

The_Art_Of_Avoiding_Confrontation_1995.txt

The Art Of Avoiding Confrontation

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Two of the most popular questions I am asked by my students are: "Can you tell me of a real life situation where you successfully defended yourselves?" and "Does this art really work in real life?" This may seem to be a good question to ask me because of my twenty years experience in Law Enforcement, but it one that has a complex answer. I could tell you countless stories of how I used this art to survive while performing law enforcement duties but you be bored to death because the majority of the time I did not have to use physical force. We may not be aware of the fact that our forefathers also avoided physical confrontations whenever possible.

As Stephen Hayes says in his book Wisdom from the Ninja Village of the Cold Moon:

The Warrior of merit collects his victory in ways that do not cause others to feel defeat. He wins before the conflict erupts, succeeds before the challenge appears, and possesses his prize before anyone thinks to oppose him.

He goes on to say:

Use your weapons with prudence employing them only when the cosmos demands it. Use your creativity as the first means of preventing danger. Use your creativity as the first means of preventing danger. When you cannot prevent avoid. When you cannot avoid confuse. When you cannot confuse, dissuade. When you cannot dissuade, hurt. When you cannot hurt, injure. When you cannot injure, maim. Only when the scheme of totality demands you be its messenger, kill.

It is these philosophies that are the foundation of my street survival skills and I try to win without fighting whenever possible.

The Ninja families of feudal Japan used every resource available to them to avoid confrontations and live in peace. Whether it was information provided by their elaborate intelligence networks that was used to prevent a major conflict or a strategy employed to confuse the enemy and avoid a small skirmish, the idea was to prevent violence from escalating and only fighting when there was no other option left. There was no glory in killing another human being, it was simply the only course of action necessary for survival at that moment.

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This type of strategy is very different from what is pictured today on television or in the movies where the hero wipes all the bad drug dealers and blows up cars buildings, etc. to accomplish the mission. Many people get hung up with this unrealistic stereotype and they want to hear how I beat up twelve bad guys using my ninjutsu skills. So my strategies are not appreciated by the masses and may even seem cowardly.

In the feudal days of Japan there were times when it was necessary to use the physical strategies in combat. That is why we are studying them today - because those people that survived the bloody battles came home and wrote the techniques down on scrolls and taught these tactics to their friends and family. Our art was not made up by some martial artist who never saw combat. With an efficient combination of tactics, strategies and combat skills even though out numbered at times and having little resources, the ninja families survived the brutal oppression of their time and our art survived to the present day.

In the twenty years I have been in law enforcement I have faced several life threatening situations and I used the approach of avoiding confrontation and using the minimal amount of force necessary. When I began training in this art I not only saw how practical the physical self-defense was but was equally impressed with the strategies the Ninja families used to win without fighting.

While most people are interested in hearing of how someone confounded a mugger or thwarted a rapist. I'm going to give you an example of what I've been talking about. It's something that happened to me during a special assignment.

The Mayor of New York City created a special task force that operated independent of the police department. As a member of the task force I found myself in one of the high crime precincts in New York City. I was part of a cover team investigating illegal drug trafficking by members of the Police Department.

The idea was to go into the area and have the undercover agents make contact with the targeted drug dealers, purchase drugs and leave the area without incident. Going in undetected and leaving undetected was of primary importance to the cover team. Anything that went wrong would ruin months of work to say nothing of embarrassment to the Mayors Office. Avoiding confrontations was essential to the success of the operation.

Months were spent gathering intelligence and putting together the right team. Tremendous pains were taken to take even the minutest details into account.

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As the operation began I "ground" myself employing several of the skills I had been taught in the dojo, from using the "earth breath" to calm my mind to using the kuji energy channeling to stay alert, to sensitivity meditations to expand my awareness. As I worked on the streets I began to notice a rhythm or pattern to the activities of the people in the neighborhood. They seemed to be a uniformity to the chaos of the street which I called "orderly chaos".

As the operation went on I found that actually being in dangerous situations day after day heightened my survival skills. There is no substitute for real experience.

