

## “Awareness of Our World is OUR Responsibility



By:  
Aman S. Brar  
Dojo-cho GO-DAN  
Dayton Honbu Dojo Dayton Ohio  
12/01/16

I have been evaluating my life to some degree since I got married and had children over the last few years. I often view my budo as my foundation to the decisions and thoughts on how I view my reality. As the frequency of violence and calculated terror events around us, our country and world become more and more dangerous, I can't help but think of how this affects my family. What the authorities on violence and crime tell us is that we must be aware of our environment, be vigilant, and be ready to detect potential danger. At the same time they tell us there is “nothing” to worry about and our “way of life” will continue on. That sounds a bit misleading. In other words, being alert and aware of your surroundings is the best defense against danger. I think that equates to being responsible for ourselves. Self-reliance, rather being prepared is critical in a life threatening scenario. It is your first and best line of defense.



As in many major crime plagued cities in America (Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis to name a few) the public safety authorities are telling people to take care of themselves. They state that citizens need be aware of their environment, be alert and need to be able to protect themselves against predators. The police often only are there to mop up the violence after it has occurred. Therefore, understanding self-preservation really starts with understanding your awareness of yourself and your environment at all times.

I can see a direct parallel between what I have been studying at The Gi Yu Dojo and with Sensei Sandhu for over a decade. What we study at the Gi Yu Dojo starts with and ends with awareness (zanshin). It is interesting to note that what we train and teach in our dojo is very old from a historical view point but not in the present principle. The basis of awareness of self-preservation spans time. Everyone in the dojo through weekly classes of martial arts training learns and studies awareness from a white belt student to the highest ranked black belt.



This basic idea of “paying attention” learning is the foundation of self-defense/self-perseveration.

We teach awareness for the purpose of viewing your environment for danger through watching and understanding your attacker before, during and after they initiate their attack. The ultimate level of understanding of this skill is to ultimately understand and be aware of your total self. With awareness of yourself you are able to understand your actions in every life scenario; from conscious execution of your etiquette, to being self-aware enough to critique, refine, and perfect your martial skill. Awareness is built into the foundation of what we do and teach at the Gi Yu Dojo every day. As Sensei has said many times “what we train in, teach others, do for our communities is timeless”. What The Gi Yu Dojo teaches has stood the test of time and is very much applicable to our present day. Remember that it all starts with awareness.