

Surviving Violence With Tricia Dong, RKC

In this interview we are talking with Tricia Dong, RKC; a fitness trainer and owner of Code 5 Fitness in Vancouver, British Columbia. <http://www.code5fitness.com/>



BRIAN: Welcome Tricia, would you please tell the readers a little about yourself?

TRICIA: I'm a former police officer – turned fitness trainer who now trains law enforcement applicants to pass the physical fitness requirements. I also teach fitness to the Canadian military, and am one of six certified RKC kettlebell instructors in British Columbia. I am a blue belt in Judo with the Vancouver Police Judo Club, and have just started training in Brazilian Ju-Jitsu.

B: You had a recent brush with violence, can you tell us what happened?

T: Lost in thought and minding my own business, I boarded SkyTrain (public transit) on Tuesday April 24, just after 5pm, heading to my dance class. I was about 10 minutes later than my usual boarding time as I had just come from visiting my grandmother in the hospital. Eerily, my worried aunt asked if I was scared to ride the SkyTrain. I looked at her, laughed, and told her I was a big girl and could take care of myself. I truly believed that statement, for I am a fitness instructor trained in judo, a former cop, and an all-around independent woman. Through consistent physical training, and a healthy dose of self-confidence, I felt ready for any of life's challenges thrown my way. And challenge me life did. Minutes later, after a verbal altercation in the SkyTrain car that turned into a physical attack, I was struggling to defend myself against two punks who wanted nothing more than to beat me up for a minor "spatial infraction" – basically, I had bumped against the guy who then escalated the incident into a physical fight. I was up against two attackers, a male and a female, in a crowded SkyTrain car during rush hour, with numerous bystanders witnessing the assault against me. My martial arts training kicked in, and I fought to defend, not to win, but to survive. Witnesses told me that after I was punched in the back of the head, I fell and hit my head on a support pole. I remember being on my back, kicking to create space, with my two attackers trying to kick and stomp me from above. The incident probably lasted less than 30 seconds before bystanders intervened, but for that brief lifetime, I reverted to my training – and was thankful for the mental clarity and spiritual strength that allowed me to survive with just a broken foot and a few bumps and bruises. But it could have been much worse.

B: What role did your level of fitness play in helping you handle the situation?

T: It made a world of difference, and without my training, the results could have been a lot worse, if not devastating. Our public transit system has been under a lot of criticism lately due to a number of violent attacks that have left the victims in a coma, severely injured, and even dead, at the hands of a few punks who like to prey in packs. Being an Asian female of relatively small stature, my attackers surely would not have provoked such a confrontation had I been a 6'4", 230lb white male. However, although I did sustain some injuries, my fitness level and martial arts training kept me from being another statistic. Physically, I could defend myself, but really it was the mental clarity to NOT turn over and turtle, to work to create space between them and me, and to stay spiritually strong enough to believe, no matter what, that I would survive the encounter. That was key in handling the situation.

B: I like what you said about "the mental clarity to NOT turn over and [be a] turtle." It is so common in our society to ignore violence and think we will never be the victim. What are your feelings regarding both men AND women preparing themselves to face violent situations?

TD: I think that we as a society are both naive and jaded at the same time. We brush off reports of violence whenever we see the news, believing it won't happen to us, and at the same time we may "justify" the incident by reasoning that "maybe they provoked it / were looking for trouble / shouldn't have been in that area of town / etc etc etc. We collectively need to become more aware of our surroundings and be more proactive in our own personal safety, as well as the safety of others. This may involve taking a personal safety or self defense course, or rehearsing in one's mind what YOU would do should your safety be threatened.

B: You are a Certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor (RKC), how has training with kettlebells prepared you to deal with violent situations and what physical qualities does kettlebell training develop in law enforcement and military?

TD: Kettlebell training has helped me, as well as my law enforcement and military clients, immensely in developing that mental fortitude and clear focus required in intense situations, as well as the body-hardening aspect of being able to take a blow. One of my favorite movie quotes from Rocky Balboa (where he trains with KBs!) is when he is talking with his son: "The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It is a very mean and nasty place. It will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me or nobody is going to hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit, it is about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward, how much can you take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!"



B: Now that you have had your brush with violence are there any lessons learned you could share with our readers?

TD: An attack can happen anywhere, anytime, to anyone. Be prepared to defend yourself. Don't expect there to be referees to stop the fight – cowards will fight dirty

and there are no rules! Keep fit, stay focused, and have balance between a healthy mind, body, and soul.

B: So what is new in the world of Code 5 Fitness, anything coming up that our readers should know about?

TD: In Vancouver I'm continuing to get kettlebell workouts out there in the mainstream; my workshops and classes are now eligible for provincial CECs and I am doing more and more demos, seminars, and presentations. I'm also working with a former Russian police officer – whose specialty was teaching physical defense – to bring the art of Russian Systema to Code 5; the curriculum is still under development but it will happen by late Fall! I've also teamed up with a fat-loss coach to implement a fat-burning camp for those clients that need guidance in the areas of diet, nutrition, and exercise. I keep my website updated with the latest events; for more information, visit www.code5fitness.com

B: Tricia you are one tough chick to have fought off 2 attackers of larger stature and survived, especially since one of them was a man. They say everyone must have their first brush with violence to truly know how they will react. I'd bet if there were ever a next time (hopefully not) you won't just survive but beat the snot out of them. Thanks for sharing your story, I hope your experience will motivate others to get off the couch and become the warriors they should be.

TD: Thanks Brian; many thanks for the opportunity to share my experience, and Be Fit For Duty!



To learn more about Tricia or if you are in the Vancouver area and want to learn more about kettlebells visit Tricia at her website at www.code5fitness.com

About the Author:

Brian Copeland, RKC

Brian Copeland is a Denver, Colorado based strength and conditioning trainer and Certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor. Brian's clients include hard comrades like military, law enforcement, martial artists, athletes, and everyday men and women who are fed up with the touchy feely drivel that is being passed as fitness advice.

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