

## **Awareness: Your Number One Skill For Avoiding Crime**

Protect yourself from criminal attack with a finely tuned awareness of your surroundings. Give yourself the best chance of getting home safely by noticing criminals setting you up for an attack. Practice this skill and you'll have enough time to run, call for help or fight back on your own terms.

Learning to be more conscious of your surroundings is often mentioned in books about self defense and crime avoidance. There's a good reason for it. Simply put, if you can truly enhance your skills of noticing bad guys BEFORE they have committed to attacking you, you'll have the choice to:

- Avoid them by slipping away unnoticed
- Prepare yourself for attack (mentally and physically)
- Ask others for help
- Proactively attack the criminals

The choice will be YOURS! Instead of being overwhelmed by their attack, YOU will be the one with options. This is a powerful concept!

### **So what exactly do I mean when I talk about becoming "Aware"?**

I mean paying careful attention to the behaviour and actions of the people around you, in order to spot things that are out of place. Specifically, you are watching for things like:

- People who are watching you intently (Remember that criminals often "stalk" their victims before attacking)
- Behaviour that seems out of place (for example, a strange man paying a little TOO much attention to a child)
- Someone discreetly pulling a handgun or other weapon out from under their jacket
- Someone stealing an item from a store shelf

There are literally thousands of different things you might see if you really start noticing the world around you...

...possibly for the first time in your life!

### **How To Improve Your Skills Of Awareness**

Ok, now you have a decent idea of "what" this skill is. So how do you actually put it into practice? First, understand that developing this ability may take some time, like any new skill.

I only really felt that my awareness was becoming automatic after about a year of practicing, possibly even longer. I would practice it every time I went out in public. Slowly, I realised that "being aware" was not taking as much concentration as it did before, yet I still noticed strange behaviour in other people. Every time I practice this skill, it improves even more. I routinely notice all kinds of interesting things long before the people I'm with spot them!

### **A quick story:**

A few months ago, I was walking through a crowded shopping centre with my wife and some friends of ours. I suddenly noticed a man standing off to the side holding a large, black automatic rifle (it was an R1 assault rifle for those of you gun enthusiasts)!

I immediately realised that he was not a criminal, but an armed security guard who was watching over his co-worker. His buddy was carrying a large bag of money out of a shop to take to their armoured truck.

What I found amusing though, is that nobody around me seemed to have "seen" this man holding a big gun, standing only a few feet away from them. I finally pointed him out to my wife and our friends. They were surprised they hadn't noticed him before!

Some people seem to be born with naturally acute senses, while others learn to use them while growing up, either through being victims of abuse or crime. For most people, including myself, it's something that you'll just have to learn and practice before it comes naturally to you.

### **Avoid "Task Fixation"**

Task fixation is when you get so involved in a task, like checking your Facebook status or making a call, that you stop noticing what's going on around you.

This is one of the most dangerous traps you can fall into while you're out in public. I have seen it so many times, and you probably have too:

- A man is so involved in his cell phone call that he fails to notice that he's speaking so loudly that he's disturbing those around him
- The woman sitting in her car, so busy checking her cell messages that she doesn't notice her shopping cart blocking the way of the other cars trying to pass
- The couple who is so engrossed in their conversation that they miss their toddler wandering further and further away from them

These examples may not seem very serious or even dangerous, but they do indicate a deeper problem: A lack of situational awareness

The solution is straightforward, but not always easy. When you are out of the safety of your home, stay consciously aware of what's going on around you at all times. There are many dangers out there, not just from criminals. The more in tune you are with what's ACTUALLY happening around you, the better prepared you will be to safely deal with any situation.

### **Develop The Habit Of Being In The "Here And Now"**

This may sound a little bit "New Age" or silly, but learning to focus your attention on what is going on in your vicinity RIGHT NOW is a rare skill. Too many people have slipped into the habit of focusing their attention inward, towards the thoughts inside their heads. Thoughts of:

- Work problems
- Relationship problems
- Mundane tasks (what to make for supper)
- To do lists

- Shopping lists
- Nasty things other people have said to them

...and a million other possibilities.

The point is, all these other thoughts are not NEARLY as important as being "present" and aware of what's happening in the "HERE and NOW". By just learning to gently return your focus to the world around you, you can vastly improve your ability to spot trouble before it finds you.

### **You'll Notice Positive Things Too**

Developing this skill is not just about noticing the criminal setting you up for a mugging (although, in my view, that's the MAIN benefit). You'll also notice:

- The new store that's just opened in your street
- A beautiful sunset
- Your friend's brand new haircut
- The couple that is so in love they can't stop staring into each other's eyes
- A business opportunity you never noticed before

The possibilities are endless!

### **Practice This VITAL Skill Every Day**

Learning and practicing the skill of awareness will give you the ability to notice and AVOID 90 percent of the danger out there before it becomes a problem for you or your family. All the fighting skill in the world won't save you from the criminal you didn't see sneaking up behind you with a baseball bat!

Not only that, but no weapon will save you if you aren't able to pull it out in time to use it. Only a well developed ability to see danger lurking ahead will give you that opportunity. Give some attention to practicing your awareness EVERY DAY...it's worth it.

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