

Anticipation Training

Generally, martial arts schools don't do enough anticipation training and you shouldn't anticipate that your dojo is an exception.
So be an exception yourself and anticipate.

How does one go about training oneself to anticipate without becoming paranoid?

First, think about this subject when you are secure and have plenty of time, so that a competence in being able to anticipate is not a necessity.

Second, if you are picturing a potential confrontation, witness one, or see one on video, do not give in to the temptation to work out the *combat* details. That may be important, but it is a separate subject. How you would fight your way out is irrelevant to anticipation, which is preparation for not getting in.

Third, spend a week being hyper-vigilant. It may not be a state you want to live in, but if you *never* live in that frame of mind, it will be hard to access when you need it. Figure that your little town in the Berkshires has been invaded by an army of undercover terrorists, just waiting for an unwary victim of whom to set an example. If you are already a nervous wreck after a day or two, take a break and go back to the exercise a week later. Once you've done this exercise for 7 days, even if not consecutive days, repeat it after a month, then again after 3 months, then again after a year. This type of mental conditioning allows you instant access to the hyperaware state to which you will need to switch if warning signs appear.

Fourth, make a list of overt warning signs. There are actually too many to list, but after you've written down a dozen, you'll see that they all reduce to "something is out of order" in your world. This doesn't mean only that something might be out of order in the things you do or places you visit habitually, but also with the people you are used to dealing with.

Fifth, be sensitive to your sixth sense. If you feel something is off but don't know what, note the *kind* of feeling it is, as well as *where* and *how* you feel it. Don't think you can be that sensitive? You already are. Can you tell when something is wrong with your child or your romantic partner? You may not know what is wrong, and you may not know what to do about it, but you know something is not as it should be. Sometimes it is a thought, sometimes a feeling.

Okay, a quick caveat here. Your engaging in Anticipation Training does not mean everything you anticipate will manifest itself. In fact, unless you live in an area in which you must be hyperaware all the time, it is likely that, for the most part, few if any of your concerns will come to pass. This is completely normal. A few years of this sort of training will, however, allow you to recognize when to dial down your awareness, when to dial it up, and when to shut it off.

In other words, just because you have trained through paranoia to become more sensitive and aware, doesn't mean that the flying fickle finger of fate won't point at you some day. And just because you train to be aware, doesn't mean you need to settle into paranoia. Training in a fighting art does not necessarily mean you will ever need to fight. You train so that if you have to fight, you will be prepared. Consider Anticipation Training like an auxiliary fighting art. Just as martial artists do not have to be martial, aware anticipators do not have to be suspicious, distrustful, or obsessed; but, just like martial artists, they do have to train.