

### In This Issue

- Breaking the Predator/Victim Relationship
- A New Paradigm for Dating at Any Age
- The Language of Assault –Part 3, Emotional Indebtedness.

### In the Coming Issue

**Getting Physical: What Your Body Language is Saying**  
The Natural Order. A look at what makes defense techniques work or fail when you need them most.

The Language of Assault, Part 4—Promises, Promises. What he may be saying when he makes assurances you haven't asked for.

### Upcoming Events

**Women's Personal Defense Workshop Level 1—**  
Saturday, April 24th, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Women's Personal Defense Workshop Level 2—**  
Saturday, September 25th, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

### Questions or Comments?

Got a story to tell or some advice to give? Write us about it. We may include it in future publications.

Stuck in a situation you don't know how to get out of? Let us know. We may be able to help.

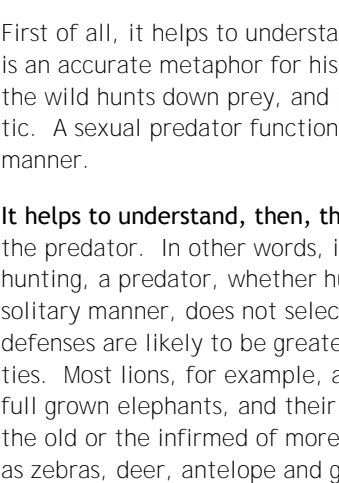
For questions or comments, you may Email us directly at [info@womenspersonaldefense.com](mailto:info@womenspersonaldefense.com) or Call us at 915-856-6560.

### Did you know?

- While the physical effects of rape can be very serious, the psychological devastation is often worse and much longer lasting. Common effects include relationship difficulties, fear of sex and intimacy, major depression, alcohol or drug abuse, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder.<sup>3</sup>
- Pava, Bateman & Glascock conducted an extended study of the effects of self-defense instruction on visually impaired women. All of these women had a more realistic perception of the risks of crime, had improved physical skills in areas such as balance and strength, and felt less vulnerable after training.<sup>4</sup>
- Self defense training has many similarities to martial arts training. A review of martial arts and psychological health concludes that increased assertiveness, confidence, self-esteem, relaxation, and concentration as well as decreased anxiety all result from such training.<sup>5</sup>

### Breaking the Predator/Victim Relationship

Although legal definitions may vary from state to state, a sexual predator is typically known as one who seeks to involve himself in sexual contact with another in a manner that exploits that other's mental, emotional and/or physical sensibilities. Even though some may argue that not all sexual predators are violent, it is my opinion that **a sexual predator's actions are always assaultive. When you set all legal hair-splitting aside, however, whether violent or not, I strongly believe that forcing sexual contact upon another is a reprehensible attack which predictably results in the collapse of an individual's sense of safety and personal security.**



Given that sexual assault is a pretty nasty, down-and-dirty business, one is tempted to think of the sexual predator as completely vile and animalistic, devoid of natural human perception and sensitivity. Although your assessment is understandable, a closer look will give you a better view and a greater awareness of how he operates and what he looks for, and hopefully this will be sufficient enough to help you steer clear of behaviors that "work" for him.

First of all, it helps to understand that the word *predator* is an accurate metaphor for his behavior. A predator in the wild hunts down prey, and is instinctively opportunistic. A sexual predator functions in very much the same manner.

**It helps to understand, then, that the prey always "fits" the predator.** In other words, in its normal course of hunting, a predator, whether hunting with a pack or in a solitary manner, does not select as prey an animal whose defenses are likely to be greater than its hunting abilities. Most lions, for example, are respectful of a herd of full grown elephants, and their prey is usually the young, the old or the infirmed and more vulnerable species such as zebras, deer, antelope and gazelles.

As another example, consider that a scorpion will sting you if you trigger its survival defenses, but it will in no way confuse you with a fly or a moth—its favored dinner delicacy. **A fly or moth "fit" within the scorpions predator/prey relationship.**

Therefore, be assured that a sexual predator is not going to select a target who appears to be above his ability to subdue. You are not going to be attacked by a smaller-than-you, fragile or weaker aggressor. To do so would violate the silent, but very present, predator/prey relationship formula. Also, chances are that if, in your normal course of habit, you lessen a predator's opportunity to assault you, he won't.

