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# READY FOR ANYTHING



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**REAL LIFE** SELF DEFENSE

READY FOR  
**ANYTHING**

# READY FOR **ANYTHING**

By Mike Gillette  
Tactical Training Specialist & Former Bodyguard

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## READY FOR ANYTHING

When I am approached for self-defense information, some people will tell me that they want to be able to be ready for anything. That's right, ANY-thing. As in any *thing*, any *where* that any *thing* might possibly happen. And while this might be a nice sounding thought, it's not really a feasible thought. Here's an example...

Let's imagine that you are part of a S.W.A.T. Team and you've just been tasked with putting together a plan to rescue someone who's being held hostage inside of a house. And the hostage-taker is armed, desperate and unpredictable.



Now in order to construct a plan to resolve that situation, a S.W.A.T. Team is **not** going to look at a satellite photograph of planet Earth and try to account for *all* of the potential contingencies that could arise based upon looking at the situation from that distant vantage point. It's obviously more effective and more efficient to drill down specifically on what logically *could* happen, given where you actually are.

This means that your specific situation dictates much of what you *should* be concerned about as well as much of what you really *shouldn't* be concerned about.

So, the first thing that we really need to do is understand that "anything" as in being ready for anything, is really sort of a repository. *Anything* varies. Your

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anything right now is different than my anything where I am. Does this make sense?

To look at it another way, your anything is a situational state. Which means that you should ideally look at your current situation and make mental contingencies to address the likeliest possibilities. It's simply more efficient and you'll drive yourself a lot *less* crazy in the process.

For context purposes, we're talking about the anything that relates to the realm of inter-personal violence or the threat of potential violence. And once we establish context, that context drives everything else. The next step for us to take will be something called a context assessment. We



need to think in terms of what actually happens during a violent encounter.

Violent acts have a certain way in which they play out. There's a speed to them; a rhythm.

Some locations are riskier than others, as are certain times of the day. Because there are these various commonalities, in order for you to be truly prepared, you need to understand them.

Certainly, it's very helpful to have a nuts-and-bolts understanding of the circumstances that you're trying to prepare for. But there's something else that's

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also very important. And it's something that a lot of people either *don't* think about, or, they just don't *want* to think about it. And what is that thing? It's the way that they *feel* about the context we're talking about.

This context, the context of violence, is difficult for many people and in order for you to be effective within this context, **you** need to get very close to how you feel about it.

What exactly is your emotional relationship to these kinds of situations? If we were talking about someone who is afraid of the water and that person wanted to learn how to swim, they would need to recognize the internal resistance they may have and work on ways to overcome that. And if they can't do that, it won't matter how much practice they attempt to do on dry land, once they hit the water, they're **not** going to be effective in it.

The same thing is true in dealing with violence; any internal difficulties you have can prevent you from being effective when the moment requires it. Which is why I recommend that you come to terms with what it is that makes you feel the way you do about it.

It may have to do with the fact that violence is physically dangerous. You can get hurt. Other people could also be hurt. Violence can also be unpredictable in terms of the legal ramifications after the incident is over. And this is something that weighs on many people's minds. Nobody wants to get sued.

There is also the fact that violence happens up close. It tends to be a very personal experience. And once people have experienced violence, they will tell you that violence doesn't just "go away" after the fact.

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Violence is inherently negative and its residue can follow you throughout your life. Any one of these can seem like big obstacles. And if you don't get yourself figured out in relationship to them, you won't be effective in dealing *with* them.

And this means that you could unintentionally develop what I refer to as a 'flawed tactical belief system'. A flawed tactical belief system simply means that you *think* you're preparing.



You might be going through the motions of preparing for violence, but until the linkage is made between your physical body and the complex computer that drives it, you're never going to be *really* ready for these kinds of situations.

Let's imagine for a moment that you're a 'karate person'. Now if you were to walk around town thinking to yourself, "My karate will protect me from harm", then I submit that you are only partially prepared. Physically, you may feel ready, but the physical is propelled by the psychological.

