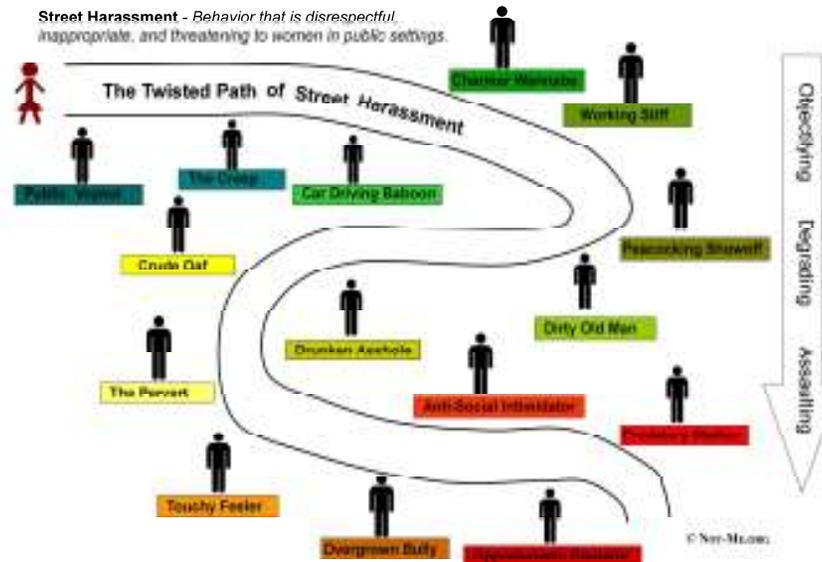


Street Harassment in the Urban Jungle

*Dealing with the Charmer Wannabe,
The Creep, Touchy Feeler, Opportunistic
Predator, and more.*



NOT-ME!

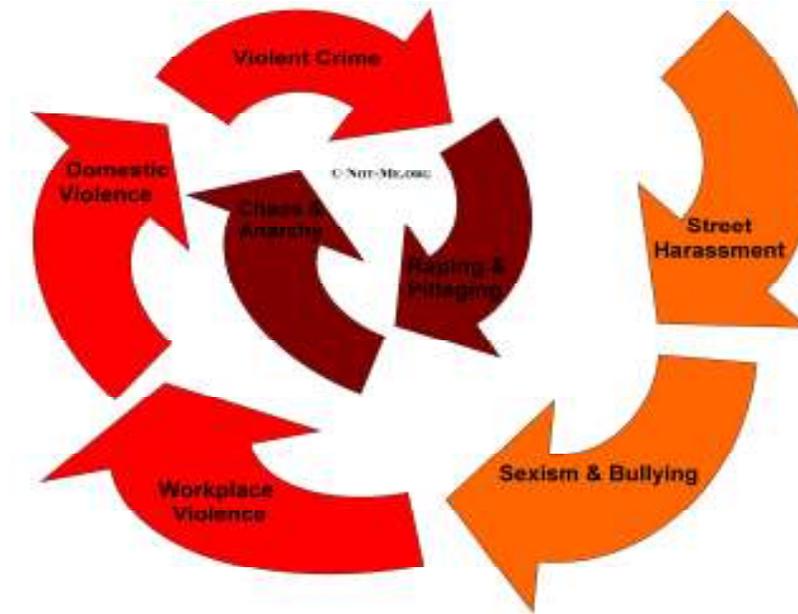
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The Death Spiral of Cultural Street Harassment in the Urban Jungle



*“They came first for the Communists,
and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew.*

*Then they came for me
and by that time no one was left to speak up.”*

- Pastor Martin Niemöller

Introduction to the Urban Jungle

Describing the Urban Jungle is a little like defining pornography. It is difficult to define, but you know it when you see it. The Urban Jungle is any place where people of all shapes and colors live and work, whether it's a large city like New York or a smaller city like Cleveland. Imagine squeezing thousands or millions of people, rich and poor, old and young, male and female, fast and slow, and a combination of every other imaginable character type into one small space, where everyone wants to eat, drink, work, and live freely. Sometimes they co-exist peacefully, but many times they do not.

Just like the real jungle, the Urban Jungle is inhabited by various different types (or species) of people. While all of these people are unique individuals, many times they share certain traits and behaviors. Unlike a politically correct discussion among well-rounded, mature adult professionals in a familiar and safe context, for example, like a board room or a school conference, the Urban Jungle is a place where all expectations are defied—and most anything goes. We don't have background information on our fellow commuters and pedestrians, so we need to draw conclusions about people based upon their behavior and the behavior of their particular 'species' in general.

We need to draw these conclusions because the Urban Jungle is a place where the laws of society are often broken, where not everyone is 'following the rules', and where—just like the real jungle—your survival may depend upon your knowledge and wits.

Street Harassment in the Urban Jungle

Street harassment is represented by specific types of activity practiced by a number of different species in the Urban Jungle. The behaviors that constitute street harassment are varied, but these behaviors can be summarized by several broad overhead terms: disrespectful, inappropriate, and threatening to women in public places. These behaviors can also be de-

scribed as behaviors effecting or intending to objectify, demean, intimidate, and/or cause physical bodily harm to women.

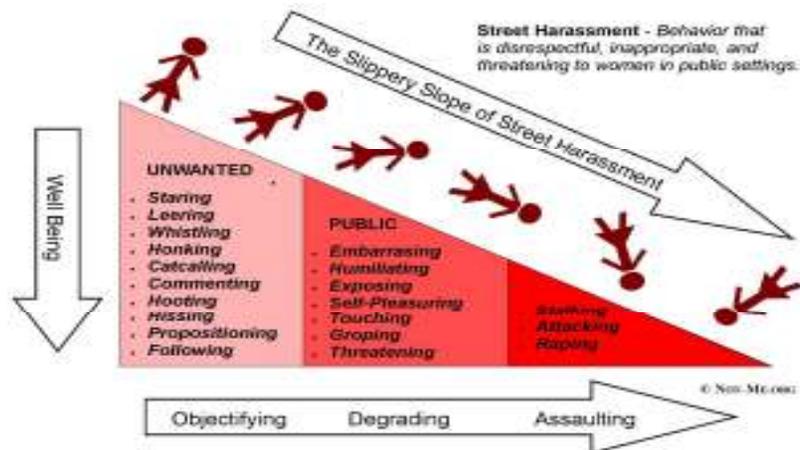
An incomplete list of behaviors follows:

<i>Staring</i>	<i>Hooting</i>	<i>Masturbating</i>
<i>Leering</i>	<i>Hissing</i>	<i>Crowding</i>
<i>Picture Taking,</i>	<i>Propositioning</i>	<i>Touching</i>
<i>Flattering</i>	<i>Following</i>	<i>Groping</i>
<i>Whistling</i>	<i>Embarrassing</i>	<i>Threatening</i>
<i>Honking</i>	<i>Heckling</i>	<i>Intimidating</i>
<i>Catcalling</i>	<i>Humiliating</i>	<i>Stalking</i>
<i>Commenting</i>	<i>Exposing</i>	<i>Rape Interviewing</i>

and more ...

