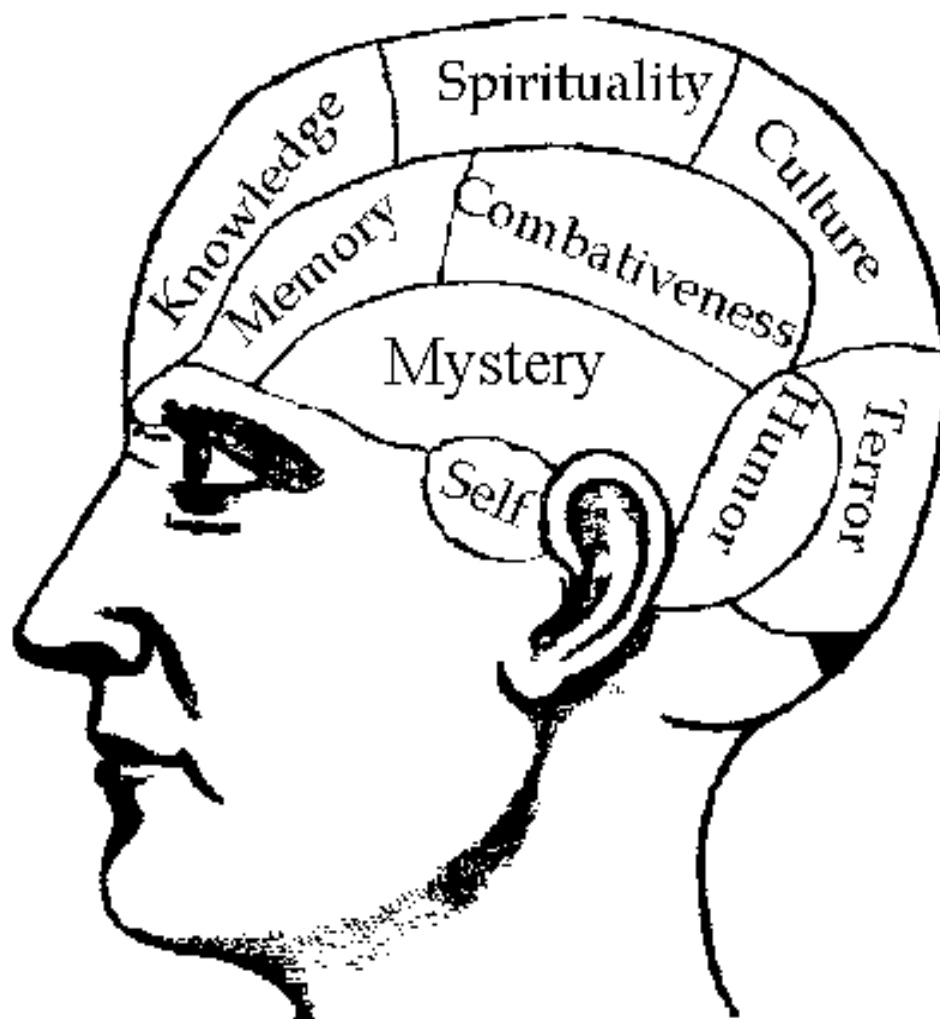


IN TOTAL DEFENSE OF THE SELF

***ENHANCING SURVIVABILITY AND
GAINING THE TACTICAL EDGE***



By Richard Dimitri

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**In Total Defense of the Self™
(5th Edition)
By Richard Dimitri**

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In Total Defense of the Self™ first appeared as mini booklets (1994) titled *Senshido's Bibles of Hand to Hand Combat™* (9 volumes). The Bibles later (1997) became the more detailed *Senshido's Street Survival Manuals™ Volumes 1 & 2* that have then (2001) been amalgamated into a longer, more detailed Book titled *In Total Defense of the Self™*. The version you are holding now is our 5th version updated between December 2006 and January 2007.

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Tania Garby, my first and last love... a true peaceful warrior, love of my life, motivation, ambition and will to foster on.

If I forgot somebody, I am truly sorry.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the people out there who care to make this world a safer place.

THE WARRIOR CODE

Everyone is warrior material. What stops one from achieving their full potential and goals and allows another to excel where it was seemingly impossible to do so are mind-sets.

Everyone wants to win; everyone has the desire to be the best but very few have the iron will or self-discipline to fulfill the necessary requirements in becoming the best. Motivation comes from within ones self and nowhere else. Success is what happens when hard work and motivation meet ambition. Warriors don't understand the meaning of the words failure or quit, they rarely lose focus of their goals, and when they do, they immediately regain focus through introspection and contemplation of who they truly are and where they really want to be.

The key is in having the guts to admit your wants, letting them go and not getting in their ways, then to tackle every obstacle in the way of each want, one by one until you have achieved your wants. Where you are in life, right now, is where you chose to be or else you'd be somewhere else doing something else. Free will. Those who create excuses determine their own fates.

Thomas Edison, after 999 attempts at creating the light bulb was asked how it felt to have failed 999 times. His answer: I did not fail, I simply found 999 ways of not creating the light bulb. Edison's perceptions of failure versus success were a warrior's perceptions. If not, then we'd all be in the dark right now. He was a warrior.

Quitting is easy, anyone, without exception can quit. There is nothing special about it. It is actually quite common. However, not everyone truly reaches their full potential.

Warriors embody the virtues of courage, truth, honor and integrity through self-discipline, introspection, humility, tenacity, inner calmness and the undying desire to be the best they can be with no attachment to perfection. The warrior is born with these attributes or must work to develop them. *Quitters never win and winners never quit.*

*"You are born and you know you are going to die:
What are you doing in between?"*

Richard Dimitri

ORIGINS

A little history

Some of you may have read this already if you purchased our VIP Membership as part of the Street Soldier's book. *It's been revised...* Who am I? What brought me to this point in my life? Forget my martial arts origins; forget my general curriculum vitae, my training, my experiences in the streets, as a bouncer, bodyguard, undercover security etc. More importantly, what made me who I am?

I don't have much memories of my childhood prior to the age of 12 really, simply faded memories triggered by stories people tell. Even my memories post 12 years of age are almost non-existent. They seem like faded thoughts within dreams that linger in the corners of my mind. Almost like they aren't even mine. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder they say, yup. Compile that with the fact that I was diagnosed with brain damage recently due to my lifestyle and violent abuse I put myself through, and my memory and attention span aren't what one would call... 100%. For the laymen out there... I'm what boxers refer to as 'punchy' now. ☺

When I was 7 years old, my mother got pregnant again for the second time in her life. I had prayed long and hard at the time for a sibling. God had answered my prayers. It finally happened. Nine months later, my brother Robin was born. I was eight. My brother and I had a very close relationship. We were similar in many ways and also shared the same silly, slapstick sense of humor.

Both my parents worked so after school, I would head over to my aunt's to be babysat. My brother would already be there from morning I believe I'm not too sure as my memories betray me. On a particular summer day where I was off of school, he and I were at my aunt's, spending the day with our cousins while we waited for my mother to pick us up at 5pm after work. My aunt had a pool in which my cousins and I (twelve years old at the time) would swim, but my brother, who was 4 years old, alas, was afraid of the water. He would stand outside the pool and splash us with an empty cup of ice cream. He would lean over and get water then throw it at us all in good fun.

As the day drifted to afternoon and into early evening, one by one, my cousins left the pool to go into the house and shower until my brother and I were left alone outside with the two dogs my aunt and uncle owned. I continued on swimming as he continued to splash me and play around the pool. My aunt was busy inside the house getting her husband's supper ready for when he would come home. Eventually, my mother arrived and as usual, she would always buy my brother and I a treat on her way from work. I heard her car so I got out of the pool, dried myself off and called onto my brother for him to follow me into the house. I told him our mom had arrived. As I entered the house, he was right behind me. I saw him following me maybe fifteen feet away at best. Naturally, my brain completed the pattern and I automatically assumed he was right behind me.

I entered the house. I greeted my mother who was at the door as she gave me my treat, a Kit Kat bar if my memory serves. She asked where my brother was and I said he was right behind me. She continued greeting her sister (my aunt) then asked me again where my brother was. I replied I didn't know and went about my business without a care in the world. She called out for him a few times. No replies.

We went outside to look for him but he wasn't there. We searched the house, nothing. Panic set in. My uncle suggested we separate to look for him, several of us remained in the house, and my uncle went out back.

Now my memory is faded and the rest is in pieces for me. The next thing I knew my uncle was standing over my brother in the backyard pumping his stomach and chest. They were both soaking wet but it wasn't raining outside. It was actually a beautiful day...

My brother had drowned.

He was clinically dead when my uncle got him out from the deep end of the pool where he had sunk to the bottom. I can only imagine the panic a 4-year-old boy who is afraid of swimming must have felt when he hit the water and couldn't touch ground. I can't even begin to describe the pain, anger, resentment, frustration and guilt I feel right this moment typing this. I was the last one to see him... he was right behind me.

My uncle, being a cardiologist, resuscitated my brother but the warm water of the pool had already caused irreparable damage. My brother suffered brain damage and was rushed to emergency care where the doctors had told my mother, he wouldn't make the night. My mother was a mess. When she told my father, he fell apart. My father was never really good at handling stress or emotional pain in general; this literally killed a big part of him. I saw my father cry twice in his life. When his father passed away at an early age and when my brother was unjustifiably torn from him.

Now from an adult's perspective and a cognitive or cerebral point of view, I clearly understood that it was not my fault. I was twelve years old. I didn't know. I wasn't the one responsible. No one was really; to lay blame won't change the facts or the outcome. However, somewhere inside of me was a twelve year-old boy who blamed himself for not waiting an extra ten seconds. Ten seconds... that is a very difficult thing for an analytical person like me to swallow. What if? That damn question was one that haunted me alongside several others for over 2 decades. Why him? What happened? How did it happen? Why didn't I just wait for him, let him go in first?

There is much, much more to this. Things I'm not so sure I understand or believe myself. Things that go beyond the realm of normalcy or reality, as we perceive it. Things I finally came to comprehend over 2 decades later. Suffice it to say however, that I had over the coming years developed somewhat of a self-destructive behavior.

There are five stages to personal growth:

1. Denial
2. Depression
3. Negotiation
4. Anger
5. Acceptance

I lost many years of my life. I can't remember much of it. The age between twelve and sixteen are a blur. Not because of drinking or drugs, I never, ever touched drugs or alcohol growing up, nope, this I reserved for much later in my adult years, when my life would yet again crumble from under me one more time and my fears, anger and hatred for myself and the world would consume me to the point where I nearly lost my life.

From sixteen on Denial and Anger were the predominant emotions burning within me on a daily basis. I masked them well and hid behind a veil of humor. The guilt was overwhelming though; I missed him terribly. I would occasionally visit my brother but every single time I left, I seem to have killed off a piece of myself. It was, to a certain extent, unbearable.

Although I managed every time to make him laugh, I couldn't shake the feeling that he was rotting away in that hospital bed because of me. Because I indirectly put him there. Because I didn't wait ten more seconds... and so; I grew selfish. Instead of bearing the hurt, the anger and the pain, I chose to not go back and be witness to my mistake. This selfishness caused more anger and guilt because in the back of my mind, I had now abandoned him.

I had to purge my anger one way or another. I knew that the anger was towards myself, I just didn't want to admit to it just yet. More denial. By my young adult years, close friends had suggested I see a psychiatrist. I refused. I refused for several reasons, one being; what would a stranger know about my pain and anger? I refused to give money to someone to help me. I refused because I believed at the time that the help would be strictly for financial gain and not because this 'shrink' cared for me as a person. I also refused simply because, well, I kinda got used to my anger. I became comfortable with it. It became, a driving force in my life. I couldn't remember life without it and it gave me what I believed it to be; an edge. An edge that later revealed itself to be a very well disguised yet powerful crutch.

My parents had enrolled me in the martial arts at a very young age, six to be exact. Many thought that through the arts, I had found a way to express myself. To a certain extent... that was true. However, not in the way those around me thought.

Without giving an exact time frame, names or locations for obvious reasons, I had decided to exorcise my demons. I flirted with death and danger for a long time, after researching PTSD and its effects, I understood why I did the things I did. By the time I

was twenty-four, I decided to settle down and open my own school. Lord knows I had the experience and knowledge to teach personal protection and hand to hand combat.

I had by then fought seven street no holds barred fights. I used to frequent certain areas where drugs were being sold and I would pretend to be interested, lure the dealer to a secluded place to make the purchase and ambush him, knocking him out and stealing his money and his drugs. I would keep the money and flush the drugs down the toilet bowl and use the money to purchase gifts or spend on my friends at the time. A real modern day vigilante.

I also worked as an undercover security guard, bouncer and bodyguard. I had been shot at, attacked at knifepoint, multiple attackers, ambushed, baseball bats, crowbars, you name it. My skills had come in quite handy. By the time I reached 24 years of age, I had done things and witnessed things most people cringe at when they see it in movies. Not much fazed me. I seemed to have this disconnected sense where, to me, things seemed to happen outside my hemisphere... I couldn't really explain it. Strange for someone who was supposed to be so in-tuned with human behavior, the psycho dynamics of violence and reading other human beings.

In December of 2001, my brother got very sick. He had water in his lungs and developed a very high fever. This happened on several occasions throughout his life while in the hospital and the doctors always called us because technically, in this weakened state and considering the severity of the situation, he could have died within a couple of days. Miraculously though, he never did, he seemed to recover fully from those supposedly fatal illnesses much to the doctor's bafflement.

So they called us and as usual, we would go see him. This time though, for whatever reason, it was different for me. I decided to face up to it and swore to him, that I would regularly visit him and try and make peace with him and myself. I would go three times per week religiously for over 1 month. He seemed to have gotten better again, his lungs and his fever cleared. Then came Christmas. I went to see him and spent some time with him alone. I poured my heart out to him. I spoke with him and told him many things I felt I needed to say, he needed to hear... I made him laugh hysterically to the point he couldn't breathe and I kissed him goodbye promising him I would come back in a few days.

Days past, soon weeks. Things got hectic for me at work as well as in my personal life. Then, one day in early March of 2002, my father calls me up at work. He tells me my brother is sick again.

I tell him that it's nothing to worry about that he'll pull through as usual. I planned on going to see him that week but my father said it was no point as he was sedated and that he and my mom would be there. I said okay and asked them to let me know when he would be more lucid so that I can go see him. On March 7th, at approx. 1 o'clock in the morning, my phone at home rings. I hate those middle of the night phone calls, they're never to tell you that you just won the lottery. I pick up; it was my father. He tells me

my brother passed away at 11pm that night. I ask him to pick me up on his way to the hospital.

By 2am, I'm holding my brother's dead body in my arms.

One day later, we're cremating him. I get to say my last good-byes before I see his body stuffed in a box being shoved into an oven. After the cremation there's a mass then we're off to spread his ashes. We get to a very nice place near a monastery and by a river we find a stream. Strangely enough, it was a beautiful day, hi 70's. For March in Montreal, that's about twenty degrees higher than usual, at least before all this global warming kicked in. My father gives me the ashes to spread.

So here I am, standing with a bag of ashes in my arms that was once my brother. A few weeks prior I was holding him and making him laugh and today, he's in bag contained in a little wooden box... just ashes. This event catapulted me into oblivion... no excuses, no justifications, but as impossible as it seemed at the time to sink any lower and let my demons get the better of me... I went downhill from there.

This was the ultra condensed version. This particular event has shifted my entire life. It created pain, suffering, anguish, guilt and anger but it also gave me an edge and drive. Somehow, through all that pain I managed to muster some good out of it, the undying desire to save people. I know that psychologically, every person I help through my work represents me saving my brother. I guess that is why I take what I do so personally. That is why I am so passionate in my work for those of you who are familiar with it.

I recall a line in a movie called 'A Time to Kill' starring Sandra Bullock, Samuel L. Jackson and Mathew McConaughey. Mathew McConaughey's character plays a young attorney and who was taught by one of the best. His mentor told him something to the extent of "*I can't promise you riches, but I can promise that you can save the world, one case at a time.*" I guess that's how I feel; I'm saving the world, one person at a time...

I've borrowed that line time and again when eager youngsters have walked into my office saying they want to teach Senshido. They have this idea that this career is glorifying, and empowering. They are right. But not in the way they think. The glory comes from hearing an individual tell you "*Thank you, you saved my life.*" The power comes from the ability to transmit that life saving information. It's not about ego. It's not about politics. It's not about whom can kick whose ass. It's not about how many trophies or prizes you acquired in your last competition. It's simply about improving lives. It's about saving lives. And in turn, each and every life improved or saved helps improve and save your own.

For many of you, this may be the very first purchase you have made through my company and the rest of this book deals more with a philosophical, spiritual, emotional, behavioral, psychological and biological aspects of personal protection. You will not find any techniques in this book but I can promise you one thing, that it will make you think.

I believe that personal protection begins with the self. More often than not, we are our own worst enemy and it is ‘us’ we need to defend against on a daily basis. The sociopath, psychopath, criminals and bad guys out there surely don’t need the extra hand. The first few pages will be dealing with our own worst enemies...

So, in the immortal words of Robert Plant, ‘*Ramble on*’.

Thank you,

Sincerely
Richard Dimitri

‘If you are pained by external things, it is not they that disturb you, but your own judgment of them. And it is in your power to wipe out that judgment now.’

— *Marcus Aurelius*

‘The more you judge, the less you love.’

— *Honoré de Balzac*

On the Turning Away.

In the reality based self defense field, many speak of the moral, legal and ethical implications of defending one's self yet in their explanations, we rarely ever hear anything about the moral and ethical aspects. We do however abundantly hear about the legal aspects, and rightfully and justifiably so, but why omit the other 2? Are they not equally important?

Nietzsche once said that "*whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.*" I tend to agree. Hell, even in our non-confrontational version of society people have lost touch with each other. Lunch with a friend has been replaced with a quick email. Notice how when online, how well we get along with some people almost instantly making a connection with them yet all of a sudden when we meet them in person and we both feel kinda awkward and quiet and don't quite know what to say? Why is that?

The point is, in a quickly growing technologically advanced environment, we are losing our humanity. We live in a society where money has become the new God and work has become the church in which to hail it. Where is our empathy? What has happened to the virtues of forgiveness, loving thy neighbor and all that? I am reminded of Mother Theresa's words engraved on the wall of her home in Calcutta:

**"People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway."**

Religious connotations notwithstanding as your beliefs are yours and mine are mine, the true essence of the martial arts is in the improvement of the self and in the aid of improving others. I find that there is too much aggression and kill, kill, kill, attack, attack, attack, mentality out there. For example, a couple of years ago on my online forum, a thread appeared titled something to the effect of "*Going to the beach, what*

improvised weapons should I bring?” Lee (my bro, business associate and good friend) and I are thinking ‘*No way, no one’s gonna answer this seriously?*’ and the replies started coming about what sorts of concealed and improvised weapons he can bring to the beach... we replied “*DON’T GO TO THAT BEACH!*”

Another example, one which some will recognize as they were there and they were the ones to recount the story to me, while others won’t because I will keep it anonymous for the sake of someone I do respect very highly, anyway... while away teaching seminars a while back, (could I be more vague ☺) a group of us decided to go out to lunch. On our way there, there were a couple of immigrants selling items on the street, which I noticed on my way out of the diner. They approached me trying to sell me something I had absolutely no use for to which I politely declined and at this point started noticing the rest of my entourage had dispersed several feet from me. The sellers insisted and I began making conversation with them as they asked me where I was from.

“*Montreal, Canada*” I tell them, and we begin a casual conversation. At one point, they see me squeezing away at my stress ball and seem like they’ve never seen one before, they actually looked fascinated to be honest so I gave them the ball and they looked shocked that I would do such a thing. The rest of the people with me joined us at this point and the whole lot of us were sharing some laughs outside this diner. As we say our good byes, these 2 guys leaned in and gave me a big hug, which I reciprocated, and we went our separate ways.

As we were getting in the car several blocks ahead, the seminar host says and I quote “*Wow, what a contradiction...*” “*To what?*” I ask “*Well...*” he goes on to tell me, “*we had hosted another instructor a few months back to teach here and we had also encountered some street sellers together and he treated them very differently*” he says to me. “*He basically threatened them with physical harm and told them to stay back and stand down and explained to us how this was a part of the system he teaches and that was a good example of how to use the passive stance to defuse a fight.*”

Personally, I saw something wrong with that. Not judging the instructor in question at all, after all, he could have been having a horrible day or week, maybe he was in a bad mood, maybe they approached him entirely differently than they did me, I don’t know and I am no one to judge. After all, I am as guilty of such and much worse myself.

However, this brings me to the following:

The following dialogue occurred between an individual I will refer to as “John”, for anonymity sake as he politely asked me to do so. As I fundamentally believe that self-defense truly begins with the self, as we are our own worst enemies; this dialogue will share with you, the reader, my experiences and opinions, nothing more, nothing less. You are not supposed to agree or disagree with any of it, as it is nothing more than information based on my experiences and beliefs. I mean no offence to any religious sect, nor am I trying to change anyone’s minds or convert anyone to anything other than what works for them.

The entire essence of this dialogue, if one were to pay close attention, is to allow the individual to self-actualize what is truly best for them, regardless of what that method is as long as it doesn't compromise anyone or anything in a negative way. Period.

I took a risk with this I know and I put my heart on my sleeve and am sharing extremely personal things in the hopes that it may somehow help others in some remote way. I know it already has as I get many private emails and phone calls on the matter, I just decided that since it seemed to help so many individuals, then why not take the chance and put it out there for everyone to garner what they can, if anything at all from it.

It is an amalgamation of a few emails and replies put together to illustrate a point. It has been, as stated, edited to maintain the individual's anonymity.

As it is repeatedly stated in the text below and above, "absorb what is useful **to you** and **disregard the rest.**" But this will give you an in-depth idea as to the path my life and system (Senshido) has taken and is taking.

Please take with a grain of salt... or two... or even three 😊

Hey John...

Quote:

As I once read, "Hate is like acid. Not only does it destroy what it is poured out upon. It also eventually destroys the vessel it is contained in"

Nice quote. Makes sense and hits home actually...

Quote:

My problem Rich is not so much being able to trust a God as I don't believe there is one. There could be, however I don't see evidence for him/her when children are raped and killed and he/she does nothing to intervene etc. I also see perpetrators of heinous crimes getting away with so much while victims are left to fend for themselves.

If I may share my experiences with you, please do not take this in any other way than my sharing my experiences and nothing else as I respect your beliefs and in no way am I trying to change them or your direction. (And that goes for any reader out there as well ;-)

I too for a very long time stopped believing in God, pretty much for the exact same reasons you stated in this message. When I was 12, my 4-year-old brother drowned and spent 20 years of his life rotting in a hospital bed with total brain damage. This is initially what set me off... how could there be a God who allows a 4 year old to drown... but I

have come to believe, through my experiences, that people in general want God to be their salvation, happiness, all powerful being that in essence is supposed to have created a utopian world for us to live in. This is obviously not the case...

God, from what I have learned and experienced is like a parent... sometimes he grants us what we need and want, sometimes he doesn't, both are for our own good whether we see it or not... he also gave us a choice, free will... he doesn't meddle in our affairs... he helps those who help themselves... there is a balance in this world, an undeniable balance... how could we ever appreciate the good without the bad? How could love exist and be so powerful without the understanding of hatred? Death is but an extension of life, not the end of it... how could we appreciate health if we didn't have sickness?

I mean people already take most everything for granted and that's with the balance of good and bad, light and dark... imagine for a second there was no sickness, no crime, no hatred, could peace and love truly exist then without a contrast to understand, appreciate and absorb peace, love and happiness? How would we know? Life is much greater than you and I, than my brother drowning years ago or the homeless man who strikes it rich after trying his hand at the lottery...

Each event creates a counter effect, regardless of that event... for example, had my brother not drowned, I would not be doing what I am doing today... and my work has literally saved hundreds of lives in the last 15 years, lives that maybe would have perished if it wasn't for destiny putting us in contact with each other... case in point, you and I would not be having this discussion had my brother not unfortunately drowned and later died when he was 24 after a miserable existence...

Now who knows what is going to come of this conversation between us... you might get inspired by it (I know I already did), you may in turn spread some light be it to your family, friends, co workers, students etc. and you may help change someone's life for the positive who in turn will do the same for someone else... do you not see God in this? When Mother Theresa helped thousands of sick and starving people in Calcutta... was that not God? When great things happen we never thank God, we don't even consider him... yet when misery or sorrow strikes we're quick to blame him or discredit him...

Unfortunately as human beings we tend to fixate on what the Buddhists call "negative attention", this is where, I believe we pinpoint something that we deem wrong or bad and dwell on it... after all, if a year goes by where many great things occurred but only one bad thing happened, which do we remember... when asked how was your year, we won't remember the wonderful things, the little things but instead we will fixate on that one negative thing, express it, blame God or others for it, etc.

The moment I gave myself to God, fully trusted 'him' and put my life in his hands is the day my life took such an incredible turn for the better... everything changed John... from my personal life to my finances to my health; for the better... but it isn't a simple thing mind you, it is as difficult as we want it to be as we hold the key to our own perceptions and beliefs, but once the commitment is there, once the belief is changed for real (not a

try out, not a test) then life will also change around us for the better.

And one can argue God, energy, higher being, spiritual guides, will power, and none of that matters... the semantics that surrounds it is secondary as the result is what counts and so for those who criticize and don't believe, that's fine... but who's life is better? Who has a better quality of life? I walked both paths brother... I walked the dark, negative angry and spiteful, faithless path for nearly 28 years of my 37... what did it get me? Pain, more anger, more hatred which led to cynicism, skepticism, self defined righteousness, a failed marriage, destroyed relationships, sickness (I would get colds and flu's at least twice a year... since my perspective changed, I've only been sick once in the last 18th months, grant it nearly killed me but that's due the purging of lifestyle that my body was doing)... and so one has to start asking themselves... is the way I am living now congruous to my objectives of happiness, peace and tranquility of the soul?

As horrible as what goes on in the world (crime, violence, lies, wars, disease, racism, hatred, etc.) these are things beyond our immediate control... I have learned that I cannot save the world, I cannot rid it of its illnesses, but I can love my family and friends and those around me, I can spread my light to them, hoping that in turn they will spread theirs... I spent 20 years trying to save the world, save victims of violence, save strangers when I couldn't even save my own marriage, my own life and that of those who are closest to me... this is where it starts brother... right at home... the ripple effects this will cause would be monumental... if everyone concentrated on their own surroundings, on making their home, street, neighborhood a better place without concerning ourselves of what is going on next door, we would all be much further ahead in this game of life...

Quote:

I am free however in not having to trust a higher power is working things out for good and not seeing it. I believe shit just happens and don't cry out looking for help to a God. Only I can make a situation better (if possible).

Isn't that too much responsibility on your shoulders? I appointed myself the ruler of my own destiny and it got me nowhere, fast... how is it working for you? And before you answer, this is rhetorical as you don't owe me or anyone else but yourself for that matter an honest and truthful answer... Can you and only you really make a situation better? Where do you get your strength? Your faith? Your passion? Your drive? And what is your rate of success these days? Again, all rhetorical...

Quote:

The part I struggle over is justice. Because I don't see a God helping out, I don't believe in justice in a afterlife, I really struggle with letting perceived injustice to me go unpunished. I can't stand the thought that someone has tried to hurt me in someway and gets away with it. Forgiving someone who will do it again is very hard for me.

Hopefully your material addresses that kind of situation. I look forward to reading what you come up with.

Brother, 2 years ago, I could have written that paragraph above word for word... I completely understand where you are coming from with this... but is it your business? Who made you the world's righter of wrongs? Who put you in charge of seeking justice for those who have none? Save your family first, then your friends, and then you can move onto your neighbor but until then, concentrate on fixing what's inside of you.

Justice is man made. Is your disbelief of justice in an afterlife congruous to your objectives? Has the way you view life improved it in any way? Forgiveness is very difficult period. But understand this, while you're sitting at home/work wherever hating or condemning whoever it is that wronged you... who is suffering more? The 'bad guy' out there who doesn't give a fuck what you think and feel is still out there living his life whether you love him or hate him, wish him dead or not, no one but the individual harboring these feelings fester inside while the very person we wish to spew our venom on goes on living their lives with or without our blessings...

So forgiveness in essence, is for the individual harboring the negative feelings, it is liberating... these negative and dark emotions hurt no one but ourselves not to mention those around us who have to constantly listen to us spew out our vial crap in the privacy of our own homes/cars/bedrooms etc.

It is the people around us that we love that suffer because they have to listen to our negative words, they have to endure our rage... but because this form of abuse is subtle and indirect, (and we shouldn't kid ourselves because it is a form of abuse even if it isn't physical or directly aimed at our loved ones) we deem it righteous because we feel we are fighting the good fight when in essence all we are doing is adding to the darkness. I know this. I lived this. I was this. It nearly destroyed me.

Quote:

I look forward to reading the info as you develop it. I appreciate your attempts to help out a stranger.

You're not a stranger, you are a human being just like me, you feel pain, sorrow, pleasure, love, hate just like I do and everyone else does in varying degrees... this makes us brothers because every single person's actions in this world either helps make it a better place, a worse place or simply maintains its neutral-ness... and since I want to live in a better world and you my friend are a major part of it then it is my pleasure to help in any way I can make it a better place through people like you. So John, in truth it is I who thanks you for wanting to better yourself, for wanting to help others... so lets just keep spreading that light man... one candle at a time.

Quote:

Thanks bro, I will try to pattern interrupt. That is the hard part.
You have helped, and again, I appreciate it.

Don't thank me John, as Mother Theresa once said, this is God's screenplay, I am merely a pencil which he uses... who do you think brought you and I together like this? Coincidence? Not what I believe... there's a reason for everything and I know that you will achieve great things be it through being a great husband and father, boss, friend, etc. I never used to understand the term "there are no coincidences"... that's because all I believed in was myself and that wasn't even real, it was a shadow as, if I were to be a million percent honest with myself, I had no security at all yet I managed to fool myself and everyone around me I had my shit together when the entire time I was rotting inside. So that's what I had going for me, a false sense of security that an ancient anger which festered to rage placed inside of me consumed.

Quote:

I hope your efforts to help others are rewarded in this journey of life

Your last message to me is rewarding enough... just 'pay it forward' as it were. ;-)

Please feel free to comment, agree, disagree, etc. like I said, these are my thoughts and beliefs I share with those who ask, you may find alot of its essence expanding into the many realms of Senshido since 2005.

Quote:

Thanks very much for such a quick response. You have given me much to think about. I will take a few days to think things over, then perhaps dialog a little more?

No problem, my pleasure, glad you are mulling it all over... anytime my friend, I'll always reply... sometimes later than others due to my schedule but I will always reply.

