

## **Personal Safety and Control**

*by Mark Davis*

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Self-defense starts with the awareness of ones environment and awareness of the human body. The interaction of the two is a critical point to understand. When the environment changes and danger is present the body reacts to these changes, physiologically and emotionally. The response that happens is that adrenaline is released into the body which prepares muscles for what is commonly known as the *fight or flight* or *adrenal response*. This heightened state of alert is meant to prepare the body for emergencies, however due to the sudden dumping of adrenaline, people may have a different reaction altogether. Some people may even interpret this reaction as fear. In combat when the body first sees danger happening it prepares to protect itself and if during this preparation the mind and body are not operating together then a certain degree of confusion may arise. At this point the mind may not be prepared to deal with such an unfamiliar situation or unfamiliar physiological reaction. For example a person may loose control of their muscles and they may not be able to either run away or fight back. They may feel a sudden rush of blood and elevation of pulse rate which may hinder their breathing. In addition their vision may narrow due to the adrenal response. These are a few examples of possible occurrences.

### **Predatory behavior**

The predator will exhibit certain characteristics in relation to the adrenal response. Predators tend to have more experience with the adrenal response than the average citizen, sometimes they call it a 'rush'. Predators also know that if a certain situation presents danger to them to take flight. They will always look for easy targets, to lessen their chances of getting hurt in a confrontation. Predators know that their general surrounding environment is one that has to be watched carefully. Since a predator is aware of the potential of things changing in his disfavor, his *rush* or *adrenal response* might be one of violence. For example, he will show a weapon, yell or be very loud, pounce and hit or exhibit a variety of aggressive gestures.

## **The preparation for conflict using martial arts.**

In martial arts there are specific ways to train in such a way that one can prepare for trouble. One of these important points is to understand that whether or not one is trained in martial arts, *everybody is vulnerable to circumstances and unexpected events*. When a martial artist prepares it is necessary to train the proper muscles for conflict and also train the mind in a proper fashion for conflict. The mind and body have to be able to act as one. This is called ki, generally known as the timing between the mind and the body. For example if the timing is off on a car engine it will not be able to function properly. The same is true of the body and mind, if they are not synchronized then a failure may result. When ones' heartbeat suddenly increases narrowing the vision we interpret this as fear, in reality it is the body preparing itself for combat and allowing for a more focused vision. If properly trained this burst of sudden adrenaline could create masses of release for energy such that a 104-pound person could take down a 300-pound person.

My uncle was on the police force and he arrived on the scene of a young woman and child being crushed under a car. With the assistance of his partner they physically lifted the vehicle to assist the victims. The result of this intervention was damage to his back but it saved the lives of the mother and her child. So as we see in the above example if the energy is properly channeled at the right time, it is not guarantee of success, but the chances of reaching safety are significantly increased.

Given time, the right attitude and the willingness to learn, understanding the adrenal response in association with martial art training can lead to great skill, confidence and awareness.

\* In part two of this article we will talk about our external environment, how this affects our personal protection and awareness but most importantly we will discuss how to keep safe and maintain a happy and beautiful life.