

WHERE'S THE "FIRE?"

*By Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Specialist
Susan Bartelstone*

*As featured on the
TODAY SHOW*

*Take a Self
Defense class and
learn how to rely
on YOURSELF in
case of trouble
instead of
depending on
others to come to
your aid!*

*No absolutes exist
in crime scenarios
and no advice can
address every
variable.*

*Evaluate each
situation
individually and
only respond in
the way you
instinctively judge
best.*

WHAT TO YELL IF YOU'RE BEING ATTACKED!

I recently appeared on the Today Show in a segment concerning rape and fighting back—prompted by an incident in Los Angeles where a young woman, walking to her car in an empty parking garage, was jumped by a concealed assailant and raped. The segment featured two re-creations of the rape scenario with a security specialist playing the part of the attacker and a young woman volunteer playing the rape victim.

The first re-creation was identical to the original incident. Prior to the second re-creation, however, a martial arts instructor gave the woman volunteer a self defense lesson which included simple strikes and kicks, advice to keep moving and the instruction to yell "Fire" (to attract attention and assistance). After her lesson, the volunteer-victim was clearly able to deter the attack. I was proud to appear on this program, but disagreed with the out-dated advice to yell "Fire." Here's why:

- **The "Bystander Effect."** It's dangerous to depend on others for aid. In the real attack, the garage was empty so no one would've heard the woman yell "Fire." Even if people had been around, it's well known that most bystanders, upon hearing cries for assistance, bolt, freeze and/or are too confused to take any action.
- **Easy Target.** The real purpose for yelling is to empower you and let the attacker know he hasn't picked an easy target—not to attract attention! Many, many criminals will be dissuaded by those who respond aggressively if attacked. Thousands of accounts bear this out. Yelling "Fire" psychologically tells an assailant that you're helpless (i.e., exactly what he's looking for).

The Warrior Yell. One of the most important techniques I teach in my **Think Fast-Talk Fast-Fight Smart** Personal Safety Workshops is how to bring forth a chilling "Warrior Yell" which breaks through your panic and immobilization and makes you furiously angry—exactly the frame of mind needed for aggressive self defense!

Safety Tip: *Don't yell "Help" or "Fire." Better advice is to yell something like "Get away from me!" or "Back-off!" or something that empowers you and projects a crime-stopping, "non-victim" attitude. If there are people around, yell "Call the Police, I'm being attacked!" to direct them what to do and overcome the "Bystander" effect.*