



# **The Gift of Fear: and Other Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence**

*Gavin de Becker*

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## **The Gift of Fear: and Other Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence** Gavin de Becker

True fear is a gift.

Unwarranted fear is a curse.

Learn how to tell the difference.

A date won't take "no" for an answer. The new nanny gives a mother an uneasy feeling. A stranger in a deserted parking lot offers unsolicited help. The threat of violence surrounds us every day. But we *can* protect ourselves, by learning to trust—and act on—our gut instincts.

In this empowering book, Gavin de Becker, the man Oprah Winfrey calls the nation's leading expert on violent behavior, shows you how to spot even subtle signs of danger—before it's too late. Shattering the myth that most violent acts are unpredictable, de Becker, whose clients include top Hollywood stars and government agencies, offers specific ways to protect yourself and those you love, including how to act when approached by a stranger, when you should fear someone close to you, what to do if you are being stalked, how to uncover the source of anonymous threats or phone calls, the biggest mistake you can make with a threatening person, and more. Learn to spot the danger signals others miss. It might just save your life.

## **The Gift of Fear: and Other Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence Details**

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# From Reader Review The Gift of Fear: and Other Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence for online ebook

## Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the undercurrent of violence in our society today. If you have a child going away to college give this book to them the summer before they leave...you will feel better.

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## Amber says

The most important book I've ever read. I first encountered de Becker when he was on Oprah years ago, talking about what to teach your child if they get lost in a public place. "Tell them to find a woman who looks like a mommy and ask her for help." After all, how often is a policeman around? This pragmatic, common sense approach stuck with me.

Later, a friend in law enforcement suggested this book and I read it in one sitting. Have a coworker who makes you uneasy? Read this book. Trying to get out of a relationship with an unstable person? Read this book. Are you a woman? Read this book.

It's hard to quantify if I'm actually safer after reading this book, but I am far more aware of my intuition now. Much of the time we're afraid to look foolish or rude by listening to that nagging feeling (leaving the overcrowded nightclub, walking away from the stranger who "just wants to help you with your groceries") but your intuition has been honed over hundreds of thousands of years of collective experience. Pay attention to it.

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## Ellen says

Removed a caveat here that said I hadn't quite finished the book because, well, I've finished it. Thoughts haven't changed. Enjoy the review!

People are saying that this should be required reading for all women, and while there's certainly a heavy emphasis on women in dangerous relationships or situations, this recommendation is a wee bit shortsighted. I think that everyone could benefit from reading it, particularly when it comes to the examples he gave about the businessman who wouldn't leave a (male) company owner alone, or the chapter on troublesome employees.

I had a bit of a hard time with this book at first, for a very basic reason: this is a scary book. The first story alone (about the woman who was raped by a man who conned his way into her apartment) was enough to raise my hackles, and the stories just kept coming. Though in reality this didn't take up that much of the book, it felt like I was slogging through a lot of terror in order to get to the empowering part. The book was making me feel scared and helpless, so I put it down for awhile.

Then, months later, I picked it back up again, because I'd heard so many good things about it from so many

people whose opinion on this sort of thing I trust, and because at least one person told me it helped them get away from a particularly poisonous harasser. As it turns out, I had stopped reading right as it was getting good, and from then on I've barely been able to put it down.

One thing I've heard from critics of the book is that the chapter on domestic violence is a bit victim-blaming, and I do have to say I agree. The chapter is helpful, and does go a bit into why battered women often choose not to leave, but then glosses over it by saying that by "letting" herself be battered a second time, she is a volunteer. This is a message that in my opinion is more harmful than helpful to women who have been abused--what you don't want is to tell an abuse victim that she should've made better life choices. She already knows that, she already blames herself for what has happened, and she already beats herself up for it; there is no need to make this feeling worse.

Also part of this is the fact that the DV community has found that it's not beneficial to tell these women what to do (by repeating "leave him leave him leave him!") without regard to what the victim herself wants. This is why people who counsel friends of victims on what to do for support tend to warn them away from demanding that the victim leave--the goal is for her to feel like she is in control of her own life, otherwise she'll resist change, no matter how beneficial it may seem. Good DV advice counsels victims on options they have, things they can do if they decide to stay, with an escape plan if/when it becomes necessary. I would suggest that survivors of abuse either skip that chapter altogether, if they're not ready for it, or take it with a HUGE grain of salt.

Other than that, this has been a superb book and I recommend it to anyone who would be interested in reading it.

