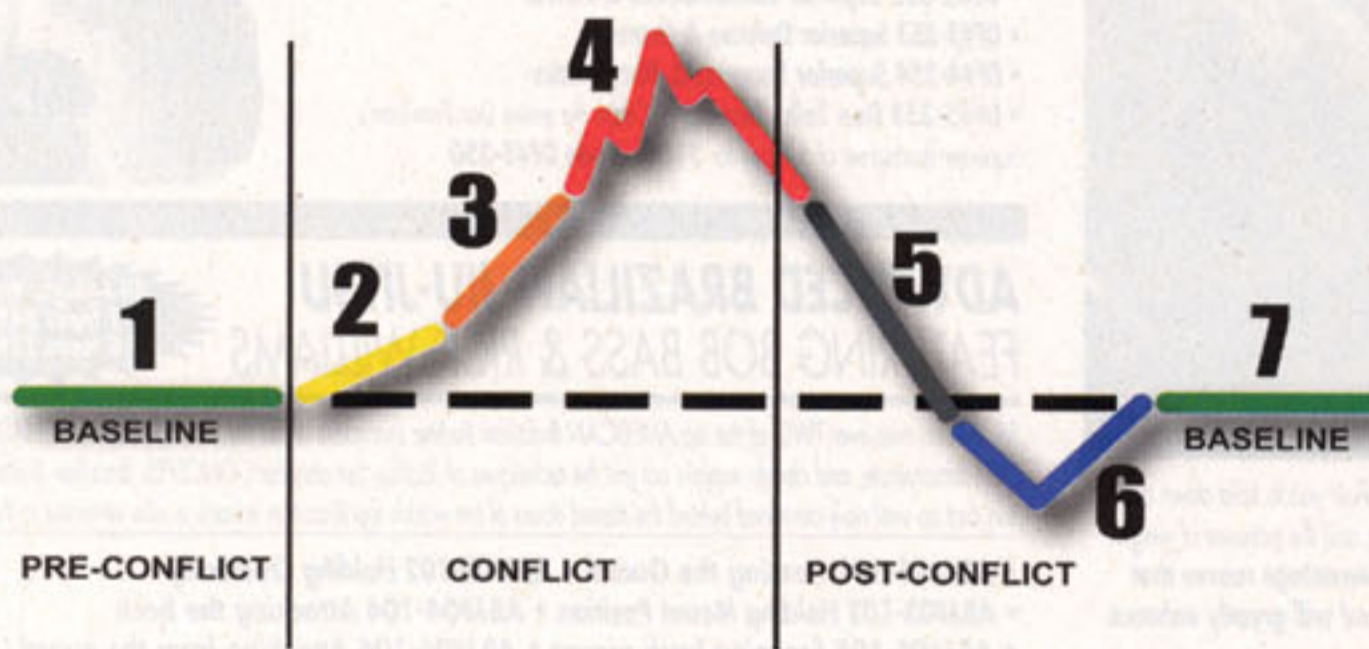


THE CONFLICT CYCLE

BY JIM WAGNER

JIM WAGNER REALITY-BASED PERSONAL PROTECTION™

THE CONFLICT CYCLE™



1. **EDUCATION** Knowledge Domain (preparation for conflict through training)
2. **INITIATION** The event that starts a conflict (conflict cues)
3. **ESCALATION** Immediate or gradual increase of danger (indicators)
4. **CONFRONTATION** Use of force (Jim Wagner Use-of-Force Ladder™)
5. **STABILIZATION** Escape or citizen's arrest, triage/first aid, police contact
6. **NORMALIZATION** Possible hospitalization, contemplation and litigation
7. **EVALUATION** Debriefing and learning from experiences; adjust training

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daily life without conflict—your normal behavior, thought patterns and habits.

Education: This is the green line that sits on the baseline. It signifies your level of preparedness before a conflict. Although it's impossible to predict the future, you can prepare for the types of conflict you're most likely to face because they depend on your environment and purpose.

I refer to pre-conflict preparation as "knowledge domain." It's a set of facts, drills and exercises and includes training in counter-surveillance, legal issues, physical and mental conditioning, the OODA process (observe, orient, decide, act), the Use-of-Force Ladder, the environment and so on.

Initiation: It's the yellow line that slants upward and indicates caution. Conflict doesn't just happen; there has to be a starting point. The more familiar you are with the various forms of violence, the more perceptive you will be at spotting the initial phase. The signs can be as simple as someone looking at you the wrong way or as complex as a pair of criminals communicating via hand signals.

Escalation: Next comes the orange line that slants upward even more steeply. It signifies that conflict is imminent. It can be immediate, such as a terrorist pulling a box cutter from his waistband, or gradual, wherein somebody starts to raise his voice. How far it goes depends on the nature of the conflict. Sometimes you can defuse the situation; other times you have to react to it.

Confrontation: Represented by the red line, it marks the phase in which physical combat takes place. The line goes up and down like a mountain range because the course of a fight can vary: One second you might be losing, the next moment you're winning, and then something unexpected happens and you're losing again. Your martial arts training will be put to the test. If it parallels the incident you're

All types of conflict—whether heated arguments or life-or-death battles—follow a cycle, a predictable sequence of events. The exact nature of the conflict and your chosen method for dealing with it will determine how long you spend at each phase of the cycle and how intensely you act during it.

Drawing from the experiences I've had during my law-enforcement career, I developed the Conflict Cycle graph to

help you understand how violent situations typically unfold. It's divided into three components: pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict. The numbering and color coding represent detailed elements within each section. Real conflict is a seamless event, but the lines are there to help explain specific events that take place.

Baseline: It's indicated by a broken black line that extends to infinity in both directions. It represents your