Another way to say it is "The mind navigates the body". And that statement gets us back to context. If you think about the very specific bandwidth in which karate or any traditional martial art is practiced, there's a clean floor, there are mats, there's illumination and there is an understanding that we're only going to go so far in terms of striking or squeezing each other.

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In other words, it's a controlled environment.

Violence is the antithesis of controlled environments. Violence does not take place when we're wearing proper clothing while everything is well lit and the floor is not slippery.

Violence implies things like weapons that you may not see or weapons you didn't even expect. In the karate studio, you might be very tough, you may be able to withstand kicks and so forth. But have you ever been kicked with boots on? Have you ever been kicked while you're lying on the ground? Probably not. This is what I mean by incomplete preparation.

Now I'm *not* saying that you should start telling people to kick you with boots on so you can feel "ready". Instead, I am saying that you need to mentally consider how *real* situations play out in *real life* so that, intellectually and emotionally, you can start preparing for these situations. This is what allows you to place your karate skills or whatever your skills may be into the correct context. (There's that word again.)

Here's another important point -- If you're not really prepared, you'll *know* it. Deep down, you'll sense it. Let's imagine a hypothetical self-defense workshop.

Now imagine that it's a workshop for women. Women can have an aversion to self-defense training because it forces them to confront things that are inherently scary in a way that most men just don't relate to. And as a result of this, many women's self-defense workshops are designed to be "fun". They're designed to be empowering (which is great) but they tend to avoid the more difficult aspects of being prepared (which is not great).



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And when you avoid the innate negativity of violence, you also avoid thinking about just how intense and intentional you must be, (you could substitute the term “vicious”) particularly if you’re a woman, in order to be effective. So, workshops like the ones I describe, generally don’t build techniques that are *situationally* relevant and they don’t present those techniques in a context which is situationally relevant.

What do I mean by situationally relevant?

There is actually a very fancy term for this and that term is called state-dependent learning.

Here’s an example of a *lack* of state-dependent learning – Imagine that you’re a police officer and the topic is pistol training. And while happily, police officers seldom are called upon to fire their pistols, the gravity surrounding those situations is such that training to do so skillfully is quite important.

So, as a hypothetical police officer, imagine if all you do to train with your pistol is done during the hours of daylight, on a flat, well-manicured pistol range with no confusing stimulus and no stress.

Now imagine an actual real-life situation that takes place at 4:00 in the morning, in the rain, while you’ve got a bit of a head cold, and you weren’t expecting what is now playing out in front of you at extremely close range. And any potential mistake you make in that exact moment will get you or an innocent party killed.

If your training doesn’t take those kinds of variables into account, then you would not be prepared. Physical skills are an important part of the preparation process. But they are a *part* of it. They don’t represent the entirety of what you need.

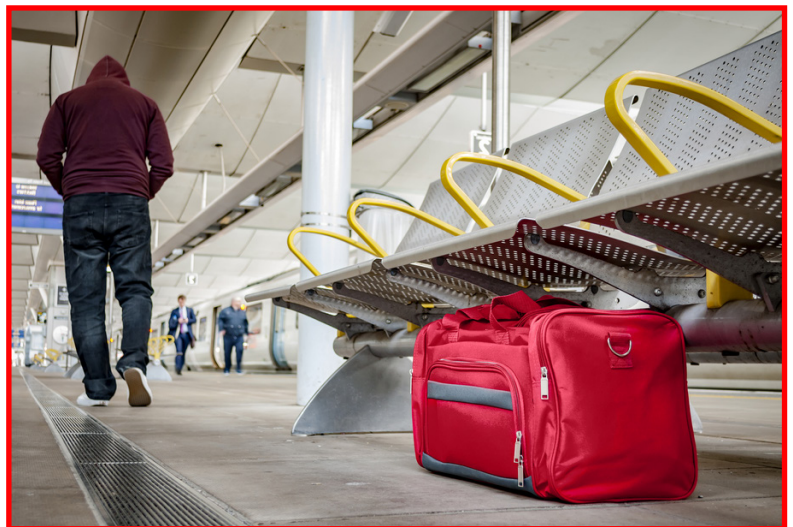
State-dependent learning is something I’ve paid attention to for a long time. In

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the post- 9/11 work that I did with the airline industry, I successfully negotiated for the inclusion of mental preparation training that would precede the physical skills component. This was important because I was taking a group of employees who had previously thought of themselves as customer service specialists and preparing them to learn things they'd never considered before. Up to, and including, how to kill a terrorist onboard a civilian airliner.