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## Lightreads says

I have a long-standing . . . psychological investment, let's say, in the science of violence: classifying it, predicting it, recovering from it. This book spent a bit of time talking about the epidemic of violence, which needs very little more illustration than to say that three out of every four American women will in their lifetimes be the victim of a violent assault, and a large portion of those assaults will be sexual. This is not something I need convincing on. I often find myself in a packed and silent elevator car down to a train station, or sitting around a boardroom table, and I'll listen to the men around me (hello, massively male-dominated field in a male-dominated profession) and think, *which one of you is a rapist? Which one of you has beaten someone unconscious?* Though to be statistically accurate, I should often be asking *how many*, not *which one*?

Anyway. Rambling. This book is about the prediction of violence. The things you -- mostly women -- can do to avoid being the victims of assaults, rapes, robberies, kidnappings, beatings. And not in the way where it's telling you how to dress or where to walk, but in the way where we can all be smarter about the things we notice, and how we react to them. Most of this was old ground for me, but it's presented here more effectively than I've seen anywhere else.

It's not perfect though. A few of the more obviously problematic things that jumped out at me:

\*De Becker doesn't really *get* socialized gendered compliance, at least not all the time. He'll go from this incredibly smart discussion of how the ways women are socialized to say no to men -- "I don't want to be seeing anyone right now," rather than "no, I don't want to date you," -- can be very dangerous because they

open the door to negotiation. De Becker will be making the sharp and correct point that women aren't actually *allowed* to say no in many scenarios, but that it's engrained so deep, we don't notice. But then he'll turn around in another chapter and say that he can't give a checklist for how to behave if you are in the power of a violent offender, just use your intuition, it will save you. The first part is true enough; there are too many scenarios at play, too many variables, and the need for appeasement in one situation can be the need for hard, relentless resistance in another. But the second part? Hang on. We know women have been socialized to react in maladaptive and often dangerous ways to men, and yet we're supposed to rely purely on reflexive response in moments of great danger? Intuition may be smart, and it may in extremis be smarter than social conditioning, but how many of us actually know how to respond to that intuition?

Don't get me wrong, it's happened to me. That moment where your brain disconnects and your body moves all on its own and you are not afraid. You aren't anything. You aren't even you. And you only think later after it's over, *I could have died*. That is really powerful shit, right there, and De Becker's right, it's smart. But it's not a given, and forgive me if I suspect that people who have been trained from birth not to credit their own wants and needs might be capable of smothering the reactions that could save their lives.

\*De Becker really misses the boat in his section on distinguishing fear from worry. Fear being the useful, smart, intuitive impulse and worry being the habituated, often projective and pointless activity that just makes us needlessly paranoid in situations where we don't have to be. He really wants to divide things up into clean, accurate, instinctive fear at the sight of a particular threat gesture, and learned, socialized fear that is not driven by unconscious data. Okay, sure.

But in which category do racially-motivated fears go? Studies consistently show that white Americans have a physiological fear response to the sight of African-American men in particular situations. Hell, some of the subconscious word association trials show a prevalence of fear associations just at the micro-visual flash of an African-American face on a computer screen. And you don't need a study for that, you just need to go into any major city with a couple of comfy white habitual suburbanites.

So, seriously, what category does that go in? It's not very smart or useful. Aside from just being shitty, I mean. African-American men might commit more violent crime than their white peers (I know, it seems like the sort of statistical assertion that should be arguable, but it turns out it's not) but that violence is directed overwhelmingly at other African-American men. Most people, in most circumstances, are in far more danger from a member of their own race.

But we have a racially-motivated fear response. So how are people supposed to tell the difference between that sort of pre-conscious racist social conditioning and true, useful intuition? De Becker doesn't say, and actually given the nearly pathological lack of race discussions from this book about violence, I suspect he doesn't know.

\*I laughed out loud when De Becker confidently proclaimed, in discussing post violence analysis of pre-violence indicators, that "if it is in your head now, it was in your head then." Ahahaha \*gasp\*. Oh, God, that is *hilarious*. And so amazingly wrong. Eye witness accounts are notoriously inaccurate, and victim witness accounts are noticeably worse. In fact, one of the physiological results of high-adrenaline for many people is blurred perception and memory. Add that to the understandable and overwhelming impulse of victims to explain it, to tabulate all the ways they should have seen it coming, and you have a recipe for incredibly unreliable recollections.

De Becker's right -- a lot of violence is not senseless, and most of it is predictable if you process the signs. If you see them in the first place. But sometimes we don't see. And the way De Becker tries to teach readers to

process in-the-moment what he can only reconstruct in example post facto strikes me as pretty problematic.