The existence of the behaviors above describe the some of the characters of the Urban Jungle. These behaviors are all socially unacceptable in polite and controlled social settings. But the Urban Jungle is not a polite and controlled social setting. It is a place of unwritten rules and laws where innocent people are sometimes victimized. The primary law of the real jungle is that the strong and adaptable survive, the weak and stubborn perish, and where effective behaviors succeed and flourish--ineffective behaviors are weeded out.

The Slippery Slope of Street Harassment



Street Harassment is a form of Bullying

Street harassment is a form of bullying and sits snugly along the continuum of sexual assault. These behaviors depend upon the existence of an imbalance of “Power & Control”. Implicit with this imbalance of power and control is an underlying “threat level” of violence. The Harasser depends upon this implicit threat in order to intimidate the Target of Harassment into not responding assertively.

Why is it a Problem?

Street harassment causes women to feel unsafe and less confident as they go about their lives in streets and public spaces. The most common response to street harassment traditionally has been to ignore it. Therefore, young women have literally been “conditioned” to not to respond to being bullied and humiliated. This constant and socially acceptable “victimization” has a negative carryover effect and makes women less assertive in other parts of their lives.

What Can be Done About it?

The long term solution is to make street harassment culturally unacceptable. In the meantime, we must provide women and girls with tools and a proactive response for when they are harassed. In order for the response to have maximum effectiveness, the response must be executed in a calculated manner—it should not be a knee-jerk reaction.

Won't Responding Make the Situation Worse?

One reason that street harassment is so prevalent and “successful” is because the Harasser is counting on the Target to either not respond out of fear, or react out of anger. Either way, the Harasser has “controlled” the situation and exerted his “power”.

How Can I Formulate an Effective Response?

An effective response is about increasing your power and control of the situation while simultaneously lessening the Harasser's. Every situation and incident of harassment must be approached differently. You must be able to determine what factors are providing power and control to the Harasser, and how to best undermine them. In many cases you will find that the Harasser's perceived Power is simply a matter of physical strength. Being male provides the Harasser with more physical strength. The Control is the intimidation created by that Power.

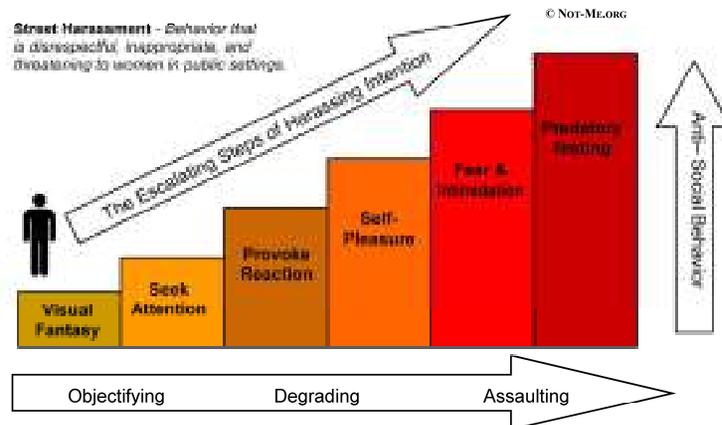
Power & Control

When a man harasses a woman, he is in effect saying “I can say or do anything I want, and you cannot do anything about it”. The reason he feels this way is that he feels that he can rely on his physical strength to keep him safe. His ace in the hole is his ability to become violent to be victorious in the encounter. But is this really true? Can he really assault you without recourse?

The reality is that in a vast number of situations, if the man attacks you, he has just crossed a major line. One that could put him in jail, cost him thousands of dollars in legal fees, and/or cause him to lose his job and the respect of his peers. He could be labeled a sex offender and lose much of his freedom. His power in the situation is only temporary; the real power lies in the aftermath. Refute his power and he has lost control.

That being said, there are those men that harass specifically to get a reaction. They know you would never engage with them voluntarily. They seek to force your acknowledgement their existence. These men need to be handled a little differently, but the strategy remains the same. Determine the source of their power and control and formulate a calculated response.

The Escalating Steps of Street Harassers' Intentions



Just like the real jungle, the Urban Jungle can be noisy. The inhabitants continually argue and fight for power and control of their particular sidewalk, bench, or surrounding area. Street Harassers are defined by their inner desire for power and control over the women that happen to venture into their territory. Their basic inner nature manifests itself in the form of an immediate *Intention*. It is this *Intention* that enables us to profile the Harassers and categorize them by their *Intention*.

The Intentions can be grouped as follows:

The Harasser wants to engage in a *Visual Fantasy* with the Target of Harassment.

The Harasser wants to *Seek the Attention* of the Target of Harassment.

The Harasser wants to *Provoke a Reaction* from the Target of Harassment.

The Harasser wants to engage in *Self-Pleasure* with the Target of Harassment.

The Harasser wants to invoke *Fear & Intimidation* in the Target of Harassment.

The Harasser wants to engage in *Predatory Testing* of the Target of Harassment.

There is a wide variety of types of street harassment in the Urban Jungle. Therefore, the different types need to be identified and defined so that they may be easily recognized. It is important to be able to recognize and categorize the behavior in order to be able to conceptualize the appropriate response to it. Each type of harassment has a different delivery method. The harassment can be delivered visually, verbally, or physically. In addition, each type of harassment situation contains an implicit “threat level” of possible violence. The following behaviors are grouped by the Harasser’s intention and listed in order of increasing anti-social behavior.

Understanding the intention and motivation of the harasser is important in order to create the most effective response. By understanding why he is doing it, you will be in a much better position to determine what type of response will act as a deterrent for future harassment, but also will not escalate the situation towards violence.

Visual Fantasy – Engaging in forbidden mental imagery with Target as subject of fantasy.

1. *Staring*
2. *Leering*
3. *Picture Taking*

Seek Attention – Attempting to get noticed by the Target or by bystanders.

