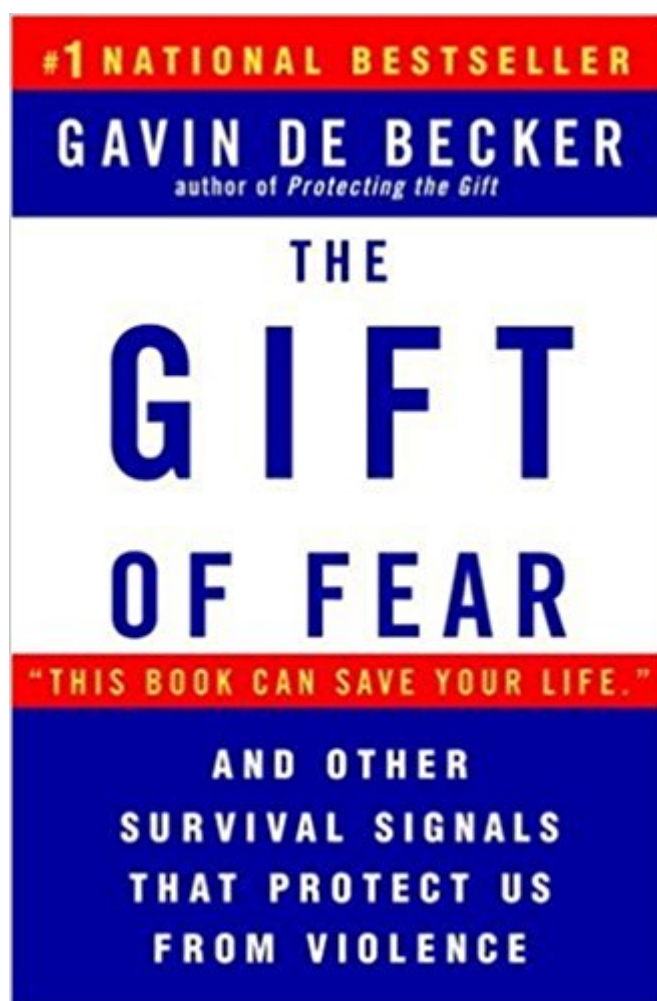




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The Gift Of Fear And Other Survival Signals That Protect Us From Violence



Synopsis

True fear is a gift. Unwarranted fear is a curse. Learn how to tell the difference. A date won't take "no" for an answer. The new nanny gives a mother an uneasy feeling. A stranger in a deserted parking lot offers unsolicited help. The threat of violence surrounds us every day. But we can protect ourselves, by learning to trust and act on our gut instincts. In this empowering book, Gavin de Becker, the man Oprah Winfrey calls the nation's leading expert on violent behavior, shows you how to spot even subtle signs of danger before it's too late. Shattering the myth that most violent acts are unpredictable, de Becker, whose clients include top Hollywood stars and government agencies, offers specific ways to protect yourself and those you love, including...how to act when approached by a stranger...when you should fear someone close to you...what to do if you are being stalked...how to uncover the source of anonymous threats or phone calls...the biggest mistake you can make with a threatening person...and more. Learn to spot the danger signals others miss. It might just save your life.

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Customer Reviews

Each hour, 75 women are raped in the United States, and every few seconds, a woman is beaten. Each day, 400 Americans suffer shooting injuries, and another 1,100 face criminals armed with guns. Author Gavin de Becker says victims of violent behavior usually feel a sense of fear before any threat or violence takes place. They may distrust the fear, or it may impel them to some action that saves their lives. A leading expert on predicting violent behavior, de Becker believes we can all learn to recognize these signals of the "universal code of violence," and use them as tools to help us

survive. The book teaches how to identify the warning signals of a potential attacker and recommends strategies for dealing with the problem before it becomes life threatening. The case studies are gripping and suspenseful, and include tactics for dealing with similar situations. People don't just "snap" and become violent, says de Becker, whose clients include federal government agencies, celebrities, police departments, and shelters for battered women. "There is a process as observable, and often as predictable, as water coming to a boil." Learning to predict violence is the cornerstone to preventing it. De Becker is a master of the psychology of violence, and his advice may save your life. --Joan Price

A Q&A with Gavin de Becker

Question: In today's world, where terror and tragedy seem omnipresent, the fear of violence never seems more heightened. Is the world a more violent place than it ever has been?

