

The ABC's of Self Defense

What if I told you that simple easy to learn “proven strategies” can greatly increase your ability to be safe in all types of situations?

The simple truth is — most people who find themselves in dangerous situations have made *strategic* mistakes. Mistakes that probably could have been avoided.

My name is Tom Burt and I am the owner of “AKKA Karate USA” on Noland Rd right here in Independence. My school has been serving the KC area for the last 20 years.

I would like to introduce you to “**Street Smarts**”...the tiny postcard newsletter packed with valuable protection strategies.

As a martial arts business owner I feel I have a responsibility to the community I serve. I am tired of reading stories in the paper or hearing on the nightly news about innocent victims being accosted by bullies and societies lowlifes. With “**Street Smarts**” I am doing something about it.

In this little newsletter I am revealing powerful strategies that have, up until now, been closely guarded secrets of the AKKA Karate USA martial arts program. They have been used to make AKKA the largest martial arts organization in the KC area. But now with “Street Smarts” they are my gift to you.

In this first issue I am going to begin with our FREE report on the ABC's of Self Defense. These are very basic concepts that anyone can use to feel confident and avoid potentially dangerous situations.

A. Avoid potentially dangerous situations. Sounds simple doesn't it. Well, it is. Just stay away from those areas of town that seem “seedy” or run down. Park your car in well lit areas near the front door wherever you are. Go places in groups of 2 or more because there is security in numbers.

B. Be calm and breathe. When your adrenaline is up and your “Fight or Flight” response kicks in you usually begin to hyperventilate and this can impair your ability to think clearly and rationally. One of my teachers said that the first step in dealing with any sort of conflict is “EXHALE”. So keep your wits about you and *breathe*.

C. Communicate with Confidence.

Street thugs are like any of natures predators...they look for the easy victim. By speaking in a firm, loud confident tone (*even if you don't feel confident...another one of my teacher's favorite bits of advice was to “Fake it 'til you make it.”*) you are sending a message that says,

“DON”T MESS WITH ME!”

A good dose of Vitamin N (“NO!”) always helps.

D. Do Not Anticipate. At first this sounds counter to what I am talking about in “Street Smarts.” You might be saying to yourself, “But Tom, didn’t you say before that we are to think ahead and avoid potentially dangerous situations?” YES! But now let’s look at self-defense from a different perspective. Let’s look at what goes on in our mind when we are in the midst of conflict. During his Fireside Chats on the radio in the 1930’s President Franklin Roosevelt once said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” In my experience there are basically two types of fear.

1. Actual Fear

2. Perceived Fear

Actual Fear is the *fear of circumstance*. This is where you find yourself in a truly dangerous situation...like the fear of being hit by a car when crossing the street, facing a vicious dog or seeing an approaching tornado. Or being attacked by a 200 pound man. These are actual situations where ***anyone in their right mind would be afraid.*** But it is this second type of fear, Perceived Fear or *fear of security*, that can paralyze us and prevent action that would conquer any fear of circumstance.

Our minds are intricately connected with our senses. We take in information with our eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin.

Our mind processes this information by making meanings and creating feelings.

I want to say that again...we make meaning and create feeling based on information we take in. And this happens in a microsecond...ie. I see a large man in front of me pointing a gun and telling me to give him my money...and I think, “Oh my God, he is going to shoot me!” As apparent as that may seem it is very difficult to know for sure.

So what do we do? Remember Letter “B” - Breathe...exhale and just notice what ***is*** going on rather than worry about what may happen. This will help you stay in the moment and grounded in reality. Is the man going to shoot me? I don't know. What I do know is that he is pointing a gun and telling me to give him my money...and I think, “Oh my God, he is going to shoot me!” As apparent as that may seem it is very difficult to know for sure.

So what do we do? Remember Letter “B” - Breathe...exhale and just notice what ***is*** going on rather than worry about what may happen. This will help you stay in the moment and grounded in reality. Is the man going to shoot me? I don't know. What I do know is that he is pointing a gun at me and is demanding my money. That is reality. That is what I need to deal with. Creating a situation, in my mind, about what I will do if this guy shoots me is a waste of energy and a distraction from what is going on. It keeps me from thinking clearly and makes me even more vulnerable in an already tricky situation. (Which, incidentally is what the attacker wants in the first place. Which is also why he has a weapon...to intimidate you into creating in your mind what he *might* do to you with the weapon...so why give him more ammunition against you?)

Remember that perceived reality is just that, perceived...not real.

E. Environment can create opportunity. Most of us do not go around carrying “weapons” for protection, but many everyday items we do carry can be effective in self defense.

Purses, handbags or backpacks. Carrying these strapped to your shoulder can provide a predator with an opportunity to grab a hold of you. However, when carrying it in your hand and holding with a firm grip they can become an effective swinging weapon.

Keys.

First of all, carry your keys in your hand. Having to fumble around in a purse, bag or pocket leaves you vulnerable giving a predator time to attack you. Holding your keys in your fist with one or two sticking out between your fingers turns your fist into a stabbing weapon. Swinging keys while holding the keychain is also very a effective “club” type of weapon.

Newspapers and magazines.

These also are effective “clubs” when carried rolled up. They can also be used as a stabbing or poking weapon, especially to vital targets like groin or face.

F. “Fire” is often better to yell than “Help”and Fight. What do most people do when they see an accident on the highway. They slow down to take a look, right? Our natural curiosity gets a hold of us when we think there might be something going on and we can watch from a distance. Ask us to get involved and our inhibitions are activated and we avoid the situation. If you do find yourself in a situation where physical confrontation is imminent then FIGHT. I mean fight like a wild animal that is backed into a corner. Do whatever it takes to protect yourself or your loved ones.

Remember, it is your safety first and their feelings later.

G. Get away and stay away...Get some training. Once you have defended yourself to the point your assailant is no longer attacking you then RUN. Do not stick around to see if they are alright. Get out of there, call the police and let them handle it. Also, if possible, avoid returning to the place of the attack. Park your car in a different spot. Go to a different store. Avoid that particular place. Once bitten, twice shy. This does not mean you should hide in your home all the time. Be careful about the places you frequent and get your radar up so you are aware of what is going on around you.

Taking a self defense class or enrolling in a martial arts school is also a good idea. The repetition of training will give you the appropriate tools you need to defend yourself and the confidence to use them if needed.

If you have any questions or you feel that self defense training at AKKA could benefit you and your family then give me a call. I would be happy to answer any of your questions. I can be reached by phone at 816-373-1255 or by email at independence@akka.org