1. *Flattering*
2. *Whistling*
3. *Honking*
4. *Catcalling*
5. *Commenting*

Provoke Reaction – Attempting to get some type of strong response from Target.

1. *Hooting*
2. *Hissing*
3. *Propositioning*
4. *Following*
5. *Embarrassing*
6. *Heckling*
7. *Humiliating*
8. *Exposing*

Self-Pleasure – Engaging in physical touch with self or with Target as subject of fantasy.

1. *Masturbating*
2. *Touching*
3. *Groping*

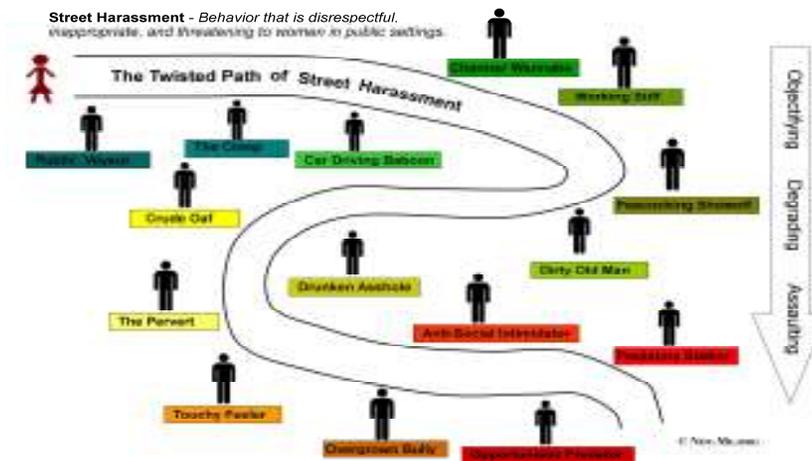
Fear & Intimidation – Attempting to induce fear into the Target

1. *Threatening*
2. *Intimidating*

Predatory Testing - Purposefully observing and/or interacting with the Target to determine if she is a suitable victim to attack.

1. *Stalking*
2. *Rape interviewing*

Profiling the Street Harassers of the Urban Jungle



Profiling the harasser is useful because it provides the Target and the Bystander a means for determining what type of harassing species they are dealing with. This knowledge helps take some of the fear out of the encounter. It also enables a vocabulary for conceptualizing and discussion.

The dynamics of all human conflict are based on power and control. This dynamic motivates Street Harassment too. It is only by understanding the immediate intention that the Target and the Bystander are able to formulate a response that is an appropriate and effective counter to the Harasser's expectations and desires.

The Harasser's Intention is to engage in a *Visual Fantasy*.

He usually expects to be ignored.

- **Public Voyeur** – This person does a lot of staring, leering, takes a picture, etc.

- **The Creep** – His very presence gives women “the creeps”. He usually knows it and uses this to his advantage.

The Harasser’s Intention to Seek Attention.

He is forcing you to recognize his existence.

- **Car Driving Baboon** – Honks, hoots, and hollers at you as he drives by. A “hit and run” tactic.
- **Charmer Wannabe** – Comes on too strong, does not listen to “No”, thinks he is “God’s gift to women, might follow you, engages in bantering and “compliments”. Attempts to control the encounter.
- **Working Stiff** – Harasses you while on the job. Looking for entertainment. Usually in a group.
- **Peacocking Showoff** – Playing to the crowd. Looking to be the entertainment. Wants attention.

The Harasser’s Intention is to Provoke a Reaction.

Expects to be ignored or get an angry reaction.

- **Dirty Old Man** – You know him when you see him. Many times goes after the young and innocent.
- **Drunken Asshole** – Has alcohol fueled courage, no inhibitions, exhibits poor judgment, etc. Sometimes starts out as the Charmer Wannabe.
- **Crude Oaf** – Makes vulgar and disgusting comments directly to or about you.

The Harasser’s Intention is Self-Pleasure.

Uses his repulsive behavior to control the situation.

- **The Pervert** – Engages in flashing and public masturbation like activities, etc.
- **Touchy Feeler** – Gets close to women and tries to rub against or touch them inappropriately whenever possible. Utilizes public transportation to his advantage. Can be sneaky or obvious.

The Harasser's Intention is *Fear & Intimidation.*

Uses the threat of violence to control the situation.

- **Overgrown Bully** – Uses threatening, derogatory, angry language, impulsive behavior, etc.
- **Anti-Social Intimidator** – Uses violence as a tool at the slightest provocation. He is dangerous.

The Harasser's Intention is *Predatory Testing.*

He is actively looking to find a suitable victim.

- **Predatory Stalker** – Follows the Target seeking opportunity for further victimization.
- **Opportunistic Predator** – Harassment is a means to test/ interview for potential victimization. He sometimes uses the techniques of the *Charmer Wannabe*. He is dangerous and needs to be deterred with the use of strong physical assertiveness.

A Deeper Look into Street Harassment

Listening to discussions and reading comments about Street Harassment seems to confirm a number of factors.

1. There is wide disagreement as to what exactly constitutes Street Harassment with the behavior discussed ranging from asking "How are you doing?" to physical assault.
2. The majority of women seem to be bothered by Street Harassment. Some don't mind it. A minority seems to like certain aspects of it. The most common response is to ignore it.
3. The most common fear is that it will escalate into "something worse".
4. When a woman does respond, she does so out of anger. She has reached the "breaking point". After responding, she seems to feel better about herself and the incident.
5. The most common perception of why it happens is that men do it to get attention.

6. When Seeking Attention men make a “compliment” and get an angry reaction, they sometimes react with anger.

This discussion on Street Harassment is similar to a self-defense discussion session where someone asks “What is the best move for self-defense?” What follows is lots of back and forth suggestions and comments, but no one seems to realize that there is no “best move for self-defense”. Just like there is no “best color” or best “temperature”. It is all relative to the particular circumstances.

When it boils down to it, a woman is bothered by Street Harassment when she feels a man is being disrespectful, inappropriate, or threatening to her in a public place. She is usually not bothered if she feels the man is being polite and respectful. In this case the definition of disrespectful and inappropriate is any behavior that would be considered by society to be disrespectful and inappropriate in a “controlled social setting”.

This definition avoids the issue of what exactly was done and why it was done. Male or female, we all know when someone is being disrespectful to us and we don’t like it. Most of the time it is not another person’s specific words that offend, it is the voice tone and body language that determine whether we feel someone is being disrespectful.

