

The Art of Verbal Judo

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About Me

- MCC Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- 20 years in higher education
- Originally trained & utilized Verbal Judo as a Resident Advisor and Hall Director
- Former volunteer firefighter and EMT
- Father of 2+1



What is Verbal Judo?

Judo (the “gentle way”) is the art of deflecting

VERBAL Judo is a tactical communication style!



Dr. George Thompson

- Earned his doctorate degree in English Literature.
- Started his professional career as English and Rhetoric Instructor.
- Later moved into law enforcement.
- Developed Verbal Judo from years of working with good cops and the lessons he learned from them.
- Passed away in 2011 after year's battling throat cancer

Why Verbal Judo?

Tactic	Percentage Employed	Mean Success (Scale of 0 to 3)
Communicated with respect, interest, & warmth towards the student	79%	2.45
Encouraged classroom community	54%	2.25
Involved students in solving the problem	43%	2.34
Consulted with a colleague	48%	1.83
Addressed student in front of class	53%	1.72
Ignored the problem	62%	1.21
Reported behavior to university official	28%	.76

Source: Meyers, SA. (2006). How Do faculty experience and respond to classroom conflict?. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 18(3), 180-187.



Why Verbal Judo?



Why Verbal Judo?

- Enhance your professionalism
- Fewer Negative Conflicts
- Reduce Personal Stress

- 1) See conflict as an opportunity.
- 2) See wider variety of interactions.

Fight your natural, adversarial human reaction to yell back



Why Verbal Judo?



DISCUSSION

**WHAT DID THE OFFICER DO
WELL?**

**WHAT COULD THEY DO
BETTER?**

The 3 Types of People

The “Nice”:

- This type of person easily complies with all directives. It is easy to deal with the “nice” in competitive situations.

The “Difficult”:

- This this type of person always questions “WHY” they have to do anything. Believe it or not, this person too is easy to deal with in competitive situations because you know what you’re getting.

The 3 Types of People, cont.

The “Two Face”:

- This type of person is the most difficult to deal with.
- The “two-face” will be nice to your face, but will stab you in the back (snipers and gossipers).
- You need to strip the two-face of their camouflage!

Why Verbal Judo?

Warning, driver in video uses explicit language.

Background: Routine speeding stop; driver has clearly been very angry and upset



DISCUSSION

**WHAT DID THE OFFICER DO
WELL?**

**WHAT COULD THEY DO
BETTER?**

“We know that the most deadly weapon we carry is not the .45 or the 9mm, it is in fact the cop’s tongue ... A single sentence fired off at the wrong person at the wrong time can get you fired, it can get you sued, it can get you killed,”

- George Thompson, PhD

“There’s so many times when people are screaming and yelling and you just go to them: ‘Hey, buddy, how you doing? My names’s Sergeant Francis, I’m with NYPD, I noticed that you’re really upset, now what’s going on with you, is there any way I can help?’”

- Joel Francis, Retired NYPD

Being a professional

- As a leader, it is important to know your strengths, as well as your weaknesses.
- You **MUST** always stay in control of your emotions; other people get to lose their cool, but **NOT** you.
- In sports, the coach/player can get the last word...the official, however, gets the last **ACTION**.
- Being in control of your emotions doesn't not mean you need to accept verbal abuse!



It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It

Others make perceptions about you in the following way:

- 7-10% Based on the content
 “What I say” (words)
- 30% Based on tone of voice & delivery
 “How I say it” (communication)
- 60% Based on non-verbal cues
 “How I deliver it” (How I look/carry myself)

Empathy



“ Let me be sure I heard what you just said” ...

No matter how upset someone is, most people will be quiet because they want to be sure you heard what they said.



Why Verbal Judo?



Great Communicators...

COMMUNICATE SIMPLY!

It is time for what you have been waiting for... HOW?

- What not to say
- Verbal Deflectors
- Professional Language
- Paraphrasing
- THE FIVE STEPS

Things to Never Say

1. CALM DOWN
2. YOU NEVER... YOU ALWAYS
3. WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
4. BECAUSE I SAID SO

Others?



