

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

*A Verbal Communications Guide for Enhancing Officer Safety  
and Law Enforcement Professionalism*



CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS & TRAINING





## **ENHANCING LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The term “Strategic Communications,” as used by California POST, supports the concept of infusing professional verbal techniques into law enforcement training components to promote officer safety, build trust within communities, enhance the concept of Procedural Justice, and to promote the mission of POST to continually enhance the professionalism of California law enforcement in serving its communities. This document features verbal communication techniques, known as Tactical Communications, which were developed by the late George Thompson, PhD and the Verbal Judo Institute. POST would like to thank the Verbal Judo Institute for their continued affiliation with POST since 1992 and for allowing POST to use these copyrighted materials as approved by a mutually agreed to MOU.

February 2019

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## TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS DEFINED

Tactical Communications (Tac Com) teaches officers how to stay calm and professional under verbal assault and how to generate voluntary compliance from even the most difficult people. Tac Com also teaches officers how to identify when their words have failed and how to then transition, through tactics, into approved force options when necessary. The ability to communicate effectively is an officer's greatest asset. These tactics enhance officer safety and can promote public trust and confidence in law enforcement.



### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The creator and founder of Tactical Communications, also known as Verbal Judo, was George Thompson, Ph.D., a retired university professor, martial artist, police officer, and an expert in situational rhetoric: how language affects people in crisis. Dr. Thompson also founded the Verbal Judo Institute, Inc.

These communication tactics presented by the Verbal Judo Institute are also federally copyrighted and trademark protected. POST is thankful to the Institute for allowing California POST the use of these training materials to enhance the verbal communication skills of our POST affiliated law enforcement agencies and their staff.

Since the establishment of the Verbal Judo Institute, in 1982, Dr. George Thompson and staff have taught the concept of Tactical Communications to over one million students in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and in a number of countries in Europe. Approximately half of these students were peace officers.

George Thompson died of Cancer on June 7, 2011; however, the Verbal Judo Institute continues to offer this valuable training through a team of experienced professionals in honor of continuing his legacy.

Refer to [www.verbaljudo.com](http://www.verbaljudo.com) for any further information on this training program.



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# TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

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## I. ENHANCING AGENCY CULTURE THROUGH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES – A POST PERSPECTIVE

- A. Culture is defined in a number of ways, and influenced by things like history, environment, and even expectations.
1. Merriam-Webster defines culture as “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an organization or institution.”
  2. Using the above definition, this can certainly apply to the law enforcement profession and more specifically to the culture of one’s own organization or agency.
- B. When identifying best practices of agency culture among law enforcement organizations, a key assessment component is how an agency’s reputation is viewed by its local community. A trait that can enhance an agency’s image, when interacting with the public is treating all people by the **Golden Rule**; treating others like you would like to be treated in identical situations and with dignity and respect.
1. The **Golden Rule** can be seen as a “basic common sense” communication tool and should be considered a guiding factor in law enforcement’s dealings with the public and it certainly should be a consideration when dealing with fellow employees within one’s organization.
  2. Having a genuine respect for all people that law enforcement deals with doesn’t demand we have respect for known child molesters, sex traffickers, drug dealers, violent gang members or those who beat their children and wives. But as law enforcement officers, there is an expectation we treat them with dignity and respect, as guided by the **Golden Rule**; “trying to empathize with the other by putting ourselves in their shoes or in their situation.”
  3. Our profession is in the Customer Service Industry, and every one of our customers’ experience is based on the encounters they have with our employees. The perceived experience our customers’ encounter from our employees ultimately defines the reputation and culture of the agency.
  4. Some encounters we can control and some we cannot. The daily encounters by law enforcement touch all kinds of people from all walks of life, including different ethnicities, ages, sexual orientation, religions, and those cooperative and uncooperative, which can make the job challenging at times. There is also a learning curve to achieving a mastery in one’s verbal communications with different types of people, especially with those who can be confrontational and argumentative, which can take years to achieve.
- C. When evaluating law enforcement training, both in basic training and in-service training, we find that officers receive very minimal hours of training in professional verbal communications. It is estimated that peace officers spend more than 90% of their time verbally interacting with people; all types of people, with all types of

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attitudes and moods. Being able to apply the **Golden Rule** to various attitudes and moods of people that officers encounter daily takes significant training. A major verbal communications trait that can enhance an officer's success is the ability to generate voluntary compliance from all types of people. This training should also include the use of Appropriate Presence and Words as an officer's initial force option. As noted by Dr. Thompson's training, when officers show up at the scene, they need to realize that "it is showtime" and they need to put on the "right face" for the situation they are responding to; "putting on that face" that portrays to others that you "really care" and are there to truly help.

- D. Mastering the trait of the **Golden Rule** through Professional Verbal Communications requires additional commitment in training and focus, but once an agency commits to making it part of its culture it can truly make a major difference in promoting public trust and confidence in their local communities. Additionally, law enforcement personnel will also find that once they master this trait, it also tends to enhance officer safety and overall officer morale.

## II. RE-INTRODUCING TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS UNDER THE POST UMBRELLA OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

- A. As previously defined in the opening (page ii), the term "Strategic Communications" supports the concept of infusing professional verbal communication techniques into various law enforcement training components to promote officer safety and build trust within our communities. In the upcoming years, POST will continue to review verbal communication techniques that can enhance the profession of law enforcement. POST realizes these various techniques may also be copyrighted by its creators and, if deemed worthy, POST will attempt to develop interagency agreements to use these techniques in future POST programs. This has been done with the Verbal Judo Institute and their training in Tactical Communications in this document.
- B. As noted, the verbal communication techniques featured in this training guide are Tactical Communications, also known as Verbal Judo, which was developed by the late George Thompson, PhD and the Verbal Judo Institute in 1982. As a historical reference, thousands of California law enforcement police officers and deputy sheriffs were personally trained by Dr. Thompson between 1989 through 1993. Dr. Thompson was personally contracted by the individual agencies to conduct this training. The trained agencies included small, medium and large organizations including: Long Beach Police, Los Angeles Police, Los Angeles County Sheriff, Santa Ana Police, Garden Grove Police, San Diego Police, San Bernardino County Sheriff, Kern County Sheriff, Merced Police, Sacramento Police, West Sacramento Police, and many others.
- C. These verbal training techniques support the concept of the **Golden Rule** and were first introduced to POST in 1992. POST then committed to an agreement with Dr. Thompson to develop a POST training video production on Verbal Judo that was



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circulated statewide to all POST affiliated agencies in 1993. A follow-up production was released again in 2000. The last updated two-hour POST DVD production was released statewide in 2007, which included 14 scenarios demonstrating the use of the Tactical Communication in a variety of situations. The scenarios in this presentation included: vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, domestic violence, landlord tenant dispute, court testimony, dealing with subjects under the influence, and a number of other situations. The production also included a detailed guide of all the tactics and scenarios used in the DVD. POST also contracted with Dr. Thompson at that time to present eight instructor courses that resulted in approximately 250 new instructors being certified to return to their basic academies and their home agencies to continue the training in Tactical Communications.

