



Stages of Awareness in Self-Protection

The purpose of protection, whether provided by yourself or someone else, is to mitigate threats to your personal safety no matter what the source of that threat.

Threats can come from your environment, such as cracks in the sidewalk that you can trip over and overhead scaffolds that hold items that can fall on your head. They can come from contagious diseases you are exposed to in crowds. They can come from careless drivers around you. They can also come from the criminal element in our society. They can even come from your friends and neighbors that may decide that their lust needs instant gratification and that you are their target for the night (or party).

You are the only person on whom you can rely at all times. It's great if you have a big, well-conditioned guy as a husband or boyfriend. It's even better if he has been trained in personal protection skills (not merely martial arts). The problem is that they will not be there all the time. You are the only person that will be with you 24/7.

The elements of protection are to:

- recognize threats,
- avoid them where possible, and
- repel them if unavoidable.

Threat recognition absolutely requires awareness. The military teaches five, color-coded stages of awareness. They are:



Condition
White



Condition
Yellow



Condition
Orange



Condition
Red



Condition
Black

Condition "White" is a relaxed, unaware condition in which most Americans exist day-to-day. Typically they are preoccupied with their thoughts of the day. They feel no danger could actually come to them. They feel that they are safe and impervious to harm. They do not know who is around them, especially at their back, or how close they are. I have actually walked up to seemingly awake adults (both male and female), stopped almost touching their backs, and startled them when I excused myself and asked to go around them. No-one should be able to get anywhere near that close without you knowing it.

Condition “Yellow” is a state of heightened awareness. Aware that danger comes in all forms and can happen at any time, they consciously place themselves in the here and now. They know danger is possible and are on the lookout for it. They have conditioned themselves to be continually aware of their surroundings. They always know where they are. They are observant about their environment. They notice physical hazards. They notice people. They always know who is around them, especially who is behind them, and how close they are. They are aware of the conduct of those around them, looking for signs of impending threat. They do not willingly let strangers close. If a stranger forces himself close, they automatically go to Condition “Orange”.

Condition “Orange” is a condition in which you recognize that danger is imminent. You have a possible enemy in sight and prepare to take evasive action or prepare to repel the danger if escape does not seem possible.

Condition “Red” is the state in which you have positively identified an imminent, credible danger. It is the condition where you must commit your full self to the execution of the self-defense strategy you have thought out and pre-conditioned yourself to execute in the identified situation. You can’t defend “just a little”. When you must defend yourself, hold nothing back for your life may be on the line.

Condition “Black” is the eternal condition you achieve if you really mess up and stay in Condition “White” too long!

In future articles, we will discuss how to identify threats and how to pre-condition responses to them. For now, work on heightening awareness so that you are always in the present and not preoccupied when you are out in public or in insecure places.

STAY AWARE! STAY SAFE!