

# The Reality of Fighting

A straight-forward look at the Martial Arts  
and the truth about fighting in the real world.

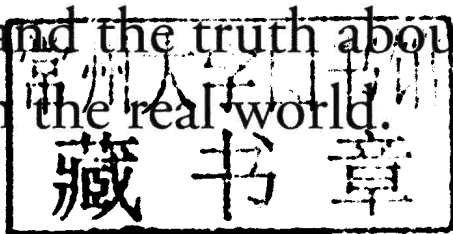
A close-up photograph of a hand holding a shattered glass bottle. The bottle is broken into many sharp, jagged pieces, with some shards still attached to the main body. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the broken glass.

R J D E F A Y E

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RJ Defaye

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## Why We Fight

Why shouldn't we fight? Why should fighting *always* be a last resort in a world where fighting seems to be the most effective way of getting what you want? It should be obvious to everyone with half a brain that fighting is wrong. Violence is wrong. Unfortunately, it seems that violence is the only thing that can stop violence. It is an endless cycle; it goes on and on, and it is a basic human instinct that many people find impossible to ignore. In some people, violence is ingrained in their behaviour from a young age, and they are brought up not entirely understanding the ramifications that violence can have on their lives, whereas others are brought up to ignore such violent tendencies. But you can't ignore a punch; you can't politely ask a knife to go away, and in this day and age where society no longer seems to have any morals, your politeness would only be laughed at. If you turn the other cheek, people *are* going to hit you, and they will keep hitting you all day long. Many daydreamers believe that fighting solves nothing—but I bet these people have never been backed into a corner by someone who was determined to hurt them no matter how hard they begged for mercy, nor have they ever had to fight for their lives. The only way to get out of a situation like that is to either fight or hope that the beating you are about to get is not too severe. I wish to make it clear from the very beginning that I do not enjoy violence; I despise fighting, and I am disgusted by people who have no control over their tempers and become aggressive at the drop of a hat. As you get to know a bit more about me, you may find it strange that I have such beliefs, but what you must realise is that being good at something and enjoying something can be two different things entirely.

In modern times, it seems that violence is more often than not the deciding factor in most disputes. We fight because we're forced to, but it should never be the first choice in any situation, and in an ideal world it

wouldn't be. But this is not an ideal world. Turn on your television or read a newspaper and you'll understand what I mean.

Humans for all appearances seem to be the most violent species on the planet. Certainly our ability to fight on a very large scale sets us apart from the other creatures that share this world. Humans will fight for just about any reason, big and small. Love, lust, dominance, power, fortune, pride, honour, hate, greed, protection, and survival are the most common reasons that we fight each other. What really sets us apart, however, is the fact that many people fight or inflict violence and pain (and sometimes death) on others for the sheer thrill of it. I have known people who have gone out with the express purpose of getting into an altercation—just for the fun of a fight. I know a few people who will joyfully walk down the street and pick a fight with a complete stranger just for the fun of it, satisfying some sick desire to assert power over another human being. I have no interest at all in what causes this kind of behaviour, nor do I have any interest in the psychological reasons behind the behaviour of the kind of people who randomly and deliberately commit violent acts. The only thing that concerns me about this is that it happens and that highly aggressive people like this actually exist in our society. Just remember as you're reading this that there *are* people out there who love fighting and pain—they *live* for it because it excites them and in some twisted way makes them feel better about themselves. Average, sensible people try to stay away from fights, so it's the above-mentioned people who will cause you the most trouble.

## The Plan and Who I Am

The purpose of this book is not to act as a martial arts manual, nor am I attempting to teach or promote any single art or way of thinking. My aim is simply to pass on the knowledge and experience I have gained throughout my life as a martial artist who has witnessed some extreme acts of violence, all of which have had a profound effect on me. Please do not mistake me for some kind of tough guy trying to big-note myself; I am simply writing this in an attempt to enlighten the average person as to the dangers of fighting, but hopefully something within these pages will also help those who find themselves in dangerous situations on a regular basis and simply cannot avoid confrontations. I also aim to briefly explore the evolution of hand-to-hand combat from its origins to today's modern fighting systems so that you may gain a better understanding of the history behind self-defence. As well as this, I will attempt to look at certain issues that you might come up against as a martial artist during your training (both as a student and a teacher), and finally I will attempt to convey my views on realistic hand-to-hand combat and why it is best to avoid getting into a fight altogether. In doing this, I am not going to attempt to overwhelm you with a lot of scientific and/or psychological jargon that, I have noticed, many martial artists seem to focus on these days, and rather than trying to calm their minds and centre themselves, they fill their heads with confusion and dull their basic senses which are vital to their protecting themselves in dangerous situations. The main aim of this book is to act as a starting point from which you may gain ideas about doing your own research in new martial arts, rather than attempt to write everything there is to know about martial arts and take up thousands of pages.

Now who am I? I am nobody special. I'm not the greatest fighter who has ever lived, I can't destroy groups of armed attackers with ease, I have never won any awards, and I've never been in any movies or magazines; that is simply not why I became a martial artist. Martial arts is to me like breathing; I have been doing it as long I can remember, and it is such a large part of my life that I could never stop doing it for long. My interest in the martial arts started when I was around four or five as my elder brother was a member of the local karate club, and I used to mimic whatever he did when he was training in the yard at home until eventually I was allowed to start going to the classes myself. It has been quite a journey since then, studying several other martial arts such as hapkido, Brazilian ju-jitsu, Muay

Thai, boxing, Tae Kwon Do, Kung Fu, several styles of karate, as well as military close combat and weapons systems.