Gavin de Becker : Your question contains much of the answer: today's world, "where terror and tragedy seem omnipresent..." The key word is "seem." When TV news coverage presents so much on these topics, it elevates the perception of terrorism and tragedy way beyond the reality. In every major city, TV news creates forty hours of original production every day, most of it composed and presented to get our attention with fear. Hence an incident on an airplane in which a man fails to do any damage is treated as if the make-shift bomb actually exploded. It didn't. Imagine having a near miss in your car, avoiding what would have been a serious collision--and then talking about every hour for months after the fact. Welcome to TV news.

To the second part of your question, No, the world is not a more violent place than it has ever been, however we live as if it were. The U.S. is the most powerful nation in world history--and also the most afraid.

Question: Your bestselling book *The Gift of Fear* gives many examples to help readers recognize what you call pre-incident indicators (PINS) of violence. What role does intuition play in recognizing these signals?

Gavin de Becker: Like every creature on earth, we have an extraordinary defense resource: We don't have the sharpest claws and strongest jaws--but we do have the biggest brains, and intuition is the most impressive process of these brains. It might be hard to accept its importance because intuition is often described as emotional, unreasonable, or inexplicable. Husbands chide their wives about "feminine intuition" and don't take it seriously. If intuition is used by a woman to explain some choice she made or a concern she can't let go of, men roll their eyes and write it off. We much prefer logic, the grounded, explainable, unemotional thought process that ends in a supportable conclusion. In fact, Americans worship logic, even when it's wrong, and deny intuition, even when it's right. Men, of course, have their own version of intuition, not so light and inconsequential, they tell themselves, as that feminine stuff. Theirs is more viscerally named a "gut feeling," but whatever name we use, it isn't just a feeling. It is a process more extraordinary and ultimately more logical

in the natural order than the most fantastic computer calculation. It is our most complex cognitive process and, at the same time, the simplest. Intuition connects us to the natural world and to our nature. It carries us to predictions we will later marvel at. "Somehow I knew," we will say about the chance meeting we predicted, or about the unexpected phone call from a distant friend, or the unlikely turnaround in someone's behavior, or about the violence we steered clear of, or, too often, the violence we elected not to steer clear of. The Gift of Fear offers strategies that help us recognize the signals of intuition--and helps us avoid denial, which is the enemy of safety.

Question: Your latest book, *Just 2 Seconds*, has been called a "masterpiece" of analysis on the art of preventing assassination. It contains an entire compendium of attacks on protected persons across the globe. What motivated you to put together such a definitive reference? What tenets can be applied to one's everyday life? Gavin de Becker: Most of all, we wrote the book we needed. My co-authors and I had long looked for an extensive collection of attack summaries from which important new insights could be harvested. Unable to find it, we committed to do the work ourselves, eventually collecting more than 1400 cases to analyze. Many new insights and concepts emerged from the study, and the one most applicable to day to day life, even for people who are not living with unusual risks, is to be in the present; pre-sent, as it were. Now is the only time anything ever happens--now is where the action is. All focus on anything outside the Now (the past, memory, the future, fantasy) detracts focus from what's actually happening in your environment. Human beings have the capacity to look right at something and not see it, and in studying such a crisp event--the few seconds during which assassinations have occurred--*Just 2 Seconds* aims to enhance the reader's ability to see the value of the present moment. (Photo © Avery Helm)

