

# Assessing Your Risk for Assault

**In distinguishing between infinite possibilities and imminent reality, the essentials to consider are:**

**1. If you were Peter Parker, would your “spider sense” be tingling?**

You needn't have been bitten by a radioactive spider to recognize the sensation. What is your survival instinct/intuition/gift of fear telling you? Become aware of any sort of physical sensation that you associate with a warning. And you needn't be an action adventure superhero to do something about it.

**2. Is someone violating your boundaries?**

Boundary violations can begin small, as a test to see if you recognize it, display discomfort, yet say/do nothing. In the case of a stranger assault, the test may take only a minute, or even seconds. In cases of domestic violence, you may be groomed to tolerate such intrusions for months or years. Boundary violations can be visual and verbal, as well as physical.

Most women are assaulted by someone they know. The perpetrator abuses familiarity to take the benefit of doubt. Many women simply assume that because they and their assailant know people in common, they won't be assaulted. That's exactly what the assailant wants you to feel, and small testing boundary violations escalate until you can no longer deny that an assault is in progress. Assailants understand that you'll be reluctant to tell people you both know. In most cases that ends up being the case.

**3. Is someone using ploys and manipulations?**

Is someone trying to get you to do something, but you doubt their motives or agenda? Are they insisting that you owe them this favor, or trying to distract you? Do you feel they're stretching the truth, or outright lying? What is the real relationship between you and this person? Is their persuasion appropriate, given the relationship?

**4. Is someone trying to isolate you?**

Assailants do not want to be caught. Assailants require not only a compliant victim but also an opportunity. Boundary violations and ploys work on the former, and isolation works on the latter. You can be isolated physically, socially and financially.



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