

FAST Times Newsletter November 04

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Welcome to the monthly newsletter of FAST Defense. For those of you who missed the last newsletter, you can find it in the Archive section of the www.fastdefense.com website.

Self Defense Myth: Men Don't Need Self Defense

This is myth that seems ludicrous, yet is very common everywhere I go. Many FAST courses are filled with women who see the need for self defense from incidents that either they or someone they know have experienced. But mysteriously, men are much less likely to attend these readily available courses.

It is my experience that many of us American and Internationally bred guys feel that taking a self-defense course is an admission of weakness. Somehow we feel that being men we are somehow supposed to know how to take care of ourselves. Yet men flock to martial arts schools which supposedly will teach us all about self defense, though typically fall well short of the goal. Why is this? Apparently martial arts present a more socially acceptable activity, engaging in combatives through complex physical movements that test our dexterity and prowess. Or perhaps it is the journey to the esteemed Black Belt that allures us in our goal driven society.

Looking at the origin of self defense courses, they have originally arose as a way to help out "them little ladies" who were helpless against the big bad guys of the world but not willing or able to engage in the rigors or traditional MA training. These courses were typically taught by martial artists or law enforcement professionals, while us "real men" joined the local Karate school to hone our self-defense skills. Then again we have to look at the times. Back in the 60's and 70's martial arts schools were more hardcore and typically represented a substantial blood and guts challenge to the participant. Truly the Martial Arts students of those days were fairly well prepared for the rigors of street combat due to the extreme training that many schools forced one to endure. Thus there was a huge distinction between martial arts training and standard short course self defense courses for women.

Today most schools are per-force less rigorous than the "old school" versions of the older times. Although some schools still hold to the hardcore training regimens of old, they are relatively few and far between, and usually less than commercially successful. Children now represent the typical bread and butter of martial arts schools with adults being a relatively smaller market. Increased self-esteem, conditioning, and self-discipline

are as much or more the desired results than actual self-defense in today's martial arts world.

Our fast paced world is making it more difficult for adults to find the time for long-term martial arts training. Increased violence is clearly dictating a greater need for self-defense training than ever before. Yet men still hold onto the conditioning that keeps them from entering self-defense classes. Denial is not a river in Egypt. Men are accosted as much as women are. It just happens in a different way. We are constantly encountering macho jerks who confront our masculinity, sexual prowess, and the myriad of other innuendos that exist. From early childhood to adulthood, we experience a barrage of challenges and threats. Yet still, no one ever teaches us how to deal with these. That is, no one other than movies which show super human feats of ninja-like skill, or cold calculated heroes who are well beyond the mere frailties of common fears. Or our well meaning buddies who gladly offer advice on subjects they probably know less about than we do ourselves. And still we refrain from engaging in the very arena that can teach us the very information we crave.

In 1990, I created the first organization to offer adrenal stress response self-defense for men. Although it was in the times of the men's movement, my motivation was not to capitalize on the sensitive new age "Alan Alda's" of the world. My friends and fellow Bulletmen simply wanted to enjoy the rewards of this powerful training that we were providing to women. After all, most of us had joined the martial arts because of some sort of previous bad experience or victimization. So I started marketing adrenal stress response training to the men in my Boulder Colorado community. The then burgeoning men's movement was the logical place to start.

Ironically, the men who were drawn to the course were a rare breed. Typically they were in the 30 plus age group. Also typical was the common bond of having had some sort of verbal or physical attack. All of them had some previous experience which pushed them over the denial threshold into admitting that they were not supermen capable of handling every adversity. Men are attacked in many ways in our society. We are verbally and physically assaulted. Worse yet we are taught that feeling the fear and vulnerability that are common byproducts of being human, are failings of inadequacy.

The bottom line is men need self defense just as women do. But it takes strength and maturity to admit that we are not invulnerable. For our male graduates, this admission of vulnerability becomes their greatest strength as they learn to use their fear and emotions as a tremendous source of power. These men leave the course stronger of heart, and much more capable of handling future macho altercations. As such they are able to discard any remnants of protective bravado facade and go forth in the world as powerful yet caring men. These men are my inspiration and the hope of the future for our gender.