- D. Over the past several years, the training in Tactical Communications in California has somewhat eroded from the original commitment made by the California law enforcement agencies and POST. Much of this lack in reinforcement training was due to retirements of chief executives and lead trainers of the departments. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon and historically it occurs not only in the law enforcement profession but in many other professions.
- E. Upon POST's further review of Tactical Communications, it has determined that these verbal communication techniques are still relevant and very much applicable to today's law enforcement profession. These techniques continue to demonstrate that they enhance officer safety and positive interactions with the public, especially in generating voluntary compliance and de-escalating difficult encounters that officers regularly face. Many of these techniques also enhance the tenets of Procedural Justice.
- F. POST has recontacted the Verbal Judo Institute and has discovered that their Institute is still in full operation and is serviced by a cadre of skilled trainers, most with extensive law enforcement training backgrounds, that have and continue to deliver this training throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa and to various countries in Europe. More than one million students have received training in Tactical Communications, a.k.a. Verbal Judo. Based on the continued effectiveness of this program, POST has once again committed to an agreement with the Verbal Judo Institute for the development of an additional DVD production and an update of this training guide in Verbal Communications. The Verbal Judo Institute can be referenced at [www.verbaljudo.com](http://www.verbaljudo.com) for further information.
- G. The techniques featured in this document are not meant to be listed in a specific sequence, but are listed as techniques that can be incorporated into a variety of law enforcement training settings. Past practices have shown that introducing these techniques in the early components of a basic law enforcement academy work best, along with weaving and reinforcing these concepts throughout the remaining basic training program. They should then be woven into the FTO (Field Training Officer) Program and then into other ongoing in-service training, especially in the area of de-escalation and force options.

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- H. As you review the techniques below on Tactical Communications, you will realize how these tactics also enhance the concepts of Procedural Justice, which further enhances community trust and the professional image of the law enforcement profession. As it has been noted by some trainers, "Procedural Justice is the ultimate concept we are trying to achieve, and Tactical Communications is the law enforcement tool, the 'how to' for achieving this concept."

**THE FOLLOWING SEGMENTS AND CONCEPTS ARE FEDERALLY COPYRIGHTED AND TRADEMARK PROTECTED BY THE VERBAL JUDO INSTITUTE AND ARE NOTED BY THIS SPECIFIC ICON -----**



### **III. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE USE OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS**



- A. Law enforcement personnel are often faced with situations that can result in serious injury or loss of life. Officers will periodically be confronted by individuals who become very challenging and argumentative because they are either under the influence of a substance (alcohol or narcotics), suffering from mental impairment, or under the influence of anger or rage based on their personal circumstances. Basic interpersonal skills do not usually work in situations like this. It has been said, "Common sense, is most uncommon under pressure."
- B. Just as officers are trained in the use of tactics to deal with combative and life-threatening situations, officers also need to learn skillful tactics in verbal communication to attempt to diffuse difficult verbal encounters, when possible, that may escalate and jeopardize an officer's safety or the safety of others.
- C. The techniques developed by Dr. George Thompson for the Verbal Judo Institute, initiated in 1982, have proven to be very effective, when applied correctly, in dealing with people, especially with argumentative and uncooperative subjects. These techniques are still very applicable today in our law enforcement environment; probably more so today than ever before.
- D. These same verbal techniques should not just be limited to law enforcement situations; most of these tactics can and should be used internally within law enforcement organizations amongst peers, supervisors, managers and executives in their daily interactions with each other.
- E. Additionally, many of the techniques defined in Tactical Communications can also be used within an officer's interactions within their own family and their own personal social settings.
- F. As our law enforcement profession understands, officers experiencing and viewing tragic incidents continually in their careers may become jaded, especially if they don't balance their lives with their families and their social and community commitments. Tac Com has also been known to be effective in promoting "emotional and career survival," not only for the officers, but for their own family members as well.

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- G. And finally, some officers perceive that Tactical Communications is just about being nice to people. Tactical Communications isn't just about being nice to people, it's about being *professional*.

#### IV. THE GOALS OF TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS (Tac Com)

##### A. Enhances Officer Safety

1. Helps officers decrease work-related injuries

##### B. Enhances Professionalism

1. Increase in professionalism helps officers to:
  - a. Generate voluntary compliance
  - b. Enhance trust in the community
  - c. Decrease citizen complaints
  - d. Decrease vicarious liability
  - e. Enhance court testimony skills
  - f. Lessen personal stress on the Job
  - g. Increase officer morale
  - h. Lessen personal stress within one's own family
  - i. Enhance career and emotional survival

#### V. ENHANCING THE FOUR TENETS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE FIVE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

- A. The Five Universal Truths of Tactical Communications were established by Dr. George Thompson for the Verbal Judo Institute and they are the foundation for their verbal communication training techniques. **The Five Universal Truths:**

1. **All cultures want to be treated with dignity and respect.**
2. **All people would rather be asked than told what to do.**
3. **All people want to know why they are asked or told to do something.**
4. **All people would rather have options than threats.**
5. **All people want a second chance to make matter better.**

- B. As noted by the *President's Task Force Report on 21st Century Policing*, that is further referenced by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and its affiliation with the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, the term Procedural Justice is a concept that is vital to law enforcement's role in developing trust within their communities. Procedural Justice defined:

1. **Procedural Justice** focuses on the way police and other legal authorities interact with the public and how the characteristics of those interactions shape the

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public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, cooperation with the police in fighting crime, and actual crime rates. (COPS/US DOJ Office/Trust & Justice Briefs)

2. **Procedural Justice is based on Four Central Tenets** (COPS/US DOJ)

- a. **VOICE** - Giving citizens a voice during encounters
- b. **RESPECT** - Treating people with dignity and respect
- c. **NEUTRALITY** - Being neutral in decision making
- d. **TRUSTWORTHINESS** – Promoting behavior and actions that convey trustworthiness

C. The verbal techniques of Tactical Communications, which are based on the Five Universal Truths, also promote the Four Tenets of Procedural Justice, which ultimately enhances the community trust and cooperation that all law enforcement agencies seek.

**VI. THE PROFESSION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT – Public Expectations** 

**A. High Visibility**

1. We speak in a fishbowl; never again can you use words to express your personal feelings. When you are known as a peace officer, or as a public service employee, you lose the right of free speech in public, both on- and in many occasions off-duty.