Quote:

To enlighten you a little more on where I come from, I was once a born again Christian. I became born again when my father had threatened suicide while on a drinking binge one weekend. It went on for about 6hrs with us (the family) begging him not to do it. Well, it shattered my preconceived notions about success fulfilling you. He was quite successful in a monetary sense however, deeply sad.

It was not long after (he didn't kill himself) that I was 'saved' and given a lot of the 'good news' you've shared with me about God, free will etc.

First, I am sincerely sorry to hear about your family, I hope it all worked out and if it didn't I pray it does.

Don't blame religion on God, brother; I don't believe in any religion myself... religion and God are 2 different things. What's important is the message, what Christ espoused, whether one believes he was the son of God or not is immaterial... what he espoused, the message... peace, love, forgiveness, what he believed in and died for is what is important, not doctrines or man made rules and laws in the name of religion that describes a spiteful, vengeful or even condemning God...

Quote:

My problem now is I was in the Christian faith and believed it was true. However, when I studied early pagan religions and see how Christianity evolved out of them, saw how science did not back up the bible, saw how some biblical verses were heinous, I had a hard time believing it came from a loving God. It seemed man made. That now is pretty much the way I see all religions now.

Forget the bible, forget even the testaments as they were written something like 300 to 400 years after Christ died or so... it isn't about any of that anyway. What were Christ's teachings? Turn the other cheek, love thy neighbor, he was against churches and organized religion... at the risk of sounding a little 'off'; let me for a minute compare Bruce Lee's legacy to Christ's in terms of misunderstanding, fixations, etched in stone, doctrines etc...

Bruce never wanted Jeet Kune Do (JKD) to be what it is today. Contrarily, he always said it's just a name, don't fuss over it and what do the majority of martial artists do? Fuss over it. Jesus Christ said you do not need a church to find me, turn over the rock and you shall find me... something to that extent anyway... his teachings were about morals, ethics, peace and love... nothing more, nothing less... it is people who messed everything up with religion to control the masses... just look at the sad state of religion today... more people have died in the name of God than in any other way in the history of mankind... is this what God is all about? Death, vengeance, punishment, fear etc.?

However contrarily to what any religion espouses through their actions and not necessarily their doctrines or prayers (obviously by their actions, just watch the news any day, any time of the week or human history over the last 2000 or so years for that matter, no major religion excluded here)... but when Christ was chastised, ridiculed and tortured, what did he pray for when bleeding on the cross? He asked God to forgive them for they know not what they do...

Forget one more time that he was or wasn't the son of God... all he had to do to save himself from the hell he went through was deny that he was the son of God and he would have been spared the atrocities... yet he continued to spread his message till his bitter end... crazy or not, son of God or not, immaterial here - **what he lived for and what he died for is what we should all be looking at...** we missed the boat on that somewhere along the way dontcha think? ;-)

Quote:

I also saw and heard a lot of lip service to trusting God etc; however seeing lives lived the polar opposite of that lip service (I am not claiming you are doing this-not at all). It was just my experience around believers when I went to church.

I too have seen plenty of that, but how is that God's fault again? How does this confirm or deny his existence? Personally, I never go to church, I don't believe in priests, rabbis or half the things they espouse. My relationship with God is a private one, a personal one. My prayers consist of asking for strength to continue walking my path, for health and for peace. They consist in thanking him for the great things I have and the strength to weather the bad days. The problem is that most people ask for things that have nothing to do with God... a new car, a better job, their girlfriends back, win the lottery... and if they don't get it then God doesn't exist or he's an asshole...

Even the worst things that happen to us happen to us for a reason, sometimes and for the most part, unless one looks real hard and gets through the whole 'denial, anger, negotiation, depression' phases of personal growth, then they can see the reasons and appreciate them... sometimes the reasons come much later, sometimes it is much more apparent...

Stupid example but it illustrates a point... there is a fable about a farmer and his son. They owned a horse to plow their fields and that's how they put food on the table... one day, their horse ran away. This was of course, devastating... how could God allow this to happen, what are we going to do, etc. a few days later, the horse came back and with him, brought another wild horse... this was a blessing all of a sudden... 2 horses, double the work in half the time... wonderful. A few weeks later, the boy fell off the wild horse and broke his leg and unfortunately couldn't continue working any longer until he healed. How could God allow this to happen, especially when things were going so well... as this happened, the country was on the brink of war and a few days after that the army came to recruit the boy. When they saw he had a broken leg, they opted not to enlist him... so the broken leg was a blessing now.

Perceptions are wonderful aren't they? With every peak comes a valley around the corner and with every valley a peak... this is the balance of this world... and so we must as often as we can and with no expectancies of any kind in return, spread as much light as possible for we do not give to receive, we give because it brings joy to others... it doesn't matter if other don't get it, it doesn't matter if they don't appreciate it, it doesn't matter if they don't reciprocate it, it doesn't even matter if they chastise you for it or even steal from you or insult you afterwards... what matters is that it is pure and comes from the right place.

Because for every act of vengeance, hatred, spitefulness we commit, for every bitter word uttered or even thought, even if it is against those that fully deserve it, all we are truly contributing to this world is more darkness and this darkness grows and there is simply no 2 other ways about it... my apologies for the cliché but you do not fight darkness with

more darkness, you fight it with light because the problem I see the most often in people including myself for the last 28+ years, is that we are trying to fight evil and injustice (for lack of better words) with the very tools they use against us, against them.

We cannot get rid of this darkness by chipping away at it, we must instead out-birth it... eliminate it, let it die out without contributing more towards it with ourselves, our children, families and friends... if we spread light, more people will spread light and that light will continue to grow and eventually, hopefully one day not in this or the next or even the next 4 or 5 lifetimes for that matter, but hopefully one day... people won't be bombing buildings with full airplanes, maybe one day, the suffering will be much less because people will be helping others instead of just sitting by... maybe. Who knows? Does it hurt to try? ☺

A friend once taught me that there are 2 kinds of givers in this world, those that give to receive and those who give because they love. Giving isn't always righteous if the intent behind it isn't pure. And I'm not talking about strictly material things either, the giving of time, a helping hand, a concerned ear, a smile or a dime... any kind of giving at all.

Quote:

In saying that, I do agree that it is hard to live life as I am now, with the anger issues I have. No dispute.

I have thought myself that I need to believe in something, however viewing religions as man made makes it difficult.

I am going to have to possibly try to take the best of them, believe in a higher power, but my head says no.

Why focus on religion at all if it doesn't work for you? Why not simply focus in being the best human beings we can be while understanding that we are still merely only human beings, and we will walk off our path at times and we will make mistakes but the real crime is when we don't learn from these mistakes, own up to them no matter how trivial or grievous they may be, and get back to being the best human being we can be.

What does religion have to do with this and what does God have to do with religion? The answers to those questions are entirely up to you and in no way can ever be wrong regardless of that answer. You can do all this believing in God, trusting in his faith and turning to him during your moments of weakness, trusting his decisions even if we don't agree with them, even if the answer hurts us, even if the situations worsens... there is a lesson to be learned here but we seldom ever listen to it... because in those circumstances, we're too busy hating and raging... vicious circle, why do it alone?

OR

You can do it without God, doesn't matter, as long as it works for you, makes you a better person and helps you in your life and that of others. The difference is, when we do

get off our paths, and we will, when life screws us up at times, and it will no matter how good it is at any given time; we have nothing to turn too because we have only a belief in ourselves but what happens when we fail ourselves? Then what? At least with God on our side, we can find our way back to the path... I denied God, cursed him out, hated him and even stopped believing in him for nearly 28 years of my life... I truly and with all my heart believed I could do it on my own, I am my own man, I am the king of my domain, the responsible one for my life... and every step of the way was painful and lonely no matter how many people surrounded me.

Don't get me wrong, I had great days, weeks, even years, laughed, played, got married, have an incredible amount of friends... but none of that ever quieted the voices in my head at night, nothing stopped the pain... I needed to be around people constantly because I wasn't comfortable with myself. I needed distractions all the time; I had to be busy from the moment I awakened to the moment I went to sleep. The littlest things would set me off (not in a violent rage or uncontrollable anger, no, a quiet seething anger, a below the breath rage that I buried deep), road rage, slow pedestrians in front of me, someone talking to loud on their cell, the slightest act I deemed disrespectful from anyone, etc.

This was my life... until our good Lord and I got reacquainted about in 2005. It took my entire life, as I knew it to collapse from under my feet at a vertiginous speed, I hit rock bottom. But, God sent a few angels my way... (No, not the Hollywood, religious angel...:-) but 8 particular individuals (they know who they are) who didn't give up on me, that taught me compassion and forgiveness and stood by me when I was at my worst.

Experience has shown that we live not in a material universe, but in a universe of dynamic energy. Everything in existence is energy that we can sense, intuit and abundantly use – which direction it goes, is ultimately up to us. The key is in understanding, learning and transforming any negative energy into useful energy congruous to our true objectives. Simply stated, where our attention goes, our energy also flows influencing other energy systems and increasing the very energy we choose to nurture around us and within us.

Negative emotions end when we experience an inner connection with our energy within, a sense of lightness, peace and tranquility along with the constant sensation of love are measures of this connection. If these measures are present, the connection is real. The more we stay connected, the more we are acutely aware of the times when we lose that connection, usually in times of distress. Once the source of our darker emotions is brought to consciousness, our connection becomes more constant and our world around us begins to change for the better.

No. I'm not a born again Christian as the term Christian alone Jesus was against, he did after all preach there is only one God and we are all his children. I am a born again human being. With a new set of beliefs and a whole new perspective on things that so far, is completely congruous to my objectives of a better life.

As I said in my post on the Senshido forum though, it wasn't easy; I understood the old saying that the only way out of hell is straight through it. So many fear what's ahead (and rightfully so might I add! Sure as hell isn't a walk in the park, I'll tell ya that but it beats sitting there, rotting forever, fearing what's ahead in hell, no???), and I did falter several times but I caught myself each and every time and that is very important... I felt disarmed at times. I felt extremely vulnerable, I thought this would weaken me... the truth is; I have never felt stronger.

Quote:

To be honest, I'm struggling with that. Like I said, I'll ponder what you've said for a while. You've given me much to think about. Especially on a life without faith of some sort.

Well, like I said in my previous emails, this is nothing more than one man's opinion brother; so if it sounds good to you and it makes sense for you, even if just a small little thing here or there, then God bless and if you find nothing of value or none of it resounds off of you, then no worries, no offence, I completely understand and respect your beliefs.

Sincerely,
Rich

Before we go on with the above, let me share with you the following as well as it ties in beautifully....

The following is courtesy of one of my affiliates, they wished to remain anonymous to protect the people in their lives but it illustrates the true measure of emotional awareness and control beyond the shadow of a doubt, and that we all possess the tools and the power and we are not necessarily enslaved by strong emotions. It was posted on our online forum on a thread that spanned from 3 other posts... the main topic was vengeance vs. forgiveness and it spanned from there into 4 separate topics. These threads have been an inspiration to many who read the forum and have also helped change several lives for the better, through simple discussion as such which provided us with a wealth of information, insight and incredible opinions on both sides of the fence but this, in my opinion is the post that said it best:

The quote that stirred the reply:

Quote: Knowing that revenge is not going to contribute any good into this world, how do you cope with that anger, feeling of unfairness, those other feelings and still strong desire for retribution "your way"?

I have had two such instances in my life where I have had to deal with exactly this challenge.

The first actually started as far back as when I was 7. I stayed a lot with my Aunt, her husband and my cousin (whom is one of my best friends), in the worst low socio-economic area in our town. No BS, it was and still is “rough”, major gangland. As a white boy in a very non-white neighborhood I learned how to take a few beatings I can tell you, but that’s another story. 😊

My Aunt’s husband was a drug dealer, a diagnosed violent paranoid schizophrenic and basically an all round asshole. If I were to give a thorough explanation as to the man’s ability to cause pain and misery, to make people actually relate to the situation this thread would be 20,000 words long, so just imagine pure evil radiating from a human being and you may get the idea a little.

For 10 years, I watched him emotionally torture my Aunt and my cousin. He would beat at least one of them most nights, sometimes both of them. I actually got off easy, all he ever did to me was throw me off the deck, chase me with a machete and throw me into a few walls so that he could reach my cousin. The unspeakable bastard was afraid that if he hurt me for real, my family would get involved and then he would not have the control that he had over his “family” to keep what he was doing “under wraps”.

I watched him put my cousin’s head through a wall, beat him with a chisel, and treat him as a punching bag more times than I care to recall. My Aunt got it just as bad. But honestly, the emotional torture he put them through eclipsed the physical 10 to 1. (Yes he was arrested numerous times, but seeing as New Zealand has no justice system to speak of, he was always back and the cycle repeated).

Well as if this wasn’t enough to conjure up repressed feelings of hatred and revenge, it got worse. Because of the emotional pain, stress and unhappiness he had caused, my Aunt developed cancer (He claimed that it was caused by evil demons that my cousin and I had bought home and blamed us for it) and died.

There is so much to this story, I have only given away 1% but it will be enough to make my point (I hope). Anyway, not too long after her death, my Mum and my Grandmother went to his house to drop something off to him and he was having one of his “moments”. He (for no reason) punched my grandmother unconscious and then proceeded to beat my mother to a pulp. He smashed her head into the ground over 10 times and tried to choke her to death. Unbelievably for that neighborhood, someone actually intervened and saved the situation from being even worse.

Now...what happened when I heard about this? I live in xxxxxxxx, which is approximately 2 hours from my hometown (thankfully). I got into my car and headed north. My intention was to seek revenge on him in the worst way. This was like the switch, which opened the floodgates of about 15 years of repressed hatred, anger, resentment, and fear, and it seemed I now had permission to deal with it. To be honest, as worried as I was about my Mum and Grandmother, I was more focused on him. It is so

easy to hypothesize about how you would/should deal with a situation if you have never been in one, but when it happens for real that is the real test.

I never reached his house. What stopped me? I would like to say I had an epiphany of wisdom and after rationally thinking it through I concluded that my actions would not serve the greater good, but that is not what happened. Instead I had a moment of clarity, seeing as how I had 2 hours in a car to think about it, and decided to see my Mum first to make sure she was ok. I am grateful that I did, as it was she who stopped me going there. It was she who pointed out the potential consequences of my actions, and the likelihood of me either winding up in jail or winding up dead. And then because of his connections, my family could also be in jeopardy. She put her faith in the justice system to finally take care of it, which of course failed her miserably.

Honestly, I did not stop because I found forgiveness in my heart, far from it; I stopped because I was made to think about the consequences. I was made to realize that I was throwing fuel on to a fire, which would not stop burning just because I felt I should intervene.

Now I am a little older and a lot wiser that situation has taught me so many valuable lessons that have guided me in the right direction and saved me from making irrational decisions in highly emotional situations, which are still tough, but I guess there is a blue print there for it now.

This was later tested when my girlfriend was violently raped, by someone she knew, and as a consequence, died. This is not something I will discuss publicly but rest assured that when that happens to someone you love, and you know who the person is and where he lives as I did...that is when you are truly put to the test and you find out who you really are as a person...Obviously that story doesn't end there and the effect of that on my life was phenomenal, but revenge against him was not a part of it, I managed to control that part.

But what would have happened if I had sought revenge on either of these people? Let's say I had gone after either one of them and killed them in revenge...

Hindsight is so wonderful and can be a great teacher if you survive the fact...

without a doubt, there would have been retribution against my family. I would have been jailed. My family would have undergone more suffering, in fact suffering of a much higher magnitude because of the fact that parents care so much more about the well being of their children than they do about themselves, that seeing me suffer would have torn them apart. And the act of violence caused by one person would have been perpetuated, magnified and spread when it could have been contained at that point.

I mean it would be different if I had been there at either of these events, in that case I would have done "whatever it took" to prevent harm to my loved ones or myself, whatever it took. And that to me would be self-defense and I would not have cared less or thought twice about it because I had a chance to prevent it at that point.

But that is not what happened. I could not change what happened, it was already done. The choice was to deal with the situation as it stood accepting that it had happened and work through all of the issues that come with that, or make it worse. To add power to the act of injustice by throwing more energy at it. Also to try to find good in the situation...that is what we always hear people say but is easier said than done, from my experience that comes later on once you have reached the acceptance stage of the grief process.

One of the most powerful laws of the universe is the law of attraction. We get what we focus on, whether we are focusing on wanting it or not wanting it, either way we are focusing on it and that is what shows up.

If revenge, hatred, anger is what you are focusing on, guess what is going to manifest into your life...more revenge, hatred, anger. And the ripple effect (Butterfly effect as Big Rob calls it) will ensure that everyone around you is also affected. All of your loved ones will feel it. You are a pebble, and when you hit the water you create ripples which touch all of the shores, and something else I notice about that is that when the ripples hit the shore they turn and come right back at you. What do you want to be “putting out there”?

Mother Teresa knew this, she once stated that she would never attend an anti-war rally, but if they held a rally for peace she would be there. She knew that whatever you give energy to by focusing on it, adds power to it and manifests more of that thing.

I guess I look at things this way these days...When I am 80 years old, sitting on my rocking chair (before I spar a few rounds 😊) what would I think looking back at this moment in my life? Would I regret not going after these guys, hurting or killing them, and dealing with the ripple affect that that would have created? Would I in fact even BE sitting there at that point because of that choice? I wonder how happy I would be and how much happiness I would have missed out on in my life and I bet I would be regretting that now it is gone...

Or would I wish that I had sought revenge? I doubt that very much.

Like Rich says, it is a personal choice. I wonder how many people who have committed “crimes of passion” would do anything to go back to that moment and make a different choice. I bet the vast majority would.

This thread is a gift because it gets us thinking about it, it creates blueprints, for if (God forbid) we are put into the situation where we need to make this choice. Maybe this will help us a little bit to see the oak tree not just the acorn when we are faced with this test.

JOHN DOE.

If any of this stirred anything in you, then I urge you to explore that as deeply and as profoundly as you can. The path one chooses is their own, this was an example of the path I chose, it matters little to me what path you choose, which religion you follow whether you follow one or not, whether you believe in the same things or entirely opposing views, but what I do care about is that whatever path you do choose, be it one that will bring you to peace and allow you to spread light and joy to those you love and in

return, have them do the same as there is enough darkness in this world.... I encourage you to find your light.

This is the first true step in total defense of the self... it starts with you, it starts inside... the rest, is actually much easier ;-)

Now does that mean I don't believe in defending oneself anymore? That we should feel compassionate towards our attackers? Hell no.... feeling compassion and remorse at the point where one is attacked is akin to wiping one's ass prior to taking the dump ;-)
simply, counter productive.

Let me be crystal clear on this matter, absolutely do what needs to be done to get yourself home safe and sound to your loved ones at night.

For lack of a much better example; but maybe one that others can somehow relate too as there is a movie presently out on DVD on the subject; take a look at the Rock's film now on DVD, the Grid Iron Gang. It's based on a true story and actually, the dialogue and story is almost word for word what happened in real life (as per the real life footage of the coach available on the DVD as well).

Here you had a group of kids, all gang-bangers... all of them criminals, murderers, drug dealers etc. and no one believed in them but this one guy, Porter. (I am oversimplifying the story for a point).

No one wanted to give these kids a chance as they were write offs by society's standards, and rightfully so to a certain degree however.... 75% of these kids end up back in jail or dead after their first stint. But because this guy Porter cared, stood by them and believed in them, more than 80% of his group succeeded and didn't end up in jail or dead afterwards... some went back to school, got jobs, became family men, etc. etc.

If everyone judged them, called them stupid, called them monsters and gave up on them, more than 75% of them would have ended up dead or in jail again. If they would have ended up dead, that means chances are they have also caused more deaths, these deaths will inevitably cause more as it will create the need for vengeance... do you not see the vicious cycle here? But one person cared enough to make a difference. A small difference to you and me maybe but a monumental one to a family that will in turn create an entire society as each seed will spread there... and yes, amongst those seeds may sprout some bad ones, so... we continue to insure that they don't win. ;-)

A good friend of mine said it best, once again; this was on my forum (we have a pretty intense forum at times ☺) his name is Rob Magio and he goes by the name of Big Rob online:

"However in my experience when a bully is confronted he will stop harassing that victim and he will simply find another victim. So what have we accomplished? However if we understand the bully's motivation and get him rehabilitated then he will not create more victims and he will not get married and bully his wife and 3 children. And what do you

think his 3 children will learn? So now we have 3 bullies to deal with who will have 3 kids each, now we have 9 more to deal with and the cycle continues. We cannot simply confront, we must not just deal with the symptoms you must deal with the cause. Statistically 75% of criminals return to prison within 3 years of their release.

So is the system working, is justice working? We need a new way to improve our society.”

Keep in mind, this doesn't mean we are saying that we should all go get jobs in the legal system to make a difference, not at all, it doesn't matter what vocation you choose/chose as honest work is always honorable; however, just start making a small difference within your neighborhood and if you already do, then fantastic, I'm preaching to the choir! ☺

Remember, food for thought.... Don't eat if you're not hungry. ☺

Okay, ummmm....turn the page, I, uh..., I'm done here.

Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all-the-time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.

Vince Lombardi (1913-70)

PREFACE

Now that we've tackled the more spiritual and philosophical side of personal protection, let us look at the psychological, emotional, behavioral, physiological AND to a degree, physical aspects.

There is a gap between "reality based" self-defense training and reality... my aim is to minimize that gap.

Richard Dimitri

Is this art good for self-defense?

There seems to be a lot of questions like these popping up, especially on Internet forums. More often than not, it is the practitioner that makes it happen, the style, range or tool that was used is incidental. However, this isn't true for many, this is the exception to the rule and not the rule itself. There are people out there who can make Tae Kwon Do work in the streets, this doesn't mean TKD would be the choice art for enhancing survivability.

In order for an art or system to enhance your chances at surviving a real fight, a real violent confrontation, an attempted rape, mugging or murder, it is essential for this art or system to be rooted in reality.

This art has to be 3 dimensional. It has to properly (not adequately, not dabble in) but properly and fully deal with the emotional, psychological, and physical aspects in terms that replicate how real fights start, why they start, which attacks are the most common, how intention to action begins, etc.

Too many times the word 'sparring' comes up... "we spar hard", "we spar against various styles" etc. when was the last time you saw or heard of a rapist strap on a pair of 12 ounce boxing gloves, set a 3 minute time limit prior to raping a woman in the entrance of her own home?

Ask yourself the following questions and answer them honestly without thinking about how you train or any martial art in question. Matter of fact, take the time to answer these questions with complete honesty and to the best of your abilities prior to reading on...

What is a real violent confrontation?

Who are the most likely to be attacked?

How will you most likely be attacked?

What frame of mind will you be in when you are attacked?

Should you be concerned about the Tai Chi expert attacking you? Should you be concerned about the golden gloves champion attacking you or maybe the last UFC champion?

The real threats are the rapists, the muggers, the random bullies and ego jocks, the road rage incidents, the potential murderers, spousal & parental abuse etc.

The difference between the dojo and the street is the unknown. Remember, awareness, consent and preparation will not be present. Your attacker will not be squaring off you; he is not there to "spar". Therefore the mind set is that of surprise and the attack is usually sudden when one is ill prepared and most always starts with an attack on the mind, which triggers emotional inertia. A person's ability to perform certain techniques that require fine or complex motor skills greatly diminishes while under attack. On the other hand, gross motor skills such as grabbing, tearing, ripping, striking, biting are not only not affected during high stress situations, they are enhanced thanks to mother nature's hard wiring of our survival mechanism.

You want to know if your system will enhance your survival during a serious violent attack that triggered the mind and caused emotional inertia prior to you even being touched? How do you train? Does your training replicate reality YES or NO?

What is reality? Go to your nearest 'hard reputed' club or bar on a Friday or Saturday night and simply observe the behavior, the initiation, the escalation and the treacherous development of a few fights. See if any of the participants "spar", stand at 4 or 5 feet away from each other first and square off. Check it out and compare it to the training that you do.

You'll notice several things. You'll notice that while someone is being grabbed with feral anger, he is also being severely verbally aggressed. You'll probably also notice that one or two or even more of his friends are standing behind him screaming and yelling for him to kill you. You'll probably also notice that you are instinctively grabbing him back trying to maintain your space and that the words coming out of your mouth are for the most part, not exactly defusing the situation...

Is this how you trained the 2 arm lapel grab last time in class? Or was it just you and your class partner while he grabbed you in a 2 arm lapel grab with some degree of force but simply stood there waiting for you to execute your technique?

What about other attacks? Which one's do you spend more time on training?

How much time is devoted to defending against the jab, the Thai kick, the technical clinch, the side kick, the perfectly executed hook punch, the arm bar, the wrist lock?

How much time is devoted to defending against a sucker punch in the middle of a verbal confrontation, a hard tackle off of a verbal assault, a knife coming out while struggling in the clinch. How are you dressed while doing this? A gi? Thai shorts? Tank top? Bare feet maybe? What about winter boots? A 3 quarter jacket? Jeans? Heals? Suit and tie? 30 pound schoolbag on your back?

If you isolate an attack without incorporating realistic levels of physical and verbal aggression in order to trigger the emotional inertia, when faced with a real attack outside the dojo, ring, mats whatever... the student will more often than not experience 'freezing' from lack of suffice information. The mind will have no comparable experience making it almost impossible for them to respond effectively. Why? Because the brain will revert back to the training but the training never dealt with this unfortunately "new information". No one in class ever nearly put me through a wall while grabbing me like that and calling my mother a filthy #!\$% licking whore?!?!

How much time does your system devote to avoiding and defusing a potential threat with proper tools based on research, experience and statistics? It's not enough to simply tell someone you don't want any trouble. It's not enough telling someone you don't want to fight. This is NOT defusing a fight at all. On the contrary, the majority of what is being taught as verbal defusing in most schools today will actually escalate the situation. When was the last time you actually verbally de-escalated the scenario you were in where it didn't go physical and your partner who was the intended attacker turned around and said "Damn man, I didn't know what else to say, you got me."

What about the physical aspect? Well, what about it? Like I mentioned earlier, we are already hard wired with a survival mechanism, Mother Nature took care of that. If your physical arsenal consists of tools or techniques that require fine and complex motor skills, then the chances of them working are minimal, argue all you want, it has been scientifically proven time and time again. So your physical arsenal should enhance what God already gave you as opposed to negate it through stylistic interference (your bodies desire to perform a move that directly negates the already bypassed cognitive brain by the mid brain due to the adrenal stress and fight or flight response).

What does your physical arsenal look like? How many hours do you spend on elaborate submissions, on perfecting your punches, kicks, elbows and knees? How much time do you spend actually using these tools not in sparring but in fighting against the unknown opponent? Unknown meaning, you don't know if he has a friend on the side who'll jump in, you don't know if he's carrying a weapon or not, you don't know how he is going to react or what he is going to do because there are no parameters created by rules in sparring... this is real now...

Let me add to this the following:

Does your style spend a considerable amount of time teaching you about the legalities of your implications in a real fight? How to deal with witnesses? How to talk to a cop if you're caught?

What about the revenge factor? Does your system teach you that after you've won your fight that the guy you just beat on may seek revenge? Do they teach you how to deal with the sometimes-grim aftermath of your actions?

Real violence is behaviorally rooted. Sparring isn't. Martial art training is physically rooted. "When someone does this, you do that." Not many explain or teach how to avoid "someone doing this" in order for "that" not to become the primary choice action. So, is your training behaviorally rooted, yes or no? Does it take into consideration pre contact psychology yes or no? Is the physical training adaptable to your hard-wired survival system or are you trying to reprogram thousands of years of evolution with new techniques that require timing, torque, distance, and a high degree of skill and cognitive processing? You be the judge. Which brings us to our next point:

Tools VS Techniques – The Difference?

Marc Ste. Marie went on to explain it as such on our online Senshido forum:

"A few definitions to help the lurkers and newbies to understand Senshido. We do not teach techniques in the general martial arts sense of the word. We teach tool and target development, strategies and tactics. As it says on the Senshido website:

"Rather than provide technical aspects for people to use in particular situations, we provide analytical skills that will be useful in any situation."

Tool: A punch, kick, lock, guard, whatever...spontaneously executed move based on the unfolding situation in an alive manner according to the tactical environment and with maximum leverage/power required for the success of the move.

Technique: "Pak sau the punch and counter punch..." or "when he grabs here, pivot, twist and etc. etc...." An impossibility... no way you can match a move for each possibility, and if you do... you won't be able to "access" the info in real time/real speed since the cognitive process of selecting the right response will always be slower than the attack you want to counter.

So... a hammer is a tool. We can drive a nail, fix a dent in a car, drive in tent pickets, remove a nail with the claws, use it as crow bar, a paper weight, to cave in someone's skull etc.....

So yes, we are finicky about proper execution and biomechanics, we spend the time needed to hone your tools, and then we learn application through very alive drills and personal experimentation."

Beyond Techniques

"The conventions of language reveals the ways in which we see the world."

- Dan Millman

Techniques as described by Webster's II New College Dictionary goes as follows:

Technique: 1. The systematic procedure by which a complex or scientific task is accomplished. 2. Procedure, system, routine; method. 3. The degree of skill or command of fundamentals exhibited in a performance.

All 3 of these definitions do not relate to personal protection as we all know that fine or complex motor skills go out the window. Tool and target development based on strategies and tactics is NOT a "systematic procedure".

In martial arts today, the term "technique" is expressed as a physical response to an attack. For the most part, it is looked as "If someone does this, you do that." If we're to take a look around at the majority of martial arts forums, you'll see threads like (the following are actual threads found on various popular martial arts forums)

- "Which technique would you use against a grappler?"
- "What's your favorite technique?"
- "Best self defense techniques."

Etc. Etc.

The problem with 'techniques' in the context provided above, is that those who use them look to them for a specific result (in order to establish their next technique) as opposed to the reaction from their attacker as the consequence of their chosen action. The problem lies within the lack of ability to see the 'fight' outside 'the box', outside of the technical applications, since the individual using it cannot choose if the technique worked or not (especially the way it was designed to function). Your opponent will always dictate what your next 'move' is going to be based on their reactions... behavior, state of mind, state of being, will dictate.

The mere term "technique" conjures up the image of memorized sequential tactics as a response to a given attack. Take boxing for instance, they don't teach techniques, they teach tools. Imagine if in Boxing, they taught that every time your opponent jabs, you do an outside slip and counter with a left hook. That would be a technical application.

We all know that there are countless ways to counter a jab, and what does it depend on? Position, distance, momentum, mind set, delivery speed etc. So, we teach personal protection and hand to hand combat within the similar frame that Boxing is taught. Tool and Target development, Strategies and Tactics.