Still. It's a great book, and I do highly recommend it. It's just the race thing. He doesn't deal with it -- I suspect he can't -- and that's a pretty big flaw.

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## Caroline says

\*\*\*NO SPOILERS\*\*\*

Something about the title and cover design of *The Gift of Fear* gives the impression that it's a self-help book about self-defense. It isn't. The only good thing on the cover is the quotation separating title from subtitle: "This Book Can Save Your Life." That's true.

The author is a specialist in security issues and threat assessment who owns a successful private security firm in Los Angeles called Gavin de Becker & Associates. His clients include many high profile figures. (A perusal of the acknowledgements shows an impressive array of many very famous names.) His love for the topic is evident and reasoning and explanations intelligent and clear.

Really explaining *The Gift of Fear* in a way that does it justice will easily overwhelm the review space, but its main idea is that human intuition (or "gut feeling") is more powerful and helpful than it gets credit for and absolutely can save one's life. Logic is always viewed as superior to "mere feelings," and intuition is feeling; however, de Becker explains that it's when one employs logic in situations that feel uncomfortable or "off" in some way that those situations can turn dangerous. De Becker says so much about intuition that sounds radical--but only for those who have been told logic is paramount.

Fans of true-crime stories will certainly enjoy *The Gift of Fear*. De Becker intermingled numerous stories--all true, some famous and some not--throughout. Some of the stories illustrate instances when someone's intuition protected him; other stories are the opposite. De Becker examined the criminal mind and broke apart many famous cases to bolster his chapters on assassins, stalking, domestic violence, violent children, and workplace violence, among others.

De Becker strongly opposes how some movies and t.v. shows depict romantic relationships, particularly how men are portrayed pursuing women.\* He also opposes how media report crime and portray criminals and explains why, after one kind of crime occurs, copycat crimes occur not long thereafter. Criminals receive lionizing media attention, and de Becker argues for a sea change:

*I propose that we don't show the bullets on the bureau in the seedy hotel room; show instead the dirty underwear and socks on the bathroom floor. I propose that we don't arrange photo opportunities that show the offender being escorted by ten federal agents from a helicopter to a motorcade of waiting cars. [...]*

*Conversely, guarded by federal agents (just like the president), whisked into waiting helicopters (just like the president), his childhood home show on TV (just like the president), the type of gun he owned fired on the news by munitions experts extolling its killing power, the plans he made described as "meticulous"--these presentations promote the glorious aspects of assassination and other media crimes. Getting caught for some awful violence should be the start of oblivion, not the biggest day of one's life.*

*But it was the biggest day in the life of accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, who was paraded in front of the waiting press surrounded by FBI agents, rushed to a motorcade, and then whisked away in a two-helicopter armada. We saw this even more with accused Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, whose close-up appeared on the covers of Time, U.S. News & World Report, and Newsweek (twice). The cover text of all three described Kaczynski as a "genius."*

*Reporters usually refer to assassins with triple names, like Mark David Chapman, Lee Harvey Oswald, Arthur Richard Jackson. One might come to believe that assassins actually used these pretentious triple names in their pre-attack lives; they didn't. They were Mark, Lee, and Arthur.*

*I propose promoting the least glamorous incarnation of their names. Call a criminal Ted Smith instead of Theodore Bryant Smith. Better still, find some nickname used in his pre-attack life:*

*Federal agent: His name is Theodore Smith, but he was known as Chubby Ted.*

Furthermore, although media are fond of reporting that criminals "snapped" or claim "nobody could have seen this coming," he explains that there are, unequivocally, "pre-incident indicators" before violent acts. He lists and explains these in detail.

*The Gift of Fear* was published in 1997 but fortunately has aged well. The only topic not covered that most definitely would be covered in an updated edition is cyber-stalking and general internet safety. As the book stands now, however, the chapter on stalking contains information that can apply to cyber-stalking. Statistics on various types of violence have no doubt changed also. (For instance, the book says 75 women are raped every hour in the U.S., but as of this writing, it's 78 every hour, according to the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.)

Ironically, those living in fear are the ones most in need of *The Gift of Fear*. It's captivating, educational, and stunning, but even more than that, it really is empowering, life-altering, and life-saving.

Final verdict: Looks can be deceiving; ignore the ugly cover. *The Gift of Fear* is an accessible five-star must-read for both men and women.

\*He would appreciate this article:

"How Rom-Coms Undermine Women": <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainm...>

Update, 9/13/17: Newest relevant article follows.