**B. Ethical Standards of Conduct** – *“You Must Live What You Represent”*

1. There is an expectation by the public and the courts that you must live to the standard you enforce.

**C. The Badge represents a Symbol of Public Trust**

1. With that trust, we gain power and responsibility to perform the various duties of a peace officer.

**VII. THE GOAL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT – Gaining Compliance** 

**A. The goal of law enforcement is to gain compliance.**

1. The best kind of compliance is voluntary compliance.

**B. Studies have shown that verbal communication is the most important component of an officer's duty.**

1. More than 95% of policing is verbal interaction with people.
2. Officers with good verbal communication skills are usually more successful in gaining voluntary compliance.

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- C. When words fail, many times force options must be initiated to gain compliance with uncooperative suspects.
    - 1. Force Options may vary among law enforcement agencies.
    - 2. Options will usually involve professional presence up to lethal force.
      - a. Professional verbal skills should be used throughout the use of force options (escalation and de-escalation) as much as possible, while at the same time maintaining officer safety.
    - 3. It should be noted that anytime an officer uses physical force to enforce an arrest, especially with an uncooperative and resisting suspect, it can visually look bad or disturbing to those witnessing the incident. Officers need to understand this and to do their best to “paint a picture” to those witnessing the incident that the suspect is the “bad guy,” not the officer.
      - a. This can usually be done effectively with the use of proper language and instructions given to the suspect; as long as officer safety is not jeopardized.
      - b. Making derogatory comments toward the suspect will usually make the officer appear unprofessional and out of control and his comments and actions will usually be challenged in court.
      - c. Learning to use effective and professional verbal skills during a physical force encounter can gain the officer empathy from those watching, especially in today’s environment when most people have a mobile phone that can immediately record an event, both in audio and video.
      - d. The use of effective verbal skills under stress can be very challenging and officers need to be exposed to these type of training situations regularly in order to achieve a level of competency to function under such stressful situations.

#### VIII. MOVING BEYOND WORDS – USING THE ACRONYM S.A.F.E.R.



- A. Officers realize that good verbal skills are essential to gaining voluntary compliance, but officers also know that “words don’t always work.”
- B. Officers must be prepared at any moment to take appropriate action, sometimes immediate action, to adapt to situations when subjects become uncooperative and could jeopardize the safety of the officer(s) or others.
- C. Officers should also be prepared to articulate the reason that triggered their actions and be able to articulate their specific use of force options and verbal techniques they used in their suspect interaction. This articulation is usually made to their supervisors and noted in their written police reports.
- D. **S.A.F.E.R.** - *The five conditions when officers must take appropriate action:*
  - 1. **SECURITY**
    - a. Whenever others are in imminent jeopardy - ACT!
    - b. Whenever property under your control is threatened – ACT!



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2. **ATTACK**

- a. Whenever your personal danger zone is violated - ACT!
- b. Or the safety of another is threatened – ACT!

3. **FLIGHT**

- a. Whenever a subject **unlawfully** flees your presence - ACT!
- b. Based on your training and situation.

4. **EXCESSIVE REPETITION**

- a. No voluntary compliance is forthcoming.
- b. You have exhausted all verbal options - ACT!

5. **REVISED PRIORITIES**

- a. Whenever a matter of a higher priority requires your immediate attention or presence - ACT!

**IX. CORE COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS – The Contact Professional** 

- A. When dealing with others in the line of duty, officers must remember that they are Contact Professionals, which means that they represent more than themselves. As police officers, they also represent the police chief or sheriff, the department, the city council (or direct governing body, i.e., county supervisors), the State, the United States Constitution, Bill of Rights and, most of all, the people.
- B. Those professionals who must interact with people daily need to understand basic or core communication concepts to be more effective in their interpersonal skills. These core communications can potentially defuse volatile situations and acts of violence that law enforcement encounters regularly.
- C. The below listed core communication concepts should not only be used by line officers, but should also be referenced by all staff members, especially supervisors, managers, and executive staff. These core concepts truly enhance professional communications and assist in maintaining a positive work environment; they can also promote a positive morale among employees. As stated earlier, these techniques can also be modified by employees for use with their own family members to further enhance their home environment.
- D. Core Communication Concepts:
  - 1. **What is the opposite of talking? It should be listening, but for most people it is waiting. Waiting to interrupt.**
    - a. This is a typical action of most people who are not trained in professional communication skills.
  - 2. **The Four Steps to Active Listening:**
    - a. **Open/Unbiased** is the principle of being disinterested – not biased. Your mind should not already be made up as to what has occurred.

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- b. **Hearing What is said** – Literally being in a position away from noise or other distractions.
    - 1) **It is also important to project that you are listening – projecting that “listening face” (eye-to-eye contact).**
    - 2) When projecting that “listening face” be careful to never project a facial expression of rolling your eyes back in response to a comment made by the sender. This is disrespectful and, in some cases, can be a cause for escalating anger and rage in the other person that could also result in a physical altercation.
  - c. **Interpretation** - Determining if what they say is in concert with what is taking place. If not, what does it mean? Use of paraphrasing can further assist in clarifying the other’s message.
  - d. **Act appropriately** - decoding the message in what is said and responding in an appropriate manner.

*Example – Statement by a victim of a burglary:*

- 1) *“Where the hell have you been? I called when I got home almost an hour ago. I’ve been robbed.”*
- 2) **DECODED** - *“I came home and found my house broken into and I’m upset and need some help.”*

### **3. Learn not to react to words, but react to needs.**

- a. Remember that the more a person is upset or angry, the more disjointed and offensive their words are going to be.
- b. Try and understand, or decode, why they are angry and frustrated and identify the actual problem causing the behavior.
- c. You will be surprised how well this also works at home with your own family members.

### **4. Use of Tactical Empathy**

- a. To see the situation through the eyes of the other for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining the tactical advantage of the situation.

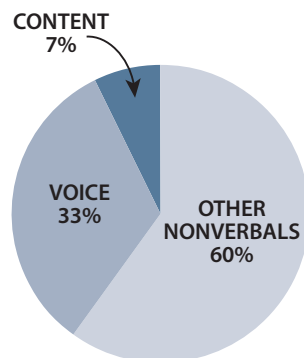
### **5. Understanding the Three Street Truths:**

- a. *Many times, when under pressure, “People Never Say What They Truly Mean”*
  - 1) Many times, subject’s words are expressing or venting due to what had just occurred to them, which can cause...
    - a) Rage
    - b) Anger
    - c) Frustration

- 
- b. *Understanding that Two People (officer and subject) actually equals Six People with varying opinions and perceptions. As noted:*
    - 1) Real Self vs. Real Self
      - a) The actual **true** self, which may not be truly understood by the self on how they truly come across to others.
    - 2) Self as seen by Self vs. Self as seen by Self
      - a) The perception of one's self as they believe they are perceived.
    - 3) Self as seen by Other vs. Self as seen by Other
      - a) The perception of the self as they believe the other perceives them.

