**Safety Tips and Techniques That Every Outbound Should Know**

[UNBREAKABLE WOMAN](http://www.unbreakablewoman.com/).  Maura joined guest host Kim Holcomb to talk about what sets her book and approach to personal safety apart from other programs out there.

Here are five of Maura's safety tips, streamlined to help young women who are returning to college or going away to school/living away from home for the first time:

1. **WALK LIKE A SUPERHERO**- Strangers only know what YOU tell them with your body language and your attitude. If you walk like you can handle yourself, it will be communicated loud and clear. Fake it 'Till you make it. (See "Eye of The Tiger" on pg. 131 in Unbreakable Woman Compassionate Self-Defense and Empowerment for more information)

2. **CHANGE THE WEATHER** - This is an assertiveness tool. If someone is creeping you out, you can be "nice" but your body language and energy will drop the temperature in the room to freezing, letting them know they are skating on thin ice. (See "Changing The Weather" pg. 119 in Unbreakable Woman Compassionate Self-Defense and Empowerment for more information)

3. **BREAK THE SCRIPT** -  Criminals have a fantasy about how their targets will behave. If you say what is happening in the moment (ex: You are not hearing me say no to you) you are "outting" them and it ruins their plan. See "Powerful Speech" on pg. 119 in Unbreakable Woman Compassionate Self-Defense and Empowerment for more information)

4. **STOP THE TRAIN** - The more momentum a train has, the longer and more difficult it is to stop. If a date starts to go in a direction you're not comfortable with, prevent any further momentum with a committed "Stop!" It's clear, direct and prevents confusion about consent which is an important date safety tool. (See "The Date Talk" on pg. 106 in Unbreakable Woman Compassionate Self-Defense and Empowerment for more information)

5. **MAKE SOMEONE VISIBLE** - Criminals want to be invisible. Sometimes simply acknowledging someone with a nod of your head or brief eye contact can eliminate you as a potential target. (See "Assertiveness" pg. 116 in Unbreakable Woman Compassionate Self-Defense and Empowerment for more information)

<http://roogirl.com/14-self-defense-tips-every-woman-should-know/>

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According to [statistics](http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/frequency-of-sexual-assault) every two minutes a woman in America is raped, and one out of four women will be the victim of a violent crime. Having the delusion that it can’t happen to you or that it’s something that only happens to other people is the kind of attitude predators depend on. The more informed you are, the better prepared you will be in the event you are targeted by a predator. By empowering yourself with knowledge, your fear will not escalate, it will diminish. Follow these tips to keep yourself from becoming a statistic:

**1. Mentally Prepare Yourself:** Preparing for a violent attack is no different than preparing for any other emergency and denial can cost you your life. In the book [You Are Not So Smart](http://youarenotsosmart.com/), author David McRaney tells the story of a couple who survived a large plane crash. The husband had mentally prepared for the emergency and was therefore able to quickly take action during the few moments between the plane hitting the ground and the explosion that followed, while his wife and the rest of the passengers were frozen by fear. He grabbed his wife’s hand and ran for safety, as everyone else sat in their seats unable to process the reality of the plane crash. By simply opening himself up to the possibility of danger, the man empowered himself to take action when the “unthinkable” happened.

Do you know what you would do if you awoke to a man in your bed trying to rape you? Have you ever allowed yourself to consider the possibility or do you hide from such thoughts? Force yourself to think about what you would do if someone were attempting to rape, kidnap or rob you. By mentally preparing yourself, you will be less likely to become frozen by fear and unable to defend yourself if the “unthinkable” were to happen.

**2. Have a Plan:** A black belt in martial arts isn’t required for you to defend yourself against an attacker.. Practice the techniques you learn and use mental imagery to plan a strategy for different scenarios. By contemplating threatening situations in this way, you are training your body and mind to act from a place of power instead of weakness and paranoia.

**2. Follow Your Intuition:** The best weapon you have is your sixth-sense. Although every animal is born with survival instincts, humans also have the ability to add judgment and everyday experience to our base intuition. This should make us superior to animals, but our judgment can sometimes get in the way. If we can’t explain our “gut feeling” in a logical way, we tend to brush it off as paranoia. By trusting your intuition, you will be able to learn the difference between real fear and worry. If you have a sense of foreboding, don’t second guess yourself. It is better to be safe than to ignore your instincts and become the victim of a violent crime.

