

Defensive vs. Offensive Mindset

In the previous blog, mention is made of the term self-defense and how a mindset of *defense* is harmful in the heat of an unprovoked act of violence. This blog will expound on the how's and why's of the common misconception of protecting yourself or another against *violent* attacks. I stress, I am referring to an unprovoked and violent physical assault against you or a loved one.



If you are in fear of being hurt, the probability is you will get hurt. In the purest definition of the word, if your concern is to defend yourself against being hurt, you will get hurt. If you intend to overcome and conquer the danger, then a greater chance exist you will not get as hurt.

I realize that to some people, the following may seem an oversimplification and an unusual analogy. If you are one, please keep an open-mind and hear me out. In 1947, the United States War Department ceased under its moniker and split into the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force. It was in 1949 all military services of the United States came under the umbrella of the newly formed Department of Defense.

Up to the time, the U.S had great success when engaged in war. At least with the outcome. If one looks back, they will realize something more than a name changed. The Korean War ended in stalemate. Vietnam was a debacle. Then, after twenty years in Afghanistan, we withdrew, and within days, the Taliban overthrew the elected Afghan government.

Let's dig deeper with some clear definitions. The Oxford English Dictionary defines defense and war—Defense: To provide with a defense or defenses; to defend, protect, guard. War: Hostile contention by means of armed forces, carried on between nations, states, or rulers, or between parties in the same nation or state; the employment of armed forces against a foreign power, or against an opposing party in the state.

From a mental, emotional, and psychological standpoint, it is far better to adopt an aggressor attitude if you're in a fight for your life. If your brain is in a defensive mode, your body will follow. You will back off when you should be on the attack. You will use blocks instead of strikes. You will revert to covering up instead of striking out. All these things are a positive if you're in a prearranged competition or up against an anti-social individual. In the eyes of the law and others, it would be beneficial. But, I am referring to a vicious and potential life threatening attack against you or a loved one when no possibility of retreat exists, and severe injury or death is imminent.

In this situation, you need every advantage possible. This is when and where you must take on the attitude of being an *attacker* and not one of a *victim*. You must become the aggressor. Tim Larkin, Founder & President of Target Focus Training (and one of my instructors), is fond of saying,

- “Violence is rarely ever the answer, but when it is, it is the only answer.”
- “The person doing the violence is typically the one who survives.”
- “The person getting violence done to him, not so much.”

Mr. Larkin is also fond of sharing that the term, “Self-defense,” is a marketing term—because it's what we've all been told is acceptable. Nobody searches for “how to use violence” because it's assumed only the “bad guys” use violence—the rest of us are stuck with self-defense. “The rest of us are stuck with self-defense.” *No, no, no*. We are not.

You need be the one injuring the person who started the attack, not the other way around. And you must continue until the person is rendered non-functional. Until they are physically unable, despite any further intentions or thought, to cause damage to you or your loved ones. Dispense with fancy moves, high Karate style kicks, and making noises. Whenever Bruce Lee was involved in the real deal, he never made silly noises. They were

reserved for the movies. The following short video may seem funny, but it is spot on the subject.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Bje3zzE1MM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bje3zzE1MM)

In a violent encounter, we *cannot* get caught up in methods or techniques. We need to stick with principles. To quote Ralph Waldo Emerson... “As to methods, there may be a million and then some, but principles are few. The man who grasps principles can successfully select his own methods. The man who tries methods, ignoring principles, is sure to have trouble.” This is an important idea to remember.

I know it may not be easy for some to grasp the concept so, let’s approach it from a different perspective. Sad to say, there have been far too many instances where an individual has endured a violent and brutal rape. Often, when the rapist is captured, they have scratch marks on their face. They were inflicted by their prey.

When asked by police and hospital interviewers why they did not gouge the rapist’s eyes out, the answer was, “I was trying to defend myself by scratching their face. I could never gouge someone’s eyes, though.” Okay. Why not? If it were *your* child or a loved one being raped, would you be able to? In most every actual case where this exchange has taken place, the response has been, “Oh, Hell yes.” So, the answer is, you *can* do it. Gouge their eyes out. Crush their throat. Rupture their testicles. Do *whatever* it takes. It need not be pretty. It need not be fair (and should not be). You only have to do what you need to end the attack in the least time and in a *decisive* way.

I will criticize no one who enrolls in or practices any style of martial art. I only ask for them to understand the overriding principle that martial arts are predominantly defensive, geared towards competition and trophies, and for self-discipline and historical purposes. They also take a lot of time, effort, and money to learn. Millions of people today are on the bandwagon when it comes to Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. It is one of the most effective styles of martial arts. It is also one of the most difficult to learn, at least in the sense of advancing through the ranks and reaching a high-level of skill.

