VOLUME 5 PROGRAM 2

Verbal Judo
Body Language Part Two

DUTY SHEET & LESSON PLAN

Total Program Length: 38:00

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OVERVIEW

Simply put, the experts say most confrontations involving police are the result of verbal jousting. Situations can escalate quickly as a result of what Dr. George Thompson calls “mind and mouth disharmony.” Thompson is the president of The Verbal Judo Institute, Inc. He is considered the guru of verbal judo. It is a concept he codified. It is a form of tactical communication which he calls “martial arts for the mouth.” It is, he says, a concept of using words to achieve a tactical goal. That goal is voluntary compliance. The word “judo” in Japanese means “the gentle way.”

VERBAL JUDO (8:00)

Using verbal judo effectively relies on several factors. Thompson says two of the most important are “respect” and “courtesy.” Regardless of how heinous a person’s crime may be, if they are treated with respect, even if you don’t respect them, it leaves them less room to maneuver in a confrontation. Thompson is more than willing to concede the last word to a subject. His theory is that he does not care what subjects say, as long as they do what he wants them to do. The benefits thereof are

VERBAL JUDO BENEFITS

- Ensure Officer Safety
- Enhance Professionalism
- Decrease Citizen Complaints
- Decrease Liability
- Lessen Personal Stress.

Thompson employs two verbal judo techniques, the 8 and 5 step programs.

8 Step Verbal Judo can be used in any confrontation and easily modified for a traffic or pedestrian stop.

The steps are:
1. Meet and Greet
2. Identify yourself and your department
3. Give reason for stop
4. Ask the subject for a “justified reason” for the infraction.
5. Ask for driver’s license
6. Ask for insurance/registration and where it is, with the caveat as to whether there is anything “to worry about” (gun, knife, ammunition) inside the car or clothing.
7. Give the decision as to the disposition of the matter, i.e. a ticket, arrest, a break.
8. Effective close and close on a positive note so the person does not leave angry.

The 5 Step verbal judo plan is employed by Thompson only when he meets resistance. He recommends that it be employed quickly so that the officer may maintain control.

The steps are:
1. Ask for or order cooperation.
2. Explain why you are asking.
3. Present Options which will appeal to him or her such as “you can cooperate or go to jail,” etc.
4. Confirmation. Ask if there is anything you can say which will make the subject cooperate.
5. Act. If it is clear there will be no compliance, take him out. That’s verbal judo, the legitimate use of force. As Thompson puts it, “words may fail, but verbal judo does not.”

Verbal judo is a form of deflecting the concerns of subjects when they are upset. Used as deflection, verbal judo
1. Makes the officer feel professional, because he or she becomes how they act. By acting polite and courteous, they become polite and courteous.
2. It encourages the use of professional words only and keeps the goal of voluntary compliance on track.
3. It empowers the officer. Civilians often use words as weapons. If the officer deflects those words, the weapon is taken from the subject.
4. There is a public relations benefit. Officers using verbal judo sound good and using the right words can not be incriminating against the officer in court or in the media.

VERBAL JUDO SCENARIO (6:45)

Thompson dissected the infamous Kehoe Brothers Shootout, subject of Volume 4 Program 8 of In the Line of Duty. In that scenario, a van was pulled over in Wilmington, Ohio by deputy Harold Harker because of a missing license plate. It turned out that the van was occupied by two militia men, the Kehoe Brothers, from Washington State. Unbeknownst to Harker, the van was filled with weapons. The driver of the van had no license. For almost 12 minutes, Harker negotiated over patting down the subject and putting him in his cruiser while he checked out the man’s story. Eventually, the second man came out of the van shooting. Several shots were exchanged, and the Kehoe brothers escaped. Thompson’s critique included the observation that Harker used all the right phrases associated with verbal judo, but did so over too long a period of time, allowing the brothers to escalate the scenario.

Thompson says officers need to be tactically aware of three kinds of people they will generally be confronted with. They are:

Nice People: They generally comply.
Difficult People: They are incapable of doing what they are asked the first time.
People Who Sound Nice: Be wary of them. They may be showing a good attitude to keep you from proceeding, or to gain an advantage if you drop your guard.

LESSONS LEARNED (2:15)

Stay Cool: Maintain composure, because common sense can become uncommon under pressure.
Be Reassuring: Put subjects in mind that everything will be fine. If they did nothing wrong, they have nothing to worry about and will soon be on their way.
If it makes you feel good, it’s no good: The natural tendency of most people is to snap at people who are insulting to them. It feels good to tell them off. That’s exactly the wrong way for officers to act with subjects because it diverts them from the intended goal of using language to achieve compliance.

QUESTIONS (1:25)

1. How well do you communicate with all members of your community?
2. What part does verbal communication play in your ability to perform your job professionally?
3. Has your ego ever gotten in the way of communicating successfully? If so, discuss how.
4. Could better communication skills make your job safer?
5. Can verbal judo/tactical communications improve your effectiveness as a police professional?
6. Has the lack of verbal skills ever placed you in a dangerous situation?
7. Have you ever argued with a citizen? If so, discuss the circumstances.
8. Do you believe that verbal skills are acquired and therefore need to be practiced?
9. Does report writing and testifying in court involve communication skills? If so, do you practice?
10. If you have attended George Thompson’s course, has it assisted you in dealing with people? Discuss it.

EPILOG GEORGE THOMPSON’S “LAWS” (1:25)

- You can treat subjects respectfully even if you don’t respect them.
- The street officer must win in three deadly arenas on the street, in court and in the media.
- Verbal Judo is not a communications course. It is a course in tactics.
- As ego goes up, officer safety goes down.
- Make it your rule to allow a subject to say what he/she wants, but do what you say.
- Street Savvy is the ability to become who you have to be to handle a situation showing fearlessness when you are fearful and showing interest when you are bored.
- Repeating commands more than twice can imply weakness to a subject.
- Treat the subject as you would like to be treated in a similar situation.
- Never argue with anybody again.
- An officer in uniform arguing with a civilian will always look bad and sound bad.