6. **Verbal delivery style makes up 93% of one's communication, and studies reflect that one's message is made up of three actual components:**

- a. Content: 7-10%
- b. Voice: 33-40%
- c. Other Non-Verbals: 50-60%
  - 1) Voice and other non-verbals make up the most percentage of your message.
  - 2) Understand that if your voice and other non-verbals are inappropriate or unprofessional your message will not be received well and could negatively complicate a situation.
- d. The below pie chart reflects the three components of verbal delivery:



7. **Additional review of the components to a message...**

- a. **Content** - This is the literal message that is sent. This is almost meaningless without the other two parts of the message components being in sync with the original content.
- b. **Voice** - Other than body language, this tells more about a person than anything else. When there is a conflict between voice and message content, people believe the voice. Voice is broken down into four parts.

- 
- c. **Tone** – Generally, reveals a person’s attitude toward any given subject.
    - 1) Remember: “Tone of Voice Reflects Attitude”
    - 2) Tone – the four-lettered word can be the deadliest word in the English language.
    - 3) A person’s inappropriate TONE of voice, in the delivery of a message, can escalate a situation into a major conflict and a physical confrontation.
  - d. **Pace** - The speed at which a person talks.
  - e. **Pitch** - High vs. low tone of voice.
  - f. **Modulation** - Words that are stressed.
  - g. **Remember - It’s more about “HOW you say it, than WHAT you say!”**
8. **You must have the proper tone of voice for the audience that you are addressing.**
- a. Therefore, you must have multiple voices to achieve your purpose because no two audiences are alike.
  - b. The ability to switch between voices while dealing with people is an important control technique and an officer survival tool. Remember, content is 7-10%, voice is 33-40%.
  - c. Based on this principle of proper tone for the perceived audience, at times your voice must lie.
    - 1) Voice reflecting you are confident and brave, when in actuality you are scared to death; based on the current setting you are encountering.
    - 2) Your voice must harmonize with your role you are portraying in the setting.
9. **Other Non-Verbals**
- a. In a conflict between voice and other non-verbals, people will usually believe the other non-verbal.
10. **Body language**
- a. A person can control as much as 90% of their body language, leaving as much as 10% of it in contradiction with the rest.
  - b. Therefore, whenever you detect a contradiction in body language, be prepared to believe the minor element. It is also important to realize that others will pick up on this and, as an officer, use care not to telegraph your intentions.
  - c. People tend to react physiologically before they do behaviorally. Physiological reactions fall into the 10%.

d. When you see the following contradictions in the other, it is vital that you start focusing on officer safety:

- 1) Excess perspiration
- 2) Shifting of the focus on one's eyes
- 3) Dropping one's center of balance

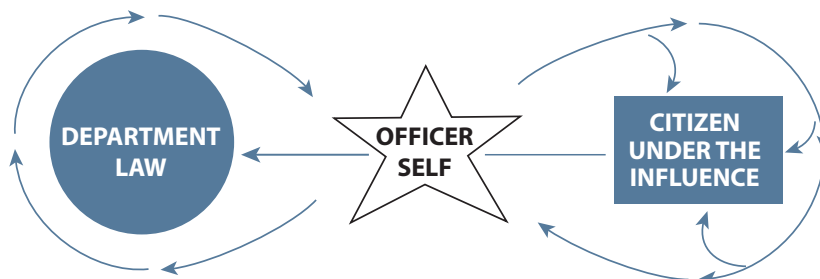
11. **Learn to Listen Intensely** – When addressing a situation, try and be patient-- as long as you are not facing an officer safety issue; learn to fine tune your ear and focus on the other's voice.

a. **Remember - Voice is the window of a subject's Intentions**

## X. THE THREE GREAT ARTS (Representation, Translation and Mediation)

### A. The Art of Representation

1. The art of representing something other than yourself
2. To successfully complete our goal in law enforcement, the officer involved must be in contact with (or have understanding of) the following:
  - a. Self - The officer must be aware of any biases that may affect their contact with different members of the public with whom they may be dealing.
  - b. The Organization - This means an understanding of the department's mission, the laws being enforced, and departmental policy and procedure.
  - c. The Subject - The officer must try to understand the person being dealt with, i.e., their biases, what they may be under the influence of, and the problem they called about or were contacted for.
3. Once the officer is in contact with the organization/self and the subject, then it is their job to represent the department to the citizen "in such a way" as to bring the citizen back into compliance with the law. As noted in the "Figure Eight" diagram:



**FIGURE EIGHT**

### B. The Art of Translation

1. The act of taking meaning one from your head and putting meaning one into their head (the process of communicating). For this to work, it requires five steps to take place:



- 
- a. Know what you are talking about
  - b. Code it, use terms the receiver will understand (your meaning wrapped in their words)
  - c. Send it - use proper voice or other non-verbals
  - d. Decoding by receiver
  - e. Listen to their response
- C. The Art of Mediation
1. The ability to bring order to chaos with the use of options.
  2. With few exceptions, there will always be more than one solution to the problems people face.
  3. Our job in enforcement is to use these options to bring people back into compliance. For this to work, we must explain what people have to gain (both positive and negative) from various courses of action they could take.
  4. "To think for others as they might think for themselves 48- to 72-hours later when they are no longer under the influence."

## XI. UNDERSTANDING VERBAL ABUSE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF DISINTEREST / THE CONCEPT OF "MUSHIN"



- A. **As peace officers, we must learn how to handle verbal abuse when it is directed toward us.** It is how we handle this abuse that marks us as professional peace officers.
- B. **It is important to realize that much of the verbal abuse officers' experience comes from people who are "under the influence."**
  1. The meaning of "under the influence" in this context can mean not only the influence of drugs and alcohol, but under the influence of anger, rage, depression and other emotions, which could be based on the individual's circumstances.
  2. Subjects with mental disabilities are also known to exhibit such traits.
- C. **Three terms officers must understand when interacting with others,** especially those who might be trying to bait officers with verbal abuse to cause officers to over-react, either verbally or physically:
  1. **Personal Biases** - The biases that we have learned from early childhood or other life/work experiences, which can also influence implicit bias, and can interfere with an officer's ability to be unbiased (disinterested) with the task at hand.
  2. **Dis-interested** - The practice of being open, flexible, and unbiased.
    - a. This term is also referred to as a "Habit of Mind." In Japanese, it is a martial art term known as "Mushin."

