surrounding

Finally there is Surrounding, which Marc tells us is most common with three or more thugs. You walk through or along a group of guys and suddenly you are in the middle. They may hang out in a sort of line, as in leaning against a wall, so the front guy can wait for you while the last follows behind as you pass. Sometimes they swarm quickly, but often they drift around you. They are hedging their bets in case they have chosen the wrong person. They may also be trying to look nonchalant, that is, not suspicious to anyone who might be watching.

Normal Vs Abnormal Behavior

The next step is to be able to identify types of behavior to avoid. To do this, we first have to recognize the things we already know, but don't know we know. That is, we need to recognize Normal Behavior. For the sake of self defense Normal means not harmful or potentially dangerous. Spastic dancing or other attention getting behavior is quite normal in New York City where I grew up. You know what normal behavior looks like for a time and place, you just may or may not be able to articulate it. You may get an odd feeling when something isn't normal, and that's a start, but while you're pausing to assess that feeling and whether or not to act on it, he's getting into position.

Since it's impossible to articulate all abnormal behavior, let's clarify what normal behavior looks and feels like, so that when you see something that isn't it, you recognize why. Pick a place and ask yourself what is normal behavior for that place. Imagine you are at your child's soccer meet. What is normal behavior for a soccer field? Envision it. What is happening? Are planes landing? People on soccer fields mostly play soccer and spectate. A bunch of people may be using their phones to take pictures or tell family members who couldn't make it what is going on. The kids who aren't playing will be running or climbing on the bleachers.

What would be odd in this environment? What would bring your hackles up? What would look out of place? Would a lone older man standing separate from the crowd but intently watching the kids cause you to look closer? He might be a grandparent. Would a guy loitering around the parking lot just outside the field looking nervous and chain smoking make you watch more carefully?

It is very important that we not judge people but rather tune into our awareness. There is a fine line. Observe and take action if necessary, do not react to first impressions. All we are doing is taking something that normally hangs out at a low level of consciousness and moving it up for a moment into the spotlight so we can give it a name.

This simple thought process can work in many situations. Once you know the difference between, "normal" and "abnormal" you can also begin to articulate the difference between flirting and probing or asking and manipulating or between your boss calling you out for a reasonable short coming and his stepping over the bounds to something more personal or devious like coercion.

The 15 Foot Rule

Especially if you are in a Fringe Area or vulnerable position, you need to keep your distance from anyone even vaguely suspicious. Distance is your best friend. Do you want the lion next you or on the other side of the river?

Marc MacYoung recommends not letting him get within 5 feet of you. For man-on-man

violence with slightly different cues and intentions that may be sufficient. I highly recommend women use the 15 feet rule.

According to law enforcement statistics, a criminal can close 20 feet in a second and a half on average at top speed. 15 feet gives you approximately one second if he lunges, but a second is a long time if you are already aware there might be danger. It is not enough time if you are clueless, but it is difficult to speak to someone further away, so 15 feet seems like the most reasonable distance to work with and reasonable is often the best we can hope for.

In practice here is what it would look like: A man employs the Positioning strategy known as Closing. He walks toward you, appearing to be in a rush, pointing at his watch. He says or implies, "It's broken, do you have the time?" You are a woman alone in an underground parking facility (Fringe Area) and this makes you uncomfortable, though you aren't sure why, other than the fact that you are a woman alone in an underground parking facility, which is enough. You have also caught the "it's broken" and registered it as possibly a bit too much pre-thought information for the moment; too much information can mean lying and you have made a note of it. You employ the Progressive Fence by putting your hands up to show discomfort (Visual Fence). You have set a boundary. You can say, "Stop, talk to me from there," (Verbal Fence)

Now, he might pretend he doesn't speak the language, although you know that everyone reads distress language and stop signals pretty much the same way. He might pretend not to notice. How will he do this? Any way that will work! He might pretend he's looking at his phone and doesn't see you. He might pretend he needs help and that gives him the right to disregard your hands. You are aware that he is continuing to close distance. In some cases, a potential criminal might look past you as if planning to walk by, yet you can tell he's focused on you even though he's not looking at you. Maybe it's because you look exceptional this morning, maybe not. Is he just one of those people acutely unaware of personal space? Do you want to stick around to find out?

This is what fifteen feet can do for you. It gives you time to calculate.

Whatever this particular potential criminal does, you now have several cues to work with. Cue number one, you're in a fringe area and anyone who understands the most elementary thing about human interaction understands that you don't stroll up to a woman in a deserted area under any circumstances. Cue number two, he ignores your body language and boundaries. Cue number three, he ignores your words. This alone labels him as a predator unless he is completely clueless, drunk, desperate or otherwise impaired. Either way, no need to stick around. If he is really in need of help he can tell you from a distance. If he is so desperate that he needs to get that close, remember that a drowning person will drown you as well.

In the unlikely instance that you are confronted by a master criminal pretending to be old, infirm or blind, you will just need to use all we have discussed and be a good interpreter of human behavior. What if he breaks into a run and comes at you from fifteen feet or less. It comes down to your awareness, knowledge of exits, and your reaction time. There are lots of ugly possibilities. Luckily most of them are very rare. He will probably walk right by as if you weren't there. Most people are not after you. If he is a predator, your awareness alone might informed him that you aren't his girl.

In general if someone ignores your boundaries, get out. Get in your car, lock the door and drive. What you don't want to do is stand there thinking to yourself that you're probably just exaggerating or you don't want to be impolite. Denial is common in unfamiliar situations. The remedy for denial is to heed your instincts and cues.

