

Combat Responsibility:

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Chapter 1-COMBAT RESPONSIBILITY©:

“The warrior stood in the clearing, where the swaying sea of grass met the belt of smoldering clouds on the new horizon. He drew his blade cleanly, cutting the air with a whisper, his eyes transfixed, breath seeping quietly from the deepest core of his body. With sudden energy, he darted forward, stabbing sharply at the air in fierce succession, every strike a complete expression of his skill. Like an ocean wave, his blade rose and fell, unhindered, free of malice or doubt. The resolution of his intent seemed to stop the hum of nature that surrounded him. Then, once awareness had returned to him, he slipped his sword carefully back into its sheath and slowly knelt amidst the tall grasses, thankful for the dawning day that was upon him.”

Combat is the very essence of all life. Every day of our existence we fight to survive. We do battle with stress, age, fatigue and desires. We work to provide ourselves with shelter, food and comfort. We compete in our studies, in the workplace and even in our leisure activities. As individuals, we are constantly striving to move forward and to find security and meaning in our time on this earth. This is why I say that we are **born to be warriors**.

These battles, by their nature are unpredictable, a fluctuating fabric woven partly by our own intentions, partly by the resistance and intentions of those who would oppose us, tempered with fear, loss and pain and ultimately vetoed and trumped by the whim Mother Nature herself. In combat, as in life, **there are simply no guarantees**, no surefire solutions, and no absolute certainties. Despite what many advertisers would have us believe, no one style, technique, or approach can ensure anyone supremacy on the battlefield or in the boardroom, no matter what the challenge may be. If such a style did it exist, it would be easy to find-it would be the style being used by the guards of the emperor of the universe and it would neutralize anyone who fought against it, but I think we can all safely agree that no such supremacy exists. There is however one commonality in every fight, one certain truth that will be found in every conflict or struggle no matter where it is waged: that is that **violence, by its nature, is unpredictable**.

Through the ages, warrior traditions have taken a mind-numbing variety of approaches to combat readiness. Some have tried to ritualize violence into something more controllable, something safer, often within a framework that fused religion, aesthetic concerns or cultural values with survival. In his Pulitzer Prize winning book Guns, Germs, and Steel, author Jared Diamond studied the pivotal importance of adaptability to change and innovation on a cultural level. One example he gives is of Japan's refusal to adopt the use of guns. In 1543, two Portuguese adventurers armed with

early rifles, brought the new technology to Japan. The Japanese were so impressed by the weapon that they began fabricating their own guns immediately and by 1600 they had so improved this new technology, that they had higher quality firearms and more of them than any other country in the world. Think about that for a moment. The country's total interest in warfare stemmed from their society's powerful warrior class, the samurai. The problem was that at the base of the samurai's way of life, was the sword. More than just a weapon, swords in Japan held a powerful value in social class distinction and stood as a symbol of Japanese national spirit and strength. Diamond notes:

“Japanese warfare had previously involved single combats between samurai swordsmen, who stood in the open, made ritual speeches, and then took pride in fighting gracefully. Such behavior became lethal in the presence of peasant soldiers ungracefully blasting away with guns. In addition, guns were a foreign invention and grew to be despised, as did other things foreign in Japan after 1600.”

So it was that the government intervened to restrict and eventually eliminate gun production. Incredibly, this ban lasted for over 200 years! Given Japan's geographic isolation, they were able to adhere to an antiquated social and combative structure, while the remainder of the world forged boldly ahead in the improvement of firearms. This ideological decree smashed face first into the reality of the outside world in 1853, when Commodore Perry, leading a heavily armed American fleet, “convinced” Japan of the need to resume gun manufacture if they were to remain competitive with foreign forces that could no longer be held at bay.

