

Personal Security

by Peter Consterdine

I thought it might have some value to move back a pace or two from the physical aspects of physical confrontation. At the end of the day when it comes to having to defend oneself, the number of techniques we should have in the armoury can be reduced to less than the fingers on one hand; even less if we are committed to pre-emption!

So if all we did was train for close quarter engagements, we really wouldn't have to train for long at any one time. Those who train with me know that, in fact, my training is not centred around purely defensive tactics - just the opposite in fact. My weekly martial arts is high level traditional, freestyle and full-contact drills (see 'Training Day Volume 1 and 2' DVDs). The work and delivery of technique has obvious 'spin offs' and can spill over into the CQB box, but I'm not doing it for that.

What I always believe supports the close quarter, pre-emptive work, is the 'soft' issue and that is Personal Security. I always preach that the physical component of self-defence should never be divorced from personal safety issues as ultimately the physical won't save your life as you are likely to be taken by surprise. Pre-emption only works when you are properly prepared for what's about to unfold in front of you.

The principles of being in that prepared state have never changed. To AVOID a threat you have two ways to go: FIGHT or FLIGHT. The fight or flight syndrome as it was called was developed back in the 1930s by a psychologist called Cannon. Either choice should be instinctive and, of course, if you see the threat in enough time, you should always take the opportunity to get away from it. If you can't, you will have to fight, but neither will be an option if you don't see it coming.

Those of you who have read my book Streetwise will know that I always present this concept as a pyramid and supporting AVOIDANCE is EVALUATION. It is being able to evaluate whether our environment has turned



threatening. The evaluation stage is where we start to make decisions based on how we believe our environment is turning against us. At this time, if you believe there is a credible threat, then stress and fear will start to play a part and your instincts should move you towards threat avoidance. This means, however, that you have managed your environment to the extent that you have escape options, either in terms of places to go or distance from the threat, which will buy you the necessary escape time.

However, all the above is dependent upon the bottom, supporting, section of the pyramid - AWARENESS. If we walk about on 'autopilot', which 99% of people do 99% of the time, then we are effectively 'looking but not seeing'. Constant awareness is a mental state that's not possible unless it's trained and there simply isn't the space here to discuss how we achieve a constant state of awareness (read the book!). But, very simply, being constantly aware of both our environment, and people within that environment, can make us alert to changes. Awareness is like any technique that we want to become a part of us and to emerge instinctively and, very simply, it needs to be honed through countless practices, so as to make it a permanent state.

I've already mentioned being alert, and whilst alert doesn't form part of the pyramid, it is an

integral part of awareness. Simply being aware is not enough, because we need to know what to be aware of! Would you know when your environment has changed to your disadvantage? Would you know what non-verbal clues to pick up from people? Alertness is a product of education and knowledge about the intricacies of personal safety.

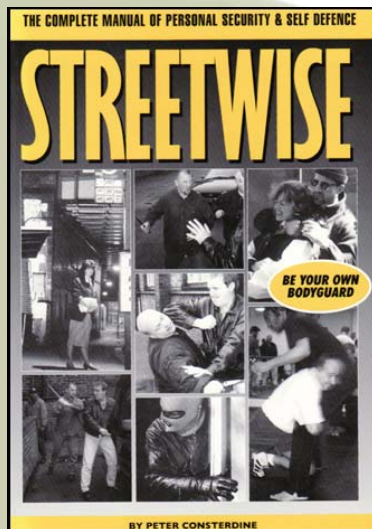
So, working back up the pyramid; by being Aware, we have permanent 'Situational Awareness' and through knowledge and training we should detect threatening changes; these are then Evaluated as either Immediately Threatening, or something which needs watching; preparing us for either Fight or Flight, in other words, avoidance if what we have perceived and evaluated proves to be a threat. So now we're prepared, can face the threat and be ready to overturn their POA (plan of action).

If, for example, it's a potential mugging, it is likely to end there because clearly you can no longer be taken by surprise. If it's a more serious and committed threat you can physically intervene much sooner because you have assessed someone's intent.

So, for me, Close Quarter, physical work, does not happen out of the blue, it's simply the last and, hopefully, small piece of a much larger jigsaw. Turning to face a threat and walking towards it is often very unsettling for the person who is threatening you and they simply lose all initiative. If you believe that having to strike or kick harder is solely the answer to personal safety, then you're some way off the mark. Work hard at understanding these 'soft' issues and concepts and you should, in fact, need to punch less.

Peter Consterdine 8th Dan Karate: from a martial arts career that began in traditional karate, Peter spent over 8 years on the Gt. Britain and England karate teams, fought full contact and was a founder member of the Shukokai Karate Union (SKU). With a specific interest in defensive tactics and practical martial arts, Peter has authored some of the foremost books on Self Defence and Specialist Security. A director of his own security company, Peter has toured the world on consultancy and protective assignments.

Streetwise



This manual is not another 'martial arts in jeans' type self-defence book! Streetwise combines the detailed concepts and procedures from the world of Executive Protection, with the very best of physical self-defence.

Streetwise by Peter Consterdine is the most comprehensive manual covering all aspects of Personal Security and Self-Defence. This is a book for instructors, students, police officers and anyone interested in the vast subject matter.

The book has been broken down into two parts. Part one deals with the very detailed subject of personal security and studies the complex psychology and procedures for awareness training. Importantly, this section looks at the perceptions of crime and all practical procedures to be adopted, in the street, in the home, the vehicle and at work.

Part two deals with the physical aspects of confrontation. From 'conflict resolution' through to striking and kicking combinations, this section leaves no stone unturned in the search for the correct approach to street survival.

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