There is great potential in its use against an asocial individual. Not so against a psychopath or any person intent on *killing* you. The bottom line is the training concentrates on going against another individual or individuals who you compete with to win a match. Pure and simple. The other person taps out, and you have won. It is not the way it works in a real life or death encounter.

I present the following true story. On 14 April 2004, in the town of Karabilah, Iraq, Marine Corporal Dunham's three man unit stopped a car suspected of an attack on a nearby convoy. An insurgent jumped out and attacked Dunham. Corporal Dunham wrestled him to the ground. In the struggle, Dunham saw the insurgent release a grenade and he threw his body on it, preventing the shrapnel from hitting his fellow Marines. He and the insurgent died from the blast.

The other two Marines did *not* assist Dunham because ... he was 'winning' the wrestling match with the insurgent. Think about this. The insurgent is there to *kill* the enemy... not compete in a match. The other Marines could have helped Dunham subdue the attacker. Instead, they got caught up watching a "competition".

Cpl. Dunham's heroic act to protect his fellow Marines could easily have been avoided if the correct training had been in place. Here is the problem: today's Marines are trained in competitive martial arts (it is called the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program or McMap for short. Sounds like something you'd order at a fast food joint). Competition breeds spectators, not operators. Had the insurgent come out shooting, all three marines would have returned fire. Yet when it became a "wrestling match" the situation quickly morphed into time to watch your buddy "tap him out".

Remember, in any situation like this where you are under a ferocious physical assault, you are not in a *fight* or competition. There are no points or trophies to be had. It is your survival or your loved ones at stake. Do not be the *victim*; be the *attacker* in the moment.

To recap:

- In a violent physical attack against you, you are *not* in a *competition*.
- You must use *violence* to end the situation in the shortest possible time.
- In the moment, there is no place for *defense* of any kind.

Look, I understand violence is not pretty. Anything you think you could learn from a dead guy's performance—if they'd just gone for the eye or not stepped back—is pointless. It's all pretend. It's make-believe. It didn't happen *that* way.

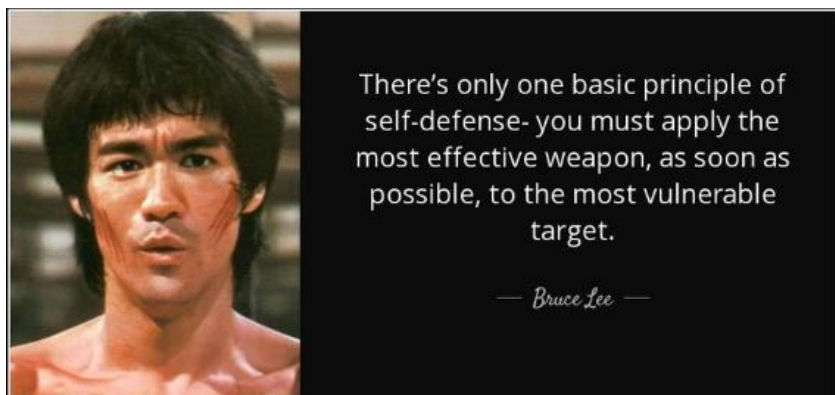
Someone else was doing something. Something that worked. Something that got the job done. Something that made the dead guy *dead*. The “someone else” is the one you want to look at if you want to learn what works in violence.

Is this a nice, comfortable idea? No, it is not. The majority of violent video footage is also criminal. And you, not being a criminal, will find it difficult to identify with the person *doing* the violence. But that is the only place where there is anything useful to be learned.

Why? Because it is a record of what works in violence. It's not pretend, it's not coulda-woulda-shoulda—it is. When we shift focus off of the dead guy and onto the survivor we leave the world of conjecture and land squarely in the realm of fact. If you will bet your life on something, I don't recommend you bet it on a bunch of opinions or armchair quarterbacking—bet it on the facts.

The person doing the violence is using the facts to his advantage. Pay attention to what they are up to. The only thing the dead guy can show you is the end result of those facts.

For some, this concept may be difficult to digest and hard to adopt. However, it will behoove you to do so. So, let the man himself spell it out in his way (yes, he used the term “self-defense.” However, it is for simplicity and clarity).



Stay aware. Stay safe.

John

Please email me with any comments, suggestions, future topics, or concerns at:

Let's Discuss 'Self-Defense'

Welcome to the first blog of PMI-Blog.com. In this post, I will talk about “self-defense.” It is an important topic, as I believe there are many misconceptions regarding the term.

With the way society is these days, you need to decide on how you will face an overabundance of adverse issues. FBI and Justice Department studies show that crime has gone up by over 500% since 1960. In my mind, it does not matter if the statistics show crime is going up or going down. If *you* are a victim, it makes no difference.