History is riddled with examples of the absolute power of adaptability. Eurasia, during the Middle Ages is an example of the reverse phenomenon that we can see in 17th century Japan. There, the Islamic scholars benefited from their geography, embracing innovations from India and China that were readily available to them. In addition, they inherited the knowledge of the ancient Greeks to the point where many of the Greek masterpieces known to us today are available to us only through Arabic copies. As Diamond notes, while Europe fumbled through its Dark Ages, Islamic societies in the Middle East were making innovations with windmill technology, creating trigonometry, advancing metallurgy and chemical engineering, and creating cutting edge irrigation methods. They had adopted paper and gun-powder and were at the absolute forefront of technical advancement until around the 1500's when a shift in ideologies and combined cultural forces caused a reversal of this great tide.

These two simple examples from opposite ends of the spectrum prove one simple fact: **Innovation and adaptability is the essence of survival.** New technologies and knowledge must constantly be absorbed, integrated and maintained in order to thrive. For this very reason, many modern self-defense systems have strayed from or improved upon the traditional martial arts, creating hybrids that incorporate the latest combative

strategies, advances in psychology, biomechanics, sports performance and a host of other factors. They understand that the world is constantly changing. As Heraclites said: "You can't step into the same river twice." The universe is constantly flowing.

Exercise 1-Go With The Flow:

Imagine any single self-defense situation. The simpler the better. Something like a basic wrist grab or push

- **Visualize yourself resolving the situation in full detail.** Once you've concluded the situation, run through the situation again in your head. Notice that even in your own visualizations, as you become more familiar with the situation, you will add details, "embellishing" your response, eventually changing your reaction.
- **Now, try a movement in application.** It could be a self-defense technique with a student or partner or a solo movement like a squat or a push-up. Although there is an intended technique that you want to do, notice the variations between each repetition. You will never perform the same push-up the same way twice or deliver two truly identical punches. The more variables you add to whatever you are doing, the more organic and original each repetition will naturally become. For example if you try throwing punches while walking backwards down a flight of stairs, you will see some massive differences in each rep.

Even this simple exercise reaffirms that **combat is chaos**. I'm driving this nail in deep because it's an important one. Regardless of your ideology or intent, no matter how you've prepared yourself, ultimately, every Warrior needs to face the reality that violence carries with it an infinite number of variables. Since there can be no one way to predict how an enemy will attack, there can be no one technique or single method that can guarantee survival. As history has shown us, the key is to **adapt**.

I will begin this manual with one simple belief and that is that everyone reading these pages may have different beliefs and values, but we are all bound by one common, underlying goal-**we are Warriors who wish to better prepare ourselves for the reality of the stress and pressure of combat and life in general.** This is why we are reading this book. Therefore, I would ask you to reaffirm this one simple truth:

Preparing for the stress of combat is your responsibility. No one will do it for you. There is help and support available to you during your preparation-this manual will certainly be an essential roadmap-but ultimately, the obligation to make this choice and to go forward, is yours alone. As we will see in the coming pages, not even our instincts can do this work for us-sorry to burst any bubbles if some of you were counting on your natural instincts bailing you out of this one.

Exercise 2-Are You Ready For Change?:

Take a moment to ask yourself the following 3 questions. These are important, so please deeply consider each question one at a time and be sure of your answers before you continue:

- Do you believe it is possible to **change your behavior** and to improve your ability to defend yourself in every aspect of your life?
- If so, would you like to **improve** these essential self-defense skills?
- If so, **how soon** would you like to experience these improvements?

If you answered anything other than:

YES you believe it is possible to change your behavior and
YES you would like to improve your self-defense skills and
You are ready for these improvements **SOON** or **NOW**...

...then this manual may not be able to help you. First you? might need to take a moment to determine what your true objectives are and what motivates you to pursue self-defense training. On the flipside, if you deeply believe that it is possible to improve yourself and to change your behavior and you are ready to experience those changes now, then I will show you how your only limit will be your expectations.

You are holding the blueprint for your own personal evolution in your hands right this minute. Get ready to change.

Unless you do your best, the day will come when, tired and hungry, you will halt just short of the goal you were ordered to reach, and by halting you will make useless the efforts and deaths of thousands.

-Gen. George S. Patton-