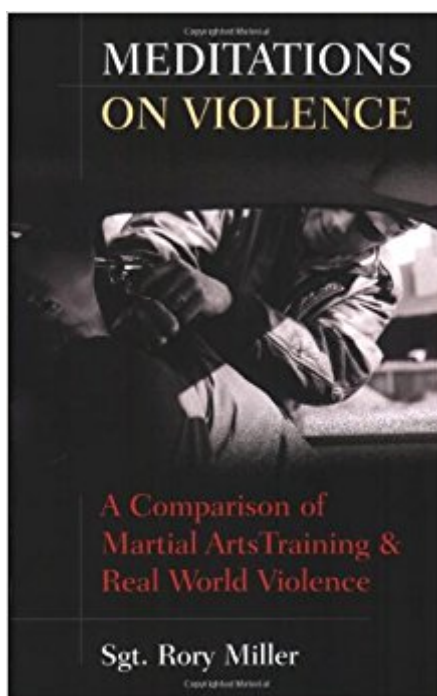


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Meditations On Violence: A Comparison Of Martial Arts Training & Real World Violence



Synopsis

Finalist - 2008 Book of the Year Award by Foreword Magazine
Finalist - 2008 USA Best Book Award
A Comparison of Martial Arts Training & Real-World Violence Experienced martial artist and veteran correction officer Sgt. Rory Miller distills what he has learned from jailhouse brawls, tactical operations and ambushes to explore the differences between martial arts and the subject martial arts were designed to deal with: Violence. Sgt. Miller introduces the myths, metaphors and expectations that most martial artists have about what they will ultimately learn in their dojo. This is then compared with the complexity of the reality of violence. Complexity is one of the recurring themes throughout this work. Section Two examines how to think critically about violence, how to evaluate sources of knowledge and clearly explains the concepts of strategy and tactics. Sections Three and Four focus on the dynamics of violence itself and the predators who perpetuate it. Drawing on hundreds of encounters and thousands of hours spent with criminals Sgt. Miller explains the types of violence; how, where, when and why it develops; the effects of adrenaline; how criminals think, and even the effects of drugs and altered states of consciousness in a fight. Section Five centers on training for violence, and adapting your present training methods to that reality. It discusses the pros and cons of modern and ancient martial arts training and gives a unique insight into early Japanese kata as a military training method. Section Six is all about how to make self-defense work. Miller examines how to look at defense in a broader context, and how to overcome some of your own subconscious resistance to meeting violence with violence. The last section deals with the aftermath • the cost of surviving sudden violence or violent environments, how it can change you for good or bad. It gives advice for supervisors and even for instructors on how to help a student/survivor. You'll even learn a bit about enlightenment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I highly recommend this book to anyone. As a civilian who dabbled sparingly in martial arts most recently over a decade ago, I am in no way an expert in anything that is contained in this book except for the fact that I have been a victim of violent crime. Any one of us could be the next victim of violence and the ideas that Sgt. Miller proposes on preparing yourself to survive assault should be basic lessons for anyone wanting to learn self-defense. Being aware of your surroundings, knowing your E&E routes, understanding that if someone hits you, you will freeze, and understanding that to an assaulter, you are just a piece of meat standing between what he wants and you have. These lessons are important, and in all the self-defense classes for women I've seen, only the first of that list has even been mentioned. Sections 3 and 4 were enlightening into a realm of human experience I am profoundly grateful that I do not have to deal with or even think about for a vast majority of my life. I am very grateful to the small group of individuals who deal with the criminal aspect of our society and create that opaque veil that shields us from ever having to deal with the thought of humans enjoying hurting and killing others of their species. Law and Policy Makers should really read this section and try to understand it. Then ask the question: Are we making our society better with our incarceration system? Finally, on a very personal note I found Section 6 to be insightful for its practical look at the problems of training. I am one of those survivor-students that looked for an Instructor to teach me how to never be raped again. I tried Tae Kwon Do, Shotokan Karate and finally Jiu-Jitsu trying to find an instructor that could give me that peace of mind. Sgt.

At the beginning of this exceptional book is a black and white photograph of a bathroom with a swirl of sticky-looking muck on the floor and a few little droplets splattered across the side of the toilet. Since there is no color it takes a moment to realize what you are looking at, but this mess is clearly human blood, a LOT of human blood. You don't know what happened but it was obviously something awful. A slowly drying pool of blood is not what one might expect to find at the beginning of a typical martial arts book, but then again real-life violence is not a subject that martial artists typically understand or write about. Like a pool of blood, violence is a very sobering subject; one that must be treated seriously in order to do any good. *Meditations on Violence* certainly fits that bill. It is a refreshingly frank, honest, and in-depth assessment that teaches readers how to think critically

about the subject, determine how to evaluate sources of knowledge, and understand how to identify strategies and select tactics to deal with violence effectively. As a corrections officer and tactical team leader Miller regularly tangles with hard-core predators. He describes his job this way: "I beat people up for a living. I can pretty the phrase up a lot, but in the end I get paid (and paid well) to go into a situation, usually alone and usually outnumbered by sixty or more criminals, and maintain order." This is a guy who routinely survives brutal encounters that would leave the average person physically and emotionally shattered. Unlike most martial arts instructors, he has first-hand experience that separates longstanding myths and heroic fantasies from merciless reality.

I'd always had a nagging feeling about my martial arts training; though there was no question it was good for my health, I was never too sure it was really relevant to self defense. The scenarios we practiced had nothing in common with the (few) *actual* violent encounters I had witnessed, which were short, brutish, and entirely unfair. (And for some reason didn't involve "Needle to Sea Bottom" or a Gracie-esque arm bar.) Since I live a pretty staid life, my training never gets tested. Which is unlike the author of this book -- a jail guard involved in physical confrontations on a near daily basis. In this book Rory Miller pretty much devastates the notion that what goes on in most martial arts classes has anything in common with the fights and strategies he's observed in his work. He details types of confrontations, the people likely to be involved in them, and strategies they're using, and the often critical flaws in the way students are "prepared" for them by movies or the dojo. As such, this is pretty much required reading for anyone taking or teaching martial arts for self-defense. He doesn't offer a specific training program as a solution -- which is kind of the point. He's asking the reader to chew on the facts, not the fantasies. Fights aren't likely to be fair, or resemble sparring sessions. But they do have predictable participants, patterns and dynamics -- from the "Group Monkey Dance" to the "permission" that people give themselves to go on or give up. It's a very particular reality he's describing; the book is pretty much a straight download from the author's life and brain.

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