

## 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.**

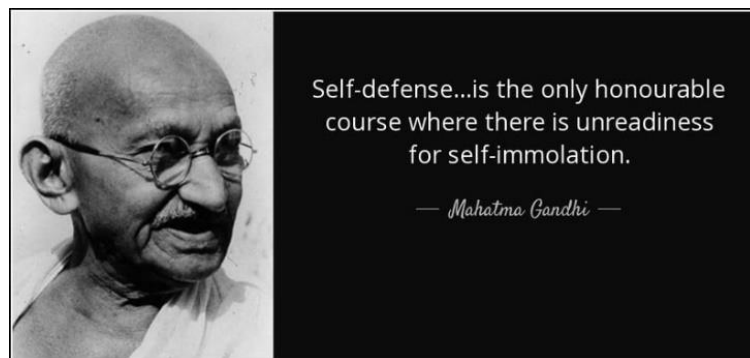
- **Drive to a safe place such as a police station, firehouse, convenience store, or a hospital. If the other driver follows, use your horn to attract attention. Do not get out of your car and keep your doors locked (you should keep them locked while in your vehicle).**

- **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.



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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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