Let's for a moment assume you are imagining things. Let's assume that the guy walking toward you in the dim and deserted garage just doesn't notice you. He also won't notice you're not there.

Fear of social embarrassment is a survival instinct. Not that long ago if you weren't part of a hunter/gatherer group, you wouldn't last long. If your group ostracized you, you starved, died of illness or were eaten by wild animals. So fear of public speaking goes back a ways. No one wants to act crazy or be labeled crazy, but there are times to disregard or override this fear. Remember the person walking toward you is someone you don't know and are unlikely to ever see again. Do you really care if he goes home and tells his wife this crazy lady ran from him in the parking lot for no reason. She may even be likely to ask him if he got too close to you and enlighten him. And you'll never know. Give yourself permission to act stupid if this sort of thing ever happens. Seriously. Do it. Say it out loud, "I am allowed to run away, slam my door or whatever I feel is necessary, if I feel in the least bit threatened. It doesn't matter what I look like when I do it. I am not that person, this action does not define me. I am only doing the right thing at that moment by heeding my instincts and my training." If it helps, pretend you're late for something.

This may seem like a lot to remember – only you already know it. Just practice articulating behavior, context and intuition silently in your head and you will begin to create a consciousness around it. Once you create that consciousness, it will be relatively easy to pick out the cues of Intent, Interview and Positioning.

Non-Violent Disruption

Now that you know what Positioning looks like and how to articulate it, how do you Disrupt him before he gets into Position?

Obviously in real life rather than a classroom violence can get you into trouble even if you are in the right. It's only your opinion after all. If you are female against a male you

have a better chance of convincing people you were the one in danger, but let's agree that if you can get away without leaving your fingerprints on the murder weapon it is preferable.

At the Positioning stage, talking is unlikely to help. He has already interviewed you and determined you have what he wants. Some people recommend vomiting or acting crazy, but I have yet to meet anyone who can vomit on command and crazy people are attacked and raped all the time. In fact, mentally ill and handicapped people are groups at high risk of abuse. If you have complete conviction, there may be situations in which you can disrupt by bluffing. You might look over the criminal's shoulder, yell police, or say something about that being the third unmarked car in that last few minutes. It is possible that some version of this might do the trick, but you had better be an excellent actor even under duress. If it works, he was probably either still interviewing you or he wasn't highly motivated.

Running

Let's discuss the art of the quick getaway. Once you realize you are in danger, you want to act quickly. One of the best strategies is to get out of the situation. Move. Make like a tree and leave. It's pretty hard to get into trouble if you're not there. If your chosen strategy is running, practice it. I don't mean train for the Olympics or run a marathon, I mean practice sprinting. See how quickly you can take off. Practice against someone else, preferably someone bigger than you are, with bigger muscles and longer legs. Running away is a completely legitimate and honorable self defense technique! But you need to know how good you are. Running may not be your thing. If it isn't, don't count on it working for you in a pinch. Adrenaline doesn't always make you super fast or super strong, sometimes it makes your legs weak and wobbly.

Noise

Screaming can get attention if you are in an area where screaming gets attention. There are places where people ignore car alarms, cities usually. If you are at a ballgame no one may notice. A good blood-curdling scream might create an opening for escape by jarring your assailant. But you must have an escape plan since screaming alone won't necessarily cause him to end his plan to harm you, it might even cause him to harm you faster.

Another option is a sort of bark that off-balances him – a big loud guttural sound. You want to engage his flinch response. While he is recovering from the jamming of his signals, you should be running away, closing and locking the door, jumping out the window, whatever. This is more easily accomplished by men with deeper voices. I myself have not garnered anything but a kind of stare, whereas Rory Miller once demonstrated his barbaric yalp, which had the desired effect on my flinch response.

If you have a whistle use that, but if I were reaching into my bag for something and I thought I was in danger, it wouldn't be a whistle.

All bets are off in practice. I wouldn't count on a strategy like making noise if I had other options. Certainly use noise in addition to other things. But we are talking about non-violent options that might save us from having to fight our way out of a life-threatening situation and there aren't many of them. If you don't have an escape plan, all of this noise is of course contingent on whether or not there is anyone helpful around you to hear it.

TWO OPPOSITE SCENARIOS- ERIK KONDO

Which of the following scenarios is more likely and which is less likely for women in general?

Scenario #1

1. Assailant is a stranger. (creepy guy, dangerous serial predator)
2. Attacks from an ambush. (surprise attack)
3. In a public place. (parking lot, public park, sidewalk, etc.)
4. Forces victim into secluded area. (dark alley, behind a bush)
5. Attacker uses a weapon and/or high physical force. (knife, gun, hard strikes, strangles, etc.)
6. Victim fights back unsuccessfully. (flails, kicks, screams, etc.)
7. Victim reports the crime to the police. (right after the attack)

Scenario #2

1. Assailant is known to the victim. (friend, date, boyfriend, acquaintance, co-worker, boss, etc.)
2. There is a buildup to the assault. (interview, boundary testing, etc.)
3. Assault happens in private area. (apartment, dorm room, private vehicle, etc.)
4. That the victim went to voluntarily. (wanted to go, was manipulated into going)
5. Assailant doesn't use a weapon, uses coercion or minimal force.
6. Victim doesn't fight back. (frozen in fear, incapacitated by drugs/alcohol, didn't want to make the assailant angry, unwilling to resist because of existing relationship)
7. Victim doesn't report the crime to the police. (doesn't tell or only after a long period of time) ■