

# INTUITION: YOUR PROTECTOR

STORY BY ATHENA THOMPSON

**W**hen most people hear the words 'self-defence' their mind immediately conjures up images of someone physically defending themselves from some sort of violent attack. Or, in other words, winning a fight against a street thug, bar-room brawler or another of society's myriad predatory types.

Yet, while it is possible to 'win' in the ring, on the mat and in tournaments, there is never a winner in a street fight, a mugging, a sexual assault, or an incident of domestic violence. There is always a price paid in violent situations, be that physical injury, emotional scarring, or moral, ethical and sometimes legal implications that will have lasting personal effect.

When we truly realise this, it suddenly becomes clear that it is much more important to avoid violence all together. In fact, avoidance is the ultimate form of self-defence. If a

verbal altercation has become physical, then on some level you have already failed to apply the cornerstone principles of self-defence. That's not to say that it's always possible to talk your way out of violence or to physically escape it (especially if you are ambushed, for example) but in most situations, it is.

Everyone in the martial arts and self-defence industry talks about awareness and avoidance, but what does it really mean?

For years people have spoken about 'women's intuition', as though women have more access to this attribute than men. I believe that men and women have a similar level of intuition, it's just that men often let their egos get in the way. Some women do too, of course, but it's arguably much less often.

Plainly put, intuition is knowing instinctively when something is wrong. It is an incredible gift that we have been given to protect ourselves, so why would we not listen

to it? We must remember that when our intuition speaks to us, it is always in response to something, whether we have picked it up on a conscious or subconscious level.

Usually it is one of two things that prevent us from paying attention to our inner 'guardian angel'. The first, which is arguably more common in women, is that we think we are being paranoid.

Think, for example, of a woman waiting for an elevator: the doors finally open and inside she sees a man who, for no specific reason, just gives her the creeps. Most women will still get in that elevator. Why? Either because she tells herself that she's just being paranoid, and thus tries to convince herself that nothing bad will happen, or she may still get in the lift because she doesn't want to

offend the man by walking away – even if his presence makes her feel really uncomfortable. Why? Isn't our personal safety more important than offending someone we don't know and will probably never see again?

The sheer fact that the woman got that bad feeling about this person means that there is something wrong! Trust that feeling. Every other animal trusts it. When a deer in the forest hears a noise it doesn't think to itself 'Oh I'm just being paranoid, I'm sure there's nothing wrong' – it startles and runs away at any sign of potential danger.

Many men, and some women, will also let their egos get involved. Imagine you are walking back to your car at night, and it is the last one left in a dimly lit parking lot. (First of all, doesn't true awareness start when you

decide where to park your car and the conditions that will be present when you need to go back to it?) Between you and your car is a group of men hanging around drinking out of brown paper bags. Your intuition goes off like a siren in your mind. But for years society has told you to stick up for yourself and not to let people push you around, so what do you say to yourself? Something like 'I'm not going to let them stop me from walking to my car'. After all, you need to get home and you're already running late, aren't you?

I'm sure most of us can relate to that kind of inner dialogue. So what are two of the potential outcomes to this scenario?

Firstly, you don't let your ego win out over your intuition, and you choose not to walk through that group of men. Perhaps you head back where you came from and get someone to drop you

off at your car? There are plenty of safer options.

Scenario two, your ego wins. You walk through the group of guys and they have a problem with you. They are armed (those glass bottles they've been drinking out of can do as much damage as any knife) and you are outnumbered. No matter how good a fighter you are, there are so many variables present that could result in you leaving in an ambulance, or never going home at all.

I know which option I would choose.

Listen to your intuition. It is there to protect you.

*Athena Thompson teaches reality-based self-defence with her husband Phil in Auckland, New Zealand. Visit the website [www.protectselfdefence.co.nz](http://www.protectselfdefence.co.nz) for more info.*

## Multiple-attack tactics



**1** Athena and Rich spot the shadows of a group of guys hanging out around the corner. Their intuition kicks in.



**2** One of the guys walks around the corner and addresses Rich. They are now in 'code red' level of awareness...



**3** ...and get their hands up in a passive stance with non-confrontational body language, while the three guys get closer showing signs of aggression. (Note the way they're holding their beer bottles ready for an attack.)



**4** As they attempt to talk their way out of the situation, one of the group attempts to separate Athena.



**5** Rich uses the element of surprise and strikes the two aggressors in front of him at once using Senshido's 'closest weapon to closest target' principle. Athena palm-strikes the guy in front of her and claws at his face, while securing the arm holding the weapon.



**6** The predators have become the prey.



**7** Athena and Rich survey the situation to ensure the attackers have no more friends ready to join in.

## Intuition in action



A woman is walking to the side street where her car is parked...



...and cleverly walks wide around the blind corner to avoid ambush. Seeing two guys loitering, she listens to her intuition and keeps walking by...



...and heads to a public area, to call a friend to help her get to her car safely, or wait until the men have gone. She keeps an eye on the men in case they follow her.

## Awareness failure



A woman is walking to her car...



...and walks close around the blind corner...



...then spots two guys. Her intuition is ignored so she continues...



...and turns her back on the guys.



**She is thus easily overcome...**



**...and dragged to a secluded spot where she can more easily be attacked.**

# Ambush survival



**1**  
A woman is walking to her car, with her keys ready in her hand, when two men suddenly approach from behind...



**2**  
...so she adopts passive body language, words and tonality, asking them what they want and even offering her car keys.



**3**  
Unsuccessful, she sets them up with weak body language and psychological manipulation...



**4**  
...then strikes the first attacker under his field of vision while the second attacker is behind his friend.



**She then turns on the second attacker, 'shredding' his eyes, ears, etc., and using him as a shield.**



**She ensures the first attacker is down then runs to safety, watching to see if her attackers attempt to follow.**

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**Athena and Rich survey the situation to ensure the attackers have no more friends ready to join in.**