Therefore, if the greeting “*Hey baby, looking good today!*” is disrespectful in a controlled social setting, then it is disrespectful in the street and therefore it is Street Harassment. Threatening is also defined in the eyes of the beholder. If you feel that someone is threatening you, then they are. Regardless of what that person says his intention is. This definition easily encompasses all public sexual acts which are forbidden in controlled social situations.

This definition is also very understandable to men. Men are known to fight and kill each other over minor issues of “disrespect” on the street. It is something they all can relate to. If *Seeking Attention* men were to understand that their actions were being perceived as being disrespectful, they would also understand why women don’t like it and why some react

with anger. Therefore, the woman's anger would be considered "justified" as opposed to "unjustified". This knowledge would make it less likely that the man would escalate with his own anger. This is no different than understanding male road rage. Few things bring on more male anger than the feeling that someone is "unjustly" disrespecting him on the road.

Why does the *Seeking Attention* man use sexual comments? Perhaps he is "throwing as much mud against the wall as possible and hoping the something will stick." He knows that the vast majority of women are not interested in interacting with him. He is trying to find one that will respond in a positive manner. It is simply a numbers game. It might be one in one hundred, but he is looking for that one. Catcalling is a tactic for avoiding outright rejection and still maintaining the feeling that he is in control. He is basically forcing women to acknowledge his presence and existence.

The next question leads us to the *Provoke Reaction* man, the one who is purposefully trying to be rude or touches you in order to get a reaction. Why is he doing it? I suggest looking at the *Provoke Reaction* man as someone suffering from a very serious case of the *Sour Grapes*. This man might be a failed *Seeking Attention* man, or not. He knows that the Target woman would not be interested in interacting with him no matter what he said. As a result, the best he can do is make inappropriate and threatening comments to make him feel that he has some ability and power to over the Target.

The *Self-Pleasuring* man is a more perverted and less verbal version of the *Provoke Reaction* man. If *Self-Pleasuring* man is engaging in some type of public masturbation, he is demonstrating significant anti-social behavior. Therefore, he has the potential to exhibit other possibly violent anti-social behaviors.

Predatory Testing is the most dangerous of the types of intentions. The Street Harassment is being used as a tool to locate suitable victims for attack. It is also a means for him to gain experience with using different techniques and strategies to manipulate women. This type of person must be dealt with

strong *physical assertiveness*. It is important to be able to distinguish this person from the less dangerous Seeking Attention man even though they may appear to exhibit similar behaviors.

The majority of Street Harassment discussions seem to make no mention of the different types of intentions involved in the scenarios described. It is for this reason that no one is able to come up with the best response to Street Harassment. Just like self-defense, there is no best response. Everything depends upon the particular circumstances.

The implications of Street Harassment on Personal Safety for Women

Street Harassment has a direct effect on reducing the personal safety of women and increasing their risk of sexual assault. The reasons are as follows:



Effect on Women as Targets of Harassment

A. *Self-Worth* – A major element to personal safety is directly related to the potential Target's feeling of confidence and self-worth. When a woman's feeling of self-worth is lowered by Street Harassment, she is at greater risk of being victimized.

B. *Intuition* – Listening to your intuition is considered an extremely important aspect of personal safety. Intuition has a number of names: spider sense, threat alarm, sixth sense, inner voice, etc. Regardless of the name, responding to the warning of intuition is designed to warn people of impending danger. Upon receiving the warning, the person is supposed to either "flee" or "fight". The problem is that the experience of numerous incidents of Street Harassment has conditioned women to ignore their intuition.

It is neither practical nor advisable to "flee" from or "fight" every instance of Street Harassment. Therefore, women learn to silence their intuition and endure the harassment. As a result, when faced with a real threat to personal safety, a woman may ignore her intuition believing that she is "merely" being harassed. This decreased ability to distinguish between Street Harassment and the prelude to an assault makes women at greater risk of being victimized.

C. *Vocal Assertiveness* – The use of a loud and powerful voice to ward off an attacker is another cornerstone of personal safety. Street Harassment conditions women to be silent. Due to the implicit threat of violence that comes with Street Harassment, women learn to ignore the behavior and not respond. They are afraid that if they respond with vocal indignation, they will escalate the situation into violence. Being conditioned to be silent to abuse puts women at greater risk of being victimized.

D. *Situational Awareness* - Being aware of one's surroundings is thought to be the most effective means of personal safety. Awareness is a deterrent to assault. But the existence of Street harassment makes situational awareness ineffective. It is not possible to use awareness to avoid Street Harassment. Street

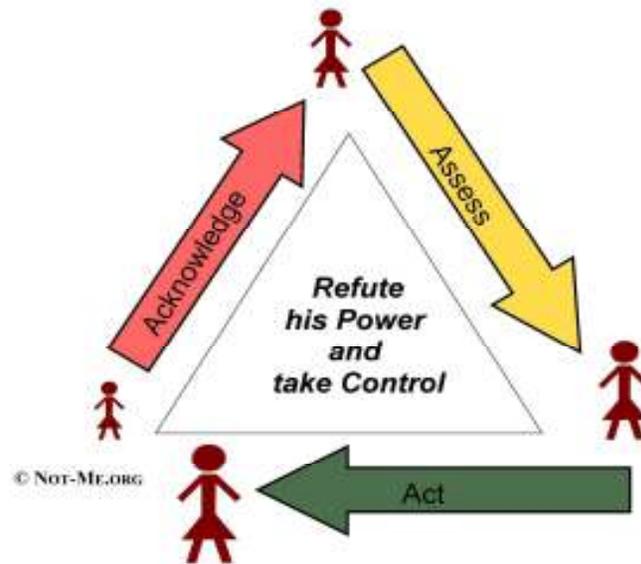
Harassment occurs regardless of whether the woman is “aware” or not. In fact, a “conditioned” defense to Street Harassment is the use of headsets to drown out and not be able to hear comments, looking down to avoid eye contact, and other techniques to appear oblivious to Street Harassers in hopes of not catching their attention. These factors put women at greater risk of being victimized.

E. *Avoidance* – Avoiding potentially dangerous situations is the complement to awareness, but it is impossible to avoid Street Harassment. Street Harassment by definition occurs in public places where women want and have a right to be. Constant exposure to Street Harassment conditions women to believe that they are unable to avoid abuse. Therefore, avoidance as a concept of personal safety loses its value. This loss of confidence in avoidance puts woman at greater risk of being victimized.