Recommended Reading: Warriors - On Living with Courage, Discipline, and Honor by: Lauren Christensen

Despite the fact that I am one of the contributing authors of this book, I can say objectively that "Warriors" is a very informative and entertaining read. Former police officer, advanced ranked Martial Artist, and Vietnam Veteran, Lauren Christensen

interviewed warriors from across the land to create this compilation of colorful views on what it means to be a modern day warrior. They are a diverse mix of warriors, from soldiers, cops, SWAT officers, and martial art masters, to experts in the field of workplace violence, theology, fear, and school safety. These thirty seven experts speak candidly on what it's like to sacrifice, to train, to fear, to protect, even to kill, to accomplish what needs to be done. This book is a vivid journey into the hearts, minds, and souls of real world warriors who have faced hardship and danger in service to others.

To order this book, go to: <http://www.lwcbooks.com/books/warriorsonliving.html>

Success Story: While visiting San Francisco with two other martial arts instructors (two of the three of us are certified FAST Defense instructors) we decided to take a ride on the famous cable car. We were walking towards the loading zone and we noticed in the distance what appeared to be an altercation between a panhandler and another man. The panhandler was screaming that the man had almost broken his fingers or something like that but it was not clear what exactly was happening. This is about all I paid attention to the issue as we were headed in the opposite direction, plus this was in no way of any interest to us. The line was long and we had to wait for several cars before we could board. We noticed the man who had confronted the panhandler towards the end of the line for the cable car. He attempted to board, but the conductor would not allow him on as he had caused some additional trouble that we were not clear on. He was still quite a distance from us, so we continued our conversation and did not pay much attention to him. Kevin, who is a veteran martial artist, myself with 22 years of experience and Russ, with over 30 years of experience are now looking at what is going on. The man makes his way towards us

Of course wouldn't you know it, out of all the people there, he started towards us. He approached Russ and was quite close to him and was asking him where he was from. At that time it became apparent that he was drunk and Russian. Russ brushed him off and we thought that was the end of it. But no, I must be a pest magnet, as he came up to me and started complaining about women (which is usually enough to piss me off). At this time, Kevin and I both dropped our bags and had our hands in a ready position, which looks more like a relaxed pose than anything. We were backed up against a railing so we had nowhere to go. I just put my hands up and said, "You need to leave!" He became more agitated and continued to ramble on with his litany. He was about 3 feet from me, and again I put my hands out and said "You need to leave now!" This time with a little more conviction. He continued on about how women have all the power and his wife left him and blah blah. He got a little closer and now I kicked it into high gear with a "I said I want you to leave." At this time everyone in line is watching. Russ and Kevin are watching, but not interfering (which actually was probably better). He continued to get loud, and I continued with the FAST Defense "Bad Dog" verbiage. Now everyone was watching, and the Pan-handler comes behind us and starts to warn us about him and says I tried to tell the police but they did not do anything. At this time I am becoming suspicious of the panhandler as well.

It seemed as though it may have been a plot or something. At this time the

Russian put his hand behind his back. Now I kicked it up to Red Alert and became more determined. He finally backed away and did a bow like maneuver to me and at that same time the cable car arrived and we boarded.

Russ was quite taken back by the interaction as he had not really ever seen a female respond like that. He has since had the opportunity to watch Kevin, Shane and myself work together on the program, and is very excited to have us come to California and conduct some classes for his students/parents/community.

Russ is an 8th Degree Black Belt in Danzan-Ryu jujitsu. He is an awesome technician, and instructor, but had not ever worked with the type of assertive training that he had witnessed. So, all in all I had an opportunity to field test the program, in addition to demo it for an associate. I am only too glad he did not have a weapon as we were backed up to a railing with nowhere to move. This could have been ugly. Both Kevin and I discussed the level of adrenaline we felt, especially when he put his hand behind his back. All in all it was a great test of our FAST Defense training. It worked like a charm! Joanne Nelson
6th Degree Black Belt American
Wisconsin FAST Defense

Upcoming Events:

Nov 11-13 Instructor training, Edmonton Canada

Nov 20, 21 Instructor training, Torrance Calif.

Thanks again for joining the FAST Defense Newsletter network. Please feel free to contact me with any questions feedback etc... Until next month, Be Well and Live Great!
Bill Kipp - President/FAST Defense

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