Marc Ste. Marie went on to explain it as such: *"Trying to memorize a solution for each possibility is ridiculous. Pre-planned scenarios applied to situations affected by multiple variables are useless..."*

And I couldn't agree more. Everyone looks at it from a purely physical perspective. They have a difficult time understanding the holistic approach behind the context in which the technique should be used such as the behavioral aspects, the emotional aspects and the variables that surround the situation.

Here's a question I ask every martial artist who walk through my doors to illustrate my point. I ask what would you do if someone grabbed you by the neck and pinned you to a wall? The response? Always and without fail, a physical response. *"I would wrist lock and front kick" - I would parry and punch" - I would grab the hand and kick" etc. etc.*

Then I ask: What if the person grabbing you is a pissed off waitress who mistook you for the asshole who just pinched her butt at the diner? What if it was 6 foot 4 biker whose friends were standing behind him and they were armed? What if it was a drunken guy in a bar and 2 of his friends were standing at each of his side? What if at the same time, you were with your girlfriend who was a little drunk and began to mouth off?

The point of the matter is, is that techniques are incidental. Techniques relate to fixation. Tools in contrast offer diversity and diverse ability. Techniques are easily dismissed in certain situations. Tools aren't. A tool will be used when it is called upon allowing for creative spontaneity moment to moment, a technique will not due to the faction in which it was created. For instance, a hammer is a tool. Primarily designed for hammering in nails but the diversity of this tool is widespread and its functions exceed 'the nail'. A technique will fixate an individual on its use and they will hinder creativity.

Semantics? Maybe. However just because everyone has the wrong definition of 'technique' doesn't mean I have to succumb to it and go along with it.

To add to this, yes we teach escapes, releases, strikes, as well as their proper biomechanical applications but we do not offer them as THE SOLUTION to a given problem, merely a tool that should be placed in the RBSD tool box and used when it is needed. Spontaneous improvisation is critical, this cannot happen with preplanned techniques.

Ville Kaivonen, an affiliate of mine in Finland prior to becoming affiliated had given an example of one of his students defending himself using technical applications as he was taught with success:

"One thing that happened to my student: He was choked in nightclub. He did the release but for some reason didn't feel comfortable with the knee kick (or forgot it due to stress) so he made just the release and immediately grabbed the guys hair with other hand and stuck another thumb into eye and pulled the opponent down with a neck crank."

This particular student was the exception to the rule. An average or less gifted student who would have 'forgotten' as Ville stated, *'what to do due to stress'* would have panicked

because what was memorized as a technique and was ingrained into him by his instructors (people whom he deems with respect and put his faith in) would have failed him at that moment. The "*uh-oh, this isn't the way we trained it in class*" syndrome would have kicked in and caused hesitation. Remember, there are some people out there who can make Karate and Tae Kwon Do work in serious violent confrontations... doesn't make the arts functional for self defense though, it's the person, not the art that made it work.

These people are exceptions to the rule... the average citizen isn't like that, we must never forget that as personal protection/self defense instructors, our target audience is general population, not the gifted athlete, the already experienced brawler, the above average young male who can pick things up quickly... if that student of Ville's was a 45 year old mother of 2 housewife who encountered a violent confrontation and had the technique fail due to stress, I highly doubt she would have recovered like Ville's student in question did. This was not the system's success but the student in question unless of course, you train them to improvise outside the technical content...

For example, when we teach in class, we allow the student to be creative. There are no patterns to follow; there are no physical guidelines. You may have 7 students work a knife defense and each will look entirely different from the other due to the moment. A student will turn to me and ask "*Did I do that right?*" and I'll reply, "*Did you survive?*" He'll say "*Yeah, but I'm not too sure I applied the right technique?*" I'll reply that anything he did that allowed him to survive with the minimal amount of damage done to him was indeed, the right 'technique'.

The guidelines are the concepts and principles, the 5 principles of physical retaliation, the knife defense concepts, etc. Those are the guidelines. The physical choices made are the manifestations of the strategic and tactical implementations of the moment dictated by the scenario and situation.

A Deeper Look:

For those who train to enhance their survivability, there are four major principles that should be included in their curriculums: fear management, how stress and the adrenaline dump affects performance, pain management and most importantly; mind set. These topics should be the foreground of all survival-training methodologies but are seldomly so. If they are not a part of the curriculum you are now training under and are under the impression you are studying to survive violence, quit now and find a system that does.

The most important thing to understand or come to terms with is that techniques, martial arts styles; ranges of combat do not win fights. People win fights. They do so because of their state of mind. How they did it is completely incidental.

For example: Marc Ste. Marie wrote the following after one of our students was jumped in the street in the middle of winter.

A friend had to put steel to another man... He was ambushed, took a punch, fell and was put in the mounted position, where his adversary attempted a choking maneuver using the lapel of the coat he was wearing. He deployed his knife and stuck him 17 times... Ain't grappling nice!

He had to go to court, where the magistrate refuses to recognize the choking attack as a potentially deadly attack and sentenced the man to 6 months in the tank. He served one. After debriefing, the man acknowledged the fact that if he was in the same predicament, he would do the same, since he, without a doubt, knew his life was in peril. The legal system is unfortunately often incongruous with what you have to do to survive.

The man stated that his lack of grappling skills saved him, which I acknowledge. At that point trying an escape to the choke would have been futile since the blow absorbed caused a second degree concussion diagnosed at the hospital after the event. His adversary had the drop on him and was in position before he could move.

He was outweighed by forty pounds, stunned and mounted, so he did the only thing he could do at that moment to survive, he cut his way out.

As human beings when the famous 'fight or flight' syndrome kicks in due to the perception of threat, violent confrontation and/or death, the body involuntarily releases stress hormones which causes the adrenal glands to secrete. During this adrenal stress phase, three of our systems are maxed out: Vision, cognitive processing and fine or complex motor skill performance.

Therefore, the loss of near vision, disrupted depth perception, 70% reduction in peripheral vision, inhibition of higher brain functions, deterioration of immediate threat recognition, negative response selection and ability of communication of complex

thoughts, loss of fine and complex motor skills such as precision shooting or martial arts techniques are all results of adrenal stress condition.

Potential Reactions from Stress

When facing violence or a life-threatening situation, there are several perceptual distortions that will occur. We touched on a few of these above but here they are in greater detail according to Police Psychologist Alexis Artwohl, Ph.D.

Diminished auditory perception: Sounds seemed muffled or non-existent.

Tunnel Vision: 70% of your peripheral vision vanished and you went into critical focus on the intended or perceived threat.

Automatic Pilot: Your body responded automatically to the threat without conscious thought or processing.

Heightened visual clarity: You were capable of seeing things or details that you normally would never catch.

Time moved in slow motion.

Dissociation: A sense of detachment or surreal-ness to the event.

Intrusive distracting thoughts: Thoughts not related to the event happening pop into your mind such as later plans, thoughts of a loved one etc.

Fast motion time. Things moved more rapidly than normal, the whole thing happened so quickly.

Intensified sounds.

Temporary paralysis: Freezing from fear, the deer in headlights phenomenon.

It's important in the above mentioned to consciously interrupt these events from occurring by realizing that they are happening and working against them by performing the opposite. Once you begin to regain cognitive control, you will less likely be affected by the adrenal stress conditioning. Obviously, the more you know about a subject, the less you are likely to freeze.

The mind, when faced with a problem begins to search the memory banks for a solution. If you have never experienced this particular problem before either through visualization (training) or real life and explored the possibilities of a solution, then your mind won't find the necessary "file" containing the answer.

When involved in a stress-related or critical incident, the posttraumatic effects can and will include some or all of the following.

According to *Ray Shelton, PhD, EMT, Emergency Stress Management*

Physically: Fatigue - Nausea – Muscular aches – Chest pains – Difficulty breathing – Rapid heart rate – Headaches – Visual distortions – Vomiting – Grinding of teeth – Weakness – Dizziness – Profuse sweating – Chills – Fainting – Diarrhea or constipation – Heart burn

Cognitively: Blaming – Confusion – Attention deficit disorder – Poor decision making – Heightened or lowered alertness – Lack of concentration – Memory loss – Hyperness – Difficulty identifying familiar people or objects – Increased or decreased awareness of surroundings – Poor problem solving and abstract thinking – Loss of time, place or person orientation – Disturbed thinking – Nightmares – Intrusive images

Emotionally: Anxiety – Guilt – Grief – Denial – Severe panic attacks (rare) – Emotional shock – Fear – Uncertainty – Loss of emotional control – Depression – Inappropriate emotional response – Apprehension – Feeling overwhelmed – Intense anger – Irritability – Agitation

Behaviorally: Change in activity – Change in speech patterns – Withdrawal – Emotional outbursts – Suspiciousness – Change in usual communication – Loss or increase of appetite – Alcohol consumption – Inability to rest or relax – Antisocial acts – Non specific bodily complaints – Hyper alertness to environment – Startle reflex intensified – Pacing – Erratic movement – Change in sexual functions – Insomnia

Spiritually: Anger at God – Feeling distant from God – Withdrawal from church – Uncharacteristic church involvement – Sudden turn towards God – Familiar practices seem empty (prayer, scripture, hymns) – Church rituals seem empty (worship, communion) – Belief that God is powerless – Loss of meaning or purpose – Sense of isolation – Questioning of your basic beliefs – Anger at clergy – Belief that God is not in control, doesn't care or that you failed God

In trying to cope with PTSD, there are generally 4 resources for getting help in gaining control. Personal Resources, Professional Resources, Family Resources and Peer Resources. How you deal with the situation is more important to look at than the event itself. Generally, there are five stages to personal growth after a critical incident.

- 1) Denial. *“I can't believe this is happening to me.” “I can't believe he's dead.”* Etc.
- 2) Depression. Sorrow, sadness, withdrawal from friends, social gatherings, work etc.
- 3) Anger. Rage, frustration generally aimed at the world or at God, sometimes on oneself for example: *“Why didn't I just... Instead?”*.

- 4) Negotiation. Where one begins to negotiate or bargain with God. “Please God, if you help me out of this, I’ll never (lie, cheat, steal, gamble, smoke etc.) again.
- 5) Acceptance. The final stage... rarely will one achieve total acceptance and peace. However if one does, this is where he looks at the event and finally embraces the reality of it, ridding himself of all ill feelings.

As hard as the following may be in a time of crisis, you want to be optimistic. Tell yourself that setback are temporary and remind yourself of previous or past adversities you survived through. Take it one step at a time, there’s a saying that goes “The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first few steps.” Take it day by day, moment to moment. Take action. Do something, anything. Go to the gym and workout. Pick up a book and read for an hour a day or go see a movie. Manage your inner dialogue. Dan Millman wrote “*The conventions of language reveals the ways in which we see the world.*” How you speak or talk to yourself will impact how you feel.

During PTSD, it’s important as hard as it may be not to be alone. To surround yourself with loved ones who understand what you have been through and who are there to support you and keep your mind off things. Try and remain within your normal daily routine, as it will keep your mind occupied.

Research and personal experience indicates that only gross motor skills are performed optimally during high stress conditions where you are on the defensive. But how does one minimize perception time and maximize reaction time? How do you deal with the overwhelming fear and dreaded adrenaline dump? How do you pull it all off in the ugly face of violence?

I wish I could say “Simple”, but it’s not all that simple really. Only through specialized education can you acquire specialized knowledge. As mentioned earlier, at Senshido, we have a saying that goes as follows: “*Rather than provide technical aspects for people to use in particular situations, we provide analytical skills that will be useful in any situation*”. And that is exactly what this book is about, providing you with analytical skills that will be useful to you in any situation.

Lets move on.

In the pre contact phase of an assault or fight, what leads one of the two parties to throw the first punch and how can you tell when your adversary is about to launch his physical assault? Sadly enough, in most martial arts today, the pre contact phase of a violent encounter is highly undermined.

During the potential for violence is when the fight or flight syndrome kicks in. The specifics of a certain event will lead you to believe that you are in danger and a host of physiological changes will occur within your body.

Naturally, the 2 emotions felt the most during this stage are fear and anger. One will be predominant over the other based on the scenario specifics and your mind will begin to race to hopefully find a solution. For the most part, if you are untrained and your killer instinct isn't developed, you will most probably go into denial, shift your mind elsewhere and put your body into automatic pilot letting it take the brunt of the assault. This is what is called being a victim.

If you are properly trained to deal with violence (and I'm not talking about black belts or No Holds Barred (NHB) champions) you will be able to spot the warning signals. For the most part, there are noticeable changes in behavior that occur before an individual goes physical. For example, if your attacker starts to breathe faster and shallower, if his skin tone goes paler, body tenses up a little, tone of voice changes, angles back or forward a little bit, chances are he's about to "let loose".

Skin tone getting paler doesn't necessarily mean he's afraid, this assumption has cost some parts of their anatomy. Sudden paleness means the blood is leaving the body and rushing into the muscles. This is usually followed by a physical assault. A sudden shift in weight forward or backward can also be telegraphing a shift in range... he's getting prepared to strike from his comfort zone.

There are of course, like always, exceptions to the rule. Emotionally Disturbed Individual's (EDI), violent criminals and drug-induced individuals may attack without any prior warning or change in behavior. However, determining the type of attacker you are facing will increase your chances of survivability.

Human instinct and physical responses automatic to your nervous system will always predominate over your training. Millions of years of evolution cannot be wiped out in 3, 5, 15 or even 30 years of training. This is when stylistic interference occurs. Your mind's desire to perform what you learned in martial arts training is in direct conflict with your natural reflexive response, fight or flight syndrome and flinch mechanism. This is where most lose the physical portion of the fight.

This is why it is imperative that you look at how you instinctively move and respond to sudden and surprise attacks, and learn how to offensively and defensively bind your combative strategy to it so that the nucleus of your arsenal is your core reflex. Therefore making it a non-perishable skill.

The post physical stage begins when you deem yourself out of danger. You enter the adrenaline withdrawal stage and begin to feel the effects of the fight. Certain aches and pains may be discovered and the inevitable feeling of nausea (sometimes slight, sometimes heavy) is usually felt.

Depending on the severity of the outcome (confrontation) some feel an overwhelming level of posttraumatic stress and fear the event repeating itself. Some Law Enforcement Officers have retired after such confrontations due to the post physical stage. In extreme cases

following, experiencing guilt, fear or the development of certain phobias may occur and be quite damaging.

Besides that, in the pre contact phase of the attack, what makes one throw the first punch is usually the inability to defuse the situation by the intended victim. That, and ego. If you're being verbally assaulted and aggressively respond to the attack, you are challenging and/or threatening your opponent. Number one rule of defense, never challenge or threaten your opponent. The whole reason behind the verbal assault is to be instigated to a level which the verbal assault will turn into a physical one. If your opponent is mouthing off or is still in the pre contact stage; that is because he is not mentally nor physically prepared to go physical yet. He needs you to help him get there. This is where passive behavior comes in. It neutralizes the need to become more aggressive. Fight fire with? Water, not fire.

Think about it... would you rather strike someone who's expecting it and is mentally and physically prepared for a counter attack or someone who is completely unaware of a coming attack? Passive behavior escalates ego and drops guard... if you cannot verbally defuse the situation, you want to at least make your opponent overconfident and nail him from a natural and non-violent stance. This strategy also works well in a multiple attacker situation, catching the first guy by surprise will automatically reduce the numbers by one right off the bat. Not to mention causing a psychological delay in the rest of them (however not always true).

So bottom line, the more you know about the psycho dynamics of violence, the better you can handle a situation. Keep your ego under control...

The 20 Commandments of Hand To Hand Combat

1. Be aware at all times.
2. There are no limits.
3. Never assume. Assumption is the mother of all failures.
4. Defeat your enemy's mind first and his body will follow.
5. Never try. Trying implies the possibility of failure. Commit.
6. Keep it simple, direct and effective.
7. Survive at all cost - neutralize your enemy before he kills you by any means available.
8. *"The more you sweat in practice, the less you bleed in combat."*
U.S. Navy Seals.
9. You only lose if you quit or die. Don't quit and you won't die.
10. There are NO RULES.
11. The best defense is a strong offense.
12. The best offense is a strong defense.
13. If it doesn't work, change it.
14. Learn your city's laws
15. Get in, get it done, get it over with, and get out.
16. Lead with speed.
17. *"Do nothing which is of no use."*
Miyamoto Musahi
18. Keep your ego under control.
19. Never let your emotions control your cognitive intuition.
20. Learn compassion and forgiveness.

CHAPTER ONE:

AWARENESS AND INTUITION

Belief Systems

“The world is moving so fast these days that the man who says it can’t be done is generally interrupted by someone doing it.”

Harry Emerson Fosdick

A belief system is a vision of reality that individuals paint or create for themselves. Everyone has different beliefs. It is fascinating to see two women of the same size and skill level but different beliefs perform in a scenario mock attack. One will go berserk and successfully make corn beef of the attacker while the other, in the exact same pretext, will passively “try” to make a move while the attacker easily negates it and capitalizes on his victim.

These two same women, taking the exact same course, prior to doing a mock attack will reveal much about their beliefs. The first woman, let’s call her “Jane” will listen to the information we gave her, process it, and feed off of it. The second Woman, we’ll call her “Beth” will hear the information, negate it, continuously ask “*yeah, well what if he’s seven feet tall, what if he’s much stronger, what if he’s got a gun, I’m only a woman, what can I do?*” There is a saying that goes “***Argue enough for limitations and sure enough they’re yours***”.

Jane will easily defend herself against the likes of Ted Bundy (five feet eight inches tall), Charles Manson (five feet four inches tall with boots on) Albert Di’Salvo and any other crazed imbecile out there with no regards to human life.

Beth however, will need some more work. It is not her physical skill nor strength that will impair her but rather her belief system, the lack of faith in herself, her abilities and the fact that she believes that there is no amount of instruction on self-defense that would amount to anything. It is the intense hold on her beliefs that will be her down fall.

Unfortunately, there are many people out there who are like Beth. The hardest task is not in imparting these individuals with the necessary skills to survive a violent situation but rather in re-educating their belief system and giving them one that is congruous to their objectives of survival. Prioritizing mind-sets.

For example, there are people out there who firmly believe that if you get shot, you die. That belief is so strong that in certain cases, people who were shot and suffered nothing more than a flesh wound died of a heart attack due to their belief that if you get shot, you die.

There was a quote made by Chris Rock in the much criticized yet in my opinion, brilliant film “Dogma” which went something like this: Beliefs become part of the beings core and are hard to change because they are so inbred, ideologies however, are easier to change.

Why did I open this chapter up with belief systems? Simply because beliefs is where it all starts, if you do not believe you can do something, you are right, however, if you believe you can do something, then... you are right.

Awareness

Awareness is the first element of defense. The majority of victims are caught unaware. But how do you consistently remain in a state of awareness all the time? I mean, hell, life takes over most of the time and here we are caught up in our daily lives, bills, ex wives and husbands, our kids, our jobs, our entertainment's etc. Well, awareness is not required one hundred percent of the time all the time.

Based on and inspired by author Jeff Cooper's book *Fireworks* where he devised a color code to enable the police officer to assume a state of mind appropriate to the various stages of readiness he may need, we at Senshido devised a color coded risk evaluation guide to help heighten civilian awareness back in 1993, here it is.

SENSHIDO'S COLOR CODED RISK EVALUATION GUIDE

Code Green: In a safe, enclosed area with friends or family

Code Yellow: Out of home with friend(s), familiar environment, daytime

Code Red: Out Alone, unknown area, enclosed space, evening or night

Believing that everyone must always be aware of their environment and implement safety strategies, Senshido's color coded risk evaluation guide indicates what levels of awareness and which physical and psychological strategies one must implement in general situations. Nothing is written in stone, the best guide is your intuition.

There are a few ground rules in effective physical and psychological self-protection. If you yell, you must also run. If enclosed and your attacker has intent, yelling and appearing confident will increase your attackers alertness and guard, and his attack will be ferocious. In this case you must apply a passive stance strategy (see chapter 2) to lower the attackers guard and raise their ego making it easier to run, move or attack when their defense is down.

At Senshido, we always advocate awareness and intuition in order to avoid. If that fails we advise to attempt to defuse in order to de-escalate, if that fails then you fight back with everything you've got. Awareness strategies and "hard target" body language (looking straight ahead rather than at the ground, standing up straight rather than letting your body collapse in on itself, and walking with purpose) are always constant where fighting back strategies are variable. Remember that predators look for prey/victim behavior.

Where are you? Can you get to a safe place? Do you know what's around you? Do you know who's around you? Are you cornered? These are all variables which dictate when and where one should apply certain strategies.

Some of these strategies include verbally asserting yourself, yelling FIRE loudly to attract attention of any people in the area, implementing a passive stance strategy to verbally defuse the situation, fighting back physically or running to get away.

Code Green:

Code Green is applicable in a safe and secure environment when you're comfortable and feeling easy. In a safe, enclosed area with friends or family i.e. home. Provided that you have implemented the necessary safety precautions and relationships with friends and family, this is an environment you can generally relax in.

Safety precautions at home include but are not limited to the following:

- Have functioning lights in all entrances. Check the bulbs frequently
- Have sensor lights installed in front and back of your house.
- Use a timer to turn on the radio and lights when you are not home.
- Have good locks on all doors and windows. Install reputable locks and use good deadbolts. If possible, install a home alarm system.
- When moving into a house or apartment, always change or re-key the locks. Otherwise, the previous resident and anyone they supplied keys to will have unrestricted access to your new home.
- Do not use your full name on your mailbox or in the phone directory, or on your answering machine.
- Do not leave a schedule of your times away from home on your answering machine.
- If you live alone, do not let strangers know. Invent a roommate or big dog.
- Know which of your neighbors you can trust in an emergency.
- Check who is at the door before opening it, and do not open the door to an unexpected visitor or stranger without having them properly identify themselves first.
- Don't hide extra keys in easily accessible places I.e. under the welcome mat or above the doorframe, criminals will find them.

- Ask for photo identification of all unsolicited repairpersons, etc. If you are still suspicious, call to verify employment.
- Never give personal information to telephone solicitors, age, how many people living with you, full name, address etc.
- Consider creating a "safe room" with a separate telephone line or cellular phone, a weapon of choice (preferably one you are trained to use) and strong locks. If someone breaks in, you can retreat there (with children if any) and immediately call for help.
- Do not let strangers into your home to use the phone. Offer to make the call for them.
- Plant "defensive" shrubs around your home, especially beneath windows. Bushes that feature thorns or stiff, spiky leaves are not good hiding places for criminals nor does it make it tempting to crawl through to get to your window. Make sure they do not obstruct your view of your exterior.
- Consider keeping a separate line or cellular phone as a security device. Taking one phone off the hook renders other units on that line inoperable. Using a separate line or cellular phone in your bedroom is a good precaution.
- Consider having a large, well-trained dog. Can be the most effective way to secure your home.

Some extra tips for avoiding home invasions:

1. Make sure that no bushes; trees, shrubs etc. obstruct your views from inside the house.
2. Build a safe room in your house with an extra cellular phone, where you and your family can run to immediately when someone starts to kick your door down.
3. Use the peephole before opening your door at all times. If there is no one visible, do not open it.
4. Make sure all possible entrances to the house (including windows etc. are securely locked.
5. Fortify all exterior entrances to your home, especially rear patio doors and inner doors from the garage.
6. Install a security camera system. If something does happen, there will be evidence for the police. Often, this sort of thing alone has helped solve some of the most horrific crimes.
7. Make sure all tools and ladders etc. are locked away securely when not in use.

8. Keep an old pair of large dirty shoes/boots at your front door, this will give the impression that a very large man lives there. (not appropriate if being stalked first mind you).
9. Make sure all phones are equipped with 911 on speed-dial and have a phone in every room of the house or a portable, and also make sure that your phone can be used in speaker phone mode, so that when the 911 call comes in, the dispatcher can hear what is going on.
10. Join or create a neighborhood watch. Get to know your neighbors.
11. Practice an escape plan with your family, and have a way out of the house. Perhaps figure a way to get the children out of the house to go for help.
12. Get a good alarm system and have prominently displayed home alarm system decals on your doors and windows.
12. Always keep the window shades closed at night, especially in the kitchen. Believe it or not, most kitchen windows do not have treatments. Exposed windows can tell the criminal a lot about how vulnerable you are. What they can't see brings reluctance on their part and they tend to move on.
13. Never let it look like you're home alone. Use the camouflage approach by turning on the lights, radio or TV -- utilize the entire house. A television in a dark room flickers and gives the appearance of more than one person in the room -- as viewed from the outside.
14. Be alert every time you drive home -- especially women. Criminals have been known to follow a potential victim home after stalking them. They may want to see where you live -- only to return later.
15. Put up a no solicitors sign. That way if someone does ring the doorbell and you see it's not somebody you know, you can go to code yellow immediately.

Code Yellow:

Code yellow is implemented when you're out of the home, in daylight to late afternoon, alone or with a friend or more. Your awareness should be up and you must implement necessary safety strategies. Strangers should be kept at a distance and your body language and stride should display confidence and purpose. Present yourself as a hard target.

If you are not in an enclosed space and are approached and threatened you should group together with your friends (using the power of numbers) and yell FIRE while moving to a safe place.

Some safety tips to consider in code yellow:

On The Street

- If walking alone, avoid groups or gangs of young men loitering or hanging out.
- Avoid secluded shortcuts such as parks at night, alleyways, or deserted parts of town.
- If you suspect that someone is following you, by foot or in a car, don't go home (or they will know where you live). Determine immediately if you are being followed. Turn around, face the intended individual and bluntly ask them: "Are you following me?" If they are, this will generally shine a light on them and attract unwanted attention, they will more often than not simply run away. If they don't, and answer "Yes, I am." and continue heading towards you with intent, go to a trusted neighbor, open store or to a public place to call police or a friend or family member, or directly to a police station.
- Walk upright, confident and with purpose. You must be seen as in control and as a hard target. If you are lost or looking for your destination, hide it as best possible. Set targets in front of you (tree, building, etc.) and move from target destination to target destination. This will give you "purpose" and potential predators will not recognize that you are lost.
- Don't hitchhike. Ever.
- Do not use outside ATM's at night or in unfamiliar surroundings. Use only in broad daylight and in safe parts of town.
- When on the street, walk facing oncoming traffic. It will be harder for someone to pull you into a car and abduct you.
- Tell someone where you'll be and what time you're supposed to return, especially if you will be with someone you don't know very well.
- Try to not overload yourself with packages and bags. If you must have your hands full, visualize how you would respond if approached and get your hands free. Could your baggage be used as a tool or improvised weapon?
- Unless in a gym, do not wear music headphones while walking or jogging, you need your auditory senses.
- Do not read while walking or standing on the street. Reading places you in a certain level of hypnosis and awareness becomes greatly affected when involved in the material for which you are reading.

- If you wear a purse with a shoulder strap, be prepared to let it go if snatched. It is better to wear it over one shoulder rather than have it across your chest, otherwise you may be hurt if the mugger knocks you down and drags you while fleeing with your purse.
- If someone asks you for directions and if you choose to reply, remain at least two arm lengths away.
- If someone asks you for the time, remain at least two arm lengths away and estimate or show them your watch arm. Never go into critical focus and look down at your watch to give the time.
- Clogs, high heels, and tight skirts are hard to run and fight in. Capes, scarves, and long necklaces are easy to grab. Modify your fashion style, or wear comfortable clothing when walking alone (change into dress-up clothes later). If you must wear that style of clothing, think through how you would fight in your dress-up clothes. For example, kicking off your high heels or hiking your skirt up around your hips before starting to run or kick. Change from high heels to flats when leaving work.
- Avoid being on the street alone if you are upset or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or have someone go with you.
- When dropping someone off at their home, make sure they are safely inside before driving away. Have them do the same for you.

In a Car

Make sure your vehicle is well maintained. Get your tires checked and keep your gas tank above the halfway mark at all times. Make sure you fill “her” up during broad daylight in a good area of town. Stay alert, particularly when coming up to stop signs or red lights. Remember two major protective driving measures 1. Let no one stop your car and 2. Do not exit your vehicle.

- Approach your vehicle with your keys already in your hand.
- Look around your vehicle for any suspicious activity. If you see someone loitering around your vehicle, walk past until they leave.
- Check the inside and around your car before entering to insure that no one is hiding there. Be sure to look in the back seat.
- Check your surroundings before getting out of your car. If something or someone strikes you as out of place or threatening, drive away.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.

- Keep doors locked and windows rolled up so that a hand can't reach in.
- Don't let gas indicator fall below a quarter of a tank. Gas up only during day or late afternoon, preferably at a familiar gas station.
- Keep your car in good running condition, especially your tires.
- If taking a long trip or heading somewhere for the first time, plan your route and check a map before you start out. If it will be a night trip, make sure you pack a flashlight and the batteries are new. In case of weather turn over, warm clothing is always a good idea.
- Park in well-lighted, heavily traveled areas if possible.
- Try not to park next to a van, as you can easily be pulled in through the sliding door.
- Don't leave valuables in plain sight inside your car. Place them in the trunk or under the seats.
- Give only ignition key to attendant. Use a two-piece key ring with your car keys separate from your other important keys. Give parking valets or mechanics your car keys only. Supplying your entire set of keys creates an opportunity for duplicates to be made.
- If you see an accident or stranded motorist, report it from the nearest telephone or use your cellular instead of stopping.
- Carry in your car the following items: flashlight, flares, the necessary equipment to fix a flat tire, maps, comfortable warm clothing, first aid kit, empty gas can, white cloth to tie to antenna in order to signal distress and a cellular phone.
- Learn basic auto maintenance I.e. fix a flat tire etc.
- If possible, vary your routine and drive different routes every day.
- At night, leave your office or building in the company of others, as there is always safety in numbers. Try not to leave alone after dark. If possible, have someone from your building security escort you, or call for police assistance.
- Be suspicious of anyone approaching your vehicle, whether passing out leaflets, cleaning your car windows or asking for donations.

How to Prevent a Carjacking

- Keep your vehicle doors locked and windows shut.
- Don't stop to assist a disabled motorist. Instead, contact a service station or police.
- If a group of suspicious people approaches you when you are stopped at a red light at a deserted intersection, run the light if your intuition tells you that the situation could get dangerous.
- When stopped at a light, sign or intersection always leave enough room between you and the car in front of you so that you can see the rear tires of the car in front. This will leave enough room for you to maneuver if you have to get away rather than being boxed in. And don't be afraid to run a red light or use the shoulder or sidewalk to drive away (assuming they're clear); a ticket is better than hospitalization or death. Be suspicious of anyone approaching the car with fliers, asking for change or directions.
- While driving, if your vehicle is struck from behind or in any suspicious way, stay in your vehicle with the doors locked and windows closed until the police arrive. Activate your vehicle's emergency flashers and call the police or 911 with your cellular phone.
- If you're very suspicious, get the other vehicle's license number and drive to the nearest police station or a well-populated and lighted area.
- If you think you are being followed, drive immediately to a well-lit public place. If possible, drive to the nearest law enforcement agency.
- Obtain and use a cellular phone to call for help, make sure you have a battery charger in your vehicle at all times for your cellular phone.
- For women driving alone at night, keep a baseball cap in the car. If you wear it, it's difficult to tell your gender from a moving vehicle and may divert a perpetrator's attention to someone else that is more easily identifiable.
- Vary your routine. If you regularly work late downtown, vary your departure time and routes to your destination.
- Don't be distracted by your radio or cellular phones while in risky areas; leave them off until you reach a safer destination.