"Stalking, actually: why men who reject rejection are not romantic heroes":  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentis...>

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## **Beverly says**

The Gift of Fear taught me some important lessons about paying attention to your instincts. The author spent decades in protection and grew up in an abusive, violent home, so he knows what he's talking about. Some of his ideas are quite counter intuitive, like that Protective Orders don't help and frequently are the catalyst for

violence from the offender.

Another idea he has is that women need to be much more assertive with men who they know they will never be interested in. According to his research, stalkers ignore the passive, non-confrontational ways of most women when they turn down a man as an incentive to keep pursuing their attention. The more you hem and haw the more they take that as a yes. Also, if the stalker calls you 20 times and you answer on the 21st ring, that is telling him, oh I have to call 21 times to get her to pick up the phone.

The messengers of intuition are: nagging feelings, persistent thoughts, humor, wonder anxiety, curiosity, hunches, gut feelings, doubt, hesitation, suspicion, apprehensions, and Fear. He explains how humor of all things can be an indicator that something is off, especially black humor; for example one of the Unabomber's packages came and the office workers thought at the time that the package looked strange, it was very heavy, had lots of tape and stamps on it and was addressed to the former head of the company. The new manager opened it anyway, but before he did, one man said let me get back to my office before the bomb goes off, he did leave and he survived, never dreaming that his instinct was telling him to run.

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## **Besha says**

On the first day of SFSI training for sex educators, we do an exercise called "I Don't Want To Talk About It." Trainees practice saying just that to a partner who inundates them with questions, from the mundane to the highly offensive. (And first-day sex educators can come up with some really offensive questions. Most of them are about anal sex.)

It's hard for many trainees to set that boundary, and most women especially add qualifiers:

"I don't want to talk about that *right now*."

"*I'm sorry, but* I'm not comfortable talking about that."

"I don't *feel like* talking about that."

This book trained me out of those caveats by teaching me that I don't owe strangers anything: not my smile, not my appearance, not my reply on a dating website. I choose to be *kind*, but I don't have to be *nice*. The fear of *not being nice* sets you up to be hurt--emotionally or physically. It's one of the most valuable lessons I've ever learned.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who was raised as a girl, but I'd also recommend it to anyone who finds it hard to say "I don't want to talk about it."

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## **Megan says**

I found this book highly repetitive, somewhat illogical, and utterly impractical. De Becker uses many examples of people who suspected something was wrong and then were proven right, but what about all the times that people suspected something was wrong and then nothing happened? Furthermore, I do not share his confidence that people can just know by instinct when a situation is dangerous. Perhaps some people can, but other people cannot. For example, I have an anxiety disorder. If I trusted my instincts, I'd never leave my



apartment. De Becker does touch on the difference between anxiety (which he thinks is useless) and fear (which he thinks is useful) but does not provide a) any useful rubric for determining the difference between anxiety and fear or b) any tips for retraining an anxious brain to recognize real threats instead of imagined ones. I don't expect De Becker to have the cure for anxiety disorders, but I did expect more practical tips for identifying danger rather than just a constant refrain of "trust your instincts", since so many people seem to have poorly formed instincts for various reasons.

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## **Anna says**

I saw a girl reading this on the subway and remembered that I read it 5 years ago or so on the recommendation of a friend. It's basically a book version of those internet forwards that tell women how to protect themselves from random attackers and/or serial killers. The gist of it is: Be aware of how you feel and don't discount your fear.

To some extent, this is smart - most people feel afraid for good reason, and you shouldn't feel silly about your fear. The thing I remember most vividly is a story about a woman who kept refusing a man's help carrying her groceries and finally relented when the man said, "There's such a thing as being too proud," which made her feel dumb, which prompted her to let him help her, and then he raped her or something. So - don't be stupid, I guess, is the moral.

But this book, much like the email forwards, promotes paranoia more than anything else. And like those email forwards, it pisses me off that it seems like more attention is paid in the book to the overemphasized "problem" of random attackers seizing women as they return to their cars in the parking lot rather than the very real problem of women who are the victims of domestic violence. So there's my soapbox for today.

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## **Stacy says**

Sometimes we need a book like this, because not everyone is as obvious as this guy...

*Oh sure, let me check in right now!*

This book isn't about what to do *after* a crime has started. Instead, it's about how to prevent these things from happening in the first place. It's about using your intuition, a natural response to things being, "off". It's an instinctive survival signal that we've had since the caveman days.

