

Self protection: you stay in charge of you

You can avoid putting yourself in harm's way most of the time. And if trouble comes looking for you, there are things you can do.

UNDERSTAND PREDATORS, PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THEM, AND WHEN PROTECTION FAILS DEFEND YOURSELF IN THE (UNLIKELY) CASE THAT YOU MUST. YOU STAY IN CONTROL OF YOU.

Despite what you read in the news things are no more violent and dangerous than they were 15 years ago. And in many cases things are better.

STILL it is best to be cautious. (You put on your seatbelt today fully expecting that you would **not** have a wreck)

Understand predators

The belligerent drunk, the road-raged person are usually people you can avoid. Predators are far more dangerous. These are the people who rape, rob, burglarize, carjack, home-invade and murder for fun or profit. Violence and abuse are at least serious hobbies if not their main employment. They can be extremely likeable if it is to their advantage or very abusive if that works. They have no compunction about hurting you to get what they want. They *have a lot of practice* and being evil doesn't make them stupid.

What predators look for

Human predators are no different from their animal counterparts. They want easy prey – it tastes just as good – so they look for:

- Small
- Frightened
- Oblivious
- Alone

Predators love to see a woman walking by herself through a twilight parking lot, purse and packages on one arm and a cell phone in the other hand. And they know that once in the car she will not lock the doors and will, rather, sit in her car on the phone or checking her packages for receipts, etc.

Swallow your pride

If you are old, small, a woman of any age and size you are at risk. If you are a 250 lb boxer you are not invulnerable to a razor or an ice pick.

Protect yourself

Make copies of credit cards and licenses get serial numbers of valuables so you can give up stuff – it can be replaced; you cannot.

IN THE HOME

1. Avoid strangers

If you don't know that man standing on your front porch you do not need to let him in. No one needs to come into your house to use your bathroom, get a drink etc. – those facilities are located every two blocks.

2. Lock your doors

Yes the door can be broken down. Good news – predators are lazy. Take reasonable precautions.

3. Be careful in the garage

When you drive out of your garage, close the garage door. When you come home, don't get out of the car if there are people you don't know. Close the door of the garage before you get out of the car.

OUTSIDE THE HOME

1. *Avoid strangers*

Beware of overly friendly strangers. Predators know how to make you feel like you are best friends in less than a minute and it will be nearly impossible not to fall for their lines. Do not help men put groceries in their trunk; do not let them help you. Maybe he's a nice guy – if he is he will respect your need for safety.

2. *Make them back up*

Politely but firmly – 'Sir, I don't know you. Don't come any closer.' **Men** – use that line if anyone you don't know comes up close behind you at an ATM.

3. *Swallow your pride*

Use valet parking. If you can't find a very close parking place make the manager or security walk you to your car. And, yes, they have to do so if you ask.

4. *Pay attention, walk with confidence and have a friend with you if possible*

Look around as you walk, do not talk on the cell and have one arm free. If a man looks at you look back at him.

5. *Have your keys out before you get to the car, get in the car, lock the doors, start it and drive away!*

By doing this you just frustrated 90% of parking lot predation.

DEFEND YOURSELF

Self-defense is something you do if you have to do so. The difference in defense and aggression is sometimes a gray area. You have to decide what you will do. There is no 'fair fight' – do what you need to do.

1. *Nothing you ever saw in the movies works in real life*

Not a single gunshot, punch or kick. All of those things you see in the movies are special effects, special effects that work as well in real life as Spiderman scaling the walls. Get training whether hand to hand or use of weapons.

2. *Do not react to loud harsh profane language*

Even educated adults react in knee jerk fashion to loud and profane language. Men get angry and can be goaded into a fight. Women become frightened and may become paralyzed. Predators are expert at knowing the buttons to push. But you are in control of you – it's just words.

3. *Go for eyes, throat, kneecaps, kidneys – vulnerable in anyone*

Learn a few moves and practice. Your goal is not to compete in the Olympics – it is to give yourself opportunity to flee.

DON'T BE AN EASY TARGET – YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF YOU

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