**3. Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Don’t talk on your phone or listen to your iPod when you’re alone in a public place. Pay attention to what’s going on around you. If you think someone is following you, cross the street or step into a store. If that isn’t possible, look the person straight in the face and ask what time it is. By being unafraid, you show that you will stand up for yourself and fight back if attacked. You can also now identify this person in a line up and this makes you a less desirable target. Predators are very cunning and want to avoid as many risks as possible.

**4. Don’t Look Like a Victim:** Predators go through a victim selection process. They are most likely to go for a woman with a ponytail, braid or long hair that can easily be grabbed. They also look for clothing that will be easy to remove quickly, like short skirts or anything with straps that can be cut. A woman who is distracted is also an easy target. You can make yourself a harder target by controlling your accessibility, setting and circumstance. Stay in areas with more people, walking with confidence and purpose. Don’t be distracted by looking through your purse or have your hands full of bags. Sometimes just looking like someone who is not to be messed with can deter a would-be attacker.

**5. Be Car Smart:** Predators target parking lots and cars to plan their attacks. Have your keys in your hand before you leave the building. For extra protection hold a few of them in between your fingers to use as a weapon if needed. Wait until you are close to your car to unlock it. If you unlock it from across the lot, someone can easily hop in and hide without you noticing. Once you’re in the car, lock the doors and start driving. Sitting in your car too long gives predators the opportunity to make their move. Also, if a van is parked on the driver’s side of your car, get in on the passenger’s side. The safest option would be to never walk to your car alone. If no one is leaving when you are, ask someone to walk you to your car.

**6. Predict Dangerous and Controlling Behavior:** Realize that 99.9% of people have no intent of harming you; the rare few who do want to harm you will give clear signals. Most attackers don’t begin with brutal force. They begin by coaxing a woman into a secluded area and forcing her to relinquish her control. In his book [The Gift of Fear](http://gavindebecker.com/resources/book/the_gift_of_fear/), Gavin de Becker calls these signals Pre-Incident Indicators (P.I.N.S.).  These are the P.I.N.S. to look for, and examples of each. In the scenario, a woman is faced with a strange man in her apartment building.

P.I.N.S.:

Forced Teaming **—** When someone tries to pretend he has something in common or is in the same predicament as you when it isn’t true. (“Let me help you with those bags of groceries. We don’t want that ice cream to melt.”)

Charm **–** Being polite and nice to manipulate someone. (“I can’t let you carry all these bags by yourself. Let me help you get them inside.”)

Too Many Details **–** If someone is lying they add excessive details to make them seem more credible. (“I’m going to your floor anyway. I’m meeting a friend, but I’m running late – my watch stopped working. So, we need to hurry. Come on. We have a hungry cat waiting for this cat food.”)

Typecasting **–** An insult to get you to talk to someone you otherwise wouldn’t. (“There is such a thing as being too proud. Now stop being silly and hand me another bag.”)

Loan Sharking **–** Giving unsolicited help and expecting favors in return. (“I’ve carried your groceries up four flights of stairs; just let me put them on the counter.”)

Unsolicited Promise **—** A promise to do (or not to do) something when no such promise was asked for; this usually means the promise will be broken. (“You can leave the door open, I’ll leave as soon as I put the bags down, I promise.”)

Discounting the word “no” **—** Refusing to accept rejection.

During the entire grocery bag incident the woman repeatedly told the strange man that she didn’t want his help, but he ignored every “no”. She gave him control of the situation and was raped for three hours. The full story can be found in book, The Gift of Fear. The book also emphasizes that “no” is a complete sentence and requires no further explanation.

**8. Know Your Strengths & His Weakness:** Your elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you get close enough, use it. If you end up on the ground, use your legs to kick free from your attacker. Go for his four weakest points: eyes, throat, groin and knees. If you are grabbed around the waist from behind, pinch your attacker under the arm, in between the elbow and armpit or in the upper inner thigh… HARD. You can literally pull the muscle away from the bone in these areas. If you are forced to comply before you can fight, grab his balls, then PULL, TWIST, YANK. He will be unable to rape you after being castrated.

**9. You Have the Right to Fight:** Don’t be afraid to fight if you feel threatened in any way. A decent man won’t approach a woman in a place that she would feel vulnerable, especially after she yells for him to stop. Statistics show that women who don’t resist are more likely to be assaulted and sustain more serious injuries than women who fight back. When under attack, adopt the Cobra Kai code “Strike first! Strike hard! Strike fast! No mercy!” Don’t wait for things to escalate. Your goal is not to stay and fight; it is to break away from your attacker so you can run for help.