F. *Personal Space* – The practice of maintaining a safety perimeter of no less than five feet is another important concept of personal safety. The concept is that by keeping strangers from being in close proximity; a woman will have more time to respond to an attack. Street Harassment makes a mockery of this practice. Street Harassers are constantly breaking into this safety circle in order to get close to their Target. As a result of women’s inability to regularly maintain a safety circle and keep abusers at a distance, they are at greater risk of being victimized.

G. *Conditioning* – All of the preceding factors mentioned and more have the effect of lessening the women’s confidence and ability to apply the concepts of personal safety. Because being subjected to Street Harassment begins for women in adolescence, women are in effect being *operant conditioned* over time to be targets of abuse. This conditioning puts women at greater risk of being victimized.

3A's of Street Harassment Disruption



The *3A's of Street Harassment Disruption* are a plan to deal with Street Harassment as it occurs. They are designed to provide the Target of Harassment with a strategic response. The response is designed to have an effect on four entities.

1. *Target* – Provide the Target with a response that will make the Target feel better.
2. *Harasser* – Provide the Harasser with a response that discourages this type of behavior.
3. *Bystanders* – Provide a response that encourages Bystander support of Target.
4. *Community* – Provide a response that discourages Street Harassment in general in society.

ACKNOWLEDGE – It is important for the Target and Bystander to acknowledge that she or someone else is being targeted for harassment. That this behavior is harmful not only to the Target, but to all those that witness it. Adolescents are most at-risk.

ASSESS – The Target and Bystander need to rapidly assess several factors in order to formulate the most effective response.

Assess what type Harasser is involved and what is the Harasser's immediate Intention.

Assess the environment for intervening and mitigating factors such as other supportive Bystanders, police, or more Harassers.

Assess the Target's and the Bystander's realistic ability (strengths & weaknesses) to confront the Harassment.

ACT – If there is no immediate threat to personal safety, the action should let the Harasser know that his behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. To avoid escalating the situation, this message should not to be conveyed with anger, but with a strong voice and body language that leaves no doubt about the inappropriateness of the behavior: "Stop harassing women."; "Don't touch me."; "Move away."; and "Back off!" are examples of assertive phrases designed to deter some types of harassing behavior.

Response actions can be divided into three main types:

1. *Visual* - A signal from the Target using body language.
2. *Verbal* – Calculated words or phrases from the Target in response.
3. *Physical* – Physical movements from the Target in response.

The most effective responses will usually be *Compound Actions* and will use multiple types of Actions.

The idea here is to understand WHAT type of reaction the Harasser WANTS and give him one that is the most opposite to what he WANTS. For example, if he wants to shock and disgust you, you show amusement and contempt for his "ability" to shock and disgust.

Street Harassment Response Example Scenario #1

This example provided is designed only to show how to use the 3A's of Acknowledge, Assess, Act. The ACTIONS depicted **are not necessarily the best responses**. They **are shown here to illustrate the concept of using a Visual, Verbal, or Physical response to a particular type of harassment** from a particular type of harasser.

You are walking down the sidewalk during the day and a man starts complimenting you on how good you look. You ignore him and continue walking, but he starts to follow you and continues his verbal banter.

STEP #1:

ACKNOWLEDGE – Yes. He is directing his attention at you. What is happening is *flattering, commenting, and following* harassing behavior.

STEP #2:

A. **ASSESS** the Intention - What is the Intention of the Harasser? **Seek Attention** - He wants to engage with you.

B. **ASSESS** the Harasser – What type named harasser does this type of behavior? **Charmer Wannabe**.

C. **ASSESS** the Environment – Other people around, but no one else is paying attention.

D. **ASSESS** yourself – You are NOT afraid or intimidated. You want to respond to and take control of the situation.

STEP #3

A. **ACT** with a Visual Response – You look at him directly and coldly.

B. **ACT** with a Verbal Response – You make a statement to the effect of "Do not bother me!"

C. **ACT** with a Physical Response – You look at him directly and coldly, you put up your hands and make a "move back motion".

The most effective response is a compound action that involves the combination of (A), (B), and (C).

These actions demonstrate *Physical Assertiveness* designed to deter the onset of aggression. The ACTUAL response will vary depending upon the circumstances and the nature of the people involved. The idea is to provide a FLEXIBLE STRATEGY as opposed to a canned response.

Street Harassment Response Example Scenario #2

This example provided in only designed to show how to use the 3A's of Acknowledge, Assess, Act. The ACTIONS depicted **are not necessarily the best responses**. They **are shown here to illustrate the concept of using a Visual, Verbal, or Physical response to a particular type of harassment** from a particular type of harasser.

You are walking down the sidewalk during the day and a man opens his coat and exposes himself in your direction.

STEP #1:

ACKNOWLEDGE – Yes. It was not a mistake and it was directed at you. What just happened? It was Exposing harassment behavior.

STEP #2:

A. **ASSESS** the Intention - What was the Intention of the Harasser? **Provoke Reaction** - To shock and disgust you, thus providing power to the Harasser.

B. **ASSESS** the Harasser – What type named harasser does this type of behavior? **The Pervert**.

C. **ASSESS** the Environment – Other people around, but no one else saw it.

D. **ASSESS** yourself – You are NOT afraid or intimidated. You want to respond to both make yourself feel better and make the Harasser feel worse.

STEP #3

A. **ACT** with a Visual Response – You look at him with contempt and make the universal sign of a “tiny penis”. You chuckle as you walk away.

B. **ACT** with a Verbal Response – You look at him with contempt and say “Pathetic”. You chuckle as you walk away.

C. **ACT** with a Physical Response – Take a picture and chuckle as you walk away.

As before, the ACTUAL response will vary depending upon the circumstances and the nature of the people involved. The idea is to provide a FLEXIBLE STRATEGY as opposed to a canned response.

The main point of both examples is to provide an assertive response that communicates your displeasure as opposed to either ignoring the harasser or reacting with anger. This type of response demonstrates that you are not intimidated by the harasser and you refuse to be controlled by him. You establish control of the encounter by voicing your feelings in a calm but direct manner. Once you have made your statement, the best strategy is to firmly walk away.

Putting out the Fire with Gasoline: Why Reacting with Anger Inflames Incidents of Street Harassment in the Urban Jungle

EXAMPLE CASE #1 – The *Charmer Wannabe* with the intention of *Seeking Attention*

Harasser: "Looking good honey!"
Target: "Fuck you asshole!"
Harasser: "Oh, ya? I'll fuck you bitch!!"