On Public Transportation

- Be aware of overheard conversations. Do not tell anyone on the bus or subway where you are going.
- Stay awake and alert until your destination stop.
- Have exact change ready.
- Try if possible, to sit near the driver or one of the exits.
- If you sense someone is following you when you get off, walk toward a populated area, enter a store or begin conversation with someone, this will usually deter the possible perpetrator. Do not walk directly home, as this will lead him to your home.

Code Red:

If you're out of your home in the evening or late night, alone or with one friend or family member or spouse, you should consider yourself in code red. This includes the first few months of dating a new acquaintance. Your awareness should be very alert. Scan rooms you enter or areas you go to for exits, safe people, improvised weapons and the general make-up of the crowd. You must implement all your safety strategies and stay close to safe areas. Body language and stride must be confident making you as hard a target as possible.

If you are not in an enclosed space and are approached, indicate them to stop and state their business. This includes being followed. Be prepared to scream and run once you have determined that you are indeed being followed. If you are in an enclosed space, I.e. elevator, bathroom stall, and are approached by an individual with intent, you must implement a passive stance strategy to get yourself out into a safe area.

If you're alone in an unknown area or an enclosed space, you must be on high alert. This includes auditory and visual senses working on over drive.

Watch everything and be prepared for anything. This is not an environment you want to stay in for long. It should be a transient place, one that you have no choice to be in at the moment.

Make yourself a hard target but be prepared. When you cannot run, it is dangerous to confront an attacker head on. The last you want to do, contrary to popular belief, is challenge or threaten your attacker with aggressive behavior, you do not fight fire with fire, as mentioned earlier, you fight it with water. Adopt a passive stance strategy, plan your exit strategy and be prepared to fight.

Once you've familiarized yourself with the color-coded risk evaluation guide, you will be implementing your awareness skills at the appropriate moments when they are needed. Your trustworthy messenger however, is intuition.

I'm not going to get too heavy on Intuition here but suffice it to say that out of every surviving victim ever interviewed after a violent confrontation, they all had one common thing to say: "I had a feeling something wasn't right." Trust it. As Gavin De Becker writes in his critically acclaimed best seller and highly recommended book *The Gift of Fear* "*It has your best intention at heart.*"

CHAPTER 2

STANCES AND POSTURES

It is said that sixty percent of communication is body language; thirty percent is tone of voice and ten percent of communication is the actual words spoken. Based on this, the visual cue you are giving your attacker can telegraph your intentions. This can challenge his ego and insecurities forcing him to become more aggressive and violent, threatening him, raising his guard and preparing him for a fight all of which are things that do not serve you during violence.

Therefore your body language should conceal your true intentions in order to maximize your safety and allow implementing a strategy of your choosing at the time of your choosing. Be careful what you communicate to your opponent.

I was teaching a class where we were covering defense against multiple attackers. In this particular drill, there are three guys facing one, intending on attacking him. The one however, is not aware, which of the three is going to jump him first. In this case, the one was me. I got my hands up in a passive stance and began to verbally defuse the situation as the three “attackers” began circling me. I shifted completely towards the guy on the left-hand side of me, to which the guy in the middle immediately picked up his pace to remain close to me. This telegraphed his intention. He was the designated hitter. His body language gave him away completely and erased any possibility of a surprise attack.

There are 3 types of stances that we teach our students to adopt depending on the situation. Natural stances (whatever position you find yourself in when confronted), The Passive stance and the Multi-functional stance.

Natural stances

“A great fighter makes his everyday stance his fighting stance, and his fighting stance his everyday stance.”

Musashi

Natural stances are the positions you find yourself in moment-to-moment, day-to-day. They can be anything from standing with your arms crossed with your back against a wall to sitting in a chair with a drink in your hand and your chin on your fist. They are of non-violent postures. One should be able to react, defend or counter attack from any position he/she finds himself/herself in if caught in a surprise attack or ‘sucker punch’ situation.

The Passive stance

When someone is violently confronted their initial reflexive response is to get their hands up in front of their chest almost submissively and begin to back peddle.

I was sitting in a restaurant with an ex girlfriend one night in 1989 when I saw two individuals getting into a fight in the parking lot. One was obviously the predator while the other immediately took prey position. The predator had his prey by a one-arm lapel grab, pinned to the side of a car leaning menacingly over him threatening to punch him in the face. The prey had instinctively put both his hands up in a submissive fashion and his body language displayed fear and negotiation.

I paid close attention to what was going to happen next and the predator got a little more agitated (keep in mind that I could not hear the dialogue that was being I am sure, eloquently spoken) and the prey winced as the predator threw a half asses punched straight towards the prey's face. Interestingly, the prey without thought reflexively closed off his centerline and parried (by accident) the predator's punch that grazed the prey on the side of his face. The prey continued to remain passive and the predator, satisfied with his dominance over his victim released him, mouthed something off while pointing at him to which the prey nodded in nervous agreement then left.

Interestingly enough this is the most strategic and powerful stance one can adopt to protect themselves as well as fight back. I began researching this posture and found that in the early eighteenth century, law enforcement officers of France used this stance as a method of deception and entry to abduct perpetrators. Most anti terrorist negotiators also use it to approach hostage takers and terrorists. I also found that several self-defense programs use it as well.

Some of these programs use it in conjunction with proper and congruous dialogue and communication while others strangely and ironically do not. Is it not counterproductive to adopt a passive/submissive stance yet use aggressive and assertive behavior? Be careful of systems which adopt a passive/submissive/de-escalation stance but use aggressive and threatening dialogue and tone accompanying it. This shows that the system in question has not thoroughly investigated the reality of the results that follow such contradictive behavior.

The passive stance (as we call it – it's also referred to as the submissive stance, de-escalation stance, the fence etc. and it is also taught differently depending on where you go) has a psychological edge that enhances a fighter's opportunity to counter attack effectively and non-telegraphically. The stance offers the user maximum protection of his centerline (the primary line of attack and the line which joins the two opponents together) as well as allowing him the use of his entire arsenal.

This stance makes the attacker believe you are weak and compliant which brings his guard down and raises his ego. This will bring him into your kill zone (the range in which you can strike the opponent without him being able to strike you back).

At the range in which your opponent will attack you, the hand becomes quicker than the eye. This means that you can fire your finger jab or lead hand strike and land it one hundred percent of the time because once your hand leaves to strike, by the time it lands is when the opponent's brain will transmit the message to his limb to block or counter the attack. By that time it is too late, he has already been struck.

The stance offers a psychological obstacle to the attacker, which he doesn't think you are doing out of strategy but rather out of fear. Since sixty percent of communication is body language, the stance becomes quite believable when the dialogue that follows is passive and compromising.

It would not be believable to take an aggressive fighting stance and use passive compromising words nor would it be strategically favorable to use an aggressive stance and aggressive words to accompany it. The first one would be disregarded as BS and the second would be taken as a challenge. Never challenge nor threaten your attacker. An unsuspecting shot is a lot harder to defend against than one that is prepared for.

The passive stance's greatest gift is that it also allows maximum reflexive response and decreases reaction time between defense and counter defense.

With your hands up protecting your centerline, any attack made coming through your centerline for your chest, face, neck, throat or lapels will instinctively cause you to close off with your hands without cognitive processing. If the oncoming attack is coming around the centerline as in a haymaker, head lock attempt, hair pull or double hand strangulation, your instinct would be to open up your arms automatically jamming and intercepting the oncoming attack instinctively and without cognitive processing.

The idea here is to fine-tune this reflexive response. Hone it and learn to immediately fight back from it without skipping a beat using gross motor skills such as raking, jabbing, tearing at the eyes, elbows, knees, spitting and biting as distraction methods, palm striking, hair and ear pulling, stomping etc.

The Multifunctional Stance

This stance (much like a boxing stance but more similar to the Bruce Lee's JKD stance) is the offensive version of the passive stance. Once it is determined that you're in a fight (after you have struck your opponent from the passive stance and assuming the fight did not end there as it should have) the multifunctional stance comes into play. Since re-adopting a passive stance after you just struck your opponent twice or more times would be ridiculous, simply modify it to the multifunctional stance.

As opposed to most traditional martial arts stances where the major source of telegraphy in a fighter's arsenal is the use of these various stances used to set up a particular technique or combination, the multifunctional stance allows access to all offensive and defensive maneuvering from a neutral axis point. Any particular stance that enhances a technique is actually telegraphing therefore hindering that technique. If you familiarize yourself with the pros and cons of your opponent's stances, the chance of them catching you off guard with a particular technique becomes almost impossible. Remember, body language says a lot.

Since a fight is non-cooperative and require instantaneous, spontaneous reactions based on your opponent's reactions and movements, a multifunctional stance would be ideal. Like the passive stance, the most important feature of this stance is that it offers non-telegraphic and spontaneous access to all offensive and defensive techniques.

For example: Senshido Instructor Marc Ste. Marie, after teaching a spinning class at a squash and Tennis club, encountered a "Master" in kung fu. After a brief discussion on combat, the "master" insisted that the multifunctional stance was no good and that his front forward stance was ideal for defense. To this, Marc picks up 2 squash rackets, hands the "master" one and says to him, *"Let's go into the squash room and play a game, but here's the catch, you play in your Kung Fu stance and I'll play using strictly a Boxing stance."* The "master" quickly replied *"That's impossible"*, Marc asked why that was and the "master" said *"Because I won't be able to move!"* To which Marc responded *"I rest my case."* The "master" just sat there dumbfounded.

Description of right side forward Multifunctional stance for the ring:

This stance looks very much like a Boxing stance or Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do strong side forward stance.

First, stand your feet shoulder width apart parallel to each other, then slide in a **straight line** back, your left foot until it is approximately shoulder width apart on an angle. Now pivot both your feet at a forty-five degree angle, your front toes should be in a straight line with your rear heel directly **on** the centerline. Keep your knees slightly bent with a fifty/fifty weight distribution on both legs. Slightly rotate your hips to your right about two inches. Place your rear hand in front of your chin and rest your inner biceps lightly against your rib cage. Your lead arm is placed similarly but slightly more forward than your rear arm and the fist is held slightly lower than the rear hand.

At this point you are in the stance. You should have a coiled feeling in your midsection. The unique quality of this position is that it offers you ideal torque to snap out any strike from your arsenal. Rotational force is the source of power in a technique and this stance maintains a neutral axis point, which allows you complete access to all your techniques. Because of the neutrality of this stance, it can be applied to all martial arts.

An example of the Passive Stance at work.



With a closest weapon to closest target application from the passive stance using economy of motion and non telegraphic movement, Rich strikes from a deceptively non violent posture.



CHAPTER 3

FEAR AND EMOTIONS

“Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared.”

Eddie Rickenbacker

“Fear is that little dark room where negatives are developed.”

Michael Prithard

Before we deal with fear, it is important to address the issue of apathy and denial, the two major causes of victimization.

Apathetic people usually sound like this:

“This will never happen to me”

“I live in a safe neighborhood”

“This only happens to people who look for it or place themselves in harms way”

“This only happens in the big cities, I live in the suburbs”

The most common phrases made by a victim.

Those who live in apathy are a statistic waiting to happen. Cemeteries, hospitals, sexual assault centers, psychiatrists offices, women’s shelters are filled with people who live in indifference. The predatory criminal’s biggest strength is his victim’s apathy.

“I can’t believe this is happening to me”

“If I pretend it isn’t there, it will go away”

“Why me?”

Last words of a victim before the body is found.

Denial is the next usual step to apathy. Once faced with the situation, the apathetic individual can’t believe that it is happening and would rather shut off than to deal with the situation therefore rendering them the perfect victim. While the brain shuts off of the present, unfortunately, the body cannot follow and instead it remains to take the assault at full capacity and with no resistance whatsoever. The victim then ends up mugged, beaten, raped or killed.

This viscous cycle has to be intercepted at apathy. Understand that no one, and I mean no one is exempt from it. For example: A very wealthy business man had come into my school one day inquiring about the cost’s of our Thai Kickboxing classes. I briefed him on the course outline and prices and he said he’d be back the next day for a free trial class. As I usually do, I also explained to him the personal protection program outline. I explained to him that for an extra fifty dollars, he would have access to double the

amount of classes per week and also get applicable personal protection skills in case God forbid, he was ever to need them.

He nodded and said he didn't need it. He said that he drove to work in his BMW everyday, parked in an underground parking lot with a 24-hour security guard and spend the weekends with his family. He said he rarely went out and that he really didn't need self-defense skills. I said okay no problem and off he went.

The next day, the gentleman didn't show up for his free trial Kickboxing class. Neither did he the day after. As a matter of fact, I didn't see him until 4 or 5 weeks later when he showed up and was all of a sudden very interested in our personal protection program. "How come?" I asked. And to my surprise, he showed me several scars on his head, knees and inside his mouth.

It turns out that the next day, his car needed an oil change and the mechanics didn't have the time to do it on the spot. So the gentleman opted to leave his car at the garage and take the metro (subway) to work instead. Once on the metro (subway), he was making his way to a seat when he politely excused himself to two young men in order to pass through them. The young men did not like the fact that this gentleman spoke English and unfortunately, though not common, racist attacks have been known to happen.

Anyhow, these two young "men" (yeah, right) decided to teach this gentleman a lesson. They fractured his skull and cracked his kneecap. They basically jumped him and stomped him for speaking English. The funny thing is, he was bilingual.

Point being here, that it is better to prevent than to circumvent. Apathy does not serve anyone. Denial comes from apathy and causes the fear and adrenaline you feel in the moment of a confrontation that was "not supposed to happen to you" to handicap you.

Once you have accepted the fact that violence is out there and can happen to you, you will be much more prepared to deal with the inevitable fear.

Fear. So many things have been written and said about this emotion. In 1993 I had gone bungee jumping and after I was done, I bought a souvenir T-shirt and on the back of it, it read, "*Courage isn't the absence of fear but rather the desire to move beyond it*". Nice and uplifting quote however, how does one move beyond it? Fear, if left on its own leads to doubt and hesitation and in turn will lead to anxiety and panic. However, it is important to understand the types of fear and their reactions and counter reactions.

There are 3 types of fears, emotional, biological and psychological fear. Each one is directly linked to the other through human response to stimuli. Fear itself is an emotion, plain and simple. When related to violence or combat, there is the normal pre-fight stimulus response. Adrenaline dump (which is also directly co-related to fear) butterflies in the stomach, light-headedness knee's shaking, a disconnected feeling, heart-pounding etc.

Fear has often been described as an acronym, F.E.A.R. that stands for False Evidence Appearing Real. This acronym has much to do with the anticipation of an outcome, apathy, and denial.

If you know you are going to be facing a potentially violent confrontation, the anticipation of the confrontation over a certain period of time produces a slow release of adrenaline. This slow discharge will cause fear and tire you out before the actual confrontation ever occurs. This is emotional inertia caused by anticipation, which in turn leads to a biological reaction to the emotion of fear. The anticipation of the possible consequences of the outcome - bodily injury, rape, death, pain, the law, etc. does not serve your objectives of survival.

A surprise attack or sucker punch if you will, happens when the attack is unexpected and the slow release of adrenaline has not happened. This accelerated escalation creates a quick adrenaline dump that creates a feeling so intense, you usually mistaken it for fear and it causes you to freeze up. The biological or physiological changes that occur during that moment is psychologically interpreted or perceived as fear. This is where hesitation and doubt is created. *“What if I lose?” “What if I die or get severely injured?” “What if I can’t perform?”* These are common thoughts that arise from psychological fear.

The key here is to consciously tell yourself to interpret this feeling as a normal response to a situation that challenges your comfort zone. This psychological thought process interruption will then cause your mind to perceive the moment differently and therefore change your biological response to one that will serve you.

It is also important to understand that a secondary dump of adrenaline may occur if something unexpected happens during the fight itself. For example: You’re knee deep involved in the fight and suddenly, your opponent unexpectedly pulls a knife out of his pants and erratically and violently swings, cutting you. During a moment like this it is imperative not to stop and analyze the depth of cut as the fight or moment will continue with or without you mentally present. During training, whether in drill mode, alive drills or actual sparring, never stop and start over, even if what you deemed as “a mistake” occurs, in reality, you will not have that opportunity. It is imperative you continue from wherever you end up and fight.

For the most part however, your second adrenaline dump will take care of the cut for you. The chances of you even feeling it in the moment will be minimal. There have been several situations where an individual was shot or stabbed during a fight and they never felt it. They only realized they were shot or stabbed after the fight was over and seeing all the blood. This is a common occurrence amongst Law Enforcement officers.

Expectancy or a planned counter attack is when you expect an attack to happen in a certain way and are completely taken by surprise when something else happens instead. This will also cause freezing and engulf you with a sudden emotional fear, which in turn will immediately cause psychological hesitation. This happens a lot during drills where the student gets so caught up in the drill that they respond to the attack before it even

occurs. During a violent confrontation, one must remain open and responsive at all times. Never assume; just reflexively respond moment to moment. Thinking during the physical portion of the fight will get you massacred because while you are thinking and countering your own thoughts with new ones, your opponent is doing. Unfortunately, we do not move as quickly as our thoughts.

During the fight you will experience pain, exhaustion, anger and/or frustration. Your body will pick up on this and give you yet another dump of adrenaline in order to aid you in surviving. Most people however will confuse that new dump of adrenaline for panic and will short-circuit on their performance through momentary hesitation, which usually will cause their defeat (read world of hurt, hospitalization or death). Again, the conscious programming of proper interpretation to these adrenaline dumps becomes imperative for optimum performance during high stress situations. The cerebral understanding of these emotional and biological occurrences will create clarity in the moment.

After the stress of the confrontation, your body will continue a slow release of adrenaline even after the fight has ended. This is our body's way of "cooling" off so it just doesn't shut down on you. You may even fear a repeat of the confrontation causing anxiety and more adrenaline. This can cause a few side effects like throwing up, passing out, diarrhea and/or extreme exhaustion.

To sum it up; emotional fear is caused by psychological fear which in turn, leads the body into a chemical adrenal reaction which is biological fear. This problematic chain of events can be interrupted at the psychological level by changing or re-defining our association to fear. It is important to understand that fear is a good thing. It keeps us alive and drives us. However, it can also consume us and destroy us.

I believe it is Shakespeare who wrote "*A coward dies a thousand deaths a hero dies but one*". Poetic but true. The coward is in constant visualization of his own demise as the hero deals with it in the moment.

Cus D'amato also said that the difference between the winner and the loser during a pro fight is what the fighters do with their fear. Each feel its effect but one manages it while the other is consumed by it.

"When faced with just one opponent and you oppose yourself... you're outnumbered."

Dan Millman

The Emotion Variable

Emotional content is a facet of defense we rarely look at. How one feels will for the most part, highly influence their actions. For example: it's a beautiful day outside, you're on your way to your boy/girlfriends place to pick them up and go cash in on your winning lottery ticket. You just received a call and got promoted with a raise on your job and you're heading out to your brand new convertible to pick up your mate.

Suddenly, some guy bumps you by mistake, turns around and shoves you asking you what your problem is. What's your response?

Before you immediately respond, it's important to adopt the frame of mind you would really be in, in the situation described above. Don't just blurt out your answer. Think about it, feel it.

Now, let's take this exact same day but change it around a little bit. It's pouring rain outside. You're sprinting to go put the top on your brand new, unpaid convertible, your mate just left you for your best friend and you just received a call from your boss firing your ass. You're extremely pissed about this because you've lost your winning lottery ticket to boot. Same guy bumps into you, turns around and shoves you asking you what your problem is. Now what's your response going to be?

The point is this; if your techniques are memorized and take too much time to learn, when your natural human emotions will kick in, your instinctive reaction will not be to drop into a stance and perform an elaborate technique. The way you would act, or should we say, 'react', to the first incident would highly differ in the way you would react in the second scenario.

Our emotions have within them the power to uplift us or sink us. As hard as it may seem to some if not most, what we do with our emotions is a choice.

The following story is one I have read in a book titled "*The Dragon Doesn't Live Here Anymore*" written by author Alan Cohen. It beautifully explains how we create, through our own perceptions, our own realities. I will dictate it word for word.

"A Samurai warrior who came to a Zen master for instruction asked, "Master, I would like to know if Heaven and hell really exist." The teacher heard his request and broke into mocking laughter.

"You would like to know about Heaven and hell?!... Don't be ridiculous! Just look at you: you're fat, uneducated and you're uncouth!...Go back to your camp and practice your silly exercises!" With that the teacher turned his back on the man and ignored him.

The Samurai became enraged. His face turned red, he began to breathe heavily and drew his sword ready to chop off the master's head off with his next breath. Just as the sword was about to fall, the master turned around smoothly and calmly told him, "That sir, is hell."

The Samurai stopped cold and realized the profundity of the master's teachings. He saw instantly how he had created his own hell through pride and anger. Immediately, he fell at the master's feet in humble reverence. The master looked at him, lifted the Samurai's head and quietly said, "And that sir, is Heaven."

It boils down to your perceptions of reality. However, our emotional state is directly correlated to our physical being. How we feel will determine how we act. How we act will alter, enhance or de-emphasize how we feel depending on the course of action taken. Vicious circle isn't it?

The way out of chasing our own tails with this circle of vice would be to consciously interrupt our unproductive and sometimes self-destructive pattern of thoughts, therefore literally changing how we feel when negative emotions begin to take control. The next time you begin to feel depressed, angered or frustrated, ask yourself if it will alter the reality of the situation which seems to be causing these emotions. Chances are, they won't. Reality is there whether we laugh about it or drop to the ground crying and stomp our feet about it.

I was sitting with my beautiful ex-wife on our brand new sofa we had just finished buying for our new apartment back in 2001. Now, I'm an occasional smoker (you can see where this is going eh?) I enjoy the occasional Cuban (I'm from Canada, I can smoke 'em legally) and Arabic pipe (fruit flavored tobacco and water filter folks when I wasn't self destructing that is). This particular night, I had spent a good half hour preparing my Arabic pipe (also referred to a hubbly bubbly or sheesha) with my favorite flavored tobacco, Rose water.

I brought it over next to the television preparing to enjoy a good cool smoke while watching a movie we had rented. I sit back, grab the matches and proceed on lighting one. The fl#sing match explodes in my hand and naturally as Murphy the bastard would have it, the coal tip of it lands right on the arm of the sofa. I quickly smack it off and make sure everything is out only to turn to face my ex who is now ignited.

Boy was she upset. Naturally so was I. I apologized and turned to relight the sheesha. Man did that not go over well I'll tell ya. She asked me to do it in the kitchen, which I did and I came back to enjoy it and watch TV. To me, what was done was done; there was no turning back, might as well go on with the weekend and the evening as planned. My ex on the other hand got upset, stayed upset and remained upset for the rest of the evening.

My point? I can't remember... oh yeah, emotions, right... the little black burn mark on the sofa arm remained. Matter of fact, it's still there as I write this and as you're reading it right now. Her anger and frustration, which remained through the night (and apparently till today as we are now divorced ☺ just kidding, it had nothing to do with that incident, we were just 2 people from 2 very different walks of life is all and I love her to death) didn't change a thing. My good humor and decision to forget about it and just enjoy my sheesha and the movie immediately after didn't change a thing.

The burn mark is still there.

See my point? ☺

CHAPTER 4

“The ancestor of every action is a thought.”

Emerson

10 Steps to Surviving a Violent Confrontation

1) Assumptions and Intuition: Never assume. Assumption is the mother of all failures. Trust your intuition. Most victims of violent crimes all had one thing in common to say, they all said that they had “a feeling” something was wrong. As Gavin De Becker states in *The Gift of Fear*, “Intuition is always right on two important accounts: 1) *It is always in response to something* and 2) *It has your best interest at heart.*”

Awareness is part of intuition. Being consciously aware of your environment is important. Emotion during high stress situations sometimes clouds our awareness. Don't let your emotional content blind your awareness. In a potentially violent confrontation, the only safe assumption to make is that your opponent is carrying a concealed weapon. That's it. That's all. This safe assumption will heighten your awareness of concealed weapons God forbid one should be pulled out and used against you. If none is pulled out, all the more power to you but at least you won't be caught off guard or by surprise.

With Awareness and intuition comes the ability to avoid. Avoidance is the best defense; if you're not there then it can't happen to you.

2) Panic: If you do not manage your fear accordingly, you will panic. Your panic will cause you to become a victim. As a victim, you will freeze and be in denial and will end up mugged, raped, beaten or killed. A victim's most common words: “*I can't believe this is happening to me.*” or “*Why me?*” Panic has to be addressed in the form of fear management.

3) Survivor's frame of mind: is what you need to adopt to accept and deal with the situation at hand A.S.A.P. A survivor quickly changes his mind set and says “*O.K. this is happening to me and I need to find a solution now.*” A survivor's mentality largely lies in his or her beliefs. If your belief system is not congruous with your objectives of survival, then regardless of how hard you train you will not live through violence. This is where most will win or lose the fight depending on their mindset.

4) Strategy and tactics: How do you develop the mental and emotional arsenal to be able to navigate through the chaos and mayhem? You need tactical awareness and strategy, let me define the word “Tactics”. Tactics are what will get you out of trouble, not your jump spinning back kick/lunge punch combination. Everybody knows... correction, everybody thinks they know, tactics. In my opinion, tactics are simply what you can do with what you've got at a given moment in time based on a previously thought out plan.

As Marc MacYoung writes in his book *Cheap Shots, Ambushes and other lessons*, “*Strategy is the overview; tactics are the immediate manifestations of strategy*”. Your tactics will have to be established in a blink of an eye and implemented in half that time based on your previously thought out strategies.

Therefore being **pro-active** and thinking out a strategy for any given situation in advance will tactically enhance your chances of survival. Someone once said that fighting is like chess at a hundred miles per hour with muscles. He who is ahead of the game wins. You have to take into consideration all of the variables we talked about earlier. Consider the terrain of the engagement, the possibility of artillery, multiple adversaries, if there is a bystander that has the potential of becoming an active participant etc. All this data has to be analyzed faster than the fastest computer and then has to be acted upon accordingly. No room for mistakes. Mistakes can lead to a world of hurt and possibly fatality.

Hand to hand combat is sixty percent psychological, twenty five percent emotional and only fifteen percent physical. Anyone can learn how to kick, punch or apply a choke with proper training in a short period of time but how do you piece it together when reality slaps you in the face and fear & stress are present? Options based on strategy.

The only way to implement a strategy of your choosing is to be versed in the discipline of fighting in all ranges without exception. Being able to flow fluidly from one range to the next at any time during a high stress situation is essential to your survival. (See Chapter on physical retaliation and ranges).

Your ability to deal with variables can be cultivated through regular realistic training. A responsible instructor or coach will constantly force his trainees to adapt to variations in drill format and will create circumstances where trainees will have to safely go beyond their physical and emotional limitations. Allow me to elaborate on this. Applying a hold on a willing partner is one thing, that same hold that you have spent hours perfecting can dramatically fail if you have to perform it after running for your life for two miles on an opponent that doesn't share the same enthusiasm your partner did in class.

Bottom line: You are training to save your life, which on its own is the ultimate stress management challenge. If your training doesn't improve your ability to think clearly under high stress situations or teach you functional combative training methods as opposed to spin kicks and katas, you are training at the wrong place.

In order to have a better understanding of how to act or react during the pre-physical altercation, you have to become a student of human nature. The recognition of behavioral patterns is paramount. Can you recognize Alphas and Betas in a gang situation? Generally speaking the more members in a gang the more cowardly each individual is likely to be. An Alpha is the group leader, the decision-maker of the bunch; the rest are Betas, followers, sheep. The ability to manipulate human behavior is more important than your ability to punch or kick.

Now go ahead and wonder: how on earth do I develop these skills? Well, the general manipulation of human behavior is something you do and can do everyday. Every time you interact with all kinds of people, you get an opportunity.

Let me submit that if you're a good student of human nature, you then know how humans behave in various conditions and situations. You need to have a good sense of observation; you don't need six years of training to become "brutally efficient". Your mind and keen sense of awareness are what's going to do it for you. Drills such as noise reaction awareness will enhance your alertness, every abrupt noise you hear such as a truck honking, a car screeching or even a dog barking should be recognized immediately and assessed for what it is, give it a name. Being oblivious to your surroundings or to the body language of your opponent could lead to disaster.

Cheating is impossible when there are no rules. An intelligent warrior will attempt to verbally defuse to de-escalate a potential violent confrontation or will physically engage only if he has "loaded the dice" in his favor using all of his psychological tools from simple body language to verbal initiators. Prey behavior induces predator activity; any 10-year-old child watching the discovery channel knows this. How do you eliminate prey behavior? Simply by being **pro-active**. Knowing how a predator thinks and acts as well as evaluating our daily routines. Where would you attack yourself if you were a sociopath? Become the predator. Think like a sociopath, what would you do if...? Acting, bluffing or role-playing are all strategies to enhance your tactical edge. We act everyday, our personalities change to adapt to each and every individuals we encounter daily; you do not act the same with your mother or father as you do with your friends or teachers/boss or mate.

5) Verbal Defusing:

What you respond to the sociopath has to be non-threatening or challenging. You need to give and take as much information as you can in order to get him thinking and let your strategy come into play. You also have to defuse the situation by using verbal tactics; this will allow you to assume control without making the sociopath aware of your intentions.

When speaking of self-defense in the martial arts, most people often associate the act to a physical one. This is a common and widespread misconception, for self-defense is not only a physical act but a psychological and emotional one as well. Since self-defense is sixty percent psychological, twenty five percent emotional and only fifteen percent physical, it is needless to say that verbal defusing in confrontation plays an imperative role in the ability to defend one's self.

Unfortunately, many, for various reasons, ignore the psychological aspect of fighting. Ignorance, emotional variables and self-destructive behaviors such as ego, pride and machismo are usually the dominant reasons why people very often get involved in many unnecessary physical fights. Consequently, they neglect or at least forget all about their *moral and social responsibilities*.