***"Since fear is so central to our experience, understanding when it is a gift - and when it is a curse - is well worth the effort."***

Most of us ignore our intuition. Maybe we don't want to look like an idiot while running away from some weirdo on the street. Many times we try to come up with explanations, to explain the feeling away. A lot of

us don't want to appear rude to people. Example: Someone walks up to you asking for help, but your gut is telling you to back away from this person. You stay to help anyway because you don't want to be rude. Hopefully nothing would happen but sometimes it does. Better safe than sorry.

One of the most interesting things that I learned from this book has to do with restraining orders. Did you know that if a woman gets a restraining order against an abusive husband/ex/boyfriend etc, he is more likely to kill her? By doing this, the woman has hurt the mans ego.

It's kind of the same with stalkers. If you get a restraining order against a stalker, this feeds their need for attention. Any contact with a stalker, or a similar person, will only cause more harm than good. The best way to get rid of an unwanted person is by going **NO CONTACT**. The author says that you will gain *6 more weeks* of stalking behavior if you have any contact with this person. Don't let them down nicely, cut them off. **Goodbye freak.**

*"No is a word that must never be negotiated, because the person who chooses not to hear it is trying to control you."*

*"The blind eye, of course, will never recognize him, which is why I devote this chapter and the next to removing the blinders, to revealing the truths and the myths about the disguises someone might use to victimize you."*

I would recommend this book to young and single women, or for any woman that goes out a lot alone. There's some great information for those in abusive relationships too. This also has a fantastic section for managers, or anyone that does hiring/firing. It teaches you how to spot difficult people that are problem causers before you even hire them. It also shows you how to diffuse workplace violence before it even starts.

**This entire book will not be relatable to everyone.** There may be parts that pertain to you, and many that do not. It's still a great book and some of the information in it could be life saving to you or to someone you love.

*"Denial is a save-now-pay-later scheme, a contract written entirely in small print, for in the long run, the denying person knows the truth on some level, and it causes a constant low grade anxiety."*

*"People who want to deceive you, I explain to Kelly, will often use a simple technique which*

*has a simple name: too many details."*

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## **Jennifer says**

This book is a primer on how to keep yourself safe by listening to your own intuition and following your instincts. Violence is seldom random - we almost always have warning signals long before the boyfriend refuses to be broken up with or the employee with the gun climbs the clock tower.

I'll relate my own Gavin de Becker-esqe story here, by way of example.

Several years ago I had a well-liked roommate who needed to break the lease and move to another city. We both interviewed roommates from the local paper to replace her. I really liked J., but J. couldn't move in for 2 months. My roommate strongly encouraged me to choose M., who could move in immediately.

M. pursued the housing situation very aggressively, wanted to move in right away, offering money up front. She had nothing good to say about the situation she was leaving - she was leaving because of roommate problems. (Red Flag #1)

I had to be out of town the first week she lived there. I came back to find that she had cleaned and rearranged my room. (Red Flag #2)

Early on she told a story about how a boyfriend asked her to move out and she destroyed many of his things in revenge (Red Flag #3)

She cooked me dinner and pulled out an album of photos of her engaging in her fairly extreme BDSM lifestyle. (Live and let live, but at least a "pink" flag that she would show those things to me).

Later red flags:

- Felt free to comment on what I ate and offered to become my personal trainer and nutritional coach, which would involve following her instructions on food and exercise every day and reporting back to her.

- Monopolized the television and VCR -even when she wasn't home, set the TV to record her shows or left instructions about it, so she was always in control of the TV.

- Her stuff (mail, photos, sporting equipment) could be in the common areas of the house, but she could complain if mine was and/or move it into my room.

- When she was upset about something she would leave me a long note on the counter threatening to move out. Eventually, I started circling those words and writing "how soon?" on the notes, and she would apologize and cook me dinner or buy flowers or a gift. Meanwhile she would paint her room or buy a piece of furniture or do something to make it clear that she was never leaving.

- Mentioned a gun she owned in her storage unit.

And the big one:

-When I said that maybe living together wasn't working out and that she should start looking for a new place, my indoor cat suddenly "escaped" in freezing weather and "couldn't be found, even though I looked everywhere." Out the back door I found clear footprints in the snow leading to a spot under the porch where the poor thing was curled up (fortunately unharmed) - so the cat could be found in about 2 minutes. Danger!