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BACK-UP (4:45)

This month’s Back-up segment continues our look at body language from Volume 5 Program 1. Jim Crotty of Strategies for Officer Survival. He discusses the warning signs which can signal danger to street officers. Specifically, he notes the following:

- Repetitive Aggressive Questions: Subjects will frequently ask such questions (Why are you always hassling me?). When the pattern is clear, it should be taken as a warning that the subject may choose action against and officer.

- Bladed Stance: Another signal that the subject may be prepared to assault an officer.
**Grooming:** A subject who constantly wipes his fingers through his hair is usually in a highly agitated state. The officer in this, and all such cases, should put more distance between himself and the subject.

**Pacing:** Constant pacing by a subject should be considered a warning sign.

**Thousand Yard Stare:** When a subject stares at an officer with a piercing, unblinking gaze, it can be a sign that action will follow.

**Spitting:** A sign of disrespect to the officer which should be a clear red flag.

**Grabbing the Groin:** Also a sign of disrespect to an officer.

All of these signs should be read as possible danger to follow from the subjects in question.

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We want to thank each and every one of you in our IN THE LINE OF DUTY family. And, we encourage your input. Our address is:

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LESSON PLAN

SYNOPSIS:  This course focuses on Verbal Judo as taught by George Thompson, Ph.D., the man who codified the technique of tactical communications. Verbal Judo is geared toward quick and effective voluntary compliance. His techniques include an eight step plan for confronting subjects, and a five step plan when a subject shows resistance. The program also focuses on body language, and how reading it may save street cops from physical confrontations.

TIME:  1 Hour

OBJECTIVES:  Upon completion of this course, officers should be able to:

Obj. A  Understand the concept of verbal judo.

Obj. B  Understand Thompson’s 8 step method of verbal judo and how to implement it.

Obj. C  Understand Thompson’s 5 step method of verbal judo when dealing with a subject resisting voluntary compliance. Understand how to implement it, and understand how verbal judo can “deflect” the concerns of a subject.

Obj. D  Understand how to read certain types of body language (continuing the body language segment from Volume 5 Program 1 on In the Line of Duty.

INSTRUCTOR’S NOTES  LESSON PLAN/LAB GUIDE

Obj. A  I. Verbal judo is referred to as martial arts for the mouth. The Japanese word “judo” means “gentle way”. It is designed to bring a subject into compliance in a gentle manner using verbal commands which are both “courteous” and respectful.

A. The benefits to an officer are:
   1. Ensure Officer Safety
   2. Enhance Professionalism
   3. Decrease Citizen Complaints
   4. Decrease Liability
   5. Lessen Personal Stress

Obj. B  II. The 8 steps of Thompson’s 8 step plan are:

A. Meet and Greet
B. Identify yourself and your department
C. Give reason for stop
D. Ask the subject for a “justified reason” for the infraction.
E. Ask for driver’s license
F. Ask for insurance/registration and where it is, with the caveat as to whether there is anything “to worry about” (gun, knife, ammunition) inside the car or clothing.
G. Give the decision as to the disposition of the matter,
i.e. a ticket, arrest, a break.

H. Effective close and close on a positive notes so the person does not leave angry.

Obj. C

III. The 5 step plan for dealing with subjects who resist voluntary compliance are:

A. Ask for or order cooperation.
B. Explain why you are asking.
C. Present Options which will appeal to him or her such as “you can cooperate or go to jail,” etc.
D. Confirmation. Ask if there is anything you can say which will make the subject cooperate.
E. Act. If it is clear there will be no compliance, take him out. That’s verbal judo, the legitimate use of force. As Thompson puts it, “words may fail, but verbal judo does not.”

IV. Verbal judo is a form of deflecting the concerns of subjects when they are upset. Used as deflection, verbal judo

A. Makes the officer feel professional, because he or she becomes how they act. By acting polite and courteous, they become polite and courteous.
B. It encourages the use of professional words only and keeps the goal of voluntary compliance on track.
C. It empowers the officer. Civilians often use words as weapons. If the officer deflects those words, the weapon is taken from the subject.
D. There is a public relations benefit. Officers using verbal judo sound good and using the right words can not be incriminating against the officer in court or in the media.

Obj. D

V. Understanding potentially aggressive body language.

A. All of these signs should be read as possible danger to follow from the subjects in question and the officer should put more space between himself/herself and the subject.
B. The body language signs to look for are:

1. **Aggressive Repetitive Questions:** Subjects will frequently ask such questions (Why are you always hassling me?). When the pattern is clear, it should be taken as a warning that the subject may choose action against the officer.

2. **Bladed Stance:** Another signal that the subject may be prepared to assault an officer.

3. **Grooming:** A subject who constantly wips his fingers through his hair is usually in a highly agitated state.

4. **Pacing:** Constant pacing by a subject should
be considered a warning sign.

5. **Thousand Yard Stare:** When a subject stares at an officer with a piercing, unblinking gaze, it can be a sign that action will follow.

6. **Spitting:** A sign of disrespect to the officer which should be a clear red flag.

7. **Grabbing the Groin:** Also a sign of disrespect to an officer.

**QUESTIONS (1:25)**

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**SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

1. **IN THE LINE OF DUTY VIDEO**
   - VOLUME 5 PROGRAM 2
2. **IN THE LINE OF DUTY**
   - DUTY SHEET
   - VOLUME 5 PROGRAM 2