De Becker, the CEO of a firm that attempts to predict and prevent violence against individuals, shares his informed insights on enhancing personal safety. He believes that violence is part of the human condition and that America is increasingly a violent place. For example, homicide is now the leading cause of death for women in the workplace. De Becker posits that intuition is our most basic and reliable survival skill. When it produces fear?as distinct from worry or anxiety?we should pay attention. Mixing theory with case histories, he discusses stranger-to-stranger crime, obsessive admirers, employee rampages, and spousal crime, as well as the more esoteric categories of celebrity stalkers and assassins. Having suffered an abusive childhood himself, de Becker has a special empathy for victims and an acute awareness of the signs of criminal intent. A valuable contribution on a timely topic, this is recommended for public libraries.-Gregor A. Preston, formerly with Univ. of California Lib., DavisCopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I spent 20 years on the streets in local law enforcement. I always felt that the Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO) we served on stalkers and spousal abusers were as worthless, in most cases, as the paper they were written on. Usually they simply served as a salve to sooth our justice system's guilt over unwillingness or inability to take strong and immediate action, or develop alternative solutions. As Gavin de Becker so aptly points out, when it comes to committed stalkers and abusers, not only are they not afraid of a piece of paper, it incents them to even a higher degree of activity and perhaps violence. The author makes an excellent case that we should be much more judicious in evaluating such cases against a threat matrix and respond in different ways depending on the nature of the threat. I also greatly appreciate the author's discussion of the origins of fear and how important it has been in allowing mankind to develop. In addition to the twenty years I spent in law enforcement, I am also a Certified Body Language trainer and teach the power of nonverbal communication. As research has shown, what we call women's intuition is in reality the fact that women, on average, are far better at picking up nonverbal cues than men. That "intuition" was absolutely essential for the females of our species to survive in a very hostile world, where they were of slighter stature and needed to quickly detect threats around them. As the primary caregiver to children they also needed to be able to effectively interpret the cues and needs of infants and small children before spoken language. One interesting study involved showing short film clips with the sound turned off to groups of men and women. Women scored an incredible 87% accuracy in evaluating the situation shown in the video. Afraid guys we only scored 42%. fMRI scans reveal women use 14-16 regions of their brains during communication, while men only 4-6 areas (most women probably would dispute giving us that much credit:-) In modern society, in the interest of being "polite", we often suppress our natural intuition, our gut feelings. Back in my police career we didn't even have a term called Body Language. We only knew it as "street-smarts". One of my great fears has to do with my beautiful wife's suppression of her natural intuition around strangers, in the interest of being polite and non-judgemental. The nature of my our respective careers requires us to live in a dense urban area, surrounded by all sorts of threats. Dark parking lots, underground garages, elevators and streets filled with street people and drug addicts. While our building is very secure, once you are on the streets it's a whole different ball game. She has terrific intuition when she uses it. She is like a perfectly honed tuning fork when she is willing to trust her intuition, but due to her kind and trusting nature, she often suppresses it in the interest of being all-inclusive and accepting. Gavin de Becker's loud message to women, Trust your gut, Don't suppress your intuition, Don't worry about hurting some stranger's feelings is a powerful one. It is my hope that my wife and

every woman will be willing to read the book, reflect on all the powerful stories in *The Gift of Fear*, including the author's personal story.

This book is an invaluable resource for women. The 4th chapter by itself is worth the price of the book alone. Titled "Survival Signals" this chapter will teach you the sophisticated manipulations that criminal predators use to try and gain control over you. You will learn about: "forced teaming"- establishing premature trust based on sharing a predicament. "charm and niceness" (remember, niceness does not equal goodness.) "too many details"- When people lie what they say doesn't sound credible to them so they keep talking. "typecasting"- Involves a slight insult to get the woman to respond by engaging verbally with the crim-pred. "loan sharking"- (it's hard to tell a creep to eff off when he's done something helpful and now you are indebted to him.) "discounting of the word NO"- refusal to respect the word no is a signal a crim-pred is trying to control you or refusing to relinquish control. There is much more detail in this chapter, and I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to recognize these "interviewing techniques" that criminal predators use. Thank you Gavin de Becker for writing such an important and informational book.

I do not remember why I bought this book. I must have seen a mention of it in something I read, but I am really glad I bought it. This is the first book that has made me reach for a highlighter since college. (And that was many years ago.) Shoot...I have no highlighter. That means another shopping trip! I have been reading this book in small pieces, because it is very dense, full of information. It also has interesting stories, and there are enough of them to give weight to his methods and predictions. I feel empowered now, even though this book is 20 years old. My intuition has been awakened, and I will listen.

This book is a must and I feel is very important for everyone to read. It really puts domestic violence into perspective for those that may not have a lot of experience with it. It helped me realize what some of my friends have been through. I highly recommend this book.

Phenomenal. Very informative. Have already used the characteristics guidelines listed to identify a controlling and manipulative volunteer in the workplace. Already encouraged friends to read this book. So good.

I read this book and immediately bought copies for 6 friends. I recommend for males and females -

lots of important tips. One copy is floating around our office and people taking turns reading it. Those I purchased, especially for young women, have been very well received. Very important information that all young and older people can glean important information from.

I've not yet finished book, however, what I've read is helpful and intuitive. I've dodged violence several times, most recently when someone else was held up at gunpoint by two men whose description matched two I'd crossed the street and changed direction to avoid about an hour before that victim was robbed. They just didn't look like they had a destination in mind, nor did I like the way one kept looking to and fro. I've not dodged all violence and those times I didn't were because I "behaved" and didn't want to risk offending someone(s) instead of trusting my instincts. I look forward to finishing this book.

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