There are many profiles of street harassers and there are many types of street harassment behaviors. This writing will address dealing with harassment from Harassers whose intention is to either *Seek Attention, Provoke a Reaction*, or to create *Fear & Intimidation*. Rather than having an intention of a *Visual Fantasy, Self-Pleasure, or Predatory Testing*.

The goal of disrupting an incident of street harassment is to provide a response that has the direct effect of the following:

- a. Providing the Target a means to assert her displeasure with the behavior.
- b. Provide the Harasser a response that deters future harassment behavior.
- c. Provide Bystanders with actionable information in order for them to support the Target.
- d. Provide society with one example of how to effectively deal with street harassment.

Referring to the incident above, the Harasser is most likely a *Charmer Wannabe*. The intention of the comment is to *Seek Attention* from the Target. He feels that his only means of exerting *Power & Control* to make the Target recognize his presence is by making forced sexual comments to her.

The Target on the other hand most likely has been victimized by these types of comments over a long period of time—she is fed up. She considers the comment to be disrespectful and an insult. Therefore, she reacts to the "insult" with angry profanity. This reaction satisfies (a) above. She has voiced her displeasure. But it is possible that this satisfaction is only momentary as the Target reviews her reaction.

Referring to (b), the Harasser now feels that he has been unjustly insulted. He had "offered a compliment" and received an insult. Therefore, his reaction is also anger. He now escalates the harassment with the intention of now making the Target feel

Fear & Intimidation. The response has not deterred his behavior. The Harasser has only changed his method of harassment.

In regard to (c), Bystanders who observe this interaction see mainly an angry confrontation with no clear aggressor or victim. Therefore, the most likely response will be to not get involved.

In regard to (d), the simple fact that this incident has escalated towards violence is proof that it is not an example for Society to follow.

A response that satisfies (a), (b), (c), (d) is a verbally assertive response combined with strong body language that conveys to the Harasser in no uncertain terms that his behavior is:

Unappreciated and disrespectful

(a) To the Target

(b) To women in general

(c) To others who are forced to see and hear it

The response does not need to be a lecture. It can be simple and quick, something along the lines of:

(a) "Don't say that. Women do not like it".

(b) "Learn to be polite. Next time just say hello".

(c) "Stop harassing women."

(d) Any phrase that comes across as assertive and not angry, but still conveys how you feel about the comment.

Based upon the initial comment, it is reasonable to assess that the Harasser's intention is *Seeking Attention*. Most likely, he is a *Charmer Wannabe* or a *Peacocking Showoff*. Despite the ineffectiveness or illogic of his method, he is hoping for some type of "ego boosting" response from the Target.

Therefore in his mind, the angry reaction from the Target is more than just a rejection, it is an uncalled-for insult. He reacts with his own anger. His intention is now to create *Fear & Intimidation* in order to *teach the Target a Lesson*. The Target on the other hand has reacted in exactly the same manner. Her reaction was also designed to teach the Harasser a lesson. These two diametrically opposed viewpoints now collide and escalate

the situation.

An assertive response is not an insult, nor is it designed to teach a lesson. It is a statement of fact and perception. When used properly, it de-escalates situations. It clearly conveys your message and feelings. If the Harasser denies his behavior or attempts to defend it as being a compliment, “Aw, can’t you take a compliment?”, you need to recognize that the *Power & Control* dynamic has just flipped to your favor. Terminate the encounter with a statement such as “It is disrespectful behavior.” and leave.

Every situation of street harassment contains a different *Power & Control* dynamic. There is no one response that works every time. But invoking anger means losing control. It is very hard to gain control over a situation when you are simultaneously losing control too.

EXAMPLE CASE #2 – The *Crude Oaf* with the intention to *Provoke Reaction*

Harasser: “Nice tits!”

Target: “Fuck you asshole!”

Harasser: “Your ass looks pretty good too!!”

In the example above, it is most likely that the Harasser is a *Crude Oaf* with the intention of *Provoking Reaction*. The *Crude Oaf* knows that there is no chance of receiving a positive response from you. Therefore, he makes his presence known with an undeniable offensive remark. If you ignore him, he has proven his dominance. If you react with anger, then he knows that his tactic works. Therefore, he gives you another offensive remark.

The *Crude Oaf* is a tough nut to crack. But the undeniably offensive nature of his comments will also alienate him from Bystanders. Since he wants either an angry or intimidated reaction from you, he should get a cold, cool, calculated response. One that states that his behavior is weak and pathetic and, therefore by extension, so is he. You are effectively denying

his ability to have *Power & Control* over you.

- (a) “Your behavior is pathetic.”
- (b) “Stop harassing women and go home!”

As before, use any phrase that comes across as assertive and not angry, but still conveys how you feel about the comment. Unlike the *Charmer Wannabe* or the *Peacocking Showoff*, the *Crude Oaf* can’t deny his intention or pretend it was a compliment. Therefore, he may be shocked into silence, or he may morph into an *Overgrown Bully*. In either case, you need to firmly exit the situation. Do not continue to engage against the *Overgrown Bully*.

EXAMPLE CASE #3 – The *Overgrown Bully* with the intention of *Fear & Intimidation*

Harasser: “Nice tits, bitch!”

Target: “Fuck you asshole!”

Harasser: “Oh, ya. I’ll fuck you, bitch! Now!!”

The *Overgrown Bully* makes his intention clear with his comment. He wants to threaten and intimidate you. An angry reaction just gives him more incentive to raise the stakes. As with the *Crude Oaf*, your reaction of anger or intimidation is a confirmation of his power. The *Overgrown Bully* is actually threatening you. Therefore, your response needs to deter the onset of further aggression. Your response needs to be calculated to end the threat and make Bystanders aware of your situation.

- (a) “Stay away!”
- (b) “Back off!!”

These statements must be combined with powerful body language. You must use physical assertiveness to convey a “do not mess with me attitude!”

Your goal should be to end the encounter and to exit the situation. This is not the time to express your anger or indignation. Exit, and go to the police. Tell them you were threatened on the street.

Fortunately, encountering the *Overgrown Bully* at the outset is much rarer than the other types of harassers. It is important to realize that all harassers have the potential to morph into the *Overgrown Bully* or worse. Therefore, regardless of your right to be angry, your goal is to avoid reacting with anger. When it comes to confrontations, anger is the accelerator, assertiveness is the brake.

Male Bystanders in the Urban Jungle

No writing on street harassment is complete without an examination of the role of male bystanders. In this case, the bystanders are defined as being neither participants, nor friends or associates of the harasser. The bystanders are strangers with no ties to either the Target of harassment or the Harasser.