A sexual predator selects his prey instinctively. He must also have the opportunity to pull off his crime. Furthermore, if he has swept through your awareness defenses and has come close enough to initiate his crime, he needs you to meet certain criteria: namely, you must be overwhelmed enough so as to render your mental and physical defenses ineffective.

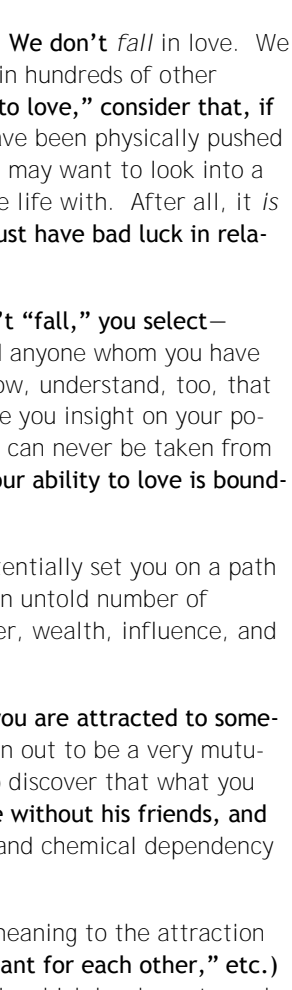
So what can you do to minimize or eliminate the possibility of being a good "fit" for a predator? The following guidelines should serve:

1. Always practice Descriptive Awareness (see *Safe Journey Newsletters Vol. 1 Issues 2 & 3*).
2. Minimize yourself as the target of an assault. For instance, avoid distractions that will decrease your perception of the surroundings. This includes such things as talking on a cell phone while walking, applying your make-up or working on your checkbook while sitting in a parked, unlocked car. Your preoccupation screams volumes to the predator, and it reeks opportunity.
3. Remember that your body language speaks loudly. To carry yourself with an air of strength and confidence is worlds apart from the wounded damsel-in-distress image. Though a predator does not study body-language, he responds to it instinctively. In fact, he is not as completely devoid of his own perceptive ability as you may think him to be.

Finally, there is the question of whether or not you should fight back should your prevention skills fail you. The answer is a resounding YES!

Statistics vary, but you should know that one study shows that approximately 96% of women who used non-forceful, verbal strategies, such as crying or pleading with the assailant, were raped.<sup>1</sup> 96%!

Compare this to women who fought back. Only 45% of them were raped and that figure dropped to 14% when **the rapist's attempts were met with violent physical force.**<sup>2</sup>



Yes, you should fight back. You should always fight back. Any fight is better than no fight, but to learn to fight wisely you should take a personal defense class. Training guides your strategies and gives you tools that keep you from struggling with your attacker. After all, your goal is not to out-power him, but to get away. This simple difference in mindset could have a huge impact on outcome.

Sexual contact is a very personal and intimate relationship which should always be left to choice. The ability to safeguard your mind, your body and your emotions is, too, intimately within your power. Give this power up for no one.

Stay safe!

### A New Paradigm for Dating at Any Age

There is no doubt that love should play a critical role in any intimate relationship. Nevertheless, defining love is not an easy thing to do mainly because one is attempting to define the ineffable—that which can never truly be defined. No matter how you try, you will likely feel like you fall short of the mark, and there is good reason for this.

To love is a very powerful but personal and subjective experience. The closer you are to someone, the harder this closeness, and the feeling associated with it, is to describe. The emotion is so much a part of you, that it is almost like struggling to convey the rich contents of your innermost sanctum. To paraphrase the popular British philosopher, writer and speaker, Alan Watts (1915–1973), this would be like asking the eyes to see themselves.

Looking at love in a practical sense is no easier than trying to define it philosophically. Confusions are all too apt to seep in, and do. Even so, it is safe to say that the need for fulfillment plays a huge role in the choices we make as regards to whom we share our intimate moments of discovery with. I am not suggesting that every individual looking for a partner is looking to be fulfilled, or made whole, by another. The move toward independence and self-fulfillment in our current social culture has made great strides in getting us to recognize that we should stand as individual wholes. Rather, I am indicating that most of us find it self-fulfilling to have the freedom to love another.

**When we fall into a "bad" relationship, then, the problem is not in the concept. The problem lies in the process we use to select the one whom we choose to lavish our loving attention upon.** And fortunately, the process can be changed, for it is directly under your control.

