

Lt. Martin Brock



***North Carolina
General Assembly
Police Department***

National Legislative Services and Security Association – Verbal judo

VERBAL JUDO

The Gentle Art of Persuasion



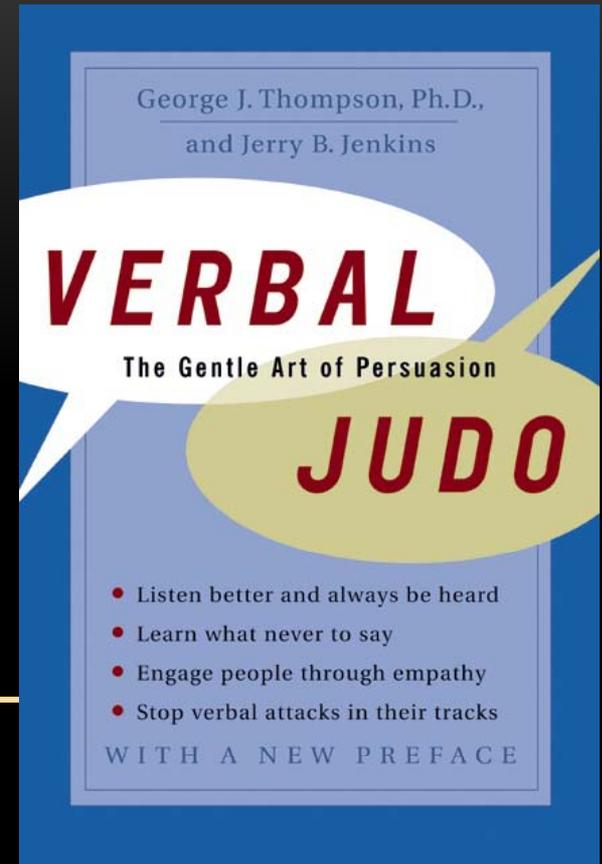
National Legislative Services and Security Association

THE CONTENT OF THIS PRESENTATION IS ACCREDITED TO THE BOOK:

“VERBAL JUDO: THE GENTLE ART OF PERSUASION”

WRITTEN BY DR. GEORGE THOMPSON [PH.D.] AND FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1994, IT IS BASED ON HIS EXTENSIVE FIELD RESEARCH. ALL MATERIAL AND METHODS DESCRIBED WITHIN ARE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.

THE TECHNIQUES OUTLINED ARE WORDED FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION, HOWEVER ALL PRINCIPLES CAN BE APPLIED TO ANY SETTING FOR MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.



Dr. George Thompson: English professor (turned street cop also known as “Doc Rhino”) ultimately taught one million law enforcement professionals the art of verbally redirecting negative behavior. He passed away on June 7th 2011 at his home in Auburn, New York. He was 69.



• Scenario A

- **Officer:** This is a restricted area. Visitors are not allowed
- **Subject:** Why?
- **Officer:** Because that's the rules
- **Subject:** This is a public place. I have the right to be here.

• Scenario B

- **Officer:** Good Afternoon sir. I'm Officer Jones with the State Police. If it is okay with you, I would like to talk to you about the rules of the building which restrict visitors to certain areas of the complex without an appointment. If you would like to walk with me back to the lobby, I would be happy to assist you with contacting your representative.

NOTICE

**RESTRICTED
AREA
AUTHORIZED
PERSONNEL ONLY**

SCENARIO A: *THE SUBJECT, ON THE DEFENSIVE ENGAGES THE OFFICER IN AN ARGUMENT, EFFECTIVELY WRESTLING CONTROL OF THE SITUATION FROM THE OFFICER.*

SCENARIO B: *THE OFFICER MAINTAINS CONTROL.*

The importance of tactical communication



- In its 2003 report, “Training the 21st Century Police Officer: Redefining Police Professionalism for the Los Angeles Police Department,” the RAND Corp. noted that “to communicate effectively is to be skilled in the overt and the subtle, to make one’s intentions known whether the recipient is deaf, unable to understand English, mentally handicapped, enraged, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or simply unfamiliar with normal police procedure.” Good officers can communicate effectively even under tremendous stress. The skill is critical to successfully gaining compliance or cooperation from subjects, and in managing situations where arrest, search and seizure, or use of force (which the report notes are “intricately related”) are required.
- These skills, say the late George “Doc” Thompson, founder and president of the Verbal Judo Institute, are anything but natural.
- “Natural communication is what flows from your lips. It gets people hurt.”



PRINCIPLES OF TACTICAL COMMUNICATION

- **Verbal Judo, or tactical communication as it has come to be called, allows a person to work effectively with individuals regardless of the kind of day they are having, circumstances in their personal life, or other influences both positive and negative.**
- **Scenario B in the introduction is one of the many examples in which Verbal Judo can work for police.**
- **It's part of the "S.A.F.E.R. 8 to 5" technique. A cornerstone tactic of Verbal Judo that can be adapted to just about any contact.**

TACTICAL 8 STEP



1. **Give an Appropriate Greeting Statement:** *This should be a statement and not a question.*
2. **Identify Yourself and your Department:** *This establishes your legal authority to stop/detain them as required by the 4th Amendment. Research has also shown that people are less likely to verbally abuse you if they can put a name with a face.*
3. **Explain the Reason for the Contact:** *Makes your justification for the stop clear upfront and clarifies that you are not just harassing some poor citizen while also decreasing complaints of racial profiling. In addition, it is also a requirement of the 4th Amendment that people have the right to know why they are being detained by the police.*
4. **Any Justifiable Reason For [your actions]...** *Could there be any justifiable reason why they violated the law?*
5. **Ask for Identification:** *This could be a Driver's License or State ID card containing name and DOB. These are items that are governed by US Supreme Court rulings. (Terry vs. Ohio)*
6. **Request Additional Information:** *Examples include... vehicle registration, proof of insurance, etc.*

7.