**11. Don’t Be Relocated:** Do whatever you have to do to prevent getting taken to a second location. Predators need to get you away from people and to a location where they are less likely to get caught. Even if someone has a gun pointed at you, there is still a chance to get away. He isn’t going to shoot you with several witnesses around. His plan is to have a quiet, uninterrupted assault, not to go to jail. If he points a gun at you from a distance, run in a zigzag pattern. In the unlikely event that he does shoot, the chances of him hitting you are slim, and the chances of him hitting a vital organ are even less likely. Although you run the risk of injury, if you are taken to a second location, you are guaranteed injury or even death.

**12. Stay Alert on Vacation (read exchange):** People on vacation are prime targets for predators, especially women travelling alone. Use valet parking if it’s available. The extra cost is well-worth your safety. Keep your hotel room locked with the deadbolt and chain when you are inside, and never let anyone in your room that you don’t know. If someone says they work for the hotel, call the front desk to confirm. Never leave an extra room key lying around for someone to grab when the maid isn’t looking. Also, never let anyone know that you are travelling alone. When you check in, ask for two keys and mention that your husband or boyfriend will be joining you soon. You never know who may be listening to your conversation.

**13. Be Safe at Home:** We all want to feel safe when we are at home. By being vigilant about preventing a violent crime from happening, your home will continue to be your safe haven. Take a few precautions, such as, keeping doors locked, even during the day. The one door most people forget is the door leading to the garage. If you forget to lock or close your garage, someone has open access to your home. Another deterrent is noise. Predators will avoid homes with alarm systems or dogs. If you don’t have a home alarm, keep your car remote beside your bed. If you hear someone breaking in, push the panic button to set off your car alarm.

**14. Prevent Date Rape:** Most women and men are assaulted by someone they know and 40 percent of the time the crime will happen in the victims own home. Predators rely on women’s weakness to allow good manners to override their survival instincts. Most women are likely to watch out for drugs being slipped into their drinks, and know to not be alone with someone they just met. However, the lines can get fuzzy when things become intimate. Do not be afraid to say “no” or stop at any point during an intimate encounter. You don’t need a reason. “No” is a complete sentence, and the man should stop immediately upon hearing it. If he doesn’t stop, he has crossed the line into sexual assault. If he has no ill-intent toward you, and the assault is more about him having no impulse control, you may be able to stop the assault by saying, “Don’t rape me”. Hearing the word “rape” may verbally shake him into reality. If, however, he continues, you must treat him as if he were a stranger on the street and fight with everything you have — because at that point, there is no possibility of it being a “misunderstanding”.

Facing the possibility of being the target of a violent crime is frightening, but there’s no need for women to live a paranoid-filled life. Although you can’t control every situation, you can make smarter decisions, like avoiding unnecessary risks. Learn to trust your intuition and how to defend yourself. <http://www.womenonguard.com/safety_tips.htm>

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**PARTY SAFETY/DATE RAPE PRECAUTIONS**

Whatever your drug of choice, remember: drugs and alcohol can affect your ability to make decisions (such as identifying danger signs and plotting escape routes). Manage how much you consume.

* Always get your own drink. Watch it being poured.
* Don't leave it unattended.
* Don't drink or taste anybody else's drink.
* Don't accept drinks from anyone else.
* Dispose of your drink if you think it tastes odd (if you just leave it, someone else may drink it).
* When in bars or clubs always get your drink directly from the bartender and do not take your eyes off the bartender or your order; don't use the waitress or let somebody go to the bar for you.
* At parties, only accept drinks in closed containers: bottles, cans or tetra packs.
* Never leave your drink unattended or turn your back on your table.
* Do not drink from open beverage sources like punch bowls, pitchers or tubs.
* Drugs used to spike drinks can be colorless and tasteless so you might not realize that anything has been added.
* Keep your eyes and ears open; if there is talk of date rape drugs or if friends seem "too intoxicated" for what they have taken, leave the party or club immediately and don't go back.
* Be aware of the behavior of your friends. Is their behavior out of character? Do they seem too "out of it" for what they've had? See the section on Drink Spiking to find out what to do.
* Watch out for your friends. Are they binge drinking or taking drugs? Are they making safe decisions? Are they OK?
* If your friend needs to sober up or straighten out, check to see that they are OK. Are they alone? Who is with them? Are they safe?
* Encourage people who are drunk to drink water or eat something. Keep an eye on them, if you can.
* Do you really trust whom you are going home with? Are you sure they won't make you do anything you don't want to do? Will they take "NO" for an answer?
* If you are going home with someone different, let someone know. Introduce them to your friends.
* If you still want to be even more cautious, consider purchasing drink testing strips. Test your drink by simply dipping it in your glass. These strips will change color if any drug is detected