There are a number of myths that devour our ability to use simple common sense and rationale in the course of selecting whom we should date, let alone whom we should share our life with.

**For starters, much as we hate to admit it, love is not a crap shoot. We don't fall in love.** We chose to love. Now, before you crash my inbox with emails that join hundreds of other emails extolling the idea that "the head cannot tell the heart who to love," consider that, if you have had your heart broken a number of times and/or if you have been physically pushed around, emotionally abused, or mentally manipulated, perhaps you may want to look into a new paradigm for how to choose the person you share your intimate life with. After all, it is possible that your selection process is flawed, and that you don't just have bad luck in relationships.

**So, begin with the idea that you can (and do) choose; that you don't "fall," you select—**whether you select poorly or well. Understand that you have loved anyone whom you have spent romantic and intimate moments with, and if you are alone now, understand, too, that chances are that you can and will love again. This will begin to give you insight on your potential to love and care for another human being—something which can never be taken from you because it is not quantifiable. You don't "run out" of love. Your ability to love is boundless.

Secondly, stop dating for the mere sake of attraction. This can potentially set you on a path of justifying what is unjustifiable. Attraction can be governed by an untold number of things—power, wealth, influence, physical need or the lack of power, wealth, influence, and physical need—name just a few.

**For instance, let's say that you are reserved and soft spoken, and you are attracted to someone who is gregarious and the life-of-the-party.** While this may turn out to be a very mutually beneficial, opposites-attract type of relationship, you may also discover that what you described as gregariousness turned out to be the guy who can't live without his friends, and the life-of-the-party description really turned out to be a drinking and chemical dependency problem.

Your troubles are compounded if you have assigned all manner of meaning to the attraction you originally felt ("It must have been meant to be," "We were meant for each other," etc.) and, since it is very difficult to extricate yourself from a relationship which has been turned upside-down, you are now a mere skip-and-a-hop from the path to justifying what is unjustifiable. In your effort to reconcile your initial feelings with your current circumstances, you may find yourself constantly excusing the inexcusable, and the road out of this may be long and painful.

There are answers, however. Use the following as a practical dating guide:

1. Remember that there is a purpose to the dating ritual. This will help you keep things in perspective, and will minimize the chances of your dating someone only because you are attracted to him/her. Dating is a path of discovery. You should date in order to get to know the person you are dating.
2. Allow yourself the time to get to know the person you are dating. Opt for dates that make it possible for you two to talk and compare life experiences. Be keenly aware of red flags that may appear early on, and don't make excuses for what you see or feel. If you are concerned, you probably have cause for concern.
3. See what is there and not what you would like there to be. If he/she is "not that into you," he/she is not that into you. Be kind to yourself and accept this. Although it could change in the future, you are likely to miss all manner of warning signs if you disregard signals that are clear and forthcoming.
4. Don't play the guessing game. If you have been dating for a while, for instance, you have a right to know where the relationship is headed, and once you know, you have the right to agree or disagree with the direction.
5. Pay attention to the person you are interested in, not just in the context of how he/she is with you but in the context of how he/she is in general. Does this person have a tendency to be argumentative, disruptive, disrespectful, inconsiderate with others? If so, even if he/she is "good" to you, chances are that you are clearly seeing what lies ahead.
6. Never sweep aggressive behavior under the carpet even when it is not directed at you. To excuse legal or discipline problems as quirks or simple bad habits is a bad idea. That aggressive or bad behavior may one day soon be leveled at you.
7. Never confuse control, manipulation, or abuse (emotional or physical) with love. If he/she pushes you around, literally or figuratively, it is not because he/she loves you so much that he/she gets jealous easily. He/she has issues that are clearly more than you will ever be able to handle, and to conclude otherwise is sheer folly. Essentially, you are flirting with fate, and the damage could be irreparable.
8. If you have to "sell" your dating partner on the benefits of your relationship, then chances are that you are walking straight into the great abyss of emotional pain and suffering. You will likely have to be the emotional salesperson for as long as you are in this dating relationship.