The question of why bystanders, especially men, failed to take any action to intervene during or after an incident of harassment is quite common. The typical feeling is that the male bystanders either don't care or are afraid to get involved. This answer may be fundamentally true, but it avoids the deeper questions of what will make the bystanders care more, or cause them to overcome their fear, and thus get involved.

In order for a bystander to take any kind of action, he first needs to have a clear indication that action is needed. While the harassment may seem very obvious to the Target of harassment, to the bystanders the situation is much less clear. If the harassment consisted of a one time event such as a disrespectful comment or unwanted touch, the bystanders may have been completely unaware of its occurrence. Even if the harassment involves a continual invasion of the Target's personal space, it still may not be clear to the bystanders that there is a definite problem.

It is important to examine the event from the male bystanders' perspective. In general, men need a concrete signal that their intervention is needed and wanted. They need to have confirmed

in their mind that the Harasser has *bad intention*. And even after they have confirmed the Harasser's bad intention, they need a *trigger event* to cause them to act. Without these elements being present, the bystanders will most likely remain in an internal indecision limbo of *deny, delay, and do nothing*.

What also needs to be understood is that while a situation that requires bystander intervention may seem incredibly obvious to a woman, it may seem harmless to a man. The man may perceive that the Target is in no immediate physical danger, therefore there is no need for him to intervene. The Target on the other hand may feel threatened and is looking for both moral support and physical backup.

The male bystander is *uncertain as to what exactly has or is happening*. He is *uncertain as to whether there is some type of unknown relationship between the Target and the Harasser*. He is *uncertain as to whether his offer to intervene will be desired or will be rejected by the Target*. He is *uncertain of what he should do if he intervenes*. He is *uncertain as to whether his intervening will escalate the situation even further*. He is *uncertain as to how the other bystanders will react to his intervention*. All of this uncertainty compounds into a generalized fear of not intervening. As a result, the easiest action to take is no action at all.

It is very easy for a male bystander to take the position that whatever happened has "already happened"; therefore, it is too late to do anything about it, anyway. The Target on the other hand may simply be looking for a confirmation of her feelings about the inappropriateness of the behavior from the bystanders.

Male bystanders are more likely to intervene in a situation of street harassment when the Target of harassment makes it clear as to *what has happened, why it is a problem, and that bystander intervention is desired*. This information will provide the male bystander with confirmation of the Harasser's *bad intention* along with the *trigger* necessary to cause him to act. This information can be provided by an assertive statement from the Target directed to the Harasser stating "Stop harassing me. I don't like it." This statement is actionable information and removes a large number of uncertainties.

On a personal note, I believe that the statement "Stop harassing

women. No woman likes it.” is less likely to induce male bystander intervention. I feel the reason is that this statement is more of a general reprimand. The Target seems to have the situation under control. Therefore, maybe no male intervention is needed or desired.

In any case, the two main uncertainties that remain are *what exactly the Bystander should do*, and *will his intervention make the situation worse?* The first one can be eliminated by an additional command from the Target to the Harasser such as “Leave me alone!”, “Move away!”, or “Back off!”. The Bystander now knows that his role is to physically create a barrier between the two, or to add an additional supporting command of his own such as “You heard her, move away from her!”

We are now left with the final uncertainty. The one that all harassers depend upon to keep both targets and bystanders in fear. It is the implicit fear that the harasser may at anytime erupt into violence that the harasser uses to his advantage, enabling him to gain power and initial control of the situation.

It is for this very reason that it is important to profile and assess the Harasser in order to determine the likelihood of his escalating the situation into violence. It is not true to say that “all harassers are bluffing” because they are all not bluffing, but when confronted with an assertive Target and supportive bystanders, most harassers are bluffing. When confronted in this manner, the Harasser needs to make a choice: he can either escalate the harassment to threats and thereby risking an angry mob of bystanders, and incurring criminal penalties, or he can back down.

In the event the Harasser backs down, the Target has won. Both the Target and the Bystander need to stand firm and allow the Harasser to make his exit. Over-intervention on the part of either the Target or Bystander may change the dynamic of the situation so much that now the Harasser is the one that feels threatened and reacts. This type of situation should be avoided.

If the Harasser does not back down when faced with both an assertive Target and Bystander, the Harasser may be an

Overgrown Bully, Anti-Social Intimidator, or worse. This type of person is comfortable with the use of violence to gain advantage. Therefore, the Target and Bystander need to jointly disengage and exit from the Harasser in an orderly manner. Upon creating a safe distance, it is an excellent opportunity to alert the police as to the nature of the incident.

In summary, male bystanders are not necessarily uncaring or afraid. They may simply be uncertain as to when and how to proceed. If they are provided with clear indications and directions, it is much more likely that they will intervene on behalf of the Target in a situation of street harassment.

The Pervert, The Creep, and the Crude Oaf: Making Threat Assessments

Despite widespread fear of stranger danger, the majority of assaults against women are perpetuated by men that are known to the female victim. Those that are initiated by strangers typically follow two methods of operation.

The first method is to engage the woman in some type of a verbal interaction in order to get close enough to launch a surprise attack. The second method is to use to launch an “ambush” style attack from concealment. In either case, the element of surprise provides the attacker with a huge advantage. Reducing or eliminating this element of surprise is why “awareness” is critical for self-defense.

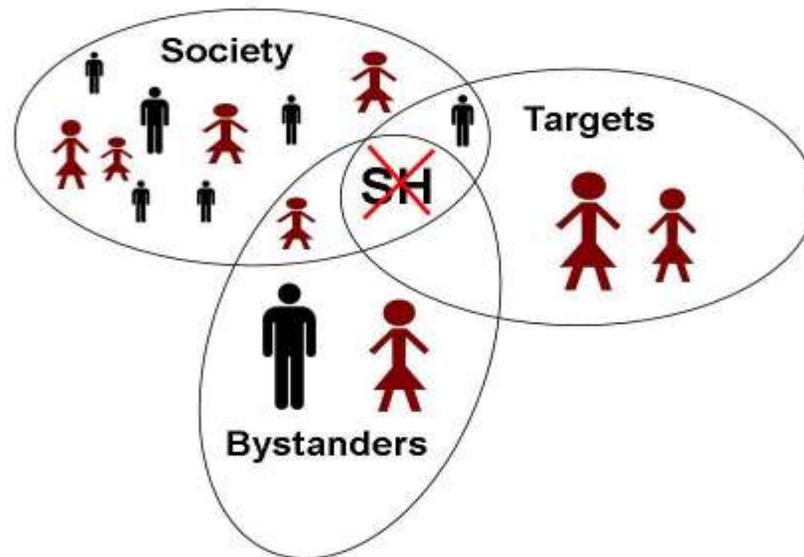
In the case of the Pervert, The Creep, and the Crude Oaf, if a man exposes himself, publically masturbates, or calls out an offensive comment to you, he has effectively lost the element of surprise. He no longer has the ability to launch a surprise attack. He has just provided you with a

key piece of information. You now know that he has a “bad intention”. By eliminating your uncertainty, he has made it easier for you to act with conviction. Any overtly aggressive movement by him towards you is your “Trigger to Act” and for you to escalate your defensive response.