Use words to generate
voluntary compliance!

Verbal Deflectors

- “I understand you feel that way, but...”
- “I see what you are getting at, but...”
- “I realize how that might be frustrating, but...”
- “I appreciate that, but...”

- After the BUT, use only professional words that serve your purpose. Everything after BUT is designed to get the job done.

Professional Language

- Use professional language to achieve your goal.
- Know your goal: compliance, cooperation, collaboration
- In using professional language, direct that person to YOUR GOAL FOR THE SITUATION.
- This is the art of re-directing personal behavior, not the art of BS.

Benefits of Paraphrasing

1. You have now hooked the other person...it's the only way to interrupt someone without generating further resistance.
2. You have taken control of the situation because you are talking and they are listening.
3. You are making sure you heard right on the spot, not finding out later you misunderstood.
4. If you have not heard the person correctly, it can be corrected.
5. You've made the other person a better listener...nobody listens better than to his or her own point of view.

V

The 5 Steps



1. ASK – Ask for compliance.
 - Nice = will comply
 - Difficult = non-compliance
2. SET CONTEXT
 - 70% of difficult people comply at this step
3. OPTIONS....good first, then bad
 - 80% of difficult people comply at this step
4. CONFIRM NONCOMPLIANCE
 - 90% of difficult people comply at this step
5. ACT



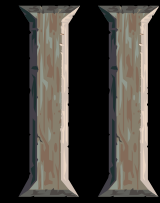
The 5 Steps



STEP 1: ASK (only nice people comply)

- Ask the other person for compliance
 - “Can you put the phone down so I can speak to you?”
- Give the other person the opportunity to comply.
- Remember to ask...not tell. Most people prefer to chose their own actions rather than being told what to do.

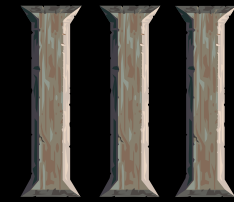
The 5 Steps



STEP 2: SET CONTEXT (70% compliance)

- Explain to the person why you are asking for compliance.
 - “I need to talk with you about...”
- Prevents person being able to say: “you never told me...”
- Clearly states your purpose for asking for compliance
- Removes the emotion and personal biases.

The 5 Steps



STEP 3: OPTIONS (80% compliance)

- Offer options to the other person
 - “You can put the phone down and speak to me or...”
- In most cultures, people like having options.
- Makes people feel in control of their own destiny.
- Makes the other person aware of the potential consequences.

The 5 Steps

IV

STEP 4: CONFIRM NON-COMPLIANCE (90% compliance)

- Give the person one last opportunity to comply.
 - “Is there something I can do so you will speak with me?”
- Give person ground to stand on (help them save face)
- Confirms it is their choice to not comply.

The 5 Steps



STEP 5: ACT

- Disengage/Carry-out Actions
- This often may include calling a superior, authorities, etc.
- Failure to follow-through results in loss of power
- Do not threaten people (real or false)
- Document, Document, Document

What is universally accepted in all cultures?

- **Politeness**
- **Options**
- **Respect**

When all else fails: S.A.F.E.R.

- **S**afety (When you feel your safety may be compromised)
 - Leave
 - Contact Authority
 - Don't go there in the first place
- **A**ttacked (when someone attacks you)
 - Run away
 - Self Defense
 - Contact Law Enforcement
- **F**lees (When the person you are confronting flees)
 - Leave and document
 - Contact Authority

When all else fails: S.A.F.E.R.

- **E**xcessive Repetition (Conversation continues in circles)
 - Leave
 - Initiate action/documentation
- **R**evised Priorities (Something more important happens)
 - Respond to highest priority
 - Contact Authority

In Summary...



- Let the other person take the first action
...use the Verbal Judo to deflect conflict.
- Keep the communication lines open, but you are not there to debate.
- Focus your communication on the correct person, not bystanders distracters.
- Be in control...professionalism is only perceived as a one way street.

Questions?