- A violent crime occurs every 22 seconds.
- A rape every 5.8 minutes.
- A murder every 34 minutes.
- An average of 1,204,00 violent crimes are committed each year (these are reported, documented cases).
- Half of all Americans will be robbed or burglarized in their lifetimes.

Every day, throughout cities and towns across the country, blatant, brazen, and uncalled for brutal physical attacks are being committed against innocent people. Shootings, stabbings, beatings—people getting punched in the head in a sick game played by thugs; individuals being walloped in the head with a baseball bat by deranged and, devoid of any sense of right and wrong, psychopaths.

Senseless acts of road rage like never seen or heard of before, where a crazed driver will run you and your family off the road, or worse, simply because you pulled in front on accident. Or, for any other myriad of reasons only because *they* feel they own the road. Yes, I get upset with how people drive these days. However, I don't counter-act unless it is to avoid a crash. If you receive the attention of an enraged driver, make sure you:

- **Don't react in a negative or aggressive way. If someone cuts you off, tailgates, or drives in an antagonistic way, you may be motivated to honk your horn, gesture to the driver, or engage them. It is best to ignore the situation if able.**

- **Don't make obscene gestures.**
- **Don't drive in an erratic way.**
- **Don't pull off the road to confront the person.**
- **Don't go directly home. The other person may follow you.**

Do:

- **Continue at a safe and normal speed if able.**
- **Pay attention to what is happening.**
- **Monitor the road, and try not to make eye contact with the other driver.**
- **Get out of the way. Put your turn signal on, and move over when it is safe to do so to let the other vehicle pass. Put distance between your vehicle and the other vehicle.**

- **Always leave room between your vehicle and the one ahead. If you're stuck in traffic, you may be inclined to creep up close to the vehicle in front of you. Instead, leave room. If an aggressive driver confronts you (or for other reasons), you want to change lanes.**

- **If you are able, get the driver's license plate number, make, and model of the vehicle.**

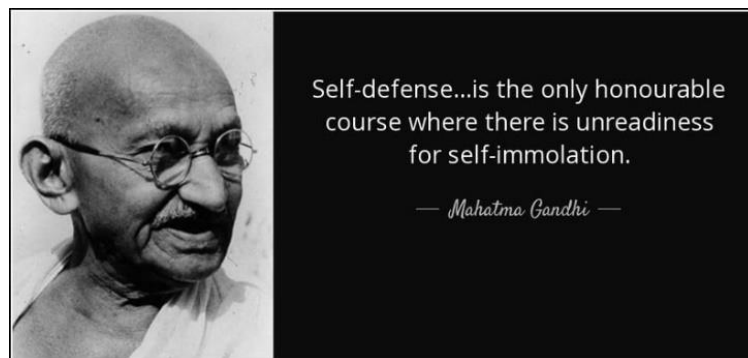
- **Drive to a safe place such as a police station, firehouse, convenience store, or a hospital. If the other driver follows, use your horn to attract attention. Do not get out of your car and keep your doors locked (you should keep them locked while in your vehicle).**

- **Call 911 as soon as possible.**

It is not a question of *if* you and your family will encounter a violent criminal, but rather *when*. You must obtain knowledge to prepare for when the time arrives and condition your mind and body to handle the situation. You owe it to yourself, your family, and your friends. Do not think it won't happen to you. We all hope it doesn't; we just cannot rely on a false sense of security and safety.

There exists a lot of confusion and ignorance as to the meaning of the term self-defense. In precise language, what is self-defense? Wikipedia describes it as... “a countermeasure that involves defending the health and well-being of oneself from harm. The right of self-defense as a legal justification for the use of force in times of danger is available in many jurisdictions. Physical self-defense is the use of physical force to counter an immediate threat of violence. Such force can be either armed or unarmed. In either case, the chances of success depend on various parameters, related to the severity of the threat on one hand, but also on the mental and physical preparedness of the defender.”

A quote by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (more commonly known by his title, Mahātmā; Mahātmā is an honorific designation meaning “great-souled”, or “venerable”) sums it well. “Self-defense... is the only honorable course where there is an unreadiness for self-immolation.”



From a legal standpoint, the following short video by attorney Ryan Pacyga explains it in a succinct way.



[Click on this text to watch on Youtube](#)

Please understand... this is *one* lawyer's outlook. It is a sincere opinion based on his background and education as an attorney. I will also point out that while Attorney Pacyga mentions Minnesota in the video (it is where he has his law practice), the premises he speaks are applicable in all 50 states. A great synopsis, and why I included it here. Note there is a distinction between *self-defense* and *self-protection*. The term self-defense denotes a legal and physical part. The principle of self-protection is to keep you safe. It is to avoid, as best you can, the pitfalls of something bad occurring. I want you to drive in a safe and proper manner. More people die from traffic crashes than from attacks by violent criminals. I also want you to know how to shield yourself and your family from fire, disasters, and diseases. This is a major difference between the terms self-defense and self-protection.

