



Charity Elucidates How the Way People Walk May Increase Their Risk of Being Targeted by a Psychopath

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The Aftermath: Surviving Psychopathy Foundation is a non-profit charity organization striving to inform and educate people about psychopathic behavior and its effects. Recently they went a step further and featured a study that could potentially contribute to actively preventing victimization by psychopaths. Namely, emerging research shows that persons with psychopathic traits use the way people walk when choosing their victims.

Past research has found that the body language of those who have been victimized differs from the body language of non-victims, and these nonverbal cues may inadvertently signal vulnerability. For instance, victims seem to walk slower, drag their feet, and have a slumped posture. Visitors to the Aftermath Foundation website can find out more about the cues psychopaths use there.

Researchers in Canada examined whether the cues that people display through their walk may put them at even greater risk of being victimized again. In one of the studies featured by the Aftermath Foundation, Associate Professor Angela Book and her colleagues asked violent offenders to watch videos of individuals walking and then rate their vulnerability to being victimized. Some of these individuals had previously been crime victims; others had not. As predicted, inmates with higher psychopathy scores were more accurate in

identifying victims. In fact, inmates with higher levels of manipulateness, superficial charm, and lack of empathy (often referred to as the Factor 1 traits or core features of psychopathy) demonstrated the highest accuracy in this regard.

Interestingly, psychopathic inmates identified the way that people walked as a factor influencing their decisions about vulnerability, whereas other inmates were more likely to focus on things like gender, build, and ability to retaliate: "...inmates scoring higher on Factor 1 traits of psychopathy were much more likely to consciously attend to a target's gait when making their vulnerability judgments," stated Book and her colleagues. This chilling finding helps shed light on why some individuals are victimized more than once, that is, that social predators are attracted to their nonverbal displays of vulnerability.

Although there is no way to guarantee protection from victimization, it is possible to take steps to reduce vulnerability," said Dr. David Kosson, president of the Aftermath Foundation. According to Kosson, "The more is known about how people with psychopathic traits look for victims, the more difficult it can be made for them to find victims."

Discover more about psychopathic individuals and the ways they operate here.

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Aftermath: Surviving Psychopathy Foundation

The goal of Aftermath is to reduce the negative impact of psychopaths on individuals and society. Aftermath supports research and education regarding the traits and characteristics of psychopathy and its impact on victims.

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