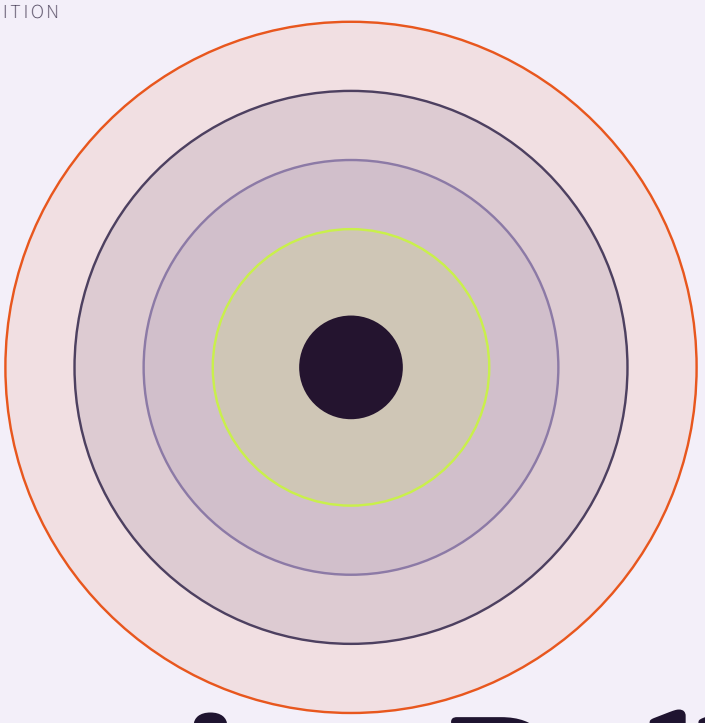


Becoming Bullet-proof: Protect Yourself, Read People, Influence Situations, and Live Fearlessly

A reading of the book by Evy Poumpouras (2020)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Becoming Bulletproof: Protect Yourself, Read People, Influence Situations, and Live Fearlessly, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Evy Poumpouras started in the NYPD and went on to serve as a US Secret Service special agent, on the protective details of four presidents and as an interrogator in the agency's polygraph unit. Becoming Bulletproof argues that fear is not the enemy. Panic is, and you can train yourself to act while afraid instead of freezing. The book has three parts: protection, which covers fear, mental toughness, planning and awareness of your surroundings; reading people, which covers why people lie and what words, voice and body give away; and influence, which covers attention, respect, rapport and how others try to sway you. Her stories come from her years in law enforcement, from the World Trade Center on 9/11 to interviewing suspects and watching presidents and first ladies up close. The aim is not to make you fearless but harder to stop.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Fear is not the problem. Panic is.

Poumpouras treats fear as a survival tool that sharpens you, and panic as the thing that shuts your thinking down. The first part of the book is about learning to keep the first without sliding into the second. You don't wait to stop being afraid. You train so that you can act while you are.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Know your default before a crisis shows it to you.

Under threat, most of us fight, flee or freeze, and each of us leans one way. Look back at the last few times you felt truly threatened and notice which you did. Once you know your default, you can practise the response you would rather have.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

When you are scared, find someone to help.

Turning your attention to people in danger pulls it off your own fear. Poumpouras was at the World Trade Center on 9/11 with Secret Service colleagues, helping the people caught in it. Having a job to do is one of the fastest ways back to clear thinking.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Protection comes in layers, not in one steel plate.

A bulletproof vest is many thin layers of fibre, and more layers stop more. The book treats safety the same way. Awareness, a plan, mental toughness and physical readiness each stop a little, and together they stop a lot.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Use fear as fuel by picturing who you could become, and the regret you want to avoid.

Fear doesn't have to be removed before you move. Point it at something. Hold a clear picture of the person you want to be, and of the version of you who stayed small, and let both pull you forward.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You can't read a person until you know their normal.

A single fidget or pause tells you very little. What matters is a change from how this person usually talks, sits and moves. Treat a change as a reason to ask another question, never as proof that someone is lying.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

How you say something can outweigh what you say.

Voice, pace, tone and posture are read before your words are. Poumpouras tells of being turned down for television work for sounding too quiet, and of training her voice to carry. People read you all the time, so it pays to know what you are sending.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Undivided attention is one of the strongest kinds of influence.

Putting the phone away, looking at someone and listening without planning your reply makes people feel seen. Poumpouras describes watching a president make each person in a crowded room feel like the only one there. It costs nothing and few people do it.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Learn the tactics of influence so you notice them used on you.

The influence part ends by turning around. Rapport, flattery, urgency and the right question work on you as well as for you. When you can name the move, you get to decide whether to go along with it.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Find your default response
- [ ] Make a one-page home plan
- [ ] Save the numbers you would need
- [ ] Record yourself and listen
- [ ] Write your two futures

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Count the exits when you walk in
- ◯ Get the baseline before the hard question
- ◯ Give one conversation full attention

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Find your default response

Write down the last three times you felt truly threatened or afraid.

Next to each, mark fight, flight or freeze. Circle the one that shows up most.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Make a one-page home plan

On one page, write two ways out of your home, a place to meet outside, and who calls whom.

Walk the route once with everyone who lives with you.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Save the numbers you would need

Put your local emergency number, two trusted contacts and your doctor in your phone favourites.

Set up your phone's emergency contacts and medical details so they show on the lock screen.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Record yourself and listen

Record two minutes of yourself explaining something you know well.

Play it back and note your pace, volume and filler words. Pick one thing to change.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Write your two futures

Write three lines about who you become if fear stops deciding for you, and three lines about who you become if it keeps deciding.

Keep the page where you will see it.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Count the exits when you walk in

Each time you enter a café, shop or venue, find two ways out before you sit down.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Get the baseline before the hard question

In your next difficult conversation, spend the first few minutes on easy topics and notice how the other person normally talks and sits.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Give one conversation full attention

Once a day, put your phone out of sight, face the person and listen to the end of what they say before you start your reply.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
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December 2026

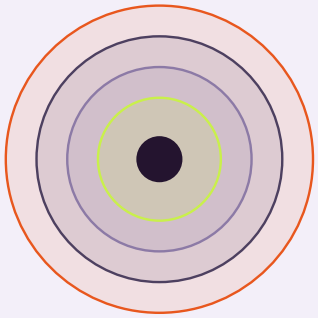
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Fear will show up either way. Train so that it finds you ready.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER EVY POUMPOURAS