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- b. Being disinterested means not being phased, or succumbing, to any verbal attacks or personal slanders by others that could be trying to cause officers to over react.
  - c. Being disinterested can also help officers avoid over-reacting to any personal or implicit biases they might have and it can help them maintain a more professional demeanor in dealing with difficult subjects.
  - d. Being disinterested does not mean to *not* look interested, officers need to project they are listening and are engaged in their contacts, also known as “Projecting a Listening Face.”
  - e. Use of the “Habit of Mind” (Mushin) concept can also assist officers in dealing with law enforcement’s four crucial arenas:
    - 1) The Streets
    - 2) The Media
    - 3) The Courts
    - 4) Their Home environment
3. **Empathy** - Citizens have a point of view, right or wrong, just or unjust.
- a. Officers do not have to agree with anything they say; they simply must understand their perspectives.
  - b. View the issue through the eyes of the other subject and then construct a verbal means to relate to that subject.
- D. **Keeping the Mind Flexible and having a MUSHIN HABIT of MIND** (Key Word Phrases)
- 1. Always keep Professional Face; never try to save Personal Face.
  - 2. Distinguish between reasonable resistance and severe resistance. Severe resistance interferes with the officer’s ability to do their duty.
  - 3. Understand every encounter is unique.
  - 4. Everyone believes they have a “good reason” for what he or she is doing.
  - 5. As Contact Professionals, you should create and maintain continuous rapport with the other person.
  - 6. People care about knowing; hence, take the time to explain.
  - 7. Control events and encounters; don’t be a victim of them.
  - 8. Respond to people; don’t react to them.
  - 9. Flexibility is strength; rigidity is weakness.
  - 10. People are flawed, not evil.

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11. **Golden Rule:** Always treat the other as you would want to be treated under identical circumstances.
  12. Use positive feedback when the other least expects it.
  13. Always try to mediate other's frustration and cause for anger.
  14. Redirect rather than resist.

## XII. THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF PEOPLE WE DEAL WITH

- A. **Cooperative people** (nice) will always comply with your requests. They will genuinely feel badly if they upset you.
- B. **Difficult people** will almost never do what you say the first time. These are the people who will ask:
  1. *Why?* (the all-American question)
  2. *Who do you think you are?*
  3. *Where do you get your authority from?*
  4. *What's in it for me?*
- C. **Deceptive people** (sneaky) can be dangerous. These are the people who will act like cooperative people to your face and be the first ones to hurt you or call your supervisor and complain behind your back.

## XIII. HOW TO HANDLE VERBAL ABUSE THROUGH DEFLECTION AND REDIRECTION

- A. The Natural Reaction - Confrontation
  1. "You called me an asshole!" "I'll show you who's the asshole!"
  2. Remember that famous quote: "The moment you use words that rise readily to your lips you will make the greatest speech you will ever regret."
- B. Police work is the business of being able to deflect verbal abuse and redirect the focus to the problem at hand. This is done with the use of verbal deflectors or strip phrases.
  1. Some examples of verbal deflectors are:
    - a. *"Appreciate that, but..."*
    - b. *"I understand that, but..."*
    - c. *"I got that, however..."*
    - d. *"Maybe so, but..."*
    - e. *"I hear that, however..."*
  2. Using a combination of two phrases also works well.

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3. It is important to use the verbal deflector and not ignore insults so that people do not become more abusive.
  4. Verbal deflectors allow the officer to focus on the issue and not the attitude. The phrase also acknowledges the other person's concern. It is professional and responsive.
    - a. The reasons for verbal deflectors:
      - 1) A tool to help officers to not get baited by the other person, which can cause one to over-react to the other's words.
      - 2) It is a springboard-focus technique.
      - 3) It disempowers the other.
      - 4) It sounds better and helps keep composure.
  5. The key to using verbal deflectors is to deflect the comment and then to immediately say "but" or "however" and go right into the specific goal the officer is trying to accomplish.

*For example:*

*Subject: "You're an asshole!"*

*Officer: "I got that; however, I need you to sign the citation."*

6. It is also important that the officer use a **professional tone of voice** and to **not** sound sarcastic when using the verbal deflector.
  - a. You **must** maintain a "Professional Face" when using these verbal deflectors. Remember... an improper tone of voice can reflect attitude and could escalate the situation.
  - b. Be careful of your tone of voice when you say the word "but" or another deflector, because you may also come across as discounting the other person.
7. Sample phrases
  - a. Avoid: "Come here!," "Calm down!," "Be more reasonable!," and "You people!"
  - b. Use: "I'd like to talk with you," "Tell me about it, what's going on," "Let's talk it out" or "We'll work this out."
8. **Three Tactical Principles to remember when dealing with difficult, argumentative, and uncooperative subjects:**
  - a. **Let them "Say what they want, but Do what you say!"** It allows them to save face, especially when they are in a crowd or among their peers.
  - b. **"I've got the last ACT; you've got the LAST word."**
    - 1) With officer safety in mind, officer controls the final movement, which is usually an arrest.

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- 2) Officer stays in control verbally and is careful ***not to be baited by suspect*** to over-react and speak out unprofessionally.

c. **The concepts of Respect vs. RE-Spect**

- 1) Respect – Golden Rule in one word.
- 2) RE-Spect – usually brought on by inappropriate comment or tone of voice that can create a perception of disrespect and a desire for revenge in the other.

**XIV. FIVE TOOLS TO GENERATE VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE – L.E.A.P.S.** 

A. Also, referred to as “The Five Tools for Effective Communication.” **This five-step tool is very effective in just about any verbal interaction (professional, social, or personal/family).** It is especially effective when you are trying to generate voluntary compliance from an uncooperative subject. This could also assist in portraying a more carrying attitude to potential witnesses that might also be observing your interaction with the uncooperative subject. The LEAPS acronym:

**1. L – LISTEN**

- a. Must project a “Listening Face”
- b. While using the four steps of active listening
  - 1) Open
  - 2) Hear Initially
  - 3) Interpret
  - 4) Act Appropriately

**2. E – EMPATHIZE**

- a. Project an “Empathetic Face”
- b. Develop a sense of “otherness”
  - 1) A sense of what it might be like to see through the eyes of the other subject and then construct a verbal means to relate to that subject.
- c. Citizens have a point of view, right or wrong, just or unjust. You do not have to agree with anything they say, you simply should try to understand their perspective.

**3. A – ASK**

- a. Using the five types of questions
  - 1) Fact Finding
    - a) Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?
  - 2) Forecast/Set Context



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a) Explain to your audience the direction you'll be taking and the purpose of your questioning.

3) Vary the questions to lessen resistance or to calm the audience.

#### 4. P – PARAPHRASE

a. The single most powerful communication tool.

b. Paraphrase is a necessary backup system to communication.

c. You put the other person's meaning into your words.

1) *Example - "Let me be sure I understand what you just said!"* This usually causes the other person to pause, so he/she can hear what you are going to say.

2) Places the other's perceived meaning in your words.

3) Upon relating the perceived message, you will find that the angry or upset person will many times realize that they are projecting their message incorrectly and will then in turn restate their message more clearly.

#### 5. S - SUMMARIZE

a. Creates a concluding decisiveness and authority because the officer now explains what is going to be done in response to the problem. Could be immediate action or a future follow-up.

b. This tool can also be used if the verbal interaction gets interrupted; the officer can return to the conversation with a summary of what has been discussed up to that point, which refocuses the conversation and it can then be continued from that point on. Ultimately, reconnects communication when (and if) it is temporarily interrupted.