8.



TACTICAL 5 STEP

Every encounter begins with the Tactical 8 Step approach, however some subjects may require additional verbal persuasion. When the citizen fails to comply with what is a lawful request of the officer, then he/she proceeds directly to the Tactical 5 Step.

1. **Ask again:** *Do not make assumptions. Repeating questions may be necessary to avoid confusion.*
 2. **Set the context:** *Deflect negative statements while staying calm. “Yes, I understand,” “I hear that,” or “I can appreciate that.” This is a good time to deflect to a higher authority as in... The State requires that an individual produce their driver’s license at the request of an officer if you are driving a vehicle.*
 3. **Present Options:** *(“You have a couple of options here”) This may make them feel as if they are in control, but they must be willing to accept what they choose.*
 4. **Confirm Non-Compliance:** *“(Sir / Ma’am), is there anything that I can say to make you comply with my lawful orders?”*
 5. **Act!:** *After confirming non-compliance, make sure that you have proper back-up to make an arrest. The subject has been given numerous chances.*
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PHRASES TO AVOID...

1. “Come here!”

- Means “go away.” Especially when said by an intimidating figure.
- If someone orders you to “come here”, ask why?
- A more effective and casual approach would be... “Excuse me, but I need to speak with you for a second” or even “Could I speak with you for a second?”
- This gives the other party the feeling that they had a choice, but your implication was clear.

2. “You wouldn’t understand”

- It’s insulting. Don’t pre-judge their ability to comprehend.
- It’s better to say, “This might be difficult to understand, but...”
“Let me try to explain this...” or even, “I hope that I can explain this...”

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I'M GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS
AND GET AWAY WITH IT.

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PHRASES TO AVOID...

3. “Because it’s against the rules!”

- Shows that you are weak and cannot support your order with logic or are insensitive and uncaring.
- If you are enforcing rules for a good reason, explain them.
- Your audience may not agree, but at least they have been honored with an explanation.
- ***If someone were to say this to you, respond...*** “Could you tell me why this rule was created? It doesn’t make sense to me and if you would help me understand why it was made, it would be easier for me to follow.”

4. “It’s none of your business!”

- The slam dunk of verbal abuse.
- It angers people because it brands them as outsiders and cuts them off.
- The phrase exposes you as someone who doesn’t have a good reason for answering the question and that you have no power behind your position.
- Instead, explain why. It’s confidential, not permitted, or there is a reason for being uncomfortable

Ask Me How
I Tolerate
Stupid Questions

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PHRASES TO AVOID...

5. “What do you want me to do about it?”

- An evasion of responsibility almost always accompanied by sarcasm.
- It comes with two problems, the one you started with and the new one you just created.
- If you are unable to assist or don't know how to help, say so and apologize.
- “I'm sorry. I really don't know what to tell you or recommend. I wish I did and I'd like to help, but I can't.” An apology almost always gain an ally.
- ***If someone were to say this to you, respond...*** “I want you to listen to me and help me”, then politely explain how the person can help.

6. “Calm down!”

- Criticism of people's behavior implies that they have no reason to be upset.
- Rather than reassuring them that things will improve, you have created a problem..
- Put on a calm face, look them in the eye and say... “It's going to be alright. Talk to me. What's the trouble?”



PHRASES TO AVOID...

7. “What’s your problem?”

- This creates a defensive reaction, making people feel deficient or even helpless.
- Nobody likes to admit that they have a problem. (People prefer to think of solutions.)
- “I’m sorry. I really don’t know what to tell you or recommend. I wish I did and I’d like to help, but I can’t.” An apology almost always gain an ally.
- ***If someone were to say this to you, respond...*** “I want you to listen to me and help me”, then *politely explain how the person can help.*

6. “Calm down!”

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PHRASES TO AVOID...

8. *“I’m not going to say this again!”*

- Almost always a lie.
- This threat traps you as you are only left with one option if you don’t repeat yourself.
- If you are not prepared to act, you lose credibility.
- If you are prepared to act, you have tipped off your adversary
- **Try this instead**, “It’s important that you understand this, so let me say it again. And listen carefully.”

9. *“I’m doing this for your own good”*

- Guaranteed to turn your listener into a cynic – It begs for a sarcastic comeback.
- If you really are... then show him – offer reasons and give concrete examples on how his life will improve.
- **If someone were to say this to you, respond...**
“No one knows me better than I do. I’m the best judge of



PHRASES TO AVOID...

10. “Why don’t you be reasonable?”

- You are only inviting conflict with a question like this. No one is going to admit to being irrational, despite whether they know it to be true.
- Be reasonable with them with the language of reassurance - “Let me see if I can understand your position.”
- ***If someone were to say this to you, respond...*** “I’m being as reasonable as I know how and with any luck I’ll get better, but apparently I see the issue differently.”





IN CLOSING

“Remember, Verbal Judo is a way, *the gentle way*, to engage in tactical communication or what I call contact professionalism. Think of it as a way of life. It is not just for sales, not just to make money and not just to dominate people. It is a way to live with dignity and power and assertiveness. Power is knowledge in action and the knowledge I hope you will gain from this has been tested on the street by the finest communicators in America. Those whose lives depend on it.”

-George J. Thompson, Ph.D.