The events of 9/11 had transformed what it meant to be a flight attendant. And because of this fact, it was critical for those flight attendants to be mentally prepared *as well as* physically. They needed to understand this new context in which they would be expected to function.

So, in this examination of violence and how to effectively prepare for it, we've established *our* context. We've established that we need to intellectually understand violence. And we know we need to prepare ourselves physically. This physical preparation could be as simple as learning a couple of essential and effective (which is a nicer-sounding word than vicious) self-defense techniques.



It could also include committing to an ongoing pursuit of physical fitness. But the *key* ingredient, (and the ingredient which is so often missing) is the mental/emotional aspect of preparation.

Now before we move on to the next step, what we need to do is make an

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objective and honest assessment of what we are willing to do and what *aren't* willing to do in a given situation. To do this, you need to ask yourself some questions. Serious, adult-type questions. Don't neglect this important step. You don't want to wait until a horrible situation is thrust upon you to try to and figure all of this stuff out.

For example, if you're out with someone and they are assuming that you will be the one to take care of a violent problem, if one should arise, then being in the middle of a violent problem would be a bad time for that person to find out that you're really more of a lover than a fighter.

And if you are more of a lover and not a fighter, that's completely fine. But make sure that you understand that *today*, so that you can govern your actions accordingly. If that's you and other people are depending on you, you need to be forthright and communicate where you're at with this thing called violence. "Hey, if something happens I'm going to run away and you are on your own." Those other people would need to know this. Because then they might be open to carrying some pepper spray or a folding knife or some other defense tool.

But mostly, this is important for **you** to know. To know and to think about what you're willing to do in a given circumstance and what you're not willing to do. And understand too, that none of these things makes you a better person or a worse person. We're all different and we all feel differently about certain things. And everyone has strong feelings when they honestly explore subjects like violence.

So, do not delay this part of the process. You need to look internally to see where

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you are with all of this. Then, once you do, you will find that it is possible to achieve a measure of comfort with what is obviously an uncomfortable topic.

Once you feel as though you have a pretty good handle on how you feel about the topic of violence, the last step of the process is a deeper understanding of the topic itself. And that study relates to the ‘when’. As in, “When is it appropriate to do one thing, but not another?”

“When is it appropriate to do this other thing and then back off to *here* or escalate to *there*?” If you don’t have an understanding of this particular aspect of the topic, that’s when people get in trouble. I’m talking about legal trouble.

Good, well intentioned people can get in legal trouble if they have an insufficient understanding of the implications of when. Understanding *when* is essential if you elect to take an active role in your own safety or the safety of others, particularly if this involves carrying some type of weapon.

To neglect this area would be negligent and irresponsible. Because not knowing the ‘when’ leads to people to do the wrong thing at the wrong time.

And this would have far-reaching effects beyond just you. It could impact your family and friends. I don’t want you to be confronted with criminal charges. And I don’t want you to be financially devastated due to a lawsuit which resulted from a bad decision you made. Not because you didn’t know *how* to



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do what you did, but because you didn't understand when it was appropriate to do one thing instead of another.

I realize this is another sobering part of our discussion, but I can't leave it out. Now let's move on...

Now once you understand all of the foregoing issues we've discussed up to this point, you need to plan for the successful resolution of any circumstance you can reasonably anticipate. This means you have to answer the question of "What does it mean to 'win' in the context of a violent encounter?"

I usually keep this answer pretty short and sweet... winning means that you get away from the bad guy before anything really horrible happens. But, winning could also mean that you get away *after* something horrible happened. Sometimes the mere act of surviving a violent encounter is a huge win. This means that for any situation you may find yourself in, you need to create a definition of success that makes sense given the totality of the circumstances.

