



The Gift of Fear

By Gavin de Becker

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A Special Kindle Edition of The Gift of Fear, with a new Foreword by the author.

A stranger in a deserted parking lot offers to help carry a woman's groceries. Is he a good Samaritan or is he after something else? A fired employee says "You'll be sorry." Will he return with a gun? After their first date, a man tells a woman it is their "destiny" to be married. What will he do when she won't see him again? A mother has an uneasy feeling about the nice babysitter she's just hired. Should she not go to work today?

These days, no one in America feels immune to violence. But now, in this extraordinary groundbreaking book, the nation's leading expert on predicting violent behavior unlocks the puzzle of human violence and shows that, like every creature on earth, we have within us the ability to predict the harm others might do us and get out of its way. Contrary to popular myth, human violence almost always has a discernible motive and is preceded by clear warning signs.

Through dozens of compelling examples from his own career, Gavin de Becker teaches us how to read the signs, using our most basic but often most discounted survival skill - our intuition. The Gift of Fear is a remarkable, unique combination of practical guidance on leading a safer life and profound insight into human behavior.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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: You were just on the Oprah show discussing spousal homicide--can you talk about the show, and whether spousal homicide is a growing epidemic?

Gavin de Becker: Through two shows Oprah dedicated to the topic, we're conveying a great deal of new information, and most of all, Oprah's announcement that a MOSAIC assessment system developed by my firm will be made available to any person who wants to use it, at no cost, via her website. This will allow anyone to diagnose a relationship to determine if it has the combination of factors most associated with escalated violence, and spousal homicide. Is spousal homicide increasing? It is not; however, the reality is more disturbing than an increase: Spousal homicide has remained a constant in our lives, such that every four hours at least one woman is killed in America by a husband or boyfriend. That uninterrupted and sad statistic can be interrupted and changed--because as explored in *The Gift of Fear*, spousal homicide is the single most preventable serious crime in America--largely owing to that fact that it always occurs after many warning signs, and after several people are aware of the risk.

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)

From Library Journal

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., Davis

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From Booklist

De Becker, a national expert on the prediction and management of violence, thinks most people are great victims because they ignore their fears and survival signals. His frighteningly simple advice will come as no surprise to women: use your intuition. De Becker believes every crime has a warning and a motive and that the code of predictable violence can be broken by trusting the phenomenon that he defines as "knowing without knowing why." If people believe in and are alert to the possibility of danger, they can reduce their risks and save themselves. Written with consummate style, the book recounts the motives, warning signals, and defenses against wife beaters, stalkers, assassins, enraged employees, and violent children. De Becker's experience as a presidential adviser, consultant, expert witness, trainer, and designer of a system that evaluates threats to Supreme Court justices should convince readers to trust the involuntary certainty of fear over the voluntary uncertainty of anxiety when confronted by those to whom senseless acts make perfect sense. *Patricia Hassler*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Cunningham:

The book The Gift of Fear can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. So just why must we leave the best thing like a book The Gift of Fear? A few of you have a different opinion about e-book. But one aim that will book can give many data for us. It is absolutely right. Right now, try to closer along with your book. Knowledge or details that you take for that, you can give for each other; you could share all of these. Book The Gift of Fear has simple shape but the truth is know: it has great and big function for you. You can seem the enormous world by open and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

Jeremy Smith:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try matter that really opposite

from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love The Gift of Fear, you can enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Roger Borquez:

Reading a book to get new life style in this yr; every people loves to study a book. When you examine a book you can get a wide range of benefit. When you read ebooks, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information onto it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. If you wish to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself you can read a fiction books, this sort of us novel, comics, in addition to soon. The The Gift of Fear offer you a new experience in reading a book.

Henrietta Belcher:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got college students? We believe that that query was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, Every individual has different hobby. And you also know that little person including reading or as looking at become their hobby. You have to know that reading is very important as well as book as to be the point. Book is important thing to include you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You will find good news or update regarding something by book. A substantial number of sorts of books that can you take to be your object. One of them is actually The Gift of Fear.

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