



Turn Situational Awareness Into A Habit

From time to time, I'm reminded that Situational Awareness can become a habit...usually by my semi-perturbed wife, or my equally indignant son.

A local police officer once told me the single best thing I could do to keep my family safe at home is simply to keep the doors locked. This is because 90% of all home break-ins occur through the front or back door. Knowing this, I started locking the door behind me whenever I enter my house, and I remind my wife and son to do the same. Within a week or so, I started doing this without even thinking. It had become a habit. So much so, that on the rare occasion, my wife might be several seconds behind me and I'll hear the rattling doorknob and her muffled voice, "Really?! You've locked me out...AGAIN!"

This is the power of the subconscious mind. More on the subconscious mind in my next article. But, I had trained my brain to respond to a particular stimulus (walking through a door) with a particular action (locking it). On occasion it might be a little off-putting to my family, but it's a particularly good habit. Suggestion: wait til the family is inside before locking the door. I'm just sayin'..

There are plenty of things you can relegate to the subconscious mind to aid in your Situational Awareness. Here's just a few:

- Lock the doors of your vehicle upon entering, even before putting the key in the ignition.
- Before exiting your locked vehicle, do a 360 degree scan. Use your mirrors - rear view and side view mirrors.
- In your mind, tick off a few physical characteristics of folks you see as you walk from your vehicle to the entrance of a store or the gym. This forces you to take in more than just a cursory scan of your environment. To take it up a notch, use the reflections from the store windows to do the same...for those BEHIND YOU.

- Immediately find the exits and escape routes in whatever building you enter.
- As you approach your driveway, scan the shadows, shrubs and nooks around your house for possible bad guys. While most of us relax as we pull into our driveway, this is one of our most vulnerable points.
- Wherever you are, sit facing the door so you can take in the whole room.

To be clear, I'm not advocating a hyper-paranoid state here. Rather, I want you to get to a place where you are constantly in a relaxed state of awareness. The more good habits you can relegate to the subconscious mind, the more relaxed you'll be.

So, start today. Pick one or two things you can do to increase your Situational Awareness, and focus on doing those consistently. Once they become a habit, add one or two more on top. And so on. Before you know it, Situational Awareness will be a habit.

Until next time, Stay Safe and God Bless.

-Rob