



The Real Path To Self Defense

By

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The best way to prepare yourself for real self-defense is to train for real. You could be attacked at anytime, anywhere, by anyone. That's reality. The FBI reports that almost 1.4 million violent crimes occur in the United States every year. More than 60% of the crimes reported to law enforcement are assaults. Robbery accounts for more than 30%. Forcible rape accounts for more than 6%. Many people across our country are being attacked right now as you read this. Many of them will be surprised by the attack. Most people don't think it will happen to them, so they never prepare to deal with a serious physical assault.

I talked with a man a couple of weeks ago who showed me scars he said came from numerous assaults – including gun shots and stabbings. I've trained many women through the years who had been victims of forcible rape. They had been unprepared for the attack, so they came to me for self-defense training to be ready if someone ever tried to hurt them again. People who have experienced violent attacks often become very good self-defense students because they understand it's for real. If you don't train for the real possibility of being attacked, you will probably not be able to defend yourself if it happens to you. Not knowing what to do during an attack puts people in a scary position. It's hard to fight back when you don't know how to fight back.

That's why we train hard on The Real Path to Self-Defense. I had been bullied many times as a child and wanted it to stop. Studying martial arts made the difference in my life. I began training 49 years ago this month and never again had to succumb to a bully's attack. I had confidence that I could do something to defend myself if anyone tried to attack me. I have been attacked several times since becoming an adult, but fortunately I was prepared for each situation. In 1970, two men approached me from behind at dusk on the streets of downtown Tampa. I was leaving work for the day. I was tired and ready to go home, but that acute awareness of danger we train for in martial arts never turns off. I sensed the danger behind me, turned around quickly, saw the men coming at me, took a defensive posture and yelled in the first man's face when he was about three steps from being able to take a swing at me. He stopped in his tracks. If he hadn't, I had already selected five targets in the center of his body that I would strike fast and hard and follow with a quick leg reap that would keep me facing his partner while throwing him backward to hit his head on the concrete sidewalk. I knew I would have less than two seconds to deal with him before his partner would be close enough to attack me. I knew the second man might be more difficult since he would see what I did to his partner. The element of surprise would be gone. I also saw something in his right hand, but it was getting dark so I couldn't tell what kind of weapon he was carrying. I guessed it was a knife, so I planned to get around to his right side to break his right arm, control it with my right hand so I wouldn't get cut, grab his hair with my left hand to control his head, sweep his legs to take away his balance and throw him hard to the sidewalk twisting his head so he would land on his face. That would put me in a good position to

check out the first attacker to make sure he wasn't coming at me again. Fortunately, both men quickly stepped back when I faced them and ran away into the dark streets. It all happened in less than 3 seconds. All I did was turn, face the enemy, stand and shout. Standing against the enemy is often all it takes to make an attacker back down. Attackers are basically cowards. Show them the strength of your resolve and it's often enough to bring the attack to a sudden end.

The rules of engagement in self-defense are simple – face the enemy, stand strong, defend well. The other attacks I faced happened in my line of work as a television reporter. I went into life situations as part of my job knowing they could be dangerous. Emotions often run high at neighborhood disputes, family disagreements, community meetings, crime scenes, police stations, jails and courthouses. One of my photographers was attacked by a law enforcement officer who tried to hit him with a wrench. He used the light on his camera to keep from being seriously hurt. He was later shot at in a drug sting that went bad. Another photographer I was with was attacked by a man who didn't want us shooting video a family member being arrested. I stepped between the man and photographer and warned him not to come any closer. All I had in my hand was a hand-held microphone, but training with traditional martial arts weapons prepared me to use the microphone and block, strike and trap if needed. The man backed away and we continued to do our job of covering the story. I've been attacked in jails and courtrooms by convicted murderers and rapists who didn't like my putting a camera and microphone in their face. Fortunately for someone, jail guards and sheriff's deputies took control of the criminals before they reached me, so none of the attacks came to

blows. If your job is to go into dangerous parts of the world, be prepared to deal with the potential of violence. If it's not your job, don't go there.

The real path to self-defense is simple – but it's not easy. Knowing what to do is simple – training to do it requires hard work to become quick and efficient. Here are three paths you can take with any attack that will work in the real world of crime and defense:

1. **Run** – if you can run away from an attacker, do it. Run as fast as you can and don't stop until you are out of danger. If your attacker grabs you, escape from the grab and distance yourself from him as quickly as you can. An attacker can't hurt you if they can't reach you. If your attacker has a gun, then change your running pattern to swerve and dodge (zig and zag). Make yourself a difficult target to hit. Remember to make noise while you're running. That does three things: it emboldens you by intensifying your passion to escape, draws attention to your situation by people who are close enough to help, and it often scares criminals away who don't want to be identified and caught.
2. **Stun** – if you can't run away from an attacker, stun him. Pull or push him off balance – go in the direction he wants to take you, but move faster using whole body force and he will lose his balance. Hit him hard in a vulnerable part of his body (usually the center of his body from throat to groin). Use your whole body to stun him – including hands, elbows, feet, knees, shoulders, hips and head. If he pulls you close to his body, knee him, elbow him, stomp on his foot, bite him, throw him – do whatever you have to do to get

away. Shake your body fast and hard as you pull, push, hit, kick, stomp, bite or throw to get away – similar to how animals shake their entire body when engaged in a struggle. You want to get his mind off attacking you and on to defending himself from your powerful counter-attack. Stunning your attacker puts out the spark in his mind before it becomes a raging fire that can destroy any chance of your escaping his attack. As soon as he lets go of you, run.

3. **Gun** – if you can't run or stun, then it's time to gun. That's where you hit and kick him as many times as you can as fast as you can until he stops attacking you. "Gunning" may look like you're fighting, but it's not typical fighting. You are not boxing with him. You are not bouncing around trying to find a way to jab at him. You are using all of your focus, intensity and technique (F I T) for the single purpose of escaping danger. That means you don't hold back – you use everything you know to overcome his attack and win. Any harsh attack can become a life or death event in a heartbeat. You can't take a chance that the attacker may show you mercy. The very fact they started the attack against you shows they have no mercy. Every self-defense movement needs to be under your control. Keep your head and you'll keep your life. Gunning is not taking revenge on someone for attacking you – you gun until you can run. No anger, no revenge. God will take revenge. Your job is to escape.

I hope and pray you will never have to use your martial arts skills in a real situation, but it's important that you train for the real possibility that it may happen to you. We live in a violent society that is becoming angrier, more frustrated and more desperate every day. Christians in many parts of the world are attacked every day just because they are Christians. That day may not be far away in our own country, so train for the real path to self-defense. Be prepared and be ready – to **Run, Stun** or **Gun**.

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