If You're Throwing the Party

* Know whom you have invited to the party and plan what you will do if there are gatecrashers.
* Provide food and non-alcoholic drink spacers, e.g. water, soft drinks, juice.
* Keep a look out for your guests. Make sure they're safe and having a good time.
* Offer to organize taxis for your guests. Take a note of the taxi company you have called.
* Create a safe atmosphere. If you know that someone is harassing or intimidating someone else, then do something about it:
  + Let them know you are watching;
  + Ask the person to stop;
  + Ask them to leave;
  + Find the victimized person a safe place;
  + Don't be afraid to call the police.

Stay safe yourself and ask for help if you need it.

**TIPS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY (CONFRONTING DANGER)**

* Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, something is probably wrong.
* Be aware of your surroundings.
* Walk close to the curb, facing oncoming traffic.
* Carry bags close to your body.
* Look confident.
* Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
* If you are being followed, head for a crowded place.
* If people start milling around you, it could a set-up for a mugging.
* Know yourself, how do you react in a crisis situation? Do you scream, cry, freeze? How would you defend yourself?
* Remember there is no right or wrong approach to dangerous situations.
* Show your anger, not your fear. A furious reaction often may stop an attack. Remember an attacker is looking for an easy victim. Yelling is always a good deterrent (a good choice is to yell FIRE) this will draw attention to those who do not want to get involved but may be concerned for their own safety and may come to help.
* If there are other people around, yell loudly enough to get their attention to what the assailant is doing.
* If you are alone and do not know anyone on the street or nearby, try calling a name out to make the attacker or assailant to believe you may be with someone. This may also help if you are alone at home.
* If someone has a weapon stay calm and wait for an opportunity. Weapons make the situation more dangerous and difficult, but there still may be something you can do about the situation.
* Make sure you keep a self defense product on your person at all times such as [Mace](http://www.womenonguard.com/Search.bok?category=Mace+Defensive+Sprays), [pepper spray](http://www.womenonguard.com/Search.bok?category=Pepper+Sprays), [stun gun](http://www.womenonguard.com/Search.bok?category=Stun+Devices), [personal alarm](http://www.womenonguard.com/Search.bok?category=Personal+Alarms) or [TASER](http://www.womenonguard.com/Search.bok?category=Tasers).

Overview

Non-resistance to prevent physical violence, Negotiate, Stall for time, Distracting or diverting the assailant, then fleeing, Verbal assertiveness, Screaming, and using a whistle or personal alarms to attract attention and help

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO PREVENT SEXUAL ASSAULT?**

* Always be aware of your surroundings.
* Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible.
* Walk confidently, directly, at a steady pace. A rapist looks for someone who appears vulnerable.
* Walk on the side of the street facing traffic.
* Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where rapists can hide.
* If you think you are being followed, walk quickly to areas where there are people and lights. If a car appears to be following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction or walk on the other side of the street.
* Be careful when people stop you for directions or money. Always reply from a distance and never get too close to the car.
* If you are in trouble or feel you are in danger, don't be afraid to attract help any way you can. Scream, yell or run away to safety.
* Always lock your car. Keep your car locked when you are away from it to keep a sexual predator from hiding and waiting inside.
* When you are inside the car, lock the doors for safety.
* Look inside and around your car before you get in.
* Be aware of other people in parking areas, especially those close to your vehicle.
* If you think you are being followed, drive to a public place or a police station to get help.
* If your car breaks down, open the hood or attach a white cloth to the antenna. If someone stops to help, stay inside your locked vehicle and ask them to call the police. The person pretending to help may be a sexual predator
* If you choose to carry any type of weapon for self-protection, give careful consideration to your ability and willingness to use it. Remember there is always the chance that it could be taken away and used.
* **PREVENTING RAPE**
* If you are in immediate danger of being raped, and you do not have pepper spray, a stun gun or a TASER, here are some things that you can do.
* Make a loud noise - Carry a whistle, personal alarm or scream "police" to attract attention
* Run - Only run if there is somewhere safe to run to. If there is no where to go you may aggravate the assailant further by running
* Stall - Speak calmly and rationally. Try not to plead, cry or show that you're scared, this may be the reaction that he's going for.
* Urinate or vomit - Do anything you can to repulse the assailant. Tell him that you have a STD or AIDS.
* Fight - Women who resist attacks and act quickly are less likely to be raped, than those who are passive. The optimum time to react is in the first 20 seconds when the body releases chemicals in the blood that help to put up a fight. Be cautious if he has a weapon.
* Keep alert - Even though it will be difficult, try to pay attention to as many details as possible, so that you can identify your rapist.
* Get help - Call 9-1-1 as soon as possible. Police are becoming more willing to help victims of rape. You are not obligated to press charges or go to court.
* Collect evidence - Do not bathe, shower, or douche. If you change clothes, put the clothes you were raped in into a bag and seal it.
* Tell someone - Call the police, rape crisis counselor, telephone operator, and/or a friend. It is very important that someone knows and that it is not kept a secret.