The rattle snake can be extremely dangerous to humans. It stalks his prey silently. Therefore, it is not in predatory mode when it is rattling its tail. It is in threatening mode. From a self-defense prospective, now that you have been warned of its presence, you don’t need to run away, you just need to avoid coming too close to it.

These types of harassers may look and act scary, their behavior is most often more bark than bite. Since they do not have the element of surprise, they are less dangerous than the Opportunistic Predator and the Predatory Stalker who typically disguise their true intentions.

The 3 Petal Plan to Defeat Street Harassment



Street harassment is a problem because it is disrespectful, inappropriate, and threatening behavior to adolescent girls and women in public places. This behavior has the greatest negative effect on the well-being of adolescent girls who become conditioned to become silent, submissive, and fearful as opposed to becoming assertive, self-reliant, and confident.

Defeating street harassment requires a 3 Petal Plan that involves a combination of actions represented by the petals of Society, Targets of Harassment, and Bystanders. While each petal has a different role, they must all work together in order to create a lasting effect.

1. Society must create a culture of intolerance for street harassment in order to eliminate the behavior.
2. Targets of Harassment must learn strategies and methods to directly voice their disapproval when harassed.
3. Bystanders - must learn strategies and methods to intervene and mitigate when observing incidents of harassment. Every situation of street harassment is different. Each situation requires a different response. But the overall strategy is the same: Society, Targets, and Bystanders need to communicate that street harassment is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated.

Using Satire to Defeat Street Harassment

Satire is a powerful artistic form designed to change bad human behavior. It uses irony, wit, and ridicule to attack human vice, folly, and foolishness. As such it is a tool that can be used to defeat street harassment.

Satire can be used to deny and refute the power of street harassers and expose their weaknesses and flaws.

The Harasser, the Toad, and the Goddesses' Daughter: A Tale for Woman



A long time ago there was a far away land where almost all people treated each other with friendliness and respect. Men and women would politely nod or say “hello” as they passed each other on the sidewalk. There only two exceptions to this behavior, and they were the grownup brothers Tom and Terry Toaden.

The Toaden brothers lived with their elderly mother on the outskirts of town. The Toadens looked the same as other men. But they were different. The Toadens were disrespectful and inappropriate to women.

As a result of their harassing, they both had never had a girlfriend or even had gone on a single date. The more women rejected them due to their unattractive behavior, the worse their behavior became. Their behavior was frowned upon by the entire town and as a result, they were unable to stay employed. While other men worked, the Toaden brothers would spend their entire day harassing women and scaring teenage girls.

Tom, the more verbal of the two, would hangout on street corners and parks. He would hoot, holler, and hiss as women walked by. While driving the family Toaden mobile, he would roll down his window and honk and yell at women as they went about their daily business.

Terry, other the other hand preferred to creep and crawl in underground areas where women and girls could be found. Sometimes he would leer at and frighten young girls. Other times, he would expose himself, or sneak up and rub against unsuspecting women.

One evening Tom and Terry were walking home after a full day of harassing women. A teenage girl passed them on the side walk. Tom took one look at her and began one of his favorite lines, "Hey baby, I'd like to ...". But this was no ordinary mortal girl. This was Wanda, the youngest daughter of the Goddess Athena. Wanda was in training to become a full fledged goddess.

Upon hearing the comment, Wanda became furious. She whipped around and said "Who are you, and you how dare you speak to me that way?" The brothers replied in unison "We're the Toaden brothers. We treat all women this way."

As the youngest daughter of three, Wanda was a bit impulsive. She responded with "Well, I see you for what you really are: *Sexless Toads*." With a wave of her hand, Wanda cast a curse upon the two brothers. "From now on, whenever you harass women on the street, you will reveal your true form for all to see." said Wanda with a smile. The Toaden brothers immediately took the form of *Sexless Toads* and hopped home as fast as they could.

But Wanda had made a terrible mistake. Unfamiliar with lasting effects of her powers, she did not realize that *Sexless Toads* can multiply on their own. No females are necessary.

Now to this day, the decedents of Tom and Terry Toaden can be found hanging out on street corners, in parks, on buses, riding subways, and in public areas in cities all over the world. They hoot, holler, hiss, honk, exposure themselves, grope, rub against women and girls during the day and night. But

they are easy to spot. The moment they begin their harassment, they show their true form, the form of the *Sexless Toad*.

The purpose of this story is to demonstrate how to change the power dynamic of a situation with either spoken words or visual imagery. If a car drive drives by you filled with men hooting and honking, it is likely you will feel angry and intimidated. But if you imagine that they are in fact half-naked sexless toads, the visual imagine will help counter your initial anger and feeling of intimidation.

This same method applies to the *Charmer Wannabe*, *Crude Oaf*, the *Creep*, and the *Touchy Feeler*. These harassers depend upon the Target being overly intimidated. Refuting the harasser's power changes the power dynamic.



Inner Armor: Replacing Fear with Knowledge & Power



Inner Armor is the confidence, conviction, and competence required to keep you safe in the Urban Jungle. It is based on the synergy of having the confidence that comes from knowledge and planning, the conviction that comes from eliminating all doubt and uncertainty, and the competence that comes from preparation and training. *Inner Armor* can be represented by a 3 Petal Plan. It is built by simultaneously developing each Petal.

Having *Inner Armor* means that you have replaced fear with knowledge and power. When harassed, you have the self-assurance to stand up for yourself at the time and place of your choosing. As a bystander to street harassment, you have the empathy to stand up for others who need your help. And as a member of the community, you have the motivation to make a difference in how society views and responds street harassment.

About the Author

Erik Kondo is the founder of the non-profit NOT-ME! He has been involved in the martial arts and the study of self-defense for over fifteen years. He currently holds a 3rd black belt in jujitsu. His focus is on creating strategies to help people deal with confrontations and physical assaults.

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