As a kid growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, I was heavily influenced at the time by the movies that Hollywood was churning out concerning the martial arts. Back then all I remember wanting to be was a high flying spin-kick throwing hero who always gets the bad guys. But even though my motivations have changed, my enthusiasm has not been dulled in the least. As I grew up, so did my love for the martial arts, and in turn I gained more and more knowledge, but it wasn't until my days in an all-boys Sydney high school that I really started learning. Besides what many might think about all-boys schools and the many jokes that go flying around about the subject, I can assure you that it was quite the opposite, and because there were around 1500 of us and no females except for some of the teachers, everyone was trying to prove their manhood in the most male way possible. It was not a pleasant environment at all. Testosterone levels were through the roof, and because our school was part of a major sporting network of schools there were a great deal of large, fit, and highly aggressive young men around all too willing to beat the crap out of each other just so they could prove to their friends that they were cool. Very rarely did I go a day without seeing at least one brawl in the yard or on the fields or behind the buildings, and because of this you either stood up or you sat in the corner and minded your own business, pretending to be invisible. I put a lot of martial arts theory into practice when I was at that school (for six years, mind you) even though at the time I was too immature to understand how dangerous my actions were. However, this was nothing compared to what lay ahead for me when I became an adult.

After I finished school and started at university, I found myself in a few street scuffles, mostly because I was sticking my nose in where it didn't belong and because I was in a new town. However, it wasn't until I started working as a bouncer that I began to be involved in and witnessed some extreme and horrific situations, and in many cases I would have to put to the test many of the things that I had been taught. I learnt a lot of painful truths during that time.

The humble bouncer gets a bad rap these days. They are stereotyped into being angry steroid freaks with very low IQ's and a single minded desire to beat people up, but I found for the most part that the opposite was true. Although there are still some thugs within the industry, I found the majority of my workmates to be caring, generous, and articulate individuals who were lured by the call of easy money (which unless you

are involved in an altercation this is true). I would not trade my time with them for any amount of money. I also met a lot of other colourful people during that time: martial arts champions, ex special forces types, highly experienced brawlers, drug dealers/users, members of organised crime gangs, motorcycle gang members, and some first-rate lunatics. Some of the things I witnessed during that time had a profound effect on me in both good and bad ways. For a long time, I had nightmares and felt physically ill when remembering some of the things that I had seen happen, but once I had gotten over my initial shock of the violence I began to open my eyes to the fact that many of the things that I had learnt throughout my training had to be re-thought and perhaps put to the test. The experiment began. I figured that since I had put myself in this situation I was going to make the most of it and hopefully come out a better person—if I came out at all.

During my time both on the streets and working in clubs, I've seen just about everything from a harmless bit of push and shove to a full-on biker brawl and beyond. I've been forced to defend myself both inside and outside of work from fists, bottles, sticks, chairs, poles, knives, and even high-heeled shoes (girls can be nasty too). I've been spat on, bled on, urinated on, and thrown up on—all deliberately. If it weren't for my training, I believe that I would have been in serious trouble more times than I could count.

Probably the biggest lesson I've learned from these experiences and the martial arts is to never take anything at face value. There are a lot of people out there who promote various things as 'street wise', 'the best way to defeat your opponent' or even statements as bold as 'in three hours learn eight moves that will make you invincible against any attacker'. Yeah. Seriously. Don't *ever* blindly follow anything or anyone. Make sure that you always question everything; even if you appear annoying by asking too many questions, it is better to ask continuously than to blindly follow something that may in the long term cause you some serious damage.

There is always going to be different opinions concerning just about everything in life, and the martial arts are no different. Take for instance the fact that Tae Kwon Do practitioners and Muay Thai practitioners throw their kicks in very different ways. The kicks are essentially the same movement, but they are executed in such a way as to make them unique to that particular style. The hardcore practitioners of each system believe that their way of executing a certain technique is the correct way, and many of them (though obviously not all) will simply refuse to even consider a different possibility, and rather than simply accept the idea that there

may be a way of doing something that is just as efficient, if not more so, they completely reject the idea altogether. To me, that is not the spirit of the martial arts, and it goes against everything that I believe a martial artist should be. You should always be open to new ideas and search for something that might make you all the more efficient in your studies.

An old karate sensei of mine once wrote down a short passage for me. I do not know where it came from, and it may well be his personal philosophy. Whatever its origin, I consider it to be the most accurate description of the way a martial artist should think and behave:

*It is my opinion that a student of the Martial Arts must develop their own form of physical, mental, and spiritual expression. One is not simply a student of Karate, Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do etc. One is a student of the interpretation of their art. Therefore, in essence, they are student, teacher, and master all in one. Each participant leaves their own stamp on their chosen field. Much as the painter causes his audience to ponder the significance of a single line of colour within his masterpiece—so does the student of boxing cause the judoka to stare in wonder when he witnesses the boxer's skill for the first time. When an element from one world is introduced to another world, the latter is irreversibly changed. This is the nature of the true martial arts. This is the nature of life. Add a little something extra to your meal and it may taste all the better.*

It is my hope that at least some of my knowledge and experience will in some way, shape, or form help you to either become or evolve into a smarter practitioner of the martial Arts and perhaps help you if you are ever in a sticky situation.