By **moral responsibility**, I mean the obligation one has to all those who surround their life and care about them such as friends and family. By **social responsibility** I mean the obligation one has as a human being to respect another so as to live in a safe and collective environment.

* Someone who is like a little brother to me as well as a 2nd generation Senshido Instructor, Daniel Tirado contributed the following:

* The world in which we live in is a world intoxicated with verbal pollution; we like to equate it to social anorexia. Whether we notice it or not, our language environment is filled with verbal abuse. Suzette Haden Elgin, leading expert on overcoming verbal abuse and author of *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense*, explains in her book that verbal abuse rarely takes the form of one person yelling curses, obscenities or threats to another. That is only our common understanding of it. As a matter of fact, verbal abuse is more subtle and wide spread than we think or realize. It can take form in the tone of voice your spouse uses in response to a question, or a co-worker's choice of words in the office. Nothing is trivial in verbal abuse. In the long run, it can cause ulcers, heart attacks, misery, chronic fatigue, migraine headaches, etc. I can go on and on.

Hence, the ideal would be to engage in what Haden Elgin calls a "syntonic conversation." The term "syntonic" is often found in psychology or ancient music theory. When 2 radio sets are so well in tuned with respect to one another that they can be used to transmit information effectively and efficiently, they are said to be syntonic.

The difficulty in attaining a syntonic conversation is that in every discussion (not 'conversation') we engage ourselves in, whether we are conscious of it or not, there is a constant 'struggle for power' as James Redfield clearly explains in his fourth chapter of *The Celestine Prophecy*.

Indeed, when two individuals are having a discussion, one of two things can happen: the individual can come away feeling strong or feeling weak depending on what was said in the interaction. Humans are always in search of energy so, to prevail in a discussion, we feel the urge to steal it from another. Once we are successful in convincing our point of view, we receive what Redfield calls a "*psychological boost*." Consequently, whether we know it or not, our ego and self esteem are fed at the cost of stealing someone else's energy, thus making someone else feel weaker.

There are four basic principles offered by Haden Elgin to avoid verbal aggression:

1) KNOW THAT YOU ARE UNDER ATTACK.

Most of the times we don't know that we are being verbally attacked. Verbal abuse, as said earlier, is not always someone yelling threats or curses. Since communication is sixty percent body language, twenty percent tone of voice and only ten percent the actual words used in an interaction, verbal abuse can be cleverly masked when the attacker shows no physical signs of aggression and regulates his tone of voice.

So how do you know when you are being verbally abused? **Trust your intuition.** As Gavin De Becker says in *The Gift of Fear*, “*intuition is a brilliant internal guardian that stands ready to warn you of hazards and guide you through risky situation*”. Verbal abuse, properly defined, is very simply language that hurts, causes harm and/or disease. Therefore, when you *feel* that you are being verbally aggressed, chances are, you probably are.

2) KNOW WHAT KIND OF ATTACK YOU ARE FACING.

Doctor Virginia Satire is a world-renowned family therapist who specializes in the language of people under stress. She came up with five categories of verbal conflict, aggression and passiveness that we will take a look at so as to know what kind of psychological profile we are facing when we are verbally abused or challenged.

BLAMING: Blamers often use threatening language and use words like “every”, “all”, “always”, “anybody” and love to finger point. Their body language matches their words. They sound something like this: “Don’t you *ever* listen to *anyone*?” “I told you to put the files in the other case, but you *always* have to do things your way.”

Blamers generally feel the need to control and manipulate behavior to their advantage, they like to feel in control of the situation and be the ones to dictate the turn of events. If things aren’t done their way or to their liking, that is when they will use verbal tactics to gain back their advantage such as the ones mentioned above. For example, “*Don’t you ever listen to anyone*” states to the receiver that they are stubborn, non-cooperative and generally mistaken. This as a result, will begin to eat away at their self-confidence, create insecurity and in turn make them defensive towards not only blamers but unfortunately any general constructive criticism as well.

PLACATING: Those who placate use words and body language that express a desire to please. They seem agreeable but deep down they are terrified that people will get angry at what they would really like to say. They fear being judged and labeled. They often use expressions like “*I don’t care*” “*It’s fine with me*”. For example: “*If you guys want we’ll spend New Year’s at my place or if you want we’ll all go to John’s. Whatever you want is fine with me. I don’t really care*”

Placatory people are highly insecure individuals who fear being judged for having a mind of their own. They worry they might not be as well liked and that maybe they’ll lose their friends because they have different tastes or ideas. This is not so much a verbal attack or assault, but in the long run will cause conflict due to the complacency of these individuals behavior’s.

COMPUTING or as we like to call them **ANDROIDS:** A computer or Android’s body language is close to no body language. They speak in generalities and abstractions. They give the impression they have no feelings or emotional content. They don’t use the words “I” or “you”. For example: “*There is undoubtedly a good reason for this shortfall, no reasonable person would be upset about it.*” They also use terms like “*Affirmative*” or “*Negative*” for agreement or disagreement.

DISTRACTING: Distracters cycle rapidly through the other modes, switching body language as they go along. The impression they give is one of total disorganization and panic. You get a sentence of placating, another sentence of blaming, than a line or two of computing. Distracters sound something like this: *“What is the matter with you people anyway? I mean, not that I care, come on you know me, I could put up with anything.”* Or *“However, common sense would seem to dictate that no rules be changed in the middle of the game, and I’m sick and tired of this kind of garbage.”*

These emotional roller coasters are in a “mind, spirit” state of confusion. They say something that elicits a response they are not prepared to handle then quickly try to rectify the situation by adding something else. Their aim is to get their point across without hurting anyone’s feelings but if they are not being understood they will aggressively pursue their point.

LEVELING: Leveling can be recognized by the absence of the language behavior associated with the other four Satire modes. The leveler’s words and the leveler’s body language are in complete harmony with the leveler’s inner feelings. Leveling is just the simple truth, as the leveler perceives it. The leveler is self-syntonic: *“Listen I’ll be frank with you, I don’t like you so stop trying to be so nice cause it won’t get you anywhere.”*

The leveler is blunt and doesn’t care who he may hurt in the process. He’s definitely not a hypocrite but his words may certainly offend.

3) KNOW HOW TO MAKE YOUR DEFENSE FIT THE ATTACK

No matter what you do, do not match together the same modes unless you want to add more fuel to the flame. Blaming a blamer means a scene; placating a placator means undignified delay, time is being wasted severely; computing a computer means dignified delay (it’s a great way to stall); distracting a distracter means that panic is feeding panic; leveling with a leveler means syntonic communication, but, to what avail?

When you are being attacked, always make sure to identify the mode used by the attacker and try to make the defense fit the attack. Let’s take for example this attack: *“If you really cared about the budget, you wouldn’t be spending money the way you do.”*

Now the attacker is expecting you to focus on the bit of the attack that states that you spend money in an inappropriate fashion. This is what we call the bait. The bait is the part of the attack that is designed to infuriate you.

Therefore ignore the bait. Instead, find the presupposition that will most effectively short circuit the attack. The presupposition in this case is that you don’t really care about the budget. Thus, if you answer the attacker: *“Since when do you think I don’t care about the budget?”* you will catch the attacker off guard. Hence, by answering the blamer with the leveling mode, you manipulate the attack so that it won’t escalate to an argument.

An attacker using computing mode would say something like this: *“If a person really cared about the budget, they wouldn’t be spending money that way.”* The attack is very much the same. However the attacker is not addressing you directly however he or she is addressing you implicitly but indirectly (as the ‘person’).

Again, ignore the bait and answer the presupposition: *“I couldn’t agree with you more, a person who did care about the budget would indeed in no way spend money that way.”* By doing so, you are interrupting the attacker’s strategic pattern, therefor causing them to shift their focus.

4) KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW THROUGH

This principle, for many people, is the hardest one of all. People usually think they are unable to follow through when their pride or ego is offended: *“I know what I should have done but I was not going to let him get away with it.”* This happens when an attack is so infuriating that the person hearing it ignores the goal of defusing the confrontation and goes into to conflict full force. This might feel good at the time. You might even think you won the confrontation with stronger arguments. However, this is a distortion of reality. The verbal abuser wants to engage in a conflict and create a scene. Therefore, by retaliating to his attack you are satisfying his desire. The verbal abuser marches you around and you lose.

Others think they are unable to follow through because they feel too guilty: *“I knew what I ought to do but I just felt so guilty, I couldn’t do it.”* This problem is based on a misconception. You feel that it is necessary to endure the verbal abuser because you think it is a kind thing to do. That is an incorrect assumption. The verbal abuser is addicted to the sense of power that comes from being able to make others miserable in that way.

When you feed that addiction, it is not kind, just like offering an alcoholic a drink is unkind. If you really want to be kind, refuse the victim role. Know how to follow through. Therefore, remember to **ignore the bait** and **answer the presupposition** of the attack with the appropriate Satire mode.

VERBAL DEFUSING / DISTRACTION AS STRATEGY

Although verbal abuse very often sneaks up on you without you even realizing, it also takes a more obvious form. Indeed, we can distinguish three types of verbal aggressions: one is more subtle and leaves you confused not knowing for sure whether you are being attacked or not yet still ill at ease; the other is obvious and assures you that you are being attacked. The former rarely escalates into physical combat (although it could lead to murder in extreme cases) while the latter will in most cases not end without bloodshed.

You obviously recognize being in danger when someone is yelling insults, curses or other obscenities at you. An important accompaniment to all these verbal aggressive displays is the body language of the attacker. Autonomic signals such as facial expressions, agitated and tensed-up muscular movements gear the attacker’s body up ready for action. In such

cases, it is imperative that you adopt a passive stance. This strategic fighting stance gives you a tremendous amount of security, thus more confidence and control over the situation and your own actions. In any case it is necessary to try and verbally defuse the confrontation as much as you can.

If verbal defusing seems pointless, use verbal distractions, which consists in distracting the attacker from his or her immediate goal by using verbal initiators such as congruous questions or dialogue.

By doing so, you are strategically buying some time to ask yourself these fundamental questions:

1)‘What is my environment?’ Am I in a shopping mall? In an alley? In the woods?

2)‘What are my surroundings?’ Am I standing against the wall, near the escalators, am I alone or with someone I know? A girlfriend, a boyfriend, a relative?

3)‘Who am I dealing with?’ a drunk bum on the streets? A guy who has four friends waiting for him in the corner of a store? A sociopath? Is the attacker carrying a concealed weapon?

4) ‘How do I feel?’ Am I fatigued, sick, hurt, physically impaired etc. Even if you know that you will inevitably get into a fight, verbal distraction will give you some time to be aware of all these things. It is imperative that you keep congruous behavioral tactics in the dialogue you choose.

Obviously one can say ‘how the hell can I think of all these things when my adrenaline is pouring in my blood and my heart starts beating faster every second?’ The answer is easy. You shouldn’t *think* about these things in any given circumstances; if you train your awareness regularly, it will come naturally. In confrontation, everything goes by so fast that you don’t have time to think; you only have the time to react. However your reaction will be more strategic if it is based on a proactive choice. As you react, stay aware. Hence, verbal self-defense, even if ineffective in calming the attacker, still becomes a strategy allowing you to become aware of your environment and your surroundings.

As you are verbally defusing or distracting the attacker, it is extremely important that you keep your vision diffused. Vision diffusion means to avoid critical focus. When in critical focus your mind fully concentrates on what it sees, and nothing else in the peripheral. Therefore, never lock your eyes on the attacker and make sure to always look to the attacker’s chest area so that you see all that surrounds you. Also by looking in the attacker’s chest area and not straight into his or her eyes, you appear more vulnerable and submissive, thus feeding the attacker the illusion of power. On the other hand, if you look into the attacker’s eyes, the attacker might take it as a sign of aggression and feel that you are challenging his or her threats. * **End of Daniel’s contribution**

Verbal Defusing is a way to change your attacker's focus without letting him know you are doing so out of strategy. That is why behavioral tactics are extremely important in your choice of speech; keep your body language and tone of voice matching your words and the situation unfolding. In other words if a guy has you by the collar because he believes you were staring at his girlfriend, don't yell out "*Hey Look... Superman!*"

6) Expected behavior: The gestures, phrases or movements that would be expected of the average person in a given situation. In a violent confrontation, your attacker expects a certain behavioral pattern from you. It usually goes two ways for the attacker or so he hopes.

1.) He attacks and threatens. The intended victim freezes and panics. The attacker gets what he wants.

2.) He attacks and threatens. The victim attempts to fight back or struggle or does not immediately comply with the attacker. The attacker escalates the use of violence and profane language in order to show he's in charge and instills fear, doubt and hesitation in the intended victim. The victim falls for it, freezes and panics. The attacker gets what he wants.

As a strategy, do what the attacker expects of you at first. Act afraid, let him believe he has you where he wants you, at that point, he will think everything is going according to his plan. He will therefore be less defensive and over-confident. His ego will rise and his guard will drop. He'll be more open for mistakes based on your presumed compliance. That is when it becomes the ideal time to act.

7) Victim Assumption: Your attacker perceives you as being his victim, that is why he chose you. That is to be used to your advantage. Since your attacker sees you as being weak and compliant, stick with that plan and let him use this illusion. This will lower his guard and raise his ego making him the perfect candidate for a brutal and completely unexpected physical retaliation. That is the ideal time to strike if necessary.

8) Thought process interruption/Distractions: These are techniques used to change the attacker's focus. You see, the human brain cannot think of two completely different things at the exact same moment. Thoughts can overlap each other at an incredibly fast pace, but no two separate thoughts can occur at the exact same time.

So in the tradition of "Look! Superman!" thought process interruption could be verbal or physical such as asking an appropriate question or some dialogue that will shift the attacker's attention away from his immediate goal. Or they can be physical, like pulling out a wallet or playing with your watch to shift his attention and sight towards your wrist in order to sucker strike him with the back of your hand.

9) Element of surprise: Due to the above 8 steps, the attacker will perceive you as a victim and that is a psychological edge for you. He will never expect you to fight back. Your attack will come as a complete surprise to him and shift him into defensive mode as opposed to offensive.

**Steps 5, 7, 8 and 9 are examples of manipulation of human behavior.*

10) Retaliate With Certitude: From peacemaker to piece maker, when de-escalation fails, an attitude reversal is required and a commitment to your own life has to take place. Once it is determined that the confrontation cannot be verbally defused and is escalating to a physical level you are left with no other choice. You have to fight back and fight like the devil. In the words of the immortal Yoda from the movie *The Empire Strikes Back*, “*Just do it, don't try, trying implies possibility of failure*”. You've got to strike with confidence. This will send strong messages to your attacker. You've got to strike with everything you've got.

The 5 Survival Signals in the Street

The Classic Bump

Example: You're walking down the street and some guy walks closer to you and as he crosses you, he deliberately bumps into you with his shoulder into yours.

First of all, if you see him coming as we most often do, try and avoid it. Let the guy come super close to you then just shift your weight off twisting your body making him miss you completely. This usually pisses them off but they can't come after you because they have no ammunition against you. If he managed to bump you then...

Reactions – turn around and politely apologize without belittling yourself. Keep up your awareness and don't turn your back until you are clear of the situation. Note: always be prepared for it to get physical immediately after the bump and watch for multiple attackers and concealed weapons.

The Classic Stare down

Example: You're at a bar or some place public and some guy across from you sits with his buddies and he's eyeballing you.

Reaction – turn away without challenging nor threatening the individual but let them know you saw them and are aware of their presence. Be aware of a possible confrontation. For the most part when the individual was made he usually will let go of the situation or find another unsuspecting victim.

For example: I was with my wife and her family in a very tourist part of Montreal called old Montreal on a beautiful summer day. Old Montreal with its cobble stone streets and out door cafes in the summer time has a very European look and feel to it. We were 8 adults and 4 children ranging from 1 year of age to 6 years of age. The women's purses were all hanging on one of the baby stroller's arms and the kids were freely walking among us.

At one point, we decided to stop and everyone got into a lively debate as to where we should get ice cream. I just kind of stood there, semi bored waiting for the decision. At that point, I see an individual sitting approximately 20 feet away from our group amongst hundreds of people milling around the area. This fellow however was scoping us. He was watching the children and the purses and obviously strategizing his next move. I stood there watching him and put myself in his direct field of vision. I looked him dead in the eye and the S.O.B. didn't even flinch. He stared back right at me sizing me up. I crossed my arms and tilted my head forward an inch and nodded "No." He looked me up and down, contemplated it for a moment then got up and walked away all annoyed like.

The fact that he was made and that I presented more work than his intended reward was worth to him led him to unfortunately go find a better victim. Hopefully he just said f!#\$ it and went for a movie instead.

Instigation through Intimidation

Example: The individual has made contact and is trying to instill fear, doubt and hesitation into you before he actually pushes you to get physical. The goal of this is to goad you into a fight and to make sure that when and if you do you are hesitant because of his predominant characteristic therefore insuring his victory.

"You got a f#\$%ng problem?" "You looking at me A\$\$hole?" "What the f#\$% you looking at bitch?" are typical start-ups for a fight to ensue. Your opponent may or may not really want to fight. He may not want to fight but want to show you up in front of his friends, inflate his ego up or maybe just a plain old insecure bully. On the other hand he may be really pissed off or a sociopath, in this case a fight is a real possibility.

Determining the type of individual you are facing is very important in order to establish a strategy.

Reaction – Adopt the passive stance strategy and verbally defuse the situation based on the dialogue. Remember, footwork and body language are an integral part of verbal defusing. Your body language must convey the same message your words.

Typcasting (Inspired by Gavin De Becker's 7 Survival signals from the book *"The Gift of Fear"*)

They will insult you in order to goad you to fight. For example: *"You f#\$%&ng' pu\$\$y"* or *"What's the matter, you a coward?"* It is also a test to see how far you can be pushed and how "strong" you are. For the most part, the type caster doesn't even believe what he is saying; it is simply a means to an end. A way to push your buttons to get you to the next level in order to get you to fight.

Tony Blauer refers to this process as "The Pressure Cooker theory" where your opponent or attacker needs to be pushed to the next level because he isn't ready to throw down just yet.

Your reaction should be for you to walk away and decline with confidence. Attempt to walk away without acknowledging them whatsoever and if that doesn't work then verbally defuse the situation as best you can while disengaging physically by walking away. If they push, see next point.

Discounting the Decline to Engage

Example: You've tried to verbally defuse it but the individual persists, he follows you and doesn't let you go and his temper and violent behavior is steadily increasing. He may or may not have gotten physical yet with hard shoves and humiliation tactics such as slaps to the head.

2 Possible Reactions:

1) Quick scan of environment, exits, and possible multiple attackers, assess your closest weapon to closest target, and then drop him hard and fast. (Note: the scanning of the room or immediate environment is something that should be done upon entering it so that you don't have to waste time doing it during a fight.)

2) Same as example 1 except for dropping him. Depending on the situation at hand you might have to roll with a few punches and swallow your pride.

For example: You're with your girlfriend and your opponent is with 7 or 8 drunk friends who may or may not have concealed weapons and is bent on giving you a beating in front of his buddies regardless of your multitude attempts at verbally defusing the situation. In a case like this one, where escape is impossible, it becomes a choice less choice. If you fight, you risk your girlfriend's well being as well as your own.

Using footwork, boxing blocks and proper body rotations to roll with the shots, fake the pain (making it seem worse than it is), take a few shots and go down into a ball on the ground protecting your head, ribs and groin area. If the beatings persist, make sure your vital targets are protected and patiently wait until either someone stops it or they feel they've dished out enough punishment to raise their penis to a psychological level they are comfortable with.

I know this sounds a little critical and may offend egos but it is better than taking a severe beating or having the person you are with be placed in harms way because you didn't feel like looking like a pussy. There are circumstances, rare as they may be, where it may tactically serve you in the long run to take a mild beating as opposed to a serious stomping. This is where body conditioning, pain threshold increase and overkill mentality pays off most

A friend of mine was at a bar in Florida with one of his friends. One thing led to another so to make a long story short; he and his friend were surrounded by seven or eight hostile drunken jocks.

My friend's buddy mouthed off and got jumped which immediately caused my friend to get jumped. My friend went to the ground and rolled himself into a ball protecting his head and ribs as best he can, his friend fought back. His friend ended up in a hospital, my friend walked away with bumps and bruises. Every situation requires a different strategy.

Damn. Lots of empty space left here... hmmm.... What can we do with this empty space...? Well, you can doodle... write a phone number maybe? Use it for notes in seminars (anyone's, not just mine ☺), you can make a collage... well, maybe not a collage... but, well, be creative...

End of empty space... sort of... end of where the PC allows me to write. Unless of course I change my margins... nah, too much work... end of empty space.

CHAPTER 5

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience you stop to really look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I lived through this horror, I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT & THE REFLEXIVE RESPONSE

Bruce Lee said ***“The height of cultivation lies in its simplicity”***. Simplicity works. As stated earlier, during the adrenal stress stage, fine and complex motor skills perish. Complex motor skills only play an important role if you are the attacker or once you establish mental and physical dominance over your opponent. The more technique, dexterity, or practice is required the less likely a technique will function in a high stress situation against an enraged attacker.

Elaborate submissions, compliance techniques, certain locks, pressure points, high kicks all require a great deal of inner calm and a high level of skill which in turn requires decades of consistent training, all of which are luxuries we do not have when faced with extreme aggression at an inopportune time. Relying on gross motor skills and reflexive responses based on realistic training strategies will enhance any fighter’s tactical edge.

When a potentially violent confrontation arises, our parasympathetic nervous system picks up on it and our survival instinct kicks in leading our sympathetic nervous system to take over. We immediately evaluate the threat and proper personal protection requires that one trust their intuition. A presence of danger instilling sudden fear is where most people begin to visualize defeat, which in turn destroys one’s confidence regardless of their level of skill.

This is where most people lose the fight, the moment they begin to hesitate and doubt their skill, their training and themselves. This is where the psychological portion of a fighter’s arsenal comes into play. Fear and stress management, confrontation management and manipulation of human behavior skills, are all as mentioned earlier, integral elements (more so than the physical) to a fighter. Never ever undervalue the mental side of your training.

The communicative aspect of hand-to-hand combat is grossly undervalued by so called “martial artists” or “self defense experts”. Dialogue will highly influence most violent confrontations and street fights. As Dan Millman said, the conventions of language play an enormous role in the ways we view the world. Words are used to convey messages, which create images that affect an individual’s behavior and perceptions. Threats, profanity, challenges and other verbal attacks will affect one’s perceptions and response. How you’re spoken to and how you mentally perceive the way you are spoken to will have an impact on your physical responses.

How you feel in that moment will alter those perceptions as well. Are you having a good day, bad day, are you ill, did your best friend just pass away in a car accident? Are you one hundred percent healthy etc?

Dialogue will also alter the fighting range you are in. (For example: an individual stares you down, suddenly, he approaches you and asks you “what the f#\$% are you staring at” then he pushes you...). Using the simple example we just gave; our attacker went from kicking to Boxing to trapping range using a verbal initiator to enter to the physical confrontation range.

This all becomes critical information to the complete fighter if he is to fully develop his combative arsenal. Verbal defusing strategies, choice speech, congruous behavior and de-escalation tactics are used to defuse the confrontation or “set up” the attacker for an effective physical retaliation.

Using the body’s natural survival reflexes that include flinching, ducking, spontaneous blocking, develop your physical retaliation principles based on whatever position you ended up in. This way, the impulse of your reaction is a reflexive response making it the quickest and most natural response because its nucleus is your reflex.

Look at what you instinctively do without training, and then work your combative tactics from there. Your spontaneous and natural options will be faster developed without any stylistic interference.

Your combative arsenal must coincide with your behavioral and psychological arsenal so that your entire being (mind, emotions, body and spirit) fully cooperates in the total defense of the self (heh, I just said the title of the book ☺). Since defusing and de-escalating through negotiation is our secondary objective (secondary because the primary objective is avoidance through awareness and intuition), the physical arsenal must emerge from natural and non-violent stances allowing for deception and spontaneous retaliation without telegraphing your intent.

Let me go back and talk about the “*mind body spirit*” concept that is so widely advertised in the martial arts industry for a moment. So many martial arts instructors or martial arts themselves claim to teach and incorporate the “*mind body spirit*” aspects of fighting but for the most part, that is full of BS. These words have been selling buzzwords in the arts community for as long as they’ve been commercialized in North America. Martial artists dwell on the physical aspect 99% of the time. It is unfortunate that most do not practice nor teach what they preach.

Not because an instructor makes his students clean his school 4 times a month while vacuuming in a horse stance or tell them not to “talk to strangers” does that make their art holistic in a “mind body spirit” way. That term “mind body spirit” is so loosely used and so seldom understood in the martial arts community that it has turned into a marketing ploy. One must not forget the highly neglected “emotional” aspect either.

To fully understand “mind” one must research the mental side of confrontations and how the human mind works on our perceptions. To fully understand “body”, one must understand how the “mind” interprets and perceives things and how that plays with our “emotions” and in turn, affects our physical presence.

The sum of the whole “mind, body, emotions” in turn work together or apart to form the spirit. If the three are in tune then the spirit is at peace; if they are not then there is havoc on the spirit. Einstein once said that if we can continuously have the “mind body and emotions” working as one then we are in “heaven”, but if the mind is in turmoil and the emotions react to that turmoil then the body follows and we are in “hell”. James O’barr went on to describe it as such:

“We do not recognize our souls until they are in pain.”

How unfortunately true.

Back to the physical side: knowing thousands of moves and techniques will create major problems in the natural flow of spontaneity during a real life extreme violent attack. In real life, it’s the surprise or “sucker” attack which counts. All other confrontations are not entirely “real” personal protection/self defense situations since they allow for some sort of preparation.

If it isn’t a “sucker punch” (by sucker punch we refer to any attack that catches you off guard completely) then you somehow participated in the escalation of the attack. In which case you have to take into consideration the more dangerous moments of a confrontation, such as extreme stress or fatigue when your cognitive thought process and hand eye coordination aren’t functioning one hundred percent. This is where reflexive responses pay off the most.

Understanding and using reflexive responses will allow one to spontaneously react, maximizing their perception time and minimizing their reaction time since there is no memorization involved since the skills are forever with you. The defense mechanism is imbedded within your reflexes. In turn it will give you more faith in your discipline, combat abilities and confidence level.

CHAPTER 6

“I can defeat you physically with or without a reason. I can only defeat your mind with a reason.”

Lao Tsu

PHYSICAL RETALIATION AND COMBATIVE RANGES

Senshido’s 5 Principles of Physical Retaliation™

In personal protection, there are generally 5 different reactions a human being will have after getting struck. The individual who has been struck can react in one or more of these ways. It is imperative to learn these and create a mental file for them as every human being will definitively react in one or more of these ways when struck allowing you to spontaneously formulate your next tactic/strategy without prefixed or preplanned ‘moves’ that may fail due to the opponent’s unexpected reaction. In no particular order they are:

1. **To create distance.** The individual hit will back up and move away to regroup or protect themselves.
2. **To clinch.** The individual will close the distance and latch on defensively to the other who hit him.
3. **To counter strike.** The individual struck strikes back immediately (with or without a weapon).
4. **Drops semi or fully unconscious.** The individual struck is put out of commission.
5. **Takes the shot and stares at you.** Replies something like *“Is that all of you’ve got?”*

Knowing and understanding these reactions are imperative for you in order to have a contingency plan for each and every one of them. If your mind is trained to be prepared for any or a combination of two or more of these reactions, it will be extremely difficult to be caught off guard during a fight. Your mind and body will be ready for whatever outcome and won’t go into the dreaded assumption phase. The worst thing a fighter can do is assume. As stated earlier the only safe assumption a fighter can make in the street is the one that his opponent is carrying a concealed weapon. That’s it, that’s all. Any other assumption can get you killed.

The key in physical retaliation is your ability to spontaneously improvise your next move based on your attacker’s reaction. Your attacker will always dictate what your next move is going to be based on the four possible reactions he will have after you landed your first strike.

In physically retaliating, there are **5 Principles** to always abide by. The following five principles are always applicable regardless of what style you practice or what the scenario or situation may be. You will even find them applicable to NHB tournaments.

Principle # 1. Economy of motion.

Musashi said, “*Do nothing which is of no use*”. Basically, do not waste energy on unnecessary movement. There are two ways of doing this. **One:** Your intended natural weapon, whatever it may be whether it is a jab, kick or submission application should be the initial point of movement prior to any other part of the human body. If your intended strike is a left jab then the left fist should be the very first thing to move followed by the rest of the body. **Two:** It’s important for you to have a mental reason for everything that you do. Don’t just throw a kick or punch for the sake of throwing it. Many fighters as they circle each other feeling each other out will unnecessarily throw ‘something’ because nothing has happened yet they almost feel obliged. If it is done with reason backed by strategy, then it’s fine but a lot of times fighter’s kick or punch for the sake of it.

At our school, when my students spar, I will randomly stop them and ask them why they did what they did, for the most part; they don’t have an answer. It’s important for the student to understand and know why they are doing what they are doing. This will economize on wasted motion and help the student strategize consistently.

In the street, economy of motion will also economize on energy. Energy is a key factor in survival. For the most part, stress, fear and the adrenaline dump will cause a mental energy drain in under a minute and a half at the most, that in turn will deplete you of physical energy rather quickly.

Principle # 2. Non Telegraphic Movement.

Non telegraphic movement ties in directly with economy of motion. This principle basically states not to telegraph your intention to your attacker by making any unnecessary movements prior to your initial attack. This includes facial expressions, shift of body weight, shift of eyesight, and idiosyncratic movements prior to striking and winding up.

Your attack should be explosive and sudden preferably from a verbal defusing stage where your body language is natural and non-threatening. If you’re already engaged in the fight and your opponent is still ‘active’ your attack should still be explosive and sudden without any prior movement to initialize it except the intended weapon of choice (whether natural or weapon or actual weapon).

In training with pads or targets, have your training partner remove the pad or target as you begin to strike it if he/she sees you moving. If you succeed at striking the target before your partner moves it, then you did so non-telegraphically. Too many fighters

train to strike hard and fast with precision and speed, not enough fighters train to actually land the strike.

Principle # 3. Opportunity Striking and Defending (Closest weapon to closest target) * Detailed version of this drill taught and fully explained and demonstrated on our DVD 'Surviving the Streets'.

This principle dictates you striking without giving your opponent the opportunity to negate, block, jam, parry or counter your strike. In the physical retaliation stage of defense, it is imperative your attack be non-telegraphic. Economy of motion is a term loosely used in the martial arts. Many verbally use the term but most don't apply it. What does economy of motion mean? Is it not just that? Using the least amount of movement in the execution of the physical technique, regardless of what that technique may be? What about non-telegraphic movement? Does it not mean moving without first alerting or making the opponent aware of the oncoming technique? If so, then why do most fighters and martial artists (all the while preaching non-telegraphy and economy of motion) still don't apply it properly?