**STREET SENSE**

Wherever you are on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus or cab, stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.  
Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uncomfortable, avoid the person or leave.  
Know the neighborhoods where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, and restaurants, or stores that are open late.

On Foot-Day or Night

* Stick to well-lighted, well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys, were a rapist or stalker can hide.
* Don't flash money or other tempting targets like jewelry or clothing.
* Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket, not a back pocket. Carry only what is necessary and try not to keep currency and credit cards all in one place.
* Don't wear shoes or clothing that restricts your movements.
* Have your car or house key in hand before you reach the door.
* Try to use automated teller machines in the daytime. Have your card in hand and don't approach the machine if you're uneasy about people nearby. Better yet, only use the ATM machines inside of grocery store, malls, or gas stations.
* If you think someone is following you, switch direction or cross the street. Walk toward an open store, restaurant, or lighted house. If someone harasses you, don't be embarrassed. Loudly say, "Leave me alone! Someone call the police! Get away!"

1. Turn the wheels when you park.   
   Never leave a spare key inside the car.   
   Park in a well-lighted place.   
   Put packages in the trunk.
2. Be Creative  
   Think of unusual ways to protect yourself and your valuables.
3. Be Informed  
   Learn the crime trends in your area and work to protect yourself against them.
4. Get Involved  
   Have your joined or organized a Neighborhood Watch?
5. Don't Give Up!  
   Crime can be reduced - with action, not apathy!

<http://www.attackproof.com/10-best-self-defense-tips.html>

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A Few Additional Tips from Brad Steiner:

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| 1. Learned this from a tourist guide. If a robber asks for your wallet and/or purse, DO NOT HAND IT TO HIM. Toss it away from you....  Chances are that he is more interested in your wallet and/or purse than you, and he will go for the wallet/purse. RUN LIKE MAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!  2. Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working etc. and just sit (making a list, checking their phone etc). Don’t do this! AS SOON AS YOU GET INTO YOUR CAR , LOCK THE DOORS AND LEAVE. |

If someone is in the car with a gun to your head DO NOT DRIVE OFF, Repeat: DO NOT DRIVE OFF! Instead, gun the engine and speed into anything, wrecking the car. Your Air Bag will save you. If the person is in the back seat they will get the worst of it. As soon as the car crashes bail out and run. It is better than having them find your body in a remote location.  
  
3. A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot, or parking garage:  
      a.) Be aware: look around you, look into your car, at the passenger side floor , and in the back seat.    
      b.) If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Most serial killers attack their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars.  
      c.) Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side... If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the mall, or work, and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out. IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY. (And better paranoid than dead.)  
  
4. If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, ALWAYS RUN! The predator will only hit you (a running target) 4 in 100 times; and even then, it most likely WILL NOT be a vital organ.  RUN, preferably in a zig-zag pattern! [or in a straight line to cover--an object capable of deflecting bullets]  
  
(Steiner’s comment: GREAT ADVICE! Again, we have urged this for decades as a good tactic, and we see no reason to change the counsel. In fact, it is NOT likely that an armed criminal will in fact fire att you at all. He obviously did not wish to fire when he had you at gun point; and he can see that raising an alarm by firing when you run away will only attract attention to himself with little chance of hitting you.)  
  
5. As women, we are always trying to be sympathetic: STOP It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a good-looking, well educated man, who ALWAYS played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He walked with a cane, or a limp, and often asked 'for help' into his vehicle or with his vehicle, which is when he abducted his next victim.  
  
(Steiner’s comment: RIGHT! Again, we have been urging this for many, many years, and it is good advice!)  
  
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Possible YouTube videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkAQKxPs6mU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qi4hFyRM1c>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO2FEdtRi44>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk2HmUpIYM4&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PL7BF5F5BE97E67309>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DarkMagician70> (all his videos)