

Situational Awareness and Predicting Future Events

By Joseph Parish

Wouldn't it be great if we had the ability to read the evil doers minds? We would know ahead of time when an individual intended to rob us or to do us harm. Unfortunately, we do not possess that ability and most America cities are now total out of control when it comes to the amount of violent crime within its borders. This is where an understanding of situational awareness would come in handy.

Recently in the news was a report about a woman who was repeated stabbed by a knife wielding criminal who left her in critical condition. As if that was not evil enough her toddler child was held as a hostage for a brief period of time. You may be asking what could possibly have prevented such a tragedy from taking place. Perhaps you may even be of the mindset that nothing short of divine interference could have helped this lady and her child.

Panic and fear tend to remove logic and perception from a person's mind when confronted with a situation such as this. This crime falls into the category of preventable. Yes, you heard me correctly. Although this crime was a tragic event it could have been prevented if you know a few secrets involving situational awareness. Here are a few hints that could have made the crime less sever or even prevented it completely.

First, learn to maximize your awareness. Train your mind and your eyes to scan your environment and recognize any potential predatory movements. Has someone acted strangely such as walking by a specific place several times? If they did you have a person actively seeking the presence of a potential victim. Acts such as this should serve to alert you that something is amiss and extra precaution should be taken.

In any emergency situation you should rely upon your instincts. If something inside of you is saying that there is a problem here and it just doesn't seem right than listen to that inner voice. Don't attempt to rationalize your feelings but rather follow what is known as your "gut instinct." Scan the sidewalks for lurkers, look up and down the street for potential dangers of any sort. Keep your eyes out for the unusual or something that just doesn't seem right. If you are in an automobile and you see some strange acting people in the area you have one of several responses that you could take. You could remain in your car until you feel it is safe to exit it or you can do the most logical act and simply drive away.

In either case situational awareness remains the key to your safety. Stop and think as you walk down a busy street in the daytime and especially in the twilight hours. How many people are staring down at their phones as they walk along? Are they becoming aware of their surroundings? I don't think so. Add to that the number of people who fail to have a clue as to what is going on and wander around all day in a fog as they pay no attention what so ever to their surroundings and what events may be taking place.

Perhaps some of the problems revolve around the idea that most people are oblivious to the general life on the street. They usually go about their life on a daily basis with nothing out of the ordinary happening to them. Statistically speaking only 1 out of 4 people will eventually

become victims to a violent crime in their lifetime. If you reside in the city than you can increase that number drastically as your chances of being involved in such crimes increase.

Every crime begins with the assumption that it will never happen to me. Granted some people may go through their entire life and never become a victim to violent crime. As an example how many people have had a German Luger stick in their face. Perhaps not many but it happened to me. This kind of thinking is potentially dangerous for the person and they should revert to being prepared and learning some awareness principles. It is sure to make a major difference in the event of a violent encounter.

Another important hint is to remain focused. Don't become distracted by things which are taking place around you - observe them but do not permit them to distract you. Once again scan your surrounding area for any potential dangers which may exist. The key here is to scan enough so that the potential criminal knows you are street wise and are looking for him. There is a good chance that he will then turn to an easier victim.

Always factor children and others who are with you into your emergency plans as well. If you fail to provide these extra precautions you could find that you overload your sensors and choose the wrong course of action. Out of shock of what is taking place before your eyes your first reaction might be to run away from the situation at hand. Now suppose you have a small child with you and without thinking you run from your assailants. That is not a good scenario for you and particularly for your child. They could be kidnapped or even worse. To prevent fleeing or freezing up always have some sort of pre-planned response to take when the time comes.

Dealing with children and emergency situations can be critical and unfortunately many parents fail to take children into consideration when thinking about attacks. When planning ahead always teach your children about the use of code word signals. Have a set of coded words established which would signal an emergency and above all teach them how to react to these coded words. Stress how important it is that they response immediately and never question you on the actions they should take. This applies not only to children but to adults as well. My wife and I had setup a code word which would tell her to seek safety and another to arm herself if she can.

Since it is so easy to kidnap another person whether they are young or old you must take that into your plans as well. Several thoughts running through a criminal's mind is first off that kids are easier to "nab" than an adult. In addition, they know that if they have your child you will do anything, they so desire, after all your Childs safety remain upmost in your mind.

Be realistic when it comes to your capabilities. Being introduced to reality when under sever emergency conditions is not the best time to learn. Learn to acknowledge reality ahead of time. A few statistics might be in order here. The usual criminal element is usually between 16 and 25 years of age. This should give you one important clue. You might not be able to outrun a teenage boy or a young man. Let's complicate the scenario a bit and add some children to it. Let's next add several attackers instead of one. Now it would be nearly impossible to run away even if you were assured you would succeed. You may not be so lucky with one or two kids tagging along.

The response towards running away indicates that you have simply not experienced many violent encounters with street thugs. When you consider running away from potential criminals consider the topic of obstacles which may be in your path. Running away can become a complex and diverse problem even though you may honestly believe that you are capable of outrunning your assailant. This would seem to indicate that running away is not a good option. Instead consider being trained in the use of a gun and obtaining a CCW license to carry a weapon. At the least be sure to carry a pepper spray canister with you and have it readily available.