### XV. THE ART OF PARAPHRASING – The Most Powerful Communication Tool in Dealing with Difficult People



A. **Paraphrase** - The single most powerful communication tool. The act of putting the other's meaning into your words. Paraphrasing is a necessary backup system to communication. It can be used as the "sword of insertion" to regain control of the interview. It is also used to check the meaning of the other's statements. It also shows that you are listening to the other and it can help you redirect the conversation to other areas.

1. Must project a Professional Face when paraphrasing, which gives people an impression that you are really listening and care.

2. A paraphrase example:

a. *"Let me be sure I understand you: You're feeling UPSET because your neighbor parked his car in your designated parking space, right?"*

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B. **Paraphrase is a “power tool” that does the following 14 things to improve your communication power:**

1. You can usually **INTERRUPT** someone without resistance.
2. You take **CONTROL** of the encounter.
3. You **“GET IT RIGHT”** on the spot. Because at times, we don’t always hear it the right way.
4. The other can **CORRECT** you if you have made an error. Makes the other feel good, and it’s good for you.
5. It **MAKES** the other a better **LISTENER**. No one will listen harder than to his **OWN** point of view.
6. It **CREATES EMPATHY**. The other will believe you are trying to understand.
7. It often **MAKES** the other **MODIFY** his/her initial statements (become more reasonable) because he or she gets to hear his or her **MEANING** in different **WORDS** and tones.
8. It overcomes **SONIC INTENTION**. People often think they have said something to you because they have “heard” themselves say it in their mind. When you paraphrase, they hear what you have heard, not what they think they have said.
9. It can **CLARIFY** for those who may be standing nearby.
10. It prevents **METAPHRASE**: the use of the “skewed phrase.” The good paraphraser will never “put words into the other’s mouth.”
11. Whenever you **GIVE** directions to others, insist **THEY** paraphrase back to you your meaning. Eight out of ten people misunderstand the point of a verbal exchange.
12. Whenever you take direction, it ensures you heard and interpreted correctly the other’s **MEANING**. **PARAPHRASE BACK**. The other may not have even said what he/she intended. Covers you from making errors. Makes you **EFFICIENT** and more **EFFECTIVE**.
13. It reinforces your own memory. The mind remembers what the mind **DOES**. Your reports, written or oral, will be more concise and accurate.
14. It generates **“THE FAIR PLAY”** response. You have listened and made an effort to understand the other. The other is almost forced (psychologically) to do the same for you.

**XVI. PROXEMICS – SPATIAL RELATIONS**



- A. This can be an officer survival issue. How do you maintain a controlling presence and maintain a safe distance?
- B. The fact that as police officers you are constantly working with people means you need to understand the concepts of personal space and territoriality.

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1. **Personal Space**
    - a. Is the invisible, flexible area surrounding a person that acts as a buffer with the environment.
  2. **Territoriality**
    - a. Is the physical area the person lays claim to and defends against the intrusion of others.
- C. Only recently has much attention been paid to the concept of space usage in communication. In the not-too-distant past the focus has been on verbal and non-verbal behavior. Studies are now showing that there is a definite biological need by humans to define and manipulate space to communicate.
- D. Studies also show that the biological need to define space is impacted by several things a few of which include:
1. Geographic background
  2. Cultural / ethnic differences
  3. Occupation (i.e. peace officers)
- E. How you perceive and use the space around you is a function of social conditioning. In most cases personal space is situation-mediated. A person will tolerate a deeper intrusion of personal space in a crowded elevator than a family disturbance.
- F. Personal space varies
1. Cultural and ethnic differences
    - a. People brought up in Tokyo or New York City may have smaller zones due to environmental difference.
  2. In locations such as bedrooms, offices, cars, etc. we can expect the entire area to become the personal (foot) zone.
  3. Some people get closer or touch as a part of their upbringing and have very small personal zones.
  4. In most cases you will find that people tolerate a closer intrusion in their personal space on their dominant side, whether right or left. They feel more secure in their ability to ward off an attack.
  5. As young children, our zones did not exist, but as we mature, our zones get larger.
  6. Violent people tend to need about twice the usual space because they feel more threatened. They often have the perception of the other person rushing at them.
    - a. If you are aware of prior aggressive behavior - personal space is probably greater than normal.

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- b. Under stress an individual is less likely to tolerate physical closeness, unless the stress is grief-oriented. (In most stress situations the buffer zone is expanded)
7. Non-verbal Controlling Tactics
- a. The “F.I. - FIELD INTERVIEW Stance” - Quartered away with a 30/70 weight distribution, front and rear foot respective, helps to lower your threat level while giving you a defensive stance with a good possibility for mobility if required.
8. “Contact and Cover” - Effective use of a Back-Up Officer
- a. The primary officer does the “F.I.,” the back-up covers.

## XVII. TACTICAL 8-STEP VEHICLE STOP AND PEDESTRIAN APPROACH

### A. **Professional Vehicle Stop Approach** – *Must be done with a Professional Face, not a Personal Face.*

#### 1. **Step 1 - GREETING**

- a. *“Good afternoon, sir.”*

#### 2. **Step 2 - IDENTIFICATION OF SELF & DEPARTMENT**

- a. *“I’m Officer Thompson with the River City Police Department.”*

#### 3. **Step 3 - EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THE CONTACT**

- a. *“The reason I stopped you sir was that I observed you traveling 15 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.”*

#### 4. **Step 4 – JUSTIFICATION FOR ACTIONS**

- a. *“Sir, was there a justifiable reason for your excessive speed, that I might not be aware of?”*

- b. Example of a driver’s comment followed by officer’s acknowledgement:  
*“No, I was listening to the radio and didn’t realize that I was going that fast.”*

Officer: *“I see. Well sir, at this time I will need to...”* Officer moves to Step 5 of the 8-Step.

**Note:** *It is important not to pause between the first four steps to prevent the person contacted from having a chance to start the most common arguments: “Who are you with? What are you stopping me for? I didn’t do anything and you’re just picking on me.”*

#### 5. **Step 5 - REQUEST DRIVER’S LICENSE**

- a. After acknowledging the response given by the driver, ask for the driver’s license.
- b. *“Sir, I will need to see your driver license.”*

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## 6. Step 6 - REQUEST ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

- a. *“Sir, I will also need to see your vehicle registration and proof of insurance.”*
- b. Prior to asking for these items (Steps 5 and 6), the officer might wish to ask the driver where they keep these items before they reach for them; an officer safety suggestion, which can allow officer additional opportunity to forecast the driver’s hand movement.
- c. After reviewing the documents with the driver for accuracy (current address, valid insurance, etc.), advise the driver you will be going back to your vehicle to further assess the information and request the driver to remain in his vehicle for their safety and yours, and that you will return shortly.