At the time I didn't have the financial resources to make a quick move, so I saved my money and started retreating from the house in small stages and avoiding conflicts with her. I signed a lease on a new place without telling her, and when she went away on a 3-week trip out of the country, I moved out. I never gave a forwarding address or a phone number. She sent me many emails, mostly accusing me of stealing things from her and threatening "consequences" if I didn't bring them back. I ignored her and stopped engaging, and eventually she went away.

If I had read *The Gift of Fear* at the time, I might have been able weed her out much earlier and not lost the apartment that had been my home for 2 years to a psycho. At the time I kept trying to see her behavior through the lens of what a "normal" person would do and I questioned myself too much.

In closing, Gavin de Becker does not want you to be fearful or carry worry or anxiety about what could happen to you. Anxiety is paralyzing. Fear-real fear-is useful. When someone makes your hackles rise, listen to your instincts.

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## Darth J says

I was intrigued when Amy Poehler kept mentioning this book in *Yes Please*, so I decided to order it. Sidenote: Wouldn't this title be a great tagline for a Christmas-themed horror movie? *"This Holiday season, give **THE GIFT OF FEAR.**"*

Anyway, a lot of this book is common sense, and the author describes "intuition" or your "gut feeling" as (deep voice) **THE GIFT OF FEAR!** De Becker says this is made of mostly unconscious processes like observing things and being able to predict what will happen... based on common sense. I was really let down by this book because, again, it's mostly just common sense. There's nothing really new here.

Another thing, for the most part this book posits that it's mostly men stalking, harassing, and being violent (mostly toward women). You have to get to the last third of the book before female assailants are even given any mention, and mostly those are in the form of overly-attached girlfriends. There's that famous Margaret Atwood quote in there about men being afraid that women will laugh at them, but women being afraid that men will kill them; except the author doesn't even attribute it to her at all. I kept having to double check that this book was indeed written by a man because most of the book is about men being the only ones capable of being monsters and only women seem to be mentioned if they are a jilted or delusional lover. It just didn't feel balanced to me, especially in a world where the statistics of female on male crime are greatly reduced for various societal reasons. I'm sure male on female crime is a higher statistic than the other way around, but

this issue is neither touched upon or glossed over, it's simply ignored. *The Gift of Fear* is basically telling you that unless you pay attention or obsess over someone, you'll be a victim if you're a woman. I actually don't find that useful or empowering at all.

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### **lindsey says**

a friend gave me this book when I was 18, after a traumatic event in my life. im rating it five stars not just for the content, but for as valuable as i (personally and directly) found it to be. i have reread it a few times, and its relevancy and accuracy hasnt diminished.

i recommend this book to women i know who care about personal safety, but also to people who are interested in the patterns of human behavior; its not just insight into what i consider 'bad behavior,' its a very interesting behavioral view into the world of women and their complicated interactions with men - and illustrates the problem of safety in a way that most men rarely think about.

its not a perfect book, but it was enormously helpful in helping me to understand a lot of things about humans in our culture - myself and everyone else, both in light of some terrible events and just generally. it also unexpectedly kicked off a lot of my overt feminist reading and research, for which i am forever exceedingly grateful.

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### **Goran Powell says**

All martial artists should read this.

Hopefully you already know that awareness is by far the most important aspect of self-defense. *The Gift of Fear* by Gavin de Becker tells us how to tune into the body's natural awareness (a subconscious intuition for danger that is hard-wired into our psyche). Basically he argues that our intuition is a far better judge than our logical mind when it comes to danger.

The author runs a security firm that guards Presidents and A list celebs among others, his training is in profiling dangerous criminals - this is 'Silence of the Lambs' type stuff in real life.

It's rare to come across a book that totally changes the way you see things, but this is one. *The Gift of Fear* is a truly great piece of writing about self-protection, almost poetic in places, and especially good for women (though pretty vital to everyone). Engrossing, surprising and ultimately very empowering. Please read it.

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### **Emma says**

What this book taught me: I should have listened to my intuition and not read it. (Thanks Jake!)

How can I be the only person that hated this book? It's so dumb. It's so useless. You really needed a 400 page

book to tell you, "listen to your gut?"

Give me \$7.99 and I'll tell you to listen to your gut.

The Gift of Fear is impossibly repetitive. It is disorganized, badly edited, and mainly serves as a pedestal on which Gavin de Becker can place himself for the rest of us to admire.

This is basically what the book looks like:

Listen to your gut. Fear is instinct. Intuition stuff. Here is a story of a client in a dangerous situation. Here is how Gavin de Becker and his crack team of intuition geniuses saved the day. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

But Oprah said you should like it, so five stars away.

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