We at Senshido developed a drill based on Bruce Lee's JKD principle of interception, simple as it may seem, to gauge whether or not your strike (regardless of what it may be) would land or not in reality. It is called the Opportunity Drill. It is adaptable to all fighting styles or systems regardless of where they're from or what ranges they specialize in.

Simply say the word "Opportunity" out loud or in your head, the second you begin to move your intended natural weapon or strike, towards your intended target. If you can say "Opportunity" more than once, even one and a half times, chances are, the strike wouldn't have landed. Why? Simply because as human beings, we all possess a natural reflexive response. We react to a given stimulus instantly (unless heavily sedated or asleep).

To further the drill, ask your training partner to move at the exact same speed you do (if you move in slow motion, he should too, if you're moving at two thirds speed, so should he) and attempt to block, slip or simply negate your primary assault. If you can say the word "Opportunity" only once between the time you moved and the time you reached your intended target, chances are you landed your shot and your training partner couldn't do anything about it. If you said the word "Opportunity" more than once, then chances are your training partner stopped you and negated your oncoming strike by the time you began saying the word "Opportunity" the second time.

In applying this drill every time you train on an offensive level, I.e. counter attacking or physically retaliating, you will train yourself instinctively to work the closest weapon TO closest target principle at all times. In turn, this will automatically work economizing on motion and truly working non-telegraphic motion.

The "**Opportunity**" drill also works on a defensive level. It works in training your mind to maximize your perception time and minimize your reaction time. You learn to read

body language, facial expression, weight displacements etc. How does your attacker telegraph? Take a sucker punch/hay maker for example. Stand there, hands at your side and watch. Read. Have your training partner come at you with a haymaker at your face moving at one-third speed.

It is imperative that your training partner be a good “actor”. What I mean by that is, the energy behind the punch, although moving at slow speed, should still have a realistic feel behind it. The body language should display the intent and rage behind the attack. The facial expression should also display the anger behind the assault.

Why it’s important to role-play appropriately is because it will help you read body language accordingly. Have your partner come at you repetitively with the haymaker while you study his movement from the moment he budges to the time the strike lands on your face. Also, don’t move. At all. However, feel what your body wants to instinctively do without moving or thought process... this will help you isolate your reflex response. As he’s striking you, say the word “Opportunity” from the moment he moves to the moment he lands. Whenever you start saying “Opportunity” well, that would be your “Opportunity” to move and counter attack.

Things to look out for when he begins to move: What moves first? What are his tendencies? Is there a shift of weight prior to the punch? Does he shove first? Do his teeth clench? Does he say something right before he strikes? Where does his weight go as the punch is coming in? Is it wide, narrow, closer to the centerline?

You’ll find that the more people you work with the more you’ll notice that we all move relatively similar. There are slight variations and idiosyncrasies but in general, the punch (sucker punch/haymaker) will always come at you in a similar fashion. Your ability to intercept it before it moves past the halfway or even quarter way point will heighten the more you do this drill. It is basically what Bruce Lee called Jeet Kune Do, the way of the intercepting fist or foot. Your ability to intercept your opponent’s emotional tenseness prior to the execution of his attack through the proper reading of body language and behavioral changes.

From this point, after successfully reading the body language and taking the attack with no movement, you want to figure out how you reflexively respond. Not how your instructor reflexively responds but how you do it. We suggest giving a couple of your friends the friendly task of scaring the crap out of you. This will definitely elicit your startle to reflex response.

Another way of doing it is having a friend of yours jump you with a headlock attempt (kinda like Kato and Inspector Clouseau from Blake Edward’s The Pink Panther series) See how you react, both physically and emotionally when someone jumps you out of the blue. Have it happen on several occasions and see if your reflex response is similar every time. Then, isolate that reflex response.

Take the reflex response and go back to the “Opportunity” drill. Isolate the sucker punch again only this time, take your reflex response and bind a combative strategy to it. See where you end up off the sucker/surprise attack with your flinch and apply your physical retaliation from there. Your reflexive response, with time, will minimize your reaction time and allow you to move much quicker to an oncoming assault, therefor intercepting it at its earliest stages.

Understand that your ability to respond immediately is cultivated through this sort of training. Also understand that you won’t always do the text book block or jam, I.e. leaning forward with your weight intercepting the oncoming assault with your arms jamming the opponent’s energy while your head remains nicely and neatly tucked.

There are too many outside factors to program this kind of successful response. It’s important to remain open and responsive at all times and never ever assume. If you assume a tactical reflex response, as often done in training, and God forbid you hit a dreaded variable, you may freeze up and not react quick enough to intercept the following portion of the assault.

For example: It’s the pre-contact phase and your opponent seems to have been made passive by your attempts to verbally defuse the situation. As he begins to turn away, your mind completes the pattern developing in front of you and your guard slowly drops in your confidence that this confrontation has been defused. Your attacker then viscously and without warning turns and swings a punch at your head, but you’re a trained fighter, you’ve trained to immediately react off your flinch. As you flinch and then move in to intercept the oncoming assault at its early beginnings, you don’t notice an object on the floor at your feet. You step onto the object as you move in to jam the oncoming assault and slip forward in an almost frontal splits, completely missing the jamming of the punch and reflexively grab onto your opponent’s jacket on the way down... your opponent however, capitalizes on your “error” and begins to viscously rain punches on you from above.

Hmmm... it’s as important to explore the possibilities of variable errors, as it is the assumption of successful defense principals. What I mean by that is, train yourself to work off of human error or variable error.

For example: In working certain defense principles or counter attacks in the Defensive Opportunity drill, make your environment hazardous to a certain extent. Place several sheets of open newspapers all over the training floor and do the drill in your socks... this will cause a certain instability in mobility and possibly cause you to slip as you make your move.

If and when you do slip, have your opponent then continue his assault in attempt to capitalize on the variable error and see how you would then flinch from there. The first flinch becomes easy to bind a combative strategy to only because now, that’s what we trained it to do. But if the first reflexive response fails due to variable error, then you

better be able to capitalize on the second and/or third flinch and not freeze due to the variable error.

If of course variable error occurs during training unexpectedly and without warning, you should from there continue doing the drill regardless of where you end up. There is no such thing as screwing up in training, you continue the moment regardless of whether it went according to the said drill or not.

Any and every attack can be isolated through the Opportunity drill, regardless of what it is. Tackle, headlock, sucker punch, committed shoves, choke attempts, whatever. This drill is designed to enhance your reaction time in the face of potential violence but does not work without the proper defensive tactics such as avoidance and de-escalation tactics. It works best from a natural and passive stance as the passive stance offers maximum potential for reflexive response due to its hands “up” position in a neutral fashion.

Principle # 4. Primary Targets.

In a real fight, you need to end it as quickly as possible. In order to do that, you have to debilitate your opponent. However, it is necessary to judge whether the situation is a maximum potential for violence (life or death situation) or minimum potential of violence. A maximum potential for violence situation requires use of extreme force.

The primary targets on the human body that will debilitate them are the eyes and throat. As human beings, we have the innate instinct to protect our eyes and windpipe. If your opponent can't see, he can't fight, if he can't breathe, he can't fight. The rest of the human body is secondary. There are no other specific targets as there are nerve clusters everywhere else on the human body. Striking the groin, the sides of the biceps or the shin will all cause a reflexive response and allow for an immediate follow up strike. Strike as many places and as often as necessary in order to reach the eyes and throat and debilitate your opponent.

If your opponent has been debilitated without having struck his eyes and throat then all the more power to you. However, if your opponent is drug induced or if he has a high threshold of pain, if he's emotionally disturbed then chances are, if you haven't struck his eyes or throat in order to reflexively protect himself, he'll most probably keep coming at you.

Principle # 5. Tactile Sensitivity.

Tactile sensitivity is the ability to interpret your opponent's energy through the sense of touch. In the street, the majority of fights will start at the close quarter range also referred to as the trapping range. Dialogue and communication will allow for an attacker to get in the close quarter range without necessarily having to strike you yet. This is where the assailant has access to lapel grabs, strangulations, shoves, tackles, headlocks, static knife attacks, intimidation tactics and more. If the fight is not dealt with at this range it might well lead to the ground.

Tactile sensitivity is applied the second you and your opponent have come into physical contact together. At the close quarter, ground fighting and in close body to body boxing range the hand is quicker than the eye. If your opponent decides to pull a knife out of his belt while in the clinch, you will not be able to see it but you will be able to read his body language through the sense of touch.

There are countless drills that help develop the tactile senses and freestyle grappling on its own is a phenomenal way of doing so as you are constantly trying to interpret your opponent's next move through the body to body contact. In free style grappling, in order to enhance your awareness of concealed weapons, have your partner carry a rubber or preferably wooden knife and pull it out at any moment during your grappling match. See if you can intercept it and defend against it before he reaches any of your vital targets.

A good tactile sense will allow you to defend yourself better at the close quarter and ground fighting ranges. You'll be able to feel and intercept an oncoming attack as it develops.

There's a parable of a Tai Chi master whose tactile sensitivity was so developed that he had a butterfly in his hand try and fly away and he followed it with his hand until his arm could no longer extend upwards as the butterfly flew off.

These five principles are always applicable regardless of the situation or scenario. They require proper training and mental blueprinting. Once they are acquired however, they become unforgettable skills, like riding a bike and applicable to all martial arts styles or systems.

Holistic Comprehensio *(Well, not anymore, we haven't referred to this drill as such since 2004, it's evolved into separate stages of the emotional invocation drill.)*

I was once doing a demonstration in front of a class of about 30 participants (all martial artists of various styles) and was demonstrating a defensive counter to a two-arm lapel grab. I asked the individual in front of me to grab me. This is what he did: He took a half step back with one foot, rigidly grabbed both my lapels without even coming in contact with my body and stood there immobilized waiting for me to counter in a semi-bow and arrow stance.

I couldn't help but chuckle to myself before I asked him if he's ever been in a fight before in his life. He answered "Sure"... "*We frequently spar hard at the dojo.*" I said, "No, a real fight?" He shrugged and said no, I figured as much. I asked him if he learned how to defend against a two-handed lapel grab and he said of course, so I asked him to demonstrate his defense. I grabbed him hard and fast with aggression and intent, slammed his chest and rocked him backwards. For a few moments he was stunned and unbalanced not knowing what to do, then I swore at him and taunted him some more. He tried to grab my wrists and apply some form of hold to which I negated and simulated sucker punching him several times to the head. He just froze there as the room went silent.

In another incident, one of my long distance student's brother had just become a police officer. My student has studied several reality-based systems such as Marc MacYoung's, Peyton Quinn's RMCAT and mine. He also makes reference to Mr. Rick Sikora, founder of Sikora Defense Systems as Mr. Sikora occasionally posted on the Senshido forum. My student goes on to write the following piece on my online forum:

* Edited for purpose of anonymity.

Now get this you guys, for the past 2 years my brother's been yelling at me for going all the way to Mr. Quinn in CO for scenario training "You fucking moron!! You're wasting your money! That scenario training doesn't work!" Lately it's been "You're going to Quebec in the summer!? OH MY GOD!! You're not LEARNING anything on these trips of yours! Why don't you join a karate school?" My answer was always "I can't find one that teaches scenario training".

*Well guess what! Mr. **PD recruit just had his FIRST exposure to scenario training yesterday and he couldn't shut up with the "BACK! STOP!" Then he showed me his instructor's gun retention technique, which was an aikido wristlock WITH NO STUN SHOT first! He told me to make a grab for his imaginary holster and tried to apply the wristlock. Rich, remembering in your DVDs that you're supposed to put ENERGY and resistance when training, I RESISTED his wrist lock to which naive baby brother says "Well, you're resisting but if you didn't you'd go down!" Now I love my baby bro and don't want him to learn any bad habits and die in the line of duty so with the BEST of intentions, I punched him HARD in the face with my free hand! He says "HEY! You're not supposed to do that!" I respond "why not? I'm a criminal" Tonight I'm going to pull out a taped up butter knife and stab him as he tries to apply his techniques, or do you guys think it's too soon for mind tricks?*

I mean today IS only his SECOND exposure ever to scenario training and I don't want to undermine his confidence in his instructor's tactics. Since you guys train law enforcement, how can I be a good mock criminal to help my baby bro not die in the line of duty? Rich, MP, Mr. Sikora, any training tips??

*Sincerely ******

In order to fully understand and experience physical retaliation it's not enough to just work counters and defensive tactics. It's important to feel and experience the dynamics and specifics of the oncoming assault to fully experience the totality of combat.

For example: When working defense against a shove, tackle, choke, knife attack etc. Work in letting your partner come in and shove you, tackle you, choke you (or any submission), take the attack, feel it, experience it, analyze it and see where you would negate it and how many options you have from there. When being choked, take the choke and see how long before you have to 'tap out'. If it's four seconds, seven seconds, it makes a difference on how you will perceive your counter.

This is being pro-active. The more you know about a subject, the easier it is to navigate through it.

Holistic Comprehension can be broken down into three categories. Category one, keep it strictly physical. Work solely on the Holistic Physical Comprehension drill. Category two, keep it emotional and physiological.

Work solely on the Holistic Emotional Comprehension drill and have your partner stand there like a drill sergeant and just verbally assault you picking on your weaknesses. Category three is putting it all together. Total Holistic Comprehension.

Work it physically with dialogue and improvise from there. It is extremely important you do not turn this drill into a joke and work it using congruous behavioral tactics.

Holistic Emotional Comprehension incorporates dialogue, threatening, swearing etc, to feel the impact of the physical attack on an emotional level. Use congruous behavioral tactics in conjunction to the attack.

Figure out what really gets under your skin. If someone vulgarly insulted your mother or sister, your race, your accent, your intelligence, your weight, your sexual orientation, whatever you may have a partial weakness too and gets you personally riled up.

The Holistic Emotional Comprehension drill will invoke emotional and physiological changes in you. One of the major drills involved in Senshido's **Emotional Invocation drill**. It is important that you DO NOT TAKE THIS DRILL PERSONALLY AND THAT IT REMAINS A DRILL WITHIN YOUR CONSENT. Your partner must let loose on you and hold nothing back to experience the emotional inertia, whether it be anger, rage, fear, sadness, pain, heartbreak, frustration, etc. This will allow you to feel and see how emotional inertia has an impact on how you will react physically and change what needs to be changed in order to maximize optimum physical retaliation.

I was sitting in my office with one of my assistant's and out of the blue looked at her and called her a whore. She looked up at me and nervously chuckled, unsure if I was joking or not. I continued in all seriousness to insult her and tell her exactly why I thought she was as such. Her entire body language changed and she almost began to cry. I stopped her right there and told her she was just used as a guinea pig for an emotional invocation and the immediate physiological response of the verbal onslaught. I asked her what she felt like doing and she stated she felt a hundred different things go through her. Anger, pain and hurt. She wanted to leave but couldn't bring herself to do it.

I asked her what she would have done had I gotten up and gotten physically agitated at the same time. She paused and said she didn't know although she is trained to defend herself and is probably one of the most devastating fighters I know. Emotional inertia is a very powerful thing, the Emotional Invocation drill will identify and allow one to

understand how these situations manifest themselves and will be much more ready to deal with such instances. Train it in consequence.

This drill will allow you to experience the realities of a violent encounter as closely as possible without placing yourself in real danger. In sports psychology, there's a term called Meta-Cognition, which is basically creating a mental blue print through visualization. It's pro-activity. When, or God forbid, if you encounter violence, you will not be shocked by the level of aggression displayed or surprised by the method or angle of attack attempted. You would have already lived it through the Emotional Invocation drill. Any changes or variations will be easily adjusted. This drill will create clarity in the moment.

Ranges and Sub-Ranges

The only way to implement a strategy of your choosing is to be versed in the discipline of fighting in all ranges without exception.

Most traditionalists who state those eclectic systems are founded by those who never had the patience of mastering one art form and are simply just a Jack of all trades; master of none, missed the entire point. Fighting or combat **is but one trade**.

Contrarily to the traditionalist's belief, to master a portion of fighting does not make one a fighter. To sub divide fighting into categories, styles and styles within styles is absurd. Fighting is an entire world on its own. To fully experience its totality one must explore its entirety.

Being able to flow fluidly from one range to the next at any time during a high stress situation is imperative to one's survival. The ranges of hand to hand combat are as follows:

The lunging range, longest range where you cannot land a kick but if you have a knife and lunge forward you may create a new orifice for your opponent.

The Kicking range, the second longest range in which you can only logically throw a kick. Punches, knees, elbows or any other closer range weapons cannot effectively be executed in the Kicking range. The basic street arsenal in this range consists of the front, round, Thai, side and jart kicks. More advanced kicks include inner and outer crescents, back kicks, spinning kicks and hook kicks. All of which are not recommended for street fights but more so for ring and should be a part of a well rounded fighter's arsenal. The intelligent fighter knows which kicks to use, how high he should throw them and when to execute them.

Landing a kick relies not only on proper execution of the kick, but timing and precision are equally crucial. A strategist will always be prepared and be 3 moves ahead of his opponent at all times. Generally speaking, when executing a kick, one must maintain their upper body axis upright and keep their hands up protecting their centerline or ready to execute a hand technique if and when required. All kicks should originate through the centerline in order to be non-telegraphic.

The pros of the Kicking range

- 1) Longest and most powerful weapon
- 2) Low line strikes seldomly expected
- 3) Good for stop hits and jams

Cons of the Kicking range

- 1) Maximum recovery time
- 2) Most telegraphic weapon in a fighter's arsenal
- 3) Environment and attire might not always permit use of this range
- 4) Standing on one leg is not an optimum position to be in

Street Kicks:

The Front Kick

The front kick is the most basic kick in a fighter's arsenal. It's the simplest of all kicks to learn and execute since the hip movement is relatively the same as when you walk. Depending on where you are kicking (target) you can use the instep of the foot, ball of the foot, heel or even the shin as a weapon. Targets include: Shins, knees, stomach, abdomen, jaw, and face.

When throwing a front kick, the knee should always be positioned slightly higher than the target you are aiming at for maximum penetration power. The Front kick is excellent for getting under your opponent's jab, hitting the mid section. It can also be used as a stop hit or set up for certain Boxing Combo's or even a way to bridge the gap for entering the clinch from kicking to grappling range.

The Side Kick

The side kick is the most powerful, straight through the center line kick you possess in your arsenal; if properly timed and executed. It should begin with the same coil as the front kick then the hip and grounded foot should shift mid way for non telegraphy. The side kick should be thrown in one fluid motion, cocking or chambering the side kick only renders it telegraphic to your opponent due to the unnecessary motion. The footwork for the side kick should be a dynamic skip step from the rear leg to the lead bringing the rear heel in a straight line position right down the center line with the upper body axis remaining upright. In using the side kick you should hit with the heel while extending the hip out for maximum power and reach. In stepping in for the coil, your movement should have ballistic explosion and fluidity.

In a street fight, if the opportunity presents itself, the side kick should be kept low, preferably below the belt (as with all kick if used in the street). The side kick should always be thrown from the lead leg as opposed to the rear for less telegraphy and economy of motion.

The Round Kick

The round kick begins with the same coil as the front kick. The grounded foot then pivots in the opposite direction of the kick so that the toes are pointed towards the rear at a 180-degree angle. This will bring the hip out and the kicking leg to a horizontal level. The leading knee must be past the centerline to ensure that at maximum extension, the kick does not simply 'tag' the target but rather goes through it. The kick should lash out like a whip rather than swing like a club. Toes should be pointed and the instep used or shin used as the striking area. If proper hip rotation is executed then the kick should traverse at a horizontal level and not at an upward angle. This ensures that hitting power is sent through the target and not dissipated or brushed off at an angle.

The Jart Kick

The Jart kick is basically an invert front kick using the ball of your foot or heel and instead of snapping out forward, it comes crashing down from above. The knee pops like your crushing something rather than remaining where it is. Think of crushing a Coke can. Uses for this kick include stop hits, rear and lead knee jarring and shin raking.

The Thai Kick

Similar to the rear round kick, the Thai kick is the most devastating lowline kick in your arsenal. The execution of the kick is identical to the round kick only the point of impact should be the shins and not the instep. The kick should also carry through the target rather than snapping back like a whip. This would be analogous to an axe swinging through a tree rather than pecking away at it with short chops. Power arises from the hip rotation and supporting foot pivoting in synch with the extension of the leg all the way through the point of impact.

Keep in mind, unlike the traditional Thai kick, you do not want to turn 360-degrees and give your back to your opponent in a street fight even for 1 second!

Soccer / Football Kicks

More brutal and efficient than any martial art kick or kick described above are the soccer/football kicks. Just go ape shit kicking field goals into your opponent's shins and low leg areas.

I remember once Marc Ste. Marie was training a newbie who had some soccer experience. He was about to go into the ring for the first time against a Thai boxer. During the first minute of the first round, he was getting mauled by the Thai boxer until Marc shouted out "*Just fuckin' soccer kick him in the legs!*"

Man, that kid just tore apart the Thai boxer with low line soccer kicks to the point that the Thai guy had to stop shortly into the second round due to the pain.

These kicks are easier, more innate and require less recovery time as well as don't compromise your balance in comparison to the more 'traditional' martial art kicks.

The Boxing/punching range.

Boxing, often referred to as the sweet science, is a crucial range to work on. This range has a lot to offer the well rounded fighter such as footwork, proximity sense, angles of attack, contact experience, slips and parries as well as strategies and tactics. Without footwork, slips and parries, your street arsenal becomes rigid and immobile. However, in the street, it is safer and wiser to use open handed strikes rather than closed fists in order not to risk breaking your knuckles.

The first thing is footwork. There's the traditional eight-point footwork but there is also stance shifting and circling. Footwork is everything. It's what gets your butt in and out of trouble and enables you to maneuver yourself offensively and defensively.

Then comes the punches. Each punch must originate from the on guard position with your hands up at your chin and your elbows tucked protecting your ribs. The hips play an integral part to every single range especially boxing. Each punch must be followed by proper hip rotation and body synergy.

The pros of the Boxing range:

- 1) Multiple combinations and angles of attack
- 2) Fluidity in movement
- 3) Increases threshold of pain
- 4) Enhances proximity sense
- 5) Enhances slipping and evasion techniques
- 6) Enhances strategy development

The cons of the boxing range:

- 1) Tendencies to head hunt
- 2) Possibility of injuring or breaking knuckles
- 3) Complete neglect of the low line
- 4) Oblivious on the ground and/or in a clinch

The Following Boxing tips are written and reproduced here by permission by Frank Benn, Integrated Arts - Austin, Texas and Editorialized by Author Richard Dimitri

Range and Proximity sense:

Learn to become really comfortable standing just out of your opponent's reach. Develop the sensitivity to gauge people's reach, and allow them to just barely miss. This will give you two valuable things: The ability to not freak out because things are flying at your face and barely missing, and the posture and positioning to hit him with little adjustment.

In other words, your defense has to facilitate your offense. Everything “defensive” is really a matter of doing as little as possible to make him miss while not messing up your alignment to hit him back.

This is why multi-step blocking and highly eccentric movements often found in many traditional martial arts (literally, “far from center”) are not practiced in boxing.

Senshido instructor Marc Ste. Marie describes it as such:

“Make your defense your offence. For the fighting man, defense blurs into offence, just like two perfect shapes that you superimpose - you only see one.

Using alignment principles as a model, we get the following: If you prevent your opponent to properly align his targets, he can't hit you. If you are good and apply what is being discussed, as you break your opponent's alignment, you will maintain yours. Doing so, you will have blended offence into defense and most likely, created and opening. We see once again that the art or fighting is the art of moving.

A good way to create opportunities is make your adversary commit to moves with a bad alignment. A shot with bad alignment upsets balance and forces the perpetrator to over rotate, over reach or do any other actions that will, ultimately cause opportunity for the wise fighter”

Never, ever, **ever** - Take your eyes off of your opponent or turn your back to him.

Let it go by:

Don't always try to stay out of his reach, or you'll always find him out of your reach. Most beginners make that mistake out of fear of being countered. Train your slips and bobs to stay in range and let the punch go right by so you're still in range to deal it out. Don't weave too much. A fluid weave will leave you open between point A of the weave and point B of the weave. All your opponent has to do is follow the weave and punch where your head is heading. All movement should utilize broken rhythm.

Everything serves your ends. Beware of gratuitous and wasteful motions that don't serve any purpose. For example, jab when you slip his jab. Cross when you slip his cross. Etc. Don't let him become comfortable, or secure in the knowledge that you're going to stand there while he does what he wants. Intercept his movement. I don't remember who said it but “When in doubt, stick it out.” (Referring to your jab of course.)

The thing that weakens an opponent's offense is your own offense. Everything else (e.g. slipping without countering, blocking as an isolated movement) is just prolonging the inevitable.

Read the hips:

Learn to read his hips. Whenever a hip comes toward you that is advance notice that something is coming from that side. Some also telegraph with their shoulders, but this is overt and amateurish I.e. wouldn't expect a good fighter to do it.

The Jab:

The art of boxing is founded on the jab. If you've got a jab, you can box. If you don't, then boxing is hard. Simple as that. Without the jab, expect to get hit a lot. The jab helps to make you a good boxer. Without one, you're just a puncher (which can also be effective, but requires specialized attributes to pull it off).

The jab is used for several things. Primarily, it's a feel out punch used to acquire information from your opponent. Is he a counter puncher? Does he tend to parry, block, or slip most often? Does he flinch? Is he defensive or does he stand his ground? Etc.

The jab can also be used as a knock out punch providing you have adequate power and rotational force behind it not to mention the timing to make it happen.

The Can Opener and the Spoon:

There's a saying in boxing that your jab is a can opener, and your cross is a spoon. The opponent is a can of meat. You've got to use your can opener to open the can BEFORE you can use your spoon to dig out the meat. If you try to use your spoon first, you'll generally fail. Even if you like to lead off with a cross (not usually advisable, unless you're Leonard, Roy Jones, Ali, or a pissed off Jack Johnson), it is advisable that you at least feint a jab to conceal the load-up of your rear shoulder for the cross.

The Hook – “Crushing Peanuts, and Come Here” -

Two things to remember in throwing your hook. Lead foot rotates on the ball like you're crushing peanuts. Lead arm hooks horizontally and tight, like you're grabbing one of your friends around the neck with your arm and saying, “Come here!” Also regarding the hook, THERE IS NO WRIST. Your wrist does not exist; it remains parallel to your forearm. You can use horizontal or vertical fist no matter what range you're hooking at.

Balls of the feet are the gas, heels are the brakes - Rule of thumb for mobility and planting.

Speed - Speed is very important. But quickness and suddenness are even more important. Don't build up in speed. If you do, you will tend to miss against a person with movement, even though your punches are fast at full extension. This is because there is a discernible buildup in your acceleration.

Relaxation is important for speed. Don't tighten your fist up until you're almost fully extended.

Shoe in the Bucket - This is a common mistake in martial arts that you will really pay for when full contact is happening. It describes a failure to shift the weight off of one foot and onto the other when throwing a power punch.

Classic example is in the cross; at full extension, your rear foot is on the ball, allowing the weight to shift and that hip to come forward. This contradicts the planted rear foot of many traditional martial arts in their “reverse punch”, what in boxing is called “shoe in the bucket.”

Barrel of a gun - Look down your punching arm like you're looking down the barrel of a gun. This will help that arm to provide cover for your chin on that side while you're punching. Common mistake is for people to leave their chin open on the side of the arm they are punching with. Depending on your personal style, it can also help to turn your thumbs downward to help bring the shoulders up and provide better cover. Your arms are like two soldiers guarding a fort. When one of them leaves the fort to make war, he has to build a wall to protect his post while he's gone. Also, in keeping with this analogy the other soldier at such times is extra vigilant.

Where there's weight, there's power - Proper loading is essential for power punching. But do not telegraph. Conceal the shift of weight in your combinations.

Hourglass stance - This is a dangerous but necessary position in hitting. It happens at the tail end of your reverse / cross. Be ready to duck and cover. Your cross will put you in a bob position. You should be ready to stay low and elbow block, weave under, or jab to correct your posture. DO NOT just stand there fully extended with nowhere to go.

60/40 Rule:

In your stance and movement, do not put more than 60 percent of your weight on either foot except in brief extreme situations. I.e. In the course of regular movement, stand in balance. One legged stances, stilted and straight knee stances, overextended forward stances, etc., are a big mistake both offensively and defensively.

Dancing - Don't dance around, or bounce up and down. Quick, short, even-keeled adjustments are what you want. Stay mobile, but don't waste any motion. In keeping with the gas and brakes analogy above, stay on the balls of your feet for quick range adjustment, but SETTLE IN (ground yourself) on your punches. You get your punching power from the ground, through the legs, and off the hips.

The generator - This is a principle I teach my students. Everything you do needs to derive power from somewhere. Your hips are your generator. Plug everything you do into your generator. Throwing punches without the hips is like fighting a duel with an unloaded gun. You might get the first shot off, but he'll be the one who really connects.

Better to make him miss by an inch, than by a mile - This relates to some other things I've already said. When you make him miss by a mile, you'll often find yourself too far out of alignment to fire back. Make him miss by an inch, and it's as if he's not punching you at all, as far as your ability to counter punch is concerned.

Keep your head at the level of your punch. You have to drop your head to the level of your target. **THIS INCLUDES BODY SHOTS.** Not to do this is to get hit. Some say you should put your eyes at the level of where you're punching; some say the chin or shoulders. I usually put my eyes at the target level.

Punching Power - The power of your punch is on the very end of it. This is one way in which boxing/fighting is a range game. You've got to find your distance, in order to tee off. The real art comes in catching him at the right time and place when your punch is at its max. It's like catching a train. You've got to coordinate things, so that both you AND the train are at the station if you're going to catch the train. Both of you are on the move, though, and this takes timing.

When to catch him: Often, an opponent is ready to move once off of your first attack to make you miss. But, usually after this first movement he has nowhere to go unless he's pretty good. Often you can catch him flatfooted at this time, if you're ready to follow up and keep gaining range. Most common of all is simply leaning away from your initial attack. If you're ready to follow up from that, you can usually catch most people.

Musashi once said something related to this: Throw something up at his face, and you'll see his reaction. Then you can know exactly what to do, since he has tipped his hand, and shown his intention. Example: You throw a threatening jab (good safe angle, well covered, but believable) and he reacts by moving slightly back away. This tells you to do the same thing, but follow with an overhand to catch him because you know where his head is going to be after the jab.