## 7. Step 7 - DECISION STAGE

- a. Upon returning to the driver’s vehicle, you now advise the driver of your decision. This may be a warning, or that you will be issuing a citation.
- b. *Example - “Sir, I will be issuing you a citation for exceeding the posted speed limit and I have noted a court date July 26th. Sir, I want you to understand that this citation is not an admission of guilt but an opportunity to appear in court to address this matter. At this time, I just need your signature on the citation to confirm its issuance.”*

## 8. Step 8 - CLOSING

- a. It is important to harmonize your closing with the action taken. If you write a citation, “Have a nice day” is not the best way to leave the driver.
- b. Saying something like, *“Thank you for your cooperation and please drive safely”* might be a better way of closing.
- c. Remember to use a professional tone of voice - using your Professional Face, not your Personal Face.

### B. Noted Advantages of the Eight-Step Vehicle Approach

1. The first four steps done consecutively help to discourage resistance.
2. These four steps can help buy additional assessment time for the officer.
3. Using the eight steps helps to create a professional delivery style, which in turn can help lessen citizen criticism, complaints and unnecessary court appearances.
  - a. Officers also need to understand that their interaction with drivers in such vehicle stops have been known to escalate into officer safety situations and they should always be prepared to ACT, as noted in SAFER. And, officers should be prepared to articulate their actions. As noted by the quote: *“Keeping one foot in the street and the other in the courtroom.”*

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4. It sounds good and creates a style of policing that helps improve both the officer's and the department's image. Additionally, it enhances the tenets of Procedural Justice.
  5. It meshes well with the five-step technique, item XIV.
- C. **Modified 8-Step Pedestrian Approach** - The above 8-step Vehicle Stop can be modified for a more professional pedestrian approach. It follows the same basic format as the vehicle stop with a minor change. Some examples where this technique can be used: stopping a possible burglary suspect that might be walking through a neighborhood, stopping a possible witness to a "drive by shooting," etc. Example of a modified eight-step pedestrian approach:
1. **Greeting** – *"Good evening, sir."*
  2. **Identify Self and Department** – *"My name is Officer Thompson with the River City Police Department."*
  3. **Reason for the Contact** – *"Sir, the reason for this contact is that we had a burglary in the area and your clothing and physical description matches a witness description of the possible suspect."*
  4. **Justification** – *"Sir, what is the purpose of your being in this location at this time?"*
  5. **Request Identification** – *"Sir, can I have your name and do you have any form of identification on you? "*
  6. **Request additional information** – (if needed) *"Sir, you stated you were out looking for your dog who apparently got out of your side yard. Can you tell me your address and the description and name of your dog?"*
  7. **Decision stage** – Possible actions could include: taking photo of subject, a possible drive-by view by the witness, documenting the contact as a "Field Investigative" (FI) contact and explaining to the subject the purpose of the FI and that he may be contacted in the future for further investigative purposes. If the contact does not warrant any further action, the officer may give a business card to the subject and ask if they see anything related to the contact to please call the officer.
  8. **Professional Closing** – *"Thank you for your cooperation and have a good evening."*

## **XVIII. THE 5-STEP TECHNIQUE – For Uncooperative/Difficult Persons**



- A. An excellent technique to use when dealing with a difficult subject who is resistive to your lawful request. Can also be used to transition from the 8-step when a subject becomes resistant or refuses to cooperate.
- B. This is also an excellent verbal technique to use just before you initiate an arrest of an uncooperative subject or need to escalate into a force option.

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- C. Can also be used with a subject refusing to sign a traffic citation or refusing to step out of their vehicle to allow you to assess if they are intoxicated, Driving Under the Influence (DUI) stop.
- D. For example, once the initial 8-step is initiated and the subject becomes difficult and you can't complete the 8-step, you can shift to this 5-step technique:
1. **ASK - Ethical Appeal**
    - a. Example - *"Sir, I need you to step out of your vehicle, so I can conduct a field sobriety test on you to determine if you are under the influence."*
  2. **SET CONTEXT - Reasonable Appeal**
    - a. Tell them **Why?**  
*Example – "Sir, as I explained to you previously, I observed you weaving on the road and by law I have the right to stop you to determine if you are under the influence and could possibly be a danger to others. Will you please step out of the vehicle so I can administer the sobriety test?"*
  3. **PRESENT OPTIONS - Personal Appeal**
    - a. Example – *"Sir, let me explain to you your options. Your first option is for you to abide my lawful order, step out of your vehicle and let me conduct a field sobriety test. Once I've completed the test and I feel you are not under the influence you will be free to go on about your business."*
    - b. *"Your second option is to refuse my lawful order, which your resistance will result in additional charges, you will be placed under arrest, transported to our jail facility, and I may then have to impound your vehicle, which will probably cause you further grief and expense. Sir, I really don't think that is necessary and I would prefer you cooperate with me. Will you please step out of your vehicle?"*
    - c. **Always present the positive option first.** If you present the negative option first, it may put the person on the defensive immediately and escalate the situation.
  4. **CONFIRMATION STAGE - Practical Appeal**
    - a. Example – The subject is still not cooperating.  
*"Sir, is there anything else I can say to earn your cooperation? I'd like to think there is."*
  5. **ACT** - Subject still does not cooperate. You now either, disengage to wait for further assistance or immediately move to a force option, while verbally advising the subject he is under arrest.
    - a. You have asked this subject four times (steps 1 to 4) to cooperate with you and he/she has refused. The continued refusal is a violation of the acronym SAFER and is considered Excessive Repetition, which is hindering your performance of duty.



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- b. Always keep in mind your officer safety. As you start to see your subject starting to become difficult, it might be wise to call for a back-up officer to your location to assist you, in case you should have to move to Step 5 - ACT.
  - E. When dealing with uncooperative subjects, you will find that most of the time they will cooperate with you after you explain to them step 2 (Set Context) or step 3 (Options).
  - F. The Five-Step Technique must be administered using a **Professional Face** (that professional tone of voice) and not with a **Personal Face** (unprofessional tone), which could escalate the situation.
  - G. This tactic is very versatile and can be used for a variety of situations
    - 1. Subject refusing to sign a citation.
    - 2. Dealing with uncooperative field contact during an investigative stop.
    - 3. Subject refusing to be arrested for an outstanding warrant.
    - 4. Dealing with uncooperative inmate in a custody setting.
    - 5. It could also be used with your children in a home setting, such as requiring a child to perform a designated chore they have put off. After you set the Context and they still refuse, you can give them their two options. The negative option could result in them losing certain privileges for outside playtime, or going to a friend's house.
  - H. When administering the Five-Step and one of the components of SAFER is violated, you should consider escalating to a justified force option. Based on the circumstances, an officer may option to disengage the subject or subjects to request additional assistance or shift to a point of advantage.
  - I. Note that once the 5-Step process is initiated, it does not have to be completed, it pretty much ends at the point when the subject cooperates with you.