And finally, in the interest of personal wellbeing, here are some tips to keep you safe:

1. Consider double dating the first time you go out with someone you barely know. This will serve two purposes: to help you feel more comfortable and at ease, and to give you the opportunity to get to know your date in a more relaxed setting.
2. Before leaving on a date, know the exact plans, and make sure someone you know and trust is aware of what you will be up to and when to expect you home.
3. Understand that your ability to respond to an unsafe or unwelcome circumstance is greatly diminished when you drink alcohol or use drugs. Don't send the message that you are willing to compromise your safety. It could cost you.
4. Remember that it is also not acceptable for your date to drink to excess or abuse drugs while on a date with you. The personality of one under the influence could change dramatically at the drop of a dime when drugs or alcohol are in the picture.
5. A "nice guy" who cannot take "no" for answer is not a nice guy. Refuse to stay on a date that is making you uncomfortable. Always have a back-up plan.

A good relationship should never be divorced from respect and considerate regard. To knowingly compromise essentially good values for mediocre or poor ones is to invite potential trouble and heartache. Making wise choices from the get-go will give you the best opportunity for a strong and lasting bond.

Good luck!

### The Language of Assault—Part 3 Emotional Indebtedness

As adults, most of us are familiar with emotional indebtedness. It is an integral part of emotionally abusive relationships and is the very "stuff" of the manipulative control that accompanies these. It can be recognized as a feeling of guilt that keeps a person indebted to another and is often followed by a sense of obligation.

The funny thing about it is that, quite often, no real debt exists and, if it does, it is never as insurmountable as the loan shark would like you to believe. When it comes to family or close friends, a certain amount of separation and emotional maturity can make it easier to spot the manipulation. But what of the play when it is used by someone we either don't know at all or don't know well?

Because we are raised in a culture that requires us to "be nice", an individual may find it extremely difficult to deal with emotional loan sharks even under relatively harmless circumstances. To a greater or lesser extent, a hint of indebtedness tugs at our social conditioning and beckons us to respond in a manner that is fitting to the loan shark, including the feeling of a certain degree of guilt despite the fact that our intuition may tell us that something is gravely amiss.

An emotional loan shark is one who does something for you with a precise computation of what that favor, kind deed, assistance or help is going to cost you emotionally or otherwise. Using an accountant's penchant for debits and credits, this loan shark is able to keep you indebted for as long as it suits him. And it doesn't suit him to have you pay off the "debt," for he would have no further control. It is an emotional scheme par excellence.



In the hands of a predator whose sights are set on your "be nice" socialization, this practice can be used with deadly precision. "Come on, I fixed your flat tire, the least you could do is have a cup of coffee with me."

For certain, there are kind strangers and attractive would-be suitors who can, and often do, use the same language. It is not the words or the obvious actions that you should be wary of. It is the whole of the encounter and how you feel in its course that matter, especially if other danger cues exist.

Is he making broad assumptions in his language, as in Coercive Coupling (see *Safe Journey Newsletter Vol. 1, Issue 1*), or is he going out of his way by being insistent and charming (see *Safe Journey Newsletter Vol. 1, Issue 2*)? If so and he's giving you the creeps, walk away and do so assertively whether or not he is offering to do, or has done, you a favor. Nothing short of a firm "No" will dissuade this man from his course of persistence. And you owe him nothing.



In the language of assault, a predator approaching you with a weapon, a grimace, and explicit demands is much easier to spot as the bad guy than the well-dressed do-gooder. Unfortunately, not all predators use the same tell-tale approach. Many prefer to lure you to your eventual fate by using cultural come-ons as their weapon of choice.

**Don't be fooled. And at all costs, avoid paying any debt that is purely emotional.** Under any circumstance this is a poor practice. On the streets, with someone you don't know well, this is sheer suicide.

Safe journey!

(Look for Part 4 of [The Language of Assault](#) series in our next newsletter.)

### References:

1. Zoucha-Jensen, and Coyne, 1993.
2. Kleck and Sayles, 1990; Siegel, et al., 1989; Ullman and Knight, 1992; Zoucha-Jensen and Coyne, 1993.
3. Koss, 1993.
4. Pava, Bateman & Glascock, 1991.
5. Marge Heyden, Tiel Jackson, Billie Anger, and Todd Elner, May/June 1999

You are receiving this Newsletter because you have either attended one of our workshops or have requested to be placed on our mailing list. To unsubscribe please send your request to [info@womenspersonaldefense.com](mailto:info@womenspersonaldefense.com) and you will be removed promptly.

Copyright © 2010 Women's Personal Defense Center<sup>SM</sup>. All Rights Reserved.

Reprints allowed by request.