The chin - The chin is the magic button. Tuck yours in, exploit his. Some people look really tough, but they go down from a tap on the chin. Whereas, trying to knock a guy out by punching his skull can take a while, unless you hit really hard. Head's like a helmet. Not a good target, unless you can already break patio blocks with your fists. I've knocked people out by punching their skull without hurting my hands, but it takes a while to get your fists tough enough for it (not to mention the hell you'll have to pay in your older age).

Jab like a fencer - Jabbing is a game of controlled lunging in coordinated footwork to achieve the right range for other things. Some people use the jab in a light way, like a fly swatter. I (Mr. Frank Ben) like to use it light, but also as a heavier punch as well with enough speed AND weight to use it both ways. I fully agree with that

Sparring - The quality of your sparring partners will influence your skill level. Highly skilled fighters do not need to go full contact all the time to get a lot from the exchange.

Besides, if you're a heavyweight 195lbs and up, here's an important stat for you: 87% of all heavyweight pros suffer from permanent brain damage as a result of full contact sparring and fighting. No thanks. I want to be able to remember my wife's name when I'm 60.

Remember that there's no million-dollar purse waiting for you at the end of your sparring match. It's just you versus your ego. So get in there to learn and try new things not to 'win'.

Moreover, you can't explore new combinations and options if there's too big a price to pay. When somebody is out there trying to knock your block off all the time, you'll tend to fall back on just surviving instead of consciously enforcing actions that are intelligent if not yet reflexive.

Shadowboxing - You should shadowbox **EVERY DAY**. The most valuable training experiences for me have been those little 15 or 20-minute sessions where I shadowbox and play with different angles and combos. Keeps you sharp, too.

I personally shadow box everyday for at least 3 rounds before and after a workout as a means of warming up and cooling off. It makes a world of difference when it's done with intense proper visualization rather than "air fighting".

Number or name your combos - Start with basic combinations I.e. Jab, Cross – double Hook – Hook, uppercut – Cross Lead Hook etc.

PUNCHES

1. Jab (straight blast / awkward jab/ traditional Boxing Jab)
2. Reverse / Cross
3. Lead & rear hooks
4. Lead & rear Uppercuts
5. Lead & Rear Overhand
6. Back-fist
7. Spinning Back-fist

The feeder (person holding the focus mitt) should collide the mitts with your punches so that the mitts do not snap back, making it possible for him to stay with you on faster combinations, and to give you a satisfying impact when you punch. Next, work into advancing combos where the feeder throws angles after your first one or two shots, you evade and continue with your counter.

The trapping/close quarter combat range AKA the clinching range.

This is where most fights start. This is where you can effectively immobilize or trap one or more of your opponent's limbs while striking or controlling him. Good tactile sensitivity (the ability to interpret your opponent's energy through the sense of touch) is necessary in this range. Since the hand is quicker than the eye and you might not be able

to see your opponent's hands (possibly reaching for a concealed weapon) you need to know where his limbs are at all times by keeping a "stick" on him.

The trapping range's arsenal consists of some of the most devastating weapons in a fighter's arsenal.

Finger jabs, palm strikes, eye and throat gouging, head butting, knees, elbows, locks, finger breaks, spitting, biting, hair pulling, chokes, hook punches, uppercuts, joint manipulations and more.

If you choose a range in which to excel in it should be this one since most fights, rapes, aggravated assaults start at this range. The CQC range is usually reached through dialogue and communication. The gap gets bridged through use of dialogue and suddenly your attacker is in your face. For the most part, it doesn't necessarily mean that the fight has gotten to an aggressive physical state yet. The attacker might have grabbed your lapels or hair, he might have or is shoving you or taunting you but he's still in your face.

The danger in the CQC range is the sucker punch since the hand is quicker than the eye at this distance. This is where the passive stance and reflexive response pays off most.

The pros of the trapping range

- 1) Tactile sensitivity
- 2) Most people don't know how to fight in this range
- 3) You always know where your opponents limbs are
- 4) Primary targets are very accessible
- 5) Use of shield during multiple attacker situation
- 6) Easy disarm of weapons attack

The cons of the trapping range

- 1) Tactile sensitivity (your opponent has it too)
- 2) Your primary targets are easily reached
- 3) Concealed weapons

The grappling / ground-fighting range.

The grappling range is where your opponent has clinched you and you've entered the energy vortex. There are 3 energies that apply to grappling: Negation, release and redirection. When first clinched it becomes almost instinctual to negate and fight force against force. The intelligent fighter will then realize the error of his ways and begin to release the negation in order to redirect that energy or force in his favor.

Grappling usually consists of wrestling your opponent down to the ground in order to establish a superior position on them and prevail using a submission move from an array

of techniques. In ground fighting, the same occurs, however once on the ground you also have access to striking. Grappling can occur both standing and on the ground. It is imperative to have a grappling and ground-fighting arsenal. Many “Reality Based” instructors and trainers today ignore this range stating “*Never go to the ground and if you do, just eye gouge or rip his throat/ear off etc.*”

Several things eluded these so-called experts. For one, human and variable error. Shit happens. Slipping, falling, tripping, icy surface etc. Two, what if your opponent just got off his motorcycle wearing a leather jacket and motorcycle helmet and took you down to the ground? What are you going to do? Eye gouging is out. Biting is out. Ear tearing is out. Throat strikes are very limited. You better have an excellent understanding of the grappling game at this point or sayonara sister.

Make no mistake about it; a grappler is a very dangerous opponent. Like Boxers, they are for the most part actually fighting, experiencing contact, understanding proximity sense, sweating and understanding. As opposed to most martial artists who practice control, hitting the air or BOB dummies, one step sparring and consensual combat training, grapplers and boxers are warrior athletes.

However, there is a disturbing trend out there and it concerns many fighters and practitioners of hand-to-hand combat. The trapping range (a.k.a. the close quarter combat range) is being used (if at all) as a transition range. As a way to get into grappling.

Let it be crystal clear: The trapping range is not someplace you cruise through while getting into the grappling range when survival is concerned. There are too many cons in doing this that may result in your defeat.

As stated earlier, it is dangerous to look at a fight as a purely physical situation. It’s necessary to define what the specifics of the situation are. Do you need to be on your feet? Is there a potential of multiple attackers? Are there or could there be weapons involved? What’s the environment like (ice, gravel, snow, elevator, subway/metro station?) Are you alone? What are you wearing and could it be used against you (Tie, large coat etc.?)

In the questions just asked, we haven’t looked at the nature of the 'attack'. But each question probably created a mental image of a scenario based on your perceptions of the nature of the event through the nature of pro-activity. However, before you strike someone or apply a chokehold it’s primarily important to learn how to assess the situation.

For example: What would you do if someone grabbed you by the throat and pinned you to a wall? It is simple to come up with a physical retaliation such as “Trap the hands, knee the individual to the groin area then side step behind them and apply a choke” But if the situation isn’t analytically dissected, then your physical response may not be the correct one.

Let me elaborate: What if that person who grabbed and pinned you to the wall was your brother and he was pissed off due to a misunderstanding? What if it was a waitress in a bar who just got her butt pinched by some other guy and mistook you for him? What if it's a six foot four biker who just doesn't like the way you looked at his woman and his 7 friends are right behind him?

Each one of these situations would require a different tactical response, which in turn would have an impact at how you would react physically.

Just as any other range of fighting, be it Boxing or Kicking, it's imperative to learn how to grapple and even more important to respect its limitations. A good fighter knows **how** to grapple; an intelligent fighter knows **when** to grapple. An intelligent fighter learns how to grapple in order to understand how to beat a grappler and/or handle himself on the ground.

Do what has to be done when it is called upon; never force a range or technique. A chess champion once said that the height in strategy is not in doing your best move but rather in doing the worst move for your opponent. That takes a certain amount of versatility and diverse-ability. There are times when it is necessary to ground-fight, even then, submissions and establishing positions isn't the most strategic thing one can do to enhance survivability. Ending the fight as quickly as possible using close quarter tools while on the ground is. For the most part, staying on your feet is optimal.

Remember that violent confrontations generally start at the close quarter range. If the confrontation is not taken care of verbally or physically at that range, or if the attack was unexpected and caught you completely off guard, only then would it probably go to the ground. Learning grappling skills is extremely important for total defense. If you are ever taken down to the ground you will not panic. You'll have the necessary tools and tactics at your disposal. However strictly concentrating your efforts on grappling or any other range for that matter will hinder your chances of survival in many real altercations.

It's important to be diversified and skilled in all ranges. If the confrontation gets physical you must have no physical preference. Tony Blauer went on to put it "*The superior fighter has no emotional attachment to any range.*" An excellent quote which defines the nature of the open mind. I had received an email once asking me, regarding Tony's quote "*But what about techniques?*" Although, in my opinion, ranges include techniques, I replied and went on to add that the superior fighter has no emotional attachment to any particular tool, style, technique or range of combat. Only then will you be capable of making a quick and strategic choice and apply the range to the confrontation that suits the situation and environment best. Be open and responsive, do not plan, planning fixates your energy... be prepared instead. Preparation allows for versatility and is open and fluid to the moment.

* The following article is written by Senshido Instructor Marc Ste. Marie

* Routine... same ol' boring crap... Get up, get dressed, eat breakfast, fight with the wife over something insignificant, hop on a train... 12 hours of your life elapses... work... and for the life of you, you don't have a clue what you have accomplished in the grand scheme of things.

Your footsteps echo like a cerebral metronome regulating the flow of thoughts invading your mind. Drifting through all the clutter like the "flying Dutchman", you mechanically set a course for home oblivious to your surroundings... and of course, don't notice a pair of dirt bags on a parallel course with you until they rudely block your path, demanding something you probably don't have or don't want to give.

Funny... actually NOT funny... well, you know what I mean. Funny how your metabolism goes from 0 to 60 in a tenth of a second. From insensitive torpor to feeling like your nerve endings are crackling like live wires. "I'm sorry, I didn't get that..." sounds like the thing to say, but somehow, I felt like there was no acceptable answer for those lads. "I don't need this crap" rings in my head; I sidestep and take my leave right? Wrong. Step left, step right, your stepping in it, ankle deep. Adrenaline starts to drip at an ever-increasing rate leaving you with the taste of ashes in your mouth, Jell-O legs and the feeling your lunch is on its way.

"Alright, what do you want?" Simple question... who would expect a fist across the face for an answer? Apparently, I didn't. Crack! I'm down, fireworks in my head and coals burning in my jaw. "Get up, c'mon" the little voice inside my head says... easier said than done. Performing a drunken jig, I make it up, gather my thoughts. It is so damn fuzzy... shadows are dancing around me, pain is on the way. Like a moron, I pat my pockets. Really, maybe I can hand them money... right? Wrong. All I can come up with is a stupid pen. "You guys take checks?" Here comes the big shadow... In goes the pen... Out comes the scream. "FUCK! My eye, my fucking eye, my eye!!!" You get the picture.

I stumble away, still groggy, a voice screams at me... don't ask why, I don't look back, maybe I only hope I hear one voice. Wishing distance between my lone pursuer and me *hopefully lone*, my right thigh seizes, the baseball bat probably had something to do with it. I whirl around. Suddenly my wife does not piss me off anymore, I want to hold her tell her that I don't want to fight anymore... so many things are unsaid. But hey! Life dealt me a shitty hand right now. I look at those two, yes two mutts; reality sets in, and, I reflexively drop in a stance, desperate. Can't say it's a fighting stance but the stance of a man who wants to go home, the stance of someone whose brain has numbed the pain centers and has accepted his faith... Crack, the goddamn bat again, my arm is broken... Shit... There are instants in a man's life where his pain becomes his fuel, the whip that drives him. I wish I could describe what happened next, but all I can remember swims in a haze. Metal flashed, bodies tangled. "I'm coming home baby..." All I can remember is kneeling on someone's chest and pounding him, using my broken arm as a club. I lost

it bad. They are lying there inanimate like grotesque puppets. I wished they'd move, I could pound them again. I'm in a different fight now. I've picked up this brick and I'm battling the urge I have to turn them into dog meat.

What kept my hand? Hell if I know. The Spartans use to say that the mind accesses "rooms" where there is no mercy, no quarter while in combat... to later pull back in rooms where love and decency dwell. Well, shit, something busted me out of room number one... what? You tell me smart-ass.

So, the worst is over? Nope, my body allows the pain to creep back... It's awful man I need help. Everything is closed; I catch a glimpse of myself in a window... Lopsided and pathetic, a real Dickens character. Two thousand dollars worth of designer clothing and I look like the "artful dodger" *yes I read Oliver Twist....* A few more excruciating steps bring me to Tim Horton's, twenty four-hour donut and coffee joint, and hopefully a phone I can use. I'm so happy I'm weeping.

I approach the nice lady at the counter and ask for help. My jaw is badly dislocated and although I want to say: "Can I call my wife, I've been mugged", all that comes out is spittle, blood and grunts. The concerned cook comes out with a pipe and tells me to get "the fuck out of there". I pass out.

So... why do I write this? My arm's healing... slowly, my jaw is back in place thanks to a surgery (*I look like Frankenfuckinstein*) and my wife still drives me nuts. I know I should feel good but I don't. I feel like crap. I hate those punks. They brought the worst out of me, they made me lose my humanity for a few fleeting moments, the elation I felt after thrashing them is not something a decent human being feels like. On top of it, they are suing me! Now I wish I'd switched them off... well not really... I don't know anymore... The head shrinker told me to put it all on paper; he said it would help me... it doesn't.

The above story is a pretty accurate description of surviving real violence. No BS stories of how a secret Russian combative technique was used, no crap about flying arm bars or extreme detail about every techniques used or angles appropriated, just the reality of being caught off guard at the wrong moment. Why? Because unlike a NHB event a self defense situation presents a different perspective:

There are no weapons in NHB events. Your opponent won't pull out a knife in the middle of your bout and start gutting you with it. He won't crack your arm with a baseball bat. He won't break a beer bottle and try to sever your jugular with it. He won't pull out a gun and shoot you with it.

There are no multiple attackers in NHB events. Your opponent's friend won't jump in and kick you in the head while you have your opponent in your guard for 10 minutes. His friends won't jump in and smash a bottle or crow bar against your skull in the ring or octagon. You don't have to worry about being blindsided.

You fight in a controlled environment in NHB events. You don't grapple on gravel or broken glass or cement in NHB events. You don't have to worry about a slippery or icy surface in NHB events. You don't have to worry about knee high snow or its suffocating you while in the guard for 10 minutes in NHB events. You don't have to worry about blizzards, rain, winds or low visibility in the ring or octagon. You're not in a train, staircase, elevator, subway in a MMA fight therefore you have no worries about falling into subway/metro tracks. You don't have to worry about being pushed through a plate glass window and get disfigured by broken glass or get tossed off a balcony of a 10-story building.

Your clothing and variables won't limit you in NHB events. You're not wearing a suit and tie or skirt and heels in MMA. You're not wearing winter boots, gloves and a 3-quarter winter jacket in the ring or octagon. You're not carrying your 10-month-old baby in your arms while fighting in NHB events. Your wife or mother isn't next to you while fighting in NHB events.

Your health isn't an issue in NHB events. You don't compete if you have a flu or fever or sickness when fighting in the ring or octagon. You don't compete and fight if you have a sprained ankle, broken wrist or bad back in NHB events.

Your state of being isn't an issue in NHB events. You won't compete if you only had 4 hours sleep per night over the last 3 days due to a hectic work schedule. You won't compete if you had too much to drink with some buddies to kick back after a long workweek.

Your opponent is not jacked on Heroin, Morphine, Cocaine, Crack or any other substance while fighting in NHB events. Or... maybe he is actually. Are they drug testing in MMA?

You know your opponent and what style of fighting he trains in before the fight and can therefore prepare for him weeks or months in advance.

You know when, what time and where you are going to fight in advance and can train, eat, sleep and supplement accordingly prior to the fight, you even have the luxury of warming up before the fight.

You can tap out, the ref can stop the fight or your corner can throw in the towel in an NHB fight.

More importantly, in NHB, there is consent awareness and preparation, luxuries we do not possess in a real self defense situation.

See the difference? Each of these points are crucial elements in a real confrontation or fight.

Sub Ranges

There are also sub-ranges. When integrating the ranges together you will notice that you can use tools from another range into the particular one you are in. For example, when in the Boxing/punching range you have access to certain kicks from the kicking range and strikes from the trapping range, these are sub-ranges. The nucleus is the mother range and everything flowing from it that doesn't belong to the nucleus is a sub-range.

In working sub ranges, learning how to shift fluidly from the nucleus to the sub range and back, takes precision, control, balance and accuracy. The shift takes minimal footwork, it is mostly weight transfers and pivoting that takes place during the shift.

Such as throwing a jab then following it up with a lead Thai Kick to the inner thigh followed immediately by a reverse/cross, rear knee, lead elbow combination. The nucleus of this combo is the Boxing range with kicking and trapping as its sub ranges.

Train sub ranges fluidity by placing yourself in a particular range and working your stance shifting and weight displacements offensively and defensively.

REMEMBER:

“A good fighter knows *how* to grapple, An intelligent fighter knows *when* to grapple.”

Senshido Adage

“Fighting resides more in the physical while defense resides more in the psychological.”

Senshido Adage

CHAPTER 7

KNIVES AND OTHER EDGED WEAPONS

Basic Defensive Knife Fighting Tactics

The following is something I borrowed from **Marc MacYoung's** web site. It illustrates a point we've been making since 1991.

"How many knife fights have you been in?"

"Well I've studied Kali for 15 years under Master..."

"No, how many times has someone tried to gut you in a dark alley?"

"I'm trained in five different knife fighting styles...."

"Around this time I usually have an overwhelming desire to rub my forehead and sigh. Yeah, I'm dealing with a knife fighter here. Has he ever stabbed anyone? Has he ever faced a knife in a dark parking lot? Has he ever had anyone try to play show and tell with his vital organs? No, but by gawd, he is a "Knife Fighter"."

Marc "The Animal" MacYoung

With that in mind, let's continue.

According to a statistic done by Author of The Fighting Edge and The Logic Of Steel James Lafond, forty percent of all acts of violence involve a weapon. Forty four percent involve mostly blunt weapons; more common is a beer bottle. Eleven percent of all violence and twenty nine percent of armed encounters involve a knife or knife like weapon such as a razor or a shank.

Also according to Lafond, the most common type of knife used by an attacker is a folding pocket or case knife three to five inches in length and more often than not, the knife is used as a tool to threaten with. The static knife attack is more common than people think. It turns out that eleven percent of utility knives and nine percent of straight razors that are used are used to threaten with a touch. More commonly around the throat, carotid and facial areas than anywhere else on the body. Then comes the slasher and stabber phase, usually due to little, no, or a poor attempt at verbal defuse, but rather an immediate challenge or threatening tone as a response to the knife being pulled out in a threatening manner.

Most attacks made by blades are made in urban settings at nighttime, forty percent happen in bars and homes. Fifty six percent happen outside on sidewalks, lots, streets and alleyways. Two thirds of shank attacks happen indoors, mostly in jails, prisons and sadly and unfortunately, public schools.

It's no secret that at twenty one feet or less, the average individual with a knife in hand can bridge the gap and filet you under two seconds. As a matter of fact, I believe the average time to close the distance at that range is 1.5 seconds. Fast hunh?

Tests were done by the FBI and at twenty-one feet a man armed with a knife will reach and gut his victim before he can draw his gun, aim and fire off a stopping shot.

Thankfully though, unless you're a law enforcement officer or someone who places themselves in harms way intentionally or due to work, the above scenario is a rarity. Majority of the time, you'll be facing a static attack aimed at threatening you and empowering your opponent to achieve his desired goal.

In working knife defense, rather than memorize catalogued techniques, it is more important to learn spontaneous movement, sensitivity, good footwork, fear management, and being aware of the predatory/prey psychology that exists in such confrontations. The knife is but a tool used to convey fear and command respect, in the hands of an EDI, it is a deadly tool. Don't fear the knife; fear the hand that controls it.

“When Death is the alternative, Injury has its appeal”

Col. George Day

There are many misconceptions, stigmas and beliefs concerning surviving edged weapons. For example, one of my students having studied numerous martial arts but predominantly longer range systems than any other had the firm belief that kicking a knife out of the assailant's hand was a functional method of disarming. Truth to tell, you are much more likely to get your leg or foot cut than you are to disarm the attacker using a kick. The simple dynamic of movement and proximity are at the kicker's disadvantage. Simply judge the distance your foot has to move to reach the intended target VS the knife hand's distance to move out of the way from the oncoming kick. The kick needs to travel approximately 3 to 4.5 feet to reach the knife hand and the knife hand has only to move 2 to 5 inches to make the kick completely miss. Logic would have you dismissing this “movie” technique insofar as survival is concerned.

Other beliefs include that a small knife is of little or no danger. I base this on the fact that I was once attacked by a guy carrying a one-inch (stop laughing!) Swiss Army knife. Whenever I recounted the story and mentioned the type of knife, everyone chuckled like it was of no concern or no danger. It's painfully obvious when someone has never been in a life threatening violent confrontation. It is scary to see the amount of damage that a one or two inch blade can cause. Marc MacYoung demonstrates the effects of a slash, on a slab of beef in some of his videos. A small blade can be easily concealed and manipulated and used with devastating and lethal effects against major arteries. Ask my attacker how he felt after I disarmed him and stuck his own knife one-inch deep into his thigh then twisted it and lifted it. He wasn't laughing I assure you.

There's another misconception that if someone is holding a knife a certain way, he's then automatically construed as a knife expert or professional. Maybe yes, maybe no. There are several ways in holding a knife and they can easily be learned just by looking at a picture or studying a video. Just because someone grips a blade in a certain way doesn't automatically make him an expert knife fighter.

For the most part, with an expert knife fighter, you won't even know he has a knife until you're dead or bleeding. Experts don't telegraph or announce to the world that they are carrying or using a blade.

Generally speaking, if the knife hasn't yet penetrated you, meaning, if the attacker is using it as a threat device, there is still time to do something about it. Using the ten steps in surviving a violent confrontation, you can manipulate the attacker's behavior to your advantage. However, it is important to remember two things. There is huge debate in our industry over the fact that the following beliefs creates a deficit mentality, here I share with you my perspective, if it works for you, then great, if not... make sure that whatever belief you choose to hold onto, does... ;-)

1. **Expect to get cut.** As I stated already, many experts do not advocate this belief due to the fact that they claim it is programming a victim's mindset. I beg to differ. In a knife fight or attack situation, if you do not expect to get cut and you do, you will most likely panic and freeze up. You may not feel the cut due to the adrenal stress condition but you may see an enormous amount of blood, and that, if you've never experienced it before is a freaky thing. It's happened to me twice. A quick slash; you don't even realize there is a weapon then you feel this "wetness" across your chest, you look down only to see a little pool of blood absorbed in your shirt grow bigger by the second....

The second time? I was in a bar one time (not working, just leisure) waiting for a friend of mine to show up when four hostile individuals decided they didn't like my face (as strange a phenomenon as it may seem, it's true.☹) To make a long story short, they circled around me and one of them flipped his beer bottle and grabbed it by the nozzle. After a failed attempt at verbally defusing the situation, I engaged and immediately took the leader down and out.

His buddy wasn't too happy about it so he decided to break the beer bottle and try and cut my throat out. Thankfully, I evaded his slash but I got nicked across the corner of my eye, which caused a dramatic amount of blood to come out of my face. I didn't panic because, one, I expected to get hit and two; I've bled before during violent confrontations which causes a certain degree of desensitization, not a good thing if you asked me as I would have much rather not lived most of the crap I lived in my life but hey! Live and learn. ☺. There was a lot of blood pouring out of the corner of my eye and even though I didn't feel it at the time, it caused vision impairment, which could have been detrimental in a now three on one situation.

In the end, I subdued my attackers only to get jumped by the bouncer who ended up paying for it as well. Asshole... 4 on 1 and he picks on me. Point being, in both situations had I not expected to get cut, I would have panicked and maybe no one would be reading this as it would exist CAUSE NEITHER WOULD I!!!!

Point made? ☺

2. **Accept the fact that you were cut and move on.** Don't stop to assess the situation there and then because your attacker will not give you the chance to do so. Had I stopped to 'check myself out' after I got cut, once again, in all seriousness, you wouldn't be reading this book right now. I'd be dead. Had I never expected to get cut, I would have panicked when cut and froze (stopped) to examine the wound.

For the most part, you probably won't even feel the cut due to the adrenaline factor and survival instinct. Several law enforcement officers shot or stabbed in the line of duty continued fighting only to notice an enormous amount of blood in the middle of the physical confrontation.

One officer went on to describe it as thinking it was his opponent bleeding and that he was confused because he hadn't shot him at that point. Only later did the officer realize it was his own blood.

The moment of danger is when you realize you've been stabbed or shot and allow panic to set in. What does panic cause? Freezing. Freezing leads to victimization. Accept it. Expect and accept and you will deal with it a lot better if it happens. It's a preparatory mindset. There's a saying that goes "*Chance favors the prepared mind.*"

If you've gotten cut or stabbed, only check it out after the confrontation is over. There are a few steps to take to insure your well being as best as possible depending of course on the length and depth of the cut.

Steps to take if you've gotten cut or stabbed (even shot for that matter).

1. Assess the situation. Is the confrontation really over? Where is your opponent? Does he have friends? Are there any other potential threats?
2. Assess yourself. Are you breathing properly? Where are you bleeding from? Can you get to a phone or get someone else to call 911?
3. Control your breathing and slow down your heart rate. The faster your heart is pumping the more blood you will lose.
4. Once determined where you are bleeding from, control the bleeding as soon as possible. Apply direct pressure to the wound preferably with a sanitary napkin, piece of clothing or your hand.
5. Can you move? Depending on the severity of the cut or stab, it is best to move as little as possible unless you have absolutely no choice whatsoever. Remember that you may be in a state of shock and that you will be dealing with adrenaline withdrawal, this will leave a feeling of nausea and light-headedness (not to mention from the blood loss as well). Tell yourself that this is normal and expected under the circumstances and don't panic.

6. Are you injured anywhere else? Make sure you are not cut or stabbed anywhere else, make a thorough check on yourself.
7. Are your five senses fully functional? Can you see, hear, smell, feel and taste? You may lose feeling in the area where you were cut or stabbed, this is generally a sign of severe blood loss or trauma.

In a knife attack, there are two general rules applicable.

2 General Rules of Knife attacks.

Rule # 1: Respect the knife. General Patton told his soldiers never to play with their weapons as it eroded the respect for war. The knife is not a toy. It is a dangerous weapon in the hands of an EDI or sociopath or worse yet, an insecure male.

Rule # 2: In physically defending against a static knife attack it is imperative to use psychological tools to thought process interrupt the assailant before you make a physical move. Use the passive stance and a verbal initiator such as “*What do you want?*” or “*My money is in my wallet man, in my back pocket, do you want to reach for it or should I?*” And when the attacker shifts his focus away from slicing you to answering the question or looking at the wallet, that is when it is the best time to grab the weapon hand.

In physically grabbing the knife hand or wrist you **must**:

- A) **Clear your body.** Move the opposite direction of the blade.
- B) **Stabilize the weapon hand.** Hard and with a death grip using 2 hands.
- C) **Neutralize the attacker.** By any and all means possible until he is no longer a threat.

In the Close Quarter range there is no more dangerous weapon than the knife. Certain arteries are more vulnerable to attack than others. None the less, a professional with a knife will be able to hit even the harder to get ones - so make sure your awareness of these is acute.

Avoid getting cut in the following areas:

- 1) Brachial Artery (inside the biceps). A half an inch in depth of cut will result in loss of consciousness in 14 seconds and death in one and a half-minute.
- 2) Radial Artery (the wrist). A quarter inch in depth of cut will result in loss of consciousness in 30 seconds and death in 2 and a half minutes.
- 3) Carotid Artery (left or right side of neck). A 1 and a half-inch depth of cut will result in loss of consciousness in 5 seconds and death in 12 seconds.

- 4) Subclavian (behind the left clavicle bone). A 2 and a half-inch depth of cut will result in loss of consciousness in 2 seconds and death in 3 and a half seconds.
- 5) Heart. A 3 and half inch depth stab will result in loss of consciousness immediately and death in 3 seconds.
- 6) The Stomach. A 5-inch stab will result in loss of consciousness and/or death depending on the depth of the cut.
- 7) Throat (Windpipe). Pretty much the same as the carotid arteries.

Other areas to avoid getting cut.

- 8) Femoral Artery (The inner thigh).
- 9) Achilles Tendon (back of the ankle above the bone). This will not kill you or make you lose consciousness however it will take away your mobility and possible ability to run or even stand. Not good.
- 10) Middle and back of neck, upward stab into brain.
- 11) Into the ears. (Weapons like screwdrivers and pencils).
- 12) Stomach. Depending on the depth and length of cut, it can be a fatal blow. However, if stabbed in the stomach, it is more likely to cause psychological hesitation and confusion and allow your opponent to capitalize.

Weapons – Concealed and Improvised

You need to understand weapons and their applications; both concealed or improvised ones. The best way to understand weapons is to know how to kill with one. Someone not qualified to instruct knife fighting is not qualified to teach knife defense. We have witnessed some so called martial arts experts teach the most ridiculous defensive knife fighting techniques to their students, stuff that would get people killed if they attempted to use the garbage taught to them in these pathetic classes. These so called “masters” have no social responsibilities whatsoever and it is also painfully obvious that they have never been in nor witnessed a real fight in their lives.

Besides learning the conventional weapons, I.e. Knife, stick, gun, etc. one also needs to know how to use improvised weapons. In a society where the law abiding citizen is frowned upon for carrying means of self protection, in a world where instituted policies take your fundamental right to protect yourself and flushes it down the toilet by asking you to trust a system that fails to “disarm” real criminals, there still exist ways for the law abiding citizen to carry weapons that won’t get him in trouble with the system.

In a penitentiary, when a man feels threatened, he will arm himself with whatever he can find. He might sharpen a stick, a piece of Plexiglas, metal; fit a razor blade to a toothbrush etc.... Mister "everybody" can easily carry "little surprises" that will help him prevail in an attempt on his person. Here are a few suggestions that could be easily used without causing trouble with big brother.

PENCILS. You are on your way to your car... so you grab your trusted HB 2 pencil on your way, pause for a few seconds at the electric sharpener, et voila! Held in the ice pick grip, you can cause facial injuries or jam it in someone's "equipment" on a rear attack.

TOYS. They make great car weapons. Most sports stores sell beautiful little aluminum baseball bats. Perfect size for junior. Also perfect to crack a punk's head. The idea is to leave it in the car with a baseball glove and a ball. "Your honor, my nephew forgot his things at my place, and my intention was to drop it at his place on my way home..." You have just justified the presence of the bat in your car. Senshido instructor Mark Ste. Marie has a toy gardening shovel that he got for his son...a fabulous red spade that (after testing) sliced a melon in half in 3 hacks. What officer would give the thing a second glance on you back seat?

TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE. You work in a shop... nobody would question you about the "Olfa" box cutter on your belt. You are an electrician you say? A few screwdrivers in a nice little pouch on your belt would not attract any undue attention. I mean, who could tell that you actually sharpened one on a belt sander. OK, so you're a white-collar kind of guy; that's cool. Take a pen, something stylish, maybe a Parker or if it is within your means, a Mont Blanc, why sacrifice style? Replace the ink thing on the inside by a same diameter steel rod. On the same belt sander (ask the electrician guy...nicely), to give the tip a point, not too much, and you have a nice spike that can be used as a kubotan without attracting the unwanted attention.

GROOMING TOOLS. (For ladies) Rat tail combs are great. I would carry one but it is out of fashion for men to have these in their back pockets since 1978. Great to jam in, rake, puncture, and perforate a punk's face. Take a wooden hairbrush and break the handle with a hammer, you get a nice sharp end. "Sorry your honor, I just couldn't afford a new brush". Eyeliner pencil can be used the same way a HB 2 can using sufficient force. Travel size bottles of hair spray filled with Javex or ammonia are great for praying the facial area.

YOUR CLOTHING. A little file work on studs can go a long way when dealing with the unpleasant elements of society. You know... It's not your fault if he rubbed his face on you jacket sleeve and lost an ear. So he decided to hang himself using your tie, what could you do? The buckle of a belt works nicely too when swung like a whip.

However, weapons, even improvised ones such as the myriad's mentioned above must be used properly and in conjunction with the human body. A good hand to hand combat fighter will not telegraph the use of such weapons and his assailant would only be made aware of them once the damage has already been done.

If you do not know how to fight or use your own natural weapons I.e. tools, do not attempt to use an extension weapon, **ever**. For the most part, those who used a weapon without knowing how to use their own body, had it taken away from them and generally used against them.

Improvised weapons can be anywhere from a ball point pen to pool balls or a fridge door. In a book written by Marc MacYoung, (*highly recommended for it's street psychology*) called **Cheap Shots Ambushes and other Lessons** he tells a story of a guy who would always stand near a pool table in a bar before a fight would break out. He'd put his buck in, get a rack of balls and wait for anyone to come near him and whip a ball at their chest. Darts are also a good resourceful weapon. Broomsticks, pool sticks, keys, etc. all improvised weapons.

Other sources of improvised weapons involve items not usually regarded as weapons at all. A telephone for instance. You're next to a phone and you're being threatened. You pick up the phone pretending or attempting to call the police when your attacker comes closer to you to hang it up or rip out the cord and WHAM, you bash him in the head or across his hand using the five principals of physical retaliation.

An ashtray. I once broke a guy's teeth using one. A cup of hot coffee or tea or any liquid for that matter, hot or cold. Splash it in the guy's face and strike on the half beat.

The key is to realize that the improvised weapon can be used one of two ways.

1. As a fight stopper. You used it successfully to end the confrontation and disable your opponent long enough for you to escape safely.
2. A distraction causing a reflexive response in order to capitalize on and strike on the half beat in order to terminate the threat.

Every principal and concept that is mentioned in this book is applicable to defensive weapon's training. Remember; the weapon is but an extension of your body.

CHAPTER 8

DRILL TRAINING AND THE OVERKILL MENTALITY

In Drill Work

When working drills, it is critical to visualize and understand why it is you're doing what you are doing. The most common mistakes made in training is in not being able to make the link between the drill and its application in sparring or combat.

You must have a philosophical reason behind **everything** that you do.

For example: Most people when they train simply execute the movements because they were told to do so by the instructor. Although they might execute it with intensity, they are not mentally linking the technique or movement to combat.

When working the double end ball for instance, if you simply hit it with multiple combinations but are not actually seeing or visualizing a human head bobbing and weaving and trying to hit you back, you are simply hitting an inanimate object with no purpose other than to physically condition you. The true fighter pictures every drill he or she does, regardless of whether it's hitting focus mitts, a heavy bag or a speedball: **as a fight**. Therefore when sparring, the link is made between the drill and the combat.

That is why (*besides the fact that sparring may be limited or non-existing – *see following page footnote*) there are so many trained martial artists whom you may see execute or display awesome skill on an inanimate object or the air, but once in the ring or street, they fall apart and can't piece it together.

When doing a drill, any kind of drill regardless, ask yourself the following questions:

“Why am I doing this?”

“Why did I land here?”

“Why did I move this way?”

“Did moving this direction serve me?”

“Is it putting me in a position where I can capitalize or counter effectively?”

“What can I and my opponent do from here now?”

“What is the most unconventional thing I can do from here that may take my opponent off guard and / or surprise him?”

“Can I see my opponent from everywhere I position myself?”

“Can I see my surroundings I.e. Environment, people, etc.?”

“What if my opponent had a concealed weapon on him?”

If working in close quarter combat range, ask yourself the following:

“Do I have a tactile sense?”

“Is my entire physical being working synergistically in total defense of the self?”

“What if he had a knife or other type of concealed weapon on him?”

“Am I aware that he may not be alone?”

If you are not answering these questions in drill training then you are simply getting an aerobic workout. You are not making that distinct connection between the fight and the fight training. They remain two separate entities in your sub-conscious mind.

Drills should also always be kept alive. What I mean by alive is that for a drill to be truly alive then it has to have three important key elements:

1. Full range of motion

Meaning the movement, the attack, the defense should be from A to Z. If you're working a defense against a one-arm lapel grab for instance, at first, to get used to the movement it's all right to isolate it and work through it slow. Once you've gotten the dynamics of the biomechanics down then you need to apply the lapel grab from a neutral point to the moment of the grab. The grab itself should be dynamic and not static.

2. Resistance

Once the lapel grab is made, the intended attacker should offer resistance and not let the defense come so easily. React realistically and offensively and defensively towards the defender's physical retaliation in order to see if the retaliation is effectively being executed.

3. Realistic energy

In applying the lapel grab, the attacker should come in hard and with momentum as a real aggressive individual would. The grab should jerk the defender off balance and the attacker should be almost barreling through the defender. Acting becomes imperative. Add dialogue to the attack to make it three-dimensional.

It is also essential to understand that no matter how alive, visualized or intense the drill is, it is still a drill. You should never get caught up in the drill itself but understand that it is a tool used for development.

***Keep in mind:** If your training strictly consists of drill training (regardless of the fact that you are mentally making the link through visualization) and has limited or no sparring and scenario based training involved, then you are still not learning how to fight or defend yourself effectively or holistically. You are then missing the biggest and most important piece of the puzzle.

During any and all drills, it is important for the "bad guy" too properly and convincingly play his roles accordingly in order to maximize on the drills. Reality based training requires the proper use of body language, dialogue and methods of attack by the participant in order to enhance chances of survival.

In the street, the attack is accompanied by a surge of emotion, usually anger or extreme rage so if your partner is not duplicating that body language then you will not be used to the signals given off in a real attack.

As Bruce Lee prophetically stated, you cannot learn how to swim standing at the edge of the pool.

The Overkill Mentality

The overkill mentality produces a survival mind set. In training, the student is taken far beyond the usual setting and time frame of a real fight. The protective equipment allows for the attacker(s) to continue coming at you regardless of the amount of strikes administered to their vital targets.

In reality, the fight would have changed its course the minute either one of the fighters would have been struck in such a vital area that would have caused them to either immediately react defensively or drop. Instead, the attacker keeps on coming and the fight can and will last anywhere between three minutes to forty-five minutes of continuous combative action.

This prepares the combatants for anything and fosters a well conditioned mind, body and spirit. In certain situations, one or more of the attackers is given a weapon that he pulls out randomly during the fight. Or a (plastic) broken bottle is suddenly tossed into the equation close enough for either of the combatants to grab it. This sort of overkill training makes the participant weary, builds mental toughness and not to mention, pushes their physical capabilities to levels where they actually experience the physiological and biochemical changes caused by the adrenal dump.

It is also psychologically challenging for most. It is not uncommon for a student to break into tears, or go into a very mild state of shock after such an experience. This also gets a person in touch with certain emotions that have been controlled or suppressed for the longest time. It is an exercise in character building as well as combat preparedness. However, once Pandora's box has been opened, even a crack, the student should work through the fear and emotional turmoil caused by the experience and DO IT AGAIN. Not doing so will only cause more shrinkage of the comfort zone and make matters worse for the student in terms of personal development.

Not all overkill training happens during high stress situations or combative drills. Most of the workout and warm up exercises have also been modified to use certain natural tools in a combative sense. For example while working the abdominals, the student will also work at executing strikes like a finger jab - palm strike combination, jab – cross combo, double horizontal elbows, eye gouge - head butt combo etc. They will also work at defensive tactics such as parrying, blocking jamming while crunching.

This keeps the mind working combatively as well as the body and keeps the student in a constant offense / defense mind set.

The student is also pushed physically to do more than he or she thinks they can. If you cannot do a series of push ups or a hard core abdominal routine, if you have to stop in the middle of your sparring match because you're "too tired", if you quit every time you begin to feel tired in order to rest, what makes you think you are going to survive a real knife fight?

The key is to make the training harder than anything you will ever possibly encounter so that anything you may face will pale in comparison. Your mind and body will be one hundred percent prepared for any attack on your self and will react accordingly in total defense of the self.

“What good is power if you cannot reach your target?”

Senshido Adage

“Distance creates opportunity.”

Senshido Adage

A little more **ZEN-SHIDO PHILOSOPHY** (Inspired by Dan Millman, Peaceful Warrior Services)

THE WARRIOR'S WAY

Due to our hard core approach to personal protection and hand to hand combat, we have been accused of having no philosophy and being nothing more than a blood and guts mutation of the traditional realm. I beg to differ. There is much reason behind our madness.

According to the Webster dictionary, the definition of philosophy is: **A study of the processes governing thought and conduct; theory or investigation of the principles or laws that regulate the universe and underlie all knowledge and reality; included in the study are aesthetics, ethics, logic, metaphysics etc.**

Wow...when Master Sensei expressed that Senshido had no philosophy behind it and that his art's philosophy is: *"Never look for trouble, but if it comes, be ready."* Or, *"Only use your skills to defend yourself and help others"*. We had to ask ourselves these questions: Is that the answer that Plato spent his life looking for? Did Jean-Paul Sartre miss that concept? Is that what the Epicureans are missing in their life? Hmmm... I think not.

A personal philosophy is acquired through participating in the struggles of life. Hard work, rigorous training, your interaction with your partners, teachers and coaches will play a part and affect your perceptions of life, but still, it is a small part of the equation of life. The journey is where you will develop your philosophies. Change, or rather, the willingness to change is where it all begins.

"We are where we should be, doing what we should be doing, or else, we'd be somewhere else doing something else."

CHINESE PROVERB

Where you are today is where you chose to be. Directly or indirectly, the choices we made in life were ours. They brought us to the point we are at right now. It is called free will.

In order to have a total understanding of Senshido one must first come to understand themselves. Senshido is a vehicle towards that path. Introspection is imperative to those who walk the warrior's way. Most people are conditioned by their fears, values and beliefs. As **Dan Millman** brilliantly states in his book *"Way of the Peaceful Warrior"* "The human *mind* is their predicament".

There is however, a considerable difference, between the "*mind*" and the organ we call the brain. We possess a brain that directs the body, processes information and stores that information. We refer to the brain's transcendent process as the "intellect." The brain and the *mind* are different. The brain is real; the *mind* is our perceptions of the brains

processed information. The “*mind*” is nothing more than an illusory development of our basic cerebral process.

It comprises all of our random, uncontrolled and unproductive thoughts that surge into our awareness from our subconscious. Consciousness, attention and awareness are not ‘*mind*’. The *mind* for the most part, becomes an obstruction and aggravation to our daily lives. It is an evolutionary mistake in the human beings evolutionary development. We have no productive use for the fettered *mind*. The difference is, warriors *let it go* and others cling to it.

Look at children for example, when we come into this world we are born knowing only life. The infant’s gift for learning is incontestable. Perceptive and keen observation of children can reveal the sources to their natural abilities. We can see that the child’s body is relaxed, free of limitations and preconceived obstructions and therefore sensitive and receptive. The child has no established or learned concepts, yet. Their unbridled emotions account for great motivational energies. The child learns complex patterns of speech and movement quite easily and rapidly and doesn’t yet understand the terms ‘quit’ or ‘failure’. The child doesn’t see the ‘impossibility’ of their tasks, if they did, we’d all be crawling and goo goo gagaing right now.

We were once that natural being, the child, remember? Our potentials were practically unlimited in any field of endeavor (learning to walk or communicate through speech for example) but then something happened. The socialization process that gave us essential information also, unfortunately, inflicted upon us fears, neuro-associations, concepts, attitudes and beliefs that drew us out of our natural patterns.

Our ‘*minds*’ formed an illusory self-concept; we learned to criticize ourselves; we began to fear failure; we placed (thanks to society) the wrong ideologies of life inside our ‘*minds*’. These emotional constrictions and inhibitions resulted in physical tension and dis-ease.

As we aged, we began to struggle with what we consider problematic and developed a variety of psycho/emotional-physical imbalances and compensations. I.e. lower back pains, muscular tension, headaches, stomach problems, ulcers etc. True consciousness is a sensitivity of the entire organism achieved through sensory feedback, cognitive clarity and emotional intuition, all of which are spiritually linked together. If it were nothing but an intellectual (logical, cerebral) affair, then babies would never be able to learn.

The adult ‘*mind*’ is full of compulsive, random and usually problematic thinking. If we remain blind to our weaknesses, we cannot correct them. The longer we accept failure, the more difficult it becomes to experience success. This compulsive attention to the ‘*minds*’ moods and impulses is a basic error. If we persist to give into these thoughts created by the *mind*, then we remain ourselves and change never occurs, I cannot fathom a worse fate.

The true warrior welcomes change, always willing to sacrifice who he is today for whom he can become tomorrow. This process can begin with the art of disillusionment.

Disillusion is the highest form of advancement we can give ourselves. However, because of our emotional attachment to illusions, we consider the term disillusion negative. The word dis-illusion precisely states a freeing from illusion. Yet people tend to cling to their illusions letting them take them where they may when clearly it is best to let them go rather than hang on to these prejudiced illusions. Reality is where life happens and if we are anywhere but there, we suffer, whether it is in the short or long term.

Most of humanity suffers in silence; they do not, in essence, fully enjoy their lives. For some, their entertainment's, the gym, reading a book, movies, sex, are not really entertainment but simply methods of escape. Temporary ways to distract them from their underlying sense of fear and reality, a reality that does not match their dreams. Life has become nothing more than mundane habit and routine. Before we know it 30, 50 or 60 years have gone by and we have no idea what happened or where it all went. Our obsessive search for distraction and escape from boredom and the predicament of change, the dilemma of life and death, seeking a purpose, financial security and trying to make sense of the mystery has diluted our natural sense of being and happiness. This belief in the exterior has diminished our individuality. People are enraptured by their own confused and mental processes. This acceptance of the '*status quo*' just because it is deemed normal by society's terms does not necessarily nor automatically make it right. What is right for others may not be right for you.

Knowledge and Wisdom are two different things. Knowledge is strictly one-dimensional. It is the comprehension of the intellect. Anyone with an average IQ can acquire knowledge. Wisdom on the other hand is three-dimensional. It is the holistic comprehension of the mental, emotional and physical. **It comes only from experience.** We are prisoners of our own illusions and we cannot see these constrictions we have imposed on ourselves because they are unfortunately deeply rooted from our childhood. These constrictions are then never unveiled or dealt with accordingly unless they are pointed out... and even then, people choose to ignore them. The path of least resistance is often confused with immediate action that will cause temporary discomfort but be beneficial in the long run. It's the old band aid analogy. Remove fast and hard or take it off real slow.

All random thoughts that distract us are self-imposed. When the *mind* resists life, thoughts arise; when something happens to conflict with a belief that is not congruous to our objectives of happiness or success, turmoil and inner conflict sets in. It is fascinating to see one persisting on hanging on to and defending a self they don't even believe in. A self that has created a self-imposed prophecy of fear and limitation. Change is imminent, only the *mind* is threatened by change.

We have many habits that weaken us; the secret to change is to focus all our energy, not on ridding ourselves of the old, but on building the new. Guns and Roses said it best

when they sang “***Slipping farther & farther away, it’s a miracle how long we can stay in a world our mind has created in a world that’s full of shit.***”

Intellectual talent through logical processing comes forth as we gain proficiency in minimizing our old habit patterns so that we no longer feel compelled to give attention to the obstructions and limitations which are self-creations of our own *minds* caused by society’s imposed beliefs. (Okay, now take a breath after such a long sentence). There is an amusing test of sanity I recall reading once in Dan Millman’s “The Warrior Athlete”. A door swings open before you and you see a sink filling with water. The stopper is in and the water begins to pour over the sink’s edge. The test of sanity is whether you remove the stopper, turn off the water or run for a mop and start mopping. In learning to deal with the *mind* and develop our intellectual talent, we are turning off the faucet. Unfortunately, regarding **self-defense and HTHC**, many martial artists everywhere are continuously mopping.

Self-conceptualization and the self-fulfilling prophecy are something I learned about while studying psychology in college. It is a very common psychological phenomenon. It basically states that our progress in life tends to be directly co-related and consistent with our expectations. Whether we believe we can do something or not, we are right. The first step is to realize that we own the power to define our boundaries and capabilities. We must then challenge our self-imposed limitations and understand that we deserve better than to be constrained by unreasonable fears, expectations of failure and feelings of unworthiness. The third step is to accept and make the necessary changes required for self-improvement.

If one concentrates on the impossibility of the achievement one will most certainly experience failure. One of my guys, Ron, was competing in a grappling tournament and was easily winning fight after fight. There was however one competitor there who had a “reputation” for being a bad ass. Not to mention he was twice Ron’s size.

Ron immediately began to concentrate on the impossibility of the achievement rather than on the moment at hand. Needless to say he lost that fight when he could have easily won it. Other competitors who Ron easily beat prior to the event did very well against the same guy.

It was painfully obvious that an elective self-concept had imposed itself on Ron, shattering his confidence and in turn, his victory. When this happens, one can surrender to it, ignore it, resist it or use it and learn from it. If you surrender to it (which is what Ron had done in that particular case) you will inevitably create your reality and your past will become your future. If you ignore it, the self-concept will continue to have subtle effects causing you continuous dis-ease.

If you resist it you will waste energy (reason being why people frequently feel fatigue and laziness). One should use it fully. Experience its metaphysical energy then cut through it by changing the accustomed act. Learn to do what you didn’t believe you could do and the word ‘*can’t*’ will lose its power over your life.

Our concerns of the future are valid until they become compulsive or obsessive. Reading the future is based on a realistic perception of the present. Don't be concerned with the future until you can clearly see and comprehend the present.

“Unless we change our direction we are likely to end up where we are headed.”

CHINESE PROVERB

This quote is very powerful and true. “**Mushin**” in Japanese is the term for ‘**No mind**’. Living life in the now and understanding that there are no ordinary moments is imperative to a healthy soul. And as **James O’barr** so poetically put it, “***There is more than one way to purify the soul. There is absolution and redemption, salvation and a means to an end; and if these axioms are of opposing polarities, then there is at least some consolation in the fact that they all have a common ground.***” Death. Our final journey. For some, the only inner peace they will ever know.

Bruce lee said that “***In seeking out truth one must search with the heart and seek with the inner eye.***” In the long history of martial arts, the instinct to follow and imitate seems to be inherent in most martial artists, instructors and students alike. This is partly due to human tendency and partly because of the steep traditions behind the myriad’s of styles and systems. Consequently, to find a refreshing and original teacher becomes somewhat of a rarity. The need for a pointer of the truth is for many, blatantly apparent and since no one really owns the truth, then it is out there for anyone to seek, acquire and teach when understood and turned from knowledge to wisdom.

I leave you again with **Bruce Lee’s** words.

“Absorb what is useful, disregard the rest and add what is specifically your own.”

CONCLUSION

There are currently no governing bodies in the martial arts or self-defense field. This makes it frustrating as anyone who has enough money to rent an empty space, buy a gi, put on a black belt and hang a few certificates on his wall can claim to teach martial arts. Mistakenly linked with martial arts is the term self-defense. This is where social responsibility comes in. Most unfortunately, have none.

Self-defense and martial arts are two completely different animals. Martial arts are also divided into various categories: Full contact sports, contact sports, semi contact sports, submission sports and traditional martial arts which do not compete. Not one of these can be labeled as self-defense although they most often all are. It's not to say that a small or large percentage of these styles or systems cannot be used for self defense, they most certainly can, however, where the social irresponsibility lies is within the "Instructor" who tags that term on his style or system without proper research. Most will believe that the entire style or system is functional as a means of personal protection.

The problem is personal protection or "fighting" is a complete system on it's own. To study a portion of it through styles or systems that are incomplete will leave one incomplete. This incompleteness can lead to disaster.

If a system or 'style' does not holistically address the physical arsenal as well as the psychological and emotional elements of fear, pain and stress management strategies then that system or 'style' is only teaching partial preparation and is therefore limiting your survivability. If it doesn't realistically use role playing scenario simulations and replications, then it is incomplete. If it is labeled as a 'style' then it is incomplete.

In order to avoid confusion, let me define and note the differences between martial arts 'systems' and 'styles'. Styles are specific types of expressions which have been passed on from teacher to student, generation to generation and therefore transmitted identically to each individual regardless of their differences as human beings. There is neither evolution nor practicality in styles since their foundations are theoretical. To mimic without thought is the way. A system is usually comprised of several styles to form a more complete art, which in turn evolves and progresses with the obvious need to adapt. Some systems however never progress and eventually become styles. Some factions of Jeet Kune Do are a good example of a methodology turned into a system turned into a style.

If the system or style in question has katas, forms, traditional uniforms, make you train barefoot, it is unrealistic. One piece of a thousand piece puzzle missing and the only noticeable thing about your puzzle will be the void where the piece is missing. In terms of protecting yourself, that "missing piece" can cost you your life. Remember, it's your blood. Please... Train intelligently and diligently.

Sincerely
Richard Dimitri

Senshido Lexicon

Here is a list of terms, lexicon we use in this book, on our web site and forum that you may come across and see often. Some are written with humor so please take with a grain of salt... ☺

SHREDDING: Rapid simultaneous short shots causing trauma while moving in and disturbing your opponent's balance and grounding. For more information on this revolutionary conceptual tool, please visit our website at www.Senshido.com

SHREDDER: One who shreds...

CWCT: Closest Weapon to Closest Target.

TECHNIQUE: What can only be the spontaneous and improvised result of a situation. To practice a move outside of a specific context without a partner or visualization is a waste of time.

SUCKER PUNCH: A surprise attack or ambush. An attack that comes without warning (not necessarily a punch).

EDI(P): Emotionally Disturbed Individual (Person).

HTHC: Hand to Hand Combat

PP: Personal Protection

PRINCIPLE: Concept unaffected by variables. Adjustments to principles are called technical improvisations in order to adapt to the moment at hand.

GROUNDING: Any position or stance that allows you to apply the necessary leverage required for you to generate the essential power that will ensure the success of your move.

LEVERAGE: Basic physics principle crucial in HTHC. If you don't know it or need an explanation to understand the principles of leverage, stop reading this now, you've got problems. Go back to high school and listen this time around.

FOOTWORK: The necessary steps that will enable you to keep your opponent(s) inside of your power box while staying out of his/theirs.

POWERBOX: The imaginary area framed by the fighter's stance in which he/she can generate maximum power and have direct access to their arsenal without adjusting the footwork.

TIMING: 1) The ability in achieving power through synergizing the entire body at the proper moment. 2) The ability to choose the moment in time where the action of your choice will take place.

SOFT TARGETS: Any part of the body damageable by non-powerful strikes therefore targets ideal when not grounded.

WINNING: The action of surviving.

LOSING: The action of dying or being maimed and/or crippled.

HANDS: Weapons used both offensively and defensively. Having five protuberances, each that can be used individually or in concert to rip, tear, gouge and/or create various forms of impacts causing lacerations, cuts, abrasions and a selection of fractures to small bone structures.

MOVEMENT: The most important thing to master, it is the art of getting into position to get closure or evade oncoming attacks.

CLOSURE: Whatever you do that ends the encounter.

BELT: Flexible piece of material designed to prevent your pants from falling down and Prophet Abrasif's butt crack from showing.

BACKYARD: Ideal location to experiment HTHC in small groups. The way it used to be taught in the old days.

TRAPPING: The action of immobilizing one or more of your opponent's limbs in order to perform an eyeballechtomy or thoraxicrush.

EYEBALLECHTOMY: The procedure in which you remove one's vision by gouging, raking, poking or striking the eyes (being one of the primary targets).

THORAXICRUSH: The procedure in which you crush, jam or strike the throat area (being another of the primary targets).

CENTERLINE: The line which joins you and your opponent together. Also the primary area of attack which must be protected at all costs.

MULTI FUNCTIONAL STANCE: The fighting stance which offers you easy access to all of your offensive and defensive arsenals without telegraphing your intentions to your opponent.

TACTILE SENSITIVITY: The ability to interpret your opponent's energy and movements through the sense of touch.

STYLISTIC INTERFERENCE: When your particular style of martial arts doesn't have the answer to a certain problem which suddenly arose during a violent confrontation and you end up sucking your steak dinner out of a straw.

FLINCH, REFLEXIVE RESPONSE: The immediate course of action instinctively taken by an individual without thinking, in response to any surprise attack or stimulus.

INTUITION: The innate survival instinct (usually ignored by most) present in all human beings.

VICTIM: You, if you fail to trust your intuition and have no strategic blueprint in order to survive with as little harm to yourself as possible.

CONGRUOUS BEHAVIOR: The expected behavior strategically adopted by an individual in order to enhance his tactical edge during a violent confrontation potentially escalating to a physical level.

THOUGHT PROCESS INTERRUPTION: Any physical, verbal or psychological act performed in order to distract or re-direct your opponents thought process.

STRATEGY: A previously thought out plan used as a blue print for any possible altercation.

TACTICS: The immediate manifestations of strategy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Me... chillin' by the ring and in mid transformation at Senshido late 2005 ☺

Well, you got my origins at the beginning; this is where it led me too....

Achievements & Member of the following organizations:

- American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers
- National Registry of Who's Who (2002 – 2003, 2005 –2006)
- Our pre-contact and behavioral personal protection curriculum has been introduced and accepted to the National Open College Network of the UK
- First civilian to be hired to teach CQ-HTHC to the British Special Air Services, the prestigious SAS.
- Chief instructor of Protective Defense for the Close Protection Training for the UK Ministry of Defense through CTR High Risk Security & Investigations Services Limited UK.

Richard Dimitri is considered to be one of the world's leading authorities on personal protection and hand to hand combat. Although still considered somewhat 'underground', his programs and drills have been integrated by martial artists, law enforcement officers, soldiers and civilians the world over. His research and martial arts training is backed by much experience where he had to apply his skills both physical and psychological while working as an undercover security guard, a bouncer and bodyguard for high profile clients for over a decade.

In 1994, Richard opened his first and only educational institution where he and his team now teach Senshido's principles and concepts. Mr. Dimitri had the pleasure to teach personnel from such groups as the prestigious SAS, the US Marines, Canadian Armed Forces, Finland's SWAT and CTU, RCMP officers, Pinkerton Security, VIP Investigations, Tandem Montreal as well as McGill Universities Walksafe department.

Featured in several films, magazines, television and radio shows, Mr. Dimitri has been published in Black Belt Magazine, Australia's BLITZ, as well as the UK's Combat magazine amongst others and has authored what is considered to be by many experts one of the best books ever written on personal protection (The um, the book you're actually reading now, if you made it this far, hell if you made it this far, send me an email letting me know you made it this far, nothing fancy, just a "Hey Rich, just lettin' ya know bro, I made it this far ;-)" type email, I'll understand ☺) which is an international best seller. He (I often wonder why I typed this in the 3rd person... "he"... it's me... ah well, formalities and such, guess it makes people feel less of an egoistical prick for writing their own bios, but who else can write my bio but me? I mean, hell, I lived my life, I know I what I did better than most. Of course my English affiliate Adam would highly disagree here but he's entitled to his prerogative and a little FYI... it doesn't make me feel any less of an egotistical prick by the way, thanks....) Where were we... oh yeah, HE also produced over 30 Instructional videos/DVD that are also considered by many experts as the most comprehensive and educational self-defense tapes on the market today, surpassing several of the most popular reality based experts and systems.

Perhaps the brainchild of Mr. Dimitri is the development of the close quarter conceptual tool known as The Shredder™ which has become one of the most controversial and talked about innovations in modern self-defense and martial arts training today. The Shredder has been referred to as "*the missing link in martial arts/self defense*" and has been adopted by law enforcement agencies, correctional institutions, military personnel and martial artists worldwide.

Sine July of 2006, Richard has sold his Senshido school (Montreal location) as a franchise To 3 of his protégés, Lee Castellani, Eric Audet and Kenny Ramsahai as Richard has become one of the most sought out combative instructors and travels extensively sharing his research with people the world over.

People travel yearly from all over the globe to Montreal to train with Richard Dimitri including Brazil, Greenland, Finland, Germany, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, The Middle East, Venezuela, The UK, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Mr. Dimitri's Senshido continues to grow worldwide and has currently saved numerous lives. Not one to sit on his laurels, Richard continues his research and his methods continue to evolve.

Mr. Dimitri is available for Private instruction, group classes, seminars, workshops and lectures. To contact Mr. Dimitri, call toll free 1-866-879-5620 or 1-514-824-2325. E-mail RDimitri@Senshido.com for more information, please visit www.Senshido.com

Not bad for an angry punk kid born in Montreal, North and raised in Brossard, Quebec of all places.... Bah... I was just lucky, eh? ;-)

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Some Highly Recommended Readings

BOOK**AUTHOR****The Journeys of Socrates**(mandatory reading for all Senshido Affiliates & instructors)**Dan Millman****Watch my Back****Geoff Thompson****The way of the peaceful warrior****Dan Millman****Sacred journey of the peaceful warrior****Dan Millman****There are no ordinary moments****Dan Millman****The warrior athlete****Dan Millman****The Book of five rings****Miyamoto Musashi****The way of a warrior****John F. Gilbey****Cheap Shots, Ambushes and Other Lessons****Marc Macyoung****Awaken the giant within****Anthony Robins****The road less traveled****Scott Peck****The Journeys of Socrates****Dan Millman****The Tao of Jeet Kune Do****Bruce Lee****The Gift of Fear****Gavin De Becker****The Art of War****Sun Tzu****When Seconds Count****Sammy Franco**