## **XIX. HOW TO DIAGNOSE A VERBAL ENCOUNTER – P.A.C.E.**



- A. Upon an officer's initial contact, if they react to the subject's words, (upset and argumentative), they can't respond to the other person's meaning and they may escalate the situation. Officer should attempt to initiate a calm dialogue with the subject in hopes of getting them to explain the reason for their agitated state and, at the same time, officer maintains an officer safety mindset.
- B. ***PACE acronym helps officers try to diagnose the other's words/anger, so they can better understand the meaning of the other person's response.***
- C. **Definition of the acronym P.A.C.E.**
  - 1. ***Problem*** – What appears to be the problem?

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2. **Audience** – Who is my audience, are they under the influence of a stimulant or are they angry for particular reason?
  3. **Constraints** – Depending on their anger, volatility, hallucination, or potential or actual weapons on site, respond with that in mind.
  4. **Ethical Presence** – Using a professional tone and approach that reflects that you are genuinely interested in the situation.
    - a. Use of other tactics are possible here as well; LEAPS, Projecting a Listening Face, etc.

## XX. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOW YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE



- A. **Code and send** the information according to your audience to ensure proper decoding. People are different. Absolutely nobody is going to see things the same way you do. Therefore, you must be flexible enough to look beyond your perspective to be able to read the people with whom you are dealing.
- B. **Always use your language as if you had an audience.** Use of the acronym “LEAPS” is an excellent tool to help maintain your composure. Remember: audiences are made, not found.
- C. **Always remember to “KEEP ONE FOOT IN THE STREET, AND THE OTHER IN THE COURTROOM.”** This notes that you must handle what will come at you in the street but you may also have to defend your actions in the courtroom.
- D. **Remember - two ways to communicate a message:**
  1. **Un-Professionally** - Snapping or lashing out at someone. Use of an improper tone of voice. This can be a very seductive form of language, often giving the user a feeling of power. Characterized by:
    - a. The unprofessional use of language
    - b. Use of words (profanity) to express your personal feelings
    - c. The use of self-referential language, i.e., “You will because I told you to!”
    - d. Not “in contact” with the audience, i.e., “It’s not my problem if you can’t get along with your neighbor just because his dog barks all night.”
    - e. Off-Target Reactions, i.e., when the little old lady from out of town asks where the post office is and you sarcastically say, “Lady, close your eyes, turn around, open them, and you just may see it.”
  2. **Professionally** - The use of Tactical Communications techniques to redirect one’s anger, to verbally control the encounter and generate voluntary compliance. Remember that once you display anger and reveal your ego, you lose power.
  3. Tactical Communications is characterized as:
    - a. The professional use of language

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- b. The use of words to achieve professional objectives
  - c. Being in contact with the audience
  - d. Skillful communication that is on target
- E. **Remember there is an expectation by the public and the courts that law enforcement officers should act professionally.** Isn't this what you would expect of an officer if you weren't in the law enforcement profession? Become that Contact Professional and you earn the respect from those you serve and work with.

## COMMENTARY - TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS & CAREER SURVIVAL

**Audrey L. Honig, Ph.D. (retired)**

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Learning and applying the principles of Tactical Communications are as critical to an officer's effective communication in his/her personal life as these skills are to an officer's physical safety and career survival. Failure to achieve this success in your personal life can be devastating, leading to relationship break-ups, depression and even suicide.

In personal relationships, as with work, it is essential to understand your strengths and weaknesses. We all have "hot buttons" or "triggers." When one of those areas gets pushed, intentionally or unintentionally, by a relationship partner, child or friend, an automatic, unthinking response can cause irreparable harm to that relationship as easily as it can to your career if you allowed such a response out in the field.

Active listening is a skill set that is essential to not only being able to fully hear and understand another person but to truly have them believe that you did! Listening must be done on both a verbal and non-verbal level. All the same components of a message: content, voice, tone, pace, pitch and modulation apply here just as they do out in the field. This allows you to not only truly hear and understand the underlying message but to get passed the words, which can sometimes be a distraction, particularly when those words come with anger. We all want to feel heard, especially by people who are important to us. This "Art of Translation" is the first step to establishing empathy, which then allows you to see the world through the eyes of the other person. You still might not agree but, but now the tone and intensity of your response is likely to reflect that understanding and help you identify and propose a compromise. While taking control and obtaining compliance has a place at work, it doesn't work very well with friends and family! A negotiated compromise, using the skills learned through the "Art of Mediation" allows everyone to at least feel heard and can go a long way to maintaining a supportive personal environment which is critical to keeping your "head in the game" and your awareness of officer safety at all times. LEAPS (Listen, Empathize, Ask, Paraphrase and Summarize), the five tools for effective communication, are just as applicable to your personal life as your work life. Everyday conversation can benefit as well as those more sensitive discussions.

Utilizing these techniques at work, thereby reducing the number and intensity of negative field or work contacts, can also have a positive effect on your home life. These negative job contacts can leak into your personal relationships as well as lead to a generally negative

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outlook on life and overall cynicism. No question, this type of life view is toxic to both work and personal relationships. The resulting negative attitude and approach to work can then lead to increased citizen complaints and the stress of being under investigation. These pressures then further taint your personal relationships and job satisfaction and ultimately can affect career survival! (*Commentary submitted to POST May 2007*)

**Audrey L. Honig, PhD / Additional Biographical Information**

Dr. Honig is a nationally renowned police psychologist who has spent more than 20 years developing and administering a multifaceted Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's 17,000 sworn and civilian employees and their families. Among her many accomplishments, Dr. Honig developed a resiliency support program to respond to large-scale critical incidents that has been highly effective in mitigating the potential negative impact of these types of events while increasing the employees' own inherent resiliency.

Dr. Honig has produced educational and training materials, as well as published articles, on a variety of topics ranging from use of force and officer involved shootings to terrorism, military repatriation protocols, and interviewing and interrogation techniques. She authored, *Under Fire - Reactions & Resilience: What an Officer Can Expect*, a seminal research project examining more than 900 officers involved in shootings spanning nine years. She sat as an advisor to the Department's Executive Planning Council as well as the Department's Training Committee. She routinely reviewed various pieces of legislation that affect law enforcement and served as a consult to California POST as a subject matter expert. She supplied operational support to the Sheriff's Department via threat assessments, profiling, hostage negotiations, forensic investigative hypnosis and as a member of the terrorism early warning group.

Dr. Honig has served as both an expert consultant and expert witness assisting other law enforcement agencies defend themselves against a variety of lawsuits. Dr. Honig had been a frequent invited guest to the FBI Academy and is a past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Psychological Services Section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).