Applying self-defense can turn into shark-infested waters. You may have the utmost confidence of a legal right to protect yourself and take physical action to end an unprovoked attack against you. However, please understand nothing your family, friends, acquaintances, or the guy at work told you (or you may have read in a reply to an article on the internet), will resemble real life.

If some politically motivated prosecutor or district attorney decides you were the aggressor, you will face charges. Then, there is always a possibility of a civil lawsuit against you. No matter how justified you feel you were, opposing lawyers will put you through the ringer. Your attorney's job is to defend you. The prosecution's side is to convince the jury you were in the wrong and for them to find you guilty. The prosecution needs only *disprove* one of the five basic elements for a defendant to justifiably claim self-defense in court. These are the five (they will be discussed further in a future blog):

- Innocence
- Imminence
- Avoidance
- Proportionality
- Reasonableness

If you lose on just one element, there is a great probability your claim of self-defense will be negated. The issue becomes, how will a jury interpret the evidence against you and the conjecture?

Some people will argue it is a matter of semantics, but I have a different outlook than many when we talk about self-defense. I follow the principle it is foolhardy to consider yourself, when under vicious and unprovoked attack, to have a *defensive* mindset and attitude. After it is over and you are victorious, then the term comes into play. However, you need to consider and act in a manner of your being the aggressor. You are not the one being attacked; *you* are the attacker. I cannot stress the psychological advantage this will give you *in the moment*.

Along these lines, I have included a short video by Chris Ranck-Buhr, the founder of Injury Dynamics. Master Chris Ranck-Buhr started his training under Mr. Tim Larkin. Mr. Larkin is the President of Target Focus Training. I consider TFT the most useful of all systems for dealing with a violent asocial attacker. You may think Chris' description is simple; that is the idea – it is a beautiful and simple summation of the difference between what many consider *self-defense*, *fighting*, and *hurting* people. It is the third one you want to do if viciously attacked by a person intent on causing you serious injury or your death.



[Click on this text to watch on Youtube](#)

Reflect on what he is telling and showing us. If you are *defending* yourself against the other person, you are not *injuring* them. You are concentrating on not getting hurt. If you are *fighting* them, this often results in nothing more than an Alpha Monkey show. Two or more people engaging in a display of punches and kicks, ultimately having little or no effect. Think in terms of a ‘hockey’ fight or even a boxing match. It amounts to a competition between people who take part in a show of one-up-manship. Sure, someone may get hurt or injured in a minor way.

Often, the people who instigate this behavior are antisocial. It is not what we are looking for when against an opponent intent on injuring or killing you. It is against an asocial psychopath we need to cause *injury*. When I say injury, I mean the infliction of a *debilitating* injury which renders the person non-functional. And in a life-or-death situation, it needs to be inflicted fast.

The bottom line is, you have an *inherent right* to protect and defend yourself from an illegal assault on your person or loved ones. The tenet has a basis in law, religion, ethics, and morality. As for the Bible, understand the difference in the meaning of reprisal and of defending one’s self. Most biblical scholars agree the Bible speaks against *retaliation and reprisal*, not *legitimate self-defense*.

Not only do you have a fundamental right to defend yourself, but you also bear sole responsibility. Unless we are talking about a child or an adult with a special situation, no individual should expect or rely on anyone else with their safety and protection. It is a potential danger and narrow-minded. Your spouse is not responsible nor is anyone else. Almost every person is alone or among strangers at times. If you don’t know what to do,

well... As far as the police, understand it's unlikely they will be anywhere around to help when the time comes. The United States Supreme Court ruled years ago police officers do not have the legal responsibility to protect an individual. Their job is the protection of society and not a specific person.

Some of you may wonder why I, and others, use the term 'self-defense'. Simple. For marketing purposes and because it sounds so much more like what an innocent, reasonable, and ordinary person would do. Defend themselves. There is little of a negative, "...you were in the wrong" connotation to it. "I used self-defense" sounds more civilized than, "I was committing violence." Problem is, the subject attacking you doesn't give a damn about marketing, being a reasonable ordinary person, or being civilized.

I will end this first blog with the disclaimer to be aware of potential traps from any successful defense against an unprovoked attack. You must try to remain within the law or risk negatives. Using deadly force, or even non-deadly physical force, should be used only in proportion to the current and imminent threat against. An individual making a verbal assault against you or yours does not call for physical action, as a drunk person poking his finger in your chest does not call for you to punch them in the head or anywhere else. Even then, it may be a long and arduous entanglement in the judicial process. An overriding consideration is – does the risk of *not* acting outweigh the potential risks of acting? It is only for you to decide. Do it *before* the time comes.

Stay aware. Stay safe.

John

Please email me with any comments, suggestions, future topics, or concerns at:

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