Things also play out differently depending on the specifics of the situation. For example, if I'm by myself, managing my own safety is not as complicated as it is if I'm with another person. And imagine if that other person is a significant other. If you're with a significant other and you represent the capable party within that duo, if something does go badly, then your definition of success has to change.

If it's just you and all you do is get away, that's a pretty good day. And this would be a reasonable definition of success. But if that was your plan while you're with your significant other, (running away and leaving that person to fend for

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themselves) then I don't think that's going to seem very successful to anyone.

So, consider how the presence of others; a significant other, a friend, children and just innocent bystanders, will influence the decisions that need to be made in order to resolve the problem.

And this leads us to one final thing you should think about. Something which is often overlooked, particularly by males when in the presence of others. Something that I call 'externally-induced, dumb decisions'. This is when other people's behavior compels you to make bad choices. I'm talking about the presence of idiots in our midst.



It is an odd thing, but idiots can sometimes cause more violence-related problems than motivated attackers, you know... *actual* criminals.

An idiot is the person who baits you into doing something you would not normally do because you let your emotions run away from you. This generally doesn't happen to people who are by themselves nearly as often as it does when they're with a group or a significant other.

To explore this idea of 'externally-induced, dumb decisions', let's use that familiar example of a bar. And in this hypothetical bar is you, your significant other and some idiot. Now the idiot goes and says something idiotic to, or about, your significant other. What are you going to do?

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Are you going to punch him? (Don't.) Will you pull a knife just to "Scare him"? (DON'T.)

Remember, to keep yourself legal, you have to do what's legal. Not a little something extra just to make you feel better, or look tough, or that you saw someone do in a movie. Everything you do must be balanced against what the other person does or communicates that they may do.

It is the perceived threat to one's *safety* that justifies a response, not a threat to one's *self-esteem*. And understand this... if an idiot, who is only doing his job by being an idiot, says something idiotic and that something compels you to do something in turn that is idiotic, then we can conclude two things. Number one, that you have just become a temporary idiot. And two; idiocy can be contagious.

A huge part of being safe and protecting yourself is protecting your state of mind. When martial artists talk about self-control, that's exactly what they're talking about. If you don't have a handle on that; if you can't withstand comments made by idiots, if those comments make you do something stupid, you've got no business carrying a weapon.

**Idiots have always populated the world, that's just how things are. Do not contribute to the idiocy problem. Instead, be the solution.**

You have to get your mind sorted out with all of this so that it can properly navigate your body if and when the time comes. You need to understand that self-defense is a thinking person's game. And it's a feeling person's game. And I know that may sound odd, but if you are not in touch with your feelings about the subject of violence, you are not going to be effective.

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Ineffective because you're not going to be honest with yourself. And you really have to know yourself in order to be adequately prepared for what may be the toughest day of your life.

It's easy to work out. It's easy to practice techniques. It's easy to go to the store and buy gadgets or tools. That's all pretty simple stuff. What's harder and less common, is for people to look inside themselves. To spend the time necessary to figure out where they are at with a troublesome topic. It's difficult to do. But it's absolutely essential. It is what will make you ready for anything.



So how would YOU handle yourself in a scary situation where your life or the lives of loved ones is on the line?

If you felt the threat of an attack or found yourself involved in a dangerous encounter where you had to react quickly, how would you respond?

I recognize this not a pleasant thought at all but as I mentioned earlier, it is something you need to mentally and physically prepare for in life.

As a Tactical Training Specialist and Former Executive Bodyguard, I've had decades to think about and prepare for these exact scenarios. I understand how critical it is to respond to them swiftly and correctly.



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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mike Gillette is a former Army Paratrooper, Police Officer, SWAT Commander, Government Counter-Terrorism Consultant and Executive Bodyguard. His mind power stunts have been documented by Guinness World Records and Ripley's Believe it or Not. Through his books and videos, his methods are in use in over 40 countries worldwide.

He is the creator of:

[REAL LIFE SELF DEFENSE](#)

[The Psychology of Strength](#)

[The Savage Strength Training System](#)