I faced several dangers simultaneously. I had to be aware if being ripped off by local thieves while listening to what was going on with the undercover operatives on the radio receiver to ensure their safety. Gun battles between rival drug dealers were a common occurrence in the neighborhood and we had to be careful not to get caught in the crossfire. I always wore a bullet proof vest because we did end up in the cross fire from a gun battle once, during which our surveillance van took a few rounds. Luckily, no one inside was hurt.

One day I was posing as a lost tourist in a car with Connecticut plates, while covering an undercover operative as he bought drugs from a local drug dealer. As if this wasn't bad enough, I had injured my leg during training and could barely walk, and I was by myself. As I sat there and made believe I was reading a road map, I noticed a guy across the street hanging out and talking to one of the local merchants. There was something that I didn't like about him so I kept my eye on him. And sure enough he crossed the street made believe he was going to get in the car behind me. He began stalking me like an animal stalking his prey. He slowly worked his way around the back of the car behind me and slowly walked up to the back of my car. This took about twenty minutes. As he crept a little closer to the back door, I drew my weapon and turned my body so I could get the first shot off if he drew a gun on me. There was no doubt in my mind he was going to try to rip me off.

As he was stalking me I thought if I didn't give off "victim energy" maybe he would pick up on it and it would dissuade him. So as this was going on I began to channel the kuji energy of the protector to give me strength and keep me calm.

As we played this game of cat and mouse I visualized a energy shield protecting me and I extended it out. I decided that if he got any closer I was going to preempt his attack and stick my gun in his face. As he crept closer I waited for just the right moment and I decided to attack first. As I grabbed the handle and opened the door - I only got the door opened about an inch - he disengaged and went back across the street. I watched him for a while until he disappeared around the block. In the months to come I never saw him again in the neighborhood.

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Everything went very well that day and that was one of several close calls I had during the course of the operation. The investigation was completed and 30 cops from the precinct were arrested for accepting bribes from drug dealers and ripping off other drug dealers for their drugs and money. As I sit here and write this article 60 Minutes is doing a report on the investigation tonight.

Another day I wasn't as lucky. A guy confronted me and grabbed my coat lapel with one hand and tried to punch me with the other. I used the angling 45 degree ichimonji foot work to prevent him from lifting me up onto my toes so he could punch me. As I moved each time he tried to off-balance me. He could not get me in the position he wanted and finally he let go of my coat and walked away cursing and threatening to kick my ass. He finally went into a store cursing and screaming. I never saw him again.

In each of the two incidents I described above I could have become aggressive and accelerated the violence but I did not want to get into a physical confrontation unless I had to as a last resort. I saved myself a lot of grief by waiting and using other means to diffuse the situation. Accelerating the confrontation would only have served my ego and not served the greater good of society. A society I swore an oath to protect.

This is the part of the training that I believe students tend to ignore leaving them with only part of a self-defense system.

I will never be able to write a book about how tough a guy I am and no movie will be made my career in law enforcement, but that's the way I prefer it. I'm in no hurry to get in a gun battle and hope I never do. Though I am confident that my training has prepared to fight if necessary and there are times when this may be necessary.

There was another guy in law enforcement who thought differently then I do. He let his ego get in the way of his duty to serve the common good by giving into the "lust for the bust". He ordered a raid to take place while ignoring information that clearly indicated that the raid should have been called off. We know that operation as the Waco incident.

The strategy part of our training is extremely important and should always be taken as serious as the physical tactics we learn. Cultivating Wisdom, Clarity, Faith, Concentration and Mindfulness is just as important as learning self-defense. One should always compliment the other.

I believe the era of survival of the fittest is over. Pure brute strength and savagery will no longer determine

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who holds the power in this world. As we approach the year 2000 it's not the strongest warrior that will survive, it will be the wisest warrior that will survive. The warrior that gains wisdom and clarity and is able to integrate that wisdom into every day life will be the one that succeeds and survives and gains power. The new millennium will belong to the peacemakers.

Due to the sensitive nature of his work, the author of this article would like to remain anonymous. Any comments or inquiries in regard to this article should be sent to the editor of this newsletter, .