

TECHNICAL NOTE

Self-defense is not an emotional reaction. It is a conditioned and measured response to a threat.

Putting Violence in Perspective

by Don Adams

Staying Dangerous

One of our students at TRTG never says, “Goodbye” after class. She doesn’t say, “So long.” She doesn’t even say “Have a nice day.” Her parting words are always, “Stay Dangerous.”

A famous psychologist recently defined what it means to be a good person. He said that to be a good person you have to be dangerous. He clarified what he meant. It doesn’t mean you have to be violent, but you have to be capable of it. One attribute of being good is that you are capable of destructive acts, but you choose to serve to the benefit of others instead.

Kia, the young lady above, is one of the kindest and gentlest people I know, but her statement above is in a defensive context.

Understanding What Violence Is

Violence is the use of force to redirect the behavior of another or the forced compliance of someone against their will. That word Violence - we get hung up on it.

The concept of violence or being violent is not passive. No one feels neutral about violence. It conjures up imagery and emotions - and negative ones at that.

Violence is a behavior, not a language. Words have meaning and evoke emotion. But you are not compelled to follow your emotions.

Physical Self-Defense, by its very definition, is violent. However, violence is measured by context.

All Violence is Not Equal

The police and local politicians hold community meetings for ideas and feedback to “stop the violence.” Organizations march on the streets to “stop gun violence” – all of which is good.

People who are unfamiliar with the lifestyle that uses violence to achieve our goals, tend to lump all violence together as if it’s all equally abominable. It’s not.

The kind of violence that is used to execute a home invasion to rape, rob, kill, or cripple someone is a level of violence that has no justification or harbor. However, the violence that is used to defend against a home invasion, for whatever the reason, is a different category of violence....and a good use of violence no matter how much we wish we didn’t have to use it.

There are two types of violence: expressive and Instrumental. Expressive violence is a type of violence that is used on someone to communicate a message. That could include reminding them not to talk to someone, to always obey, an act of revenge or even a murder that’s designed to send a message. That message is either do what is required or else. That’s the type of violence used in domestic situations, that’s why it’s called domestic violence.

Instrumental violence is the type of violence use to achieve a goal such as in a robbery, an act of

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revenge, a rape or other type of sexual assault. It's a means to achieve and end result.

Responding to Violence

I was teaching an adult self-defense class. We were engrossed in learning one particular technique, when one of the attendees made the statement that they weren't a violent person. Well neither am I, but that doesn't negate me from the fact that someday I may have to use violent force in an effort to save my life.

Unprovoked violence on another can't be stopped by reason or an appeal for mercy. Imminent violence, in most cases, with only the tiniest of exceptions due to forces outside of our control, can only be stopped by a greater amount of violence on the attacker.

That responsive violence (or defense) needs to be such that it renders them incapable of continuing the attack or adjusting their perspective so that they voluntarily stop the attack.

Those who commit violent events are committed to using violence to get what they want. They have already made the commitment to use violence far before they initiate the attack.

Violence: We Might Just Have to Deal With It

In contrast, a victim who has never prepared to defend themselves, must very rapidly go from recognizing the need, prepare to act, then execute. That's time consuming and already puts them behind. We just pray, it's not too late.

The problem "non-violent" people face is our lack of preparation to face violence. Unless you have given serious consideration to what you might have to do and have trained for it, you are very unlikely to overcome it...or you could just get lucky.

Those who are "Dangerous", understand the realistic and proper position that violence plays in our self-defense. We understand the difference in violent acts, and while we abhor violence on one level, we know that sometimes we must use it for the greater good.

Those who put being "Dangerous" in its proper context and perspective, have created a platform for defense and are prepared to execute it if the situation requires it.

Think about your defense and how far are you willing to go to defend yourself. What are the limits of your strategy? Do you have gaps in your strategy? The only right answer is that you have thought about it and have decided on a plan or no plan of action...do what's comfortable within your personal limits, physically, spiritually and practically....then grow from there.