

Mobile Self-Defense Expert Available to Train Women in the Palisades

By JENNIKA INGRAM
Reporter

Meet Elliott Derzaph: a self-defense expert who focuses on helping women. His company, Conscious Defense, is a mobile operation coming to Pacific Palisades.

As someone trained in self-defense with a background in martial arts, Derzaph found himself teaching female friends and family how to protect themselves. He's a married man himself, celebrating 29 years now.

After helping so many women in his life with self-defense, he became acutely aware of the difference between how equipped men are to handle themselves in an assault situation versus women. He wanted to help change this.

"Attacks on women have gone up recently," Derzaph told the *Palisadian-Post*. "And whenever a woman has to defend herself, it's normally not against somebody her same size, it's somebody that's at least twice her size."

After retiring from a 23-year-long career in project management, he began Conscious Defense, a business for helping women protect themselves through women-only workshops.

"Self-defense is nothing like most martial arts training, most is a sport," Derzaph explained. "Self-defense is a survival tactic."

Derzaph trains women with skills that could actually cause serious harm. He also talks about emotional intelligence in his workshops and how to avoid putting yourself in danger.

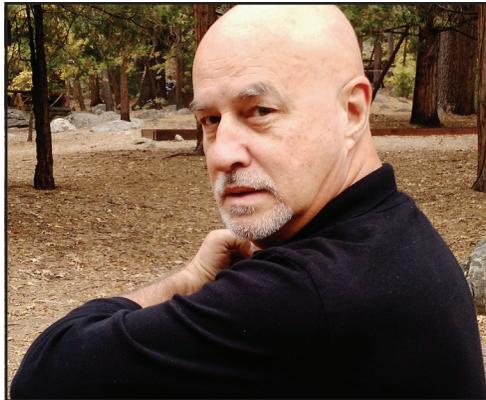
"You never attack someone muscle to muscle, you only hit their weak spots," Derzaph shared.

Conscious Defense began three years ago when the West LA YMCA hired Derzaph to lead a female self-defense course. Originally, the program took 16 hours to complete.

Derzaph desired to create a program that women could finish in one day with the basics they need to defend themselves. He condensed his new program into four hours. He encourages women to join with a friend so that they have a partner to practice the new skills they learn.

The workshop covers topics such as emotional intelligence, awareness, intuition, finding the mindset to fight for survival, how to use body parts as weapons, the attacker's weak spots, how to hit, how to fall, spotting impromptu weapons, and learning what weapons are safely and legally available in California. Students have an opportunity to practice skills using their equipment.

Derzaph's goals for the business are focused on paying it forward. If a legitimate nonprofit wants his services, he will work



A look inside a workshop, led by Elliott Derzaph

Photos courtesy of Elliott Derzaph



for a discount or pro bono, and he'll accept a woman in the workshop who doesn't have the means to pay.

Derzaph has helped such nonprofits as Santa Monica Pier Aquarium, New Star Family Justice Center and Dwelle Collaborative. Since Conscious Defense is a mobile business, it is easy to go to where there is a need.

Classes are limited to 12 people maximum, with two or three instructors by his side to give as much one-on-one training as possible. Trained instructors include his 22-year-old son Ethan, Rick Harrigan (black belt in

Akido), as well as Andy Madison and Chris Ponce.

Workshops are held on Saturdays, twice a month in Santa Monica from 2 to 6 p.m. for \$70: September 28, October 5 and 12, November 2 and 23. Additionally, there is private/group/corporate training by demand, including in the Palisades.

Classes are 100% money-back guarantee, designed for tweens to seniors.

For more information, visit consciousdefense.com.