VERBAL JUDO

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Edited by
RALPH SLOVENKO, B.E., LL.B., M.A., Ph.D.
Professor of Law and Psychiatry
Wayne State University Law School
Detroit, Michigan

VERBAL JUDO

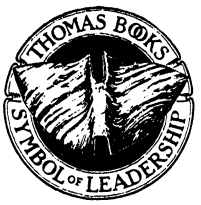
WORDS AS A FORCE OPTION

By

GEORGE J. THOMPSON

Principal Instructor
Communication Strategies, Inc.
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Former Associate Professor of English
Emporia State University
Emporia, Kansas



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In Memoriam

Professor George J. Thompson
Cornell University Law School

And for

KELLEY B. THOMPSON
and
TAYLOR A. THOMPSON

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

THIS book, *Verbal Judo: Words for Street Survival,* by George J. Thompson addresses directly those men and women who engage in one of the toughest jobs imaginable — policing the streets of this country. The book's title, *Verbal Judo,* also refers to all kinds of "confrontation rhetoric," thereby encompassing in its audience any professional who has to deal with the public in a control-management role.

Verbal Judo is both a theoretical and a practical account of how to handle the verbal street encounter. Subtitled "Police Rhetoric," the book offers a rhetorical theory designed specifically for people who have to develop almost instantaneous verbal strategies to control situations non-violently. In order to avoid violence, police officers must change or redirect human behavior with their words. Citizens expect officers to be expert arbiters and negotiators, yet little specific training has been available to develop these important roles. Recognizing that rhetoric is "situational," *Verbal Judo* presents a method and a habit of mind that enables officers to select the best available means of persuasion in any given instant. The book argues that the ability to communicate effectively is an officer's greatest asset, both for his own safety and for the greater good of the community.

Verbal Judo does not suggest that physical force is never necessary. Force is sometimes absolutely necessary and proper, but words are more powerful, correctly used, than often believed. *Verbal Judo's* basic premise is that if officers know the *limits* of words skillfully used, they will know more precisely when force is appropriate.

Verbal Judo argues that rhetorical skill is partially the ability to make oneself into what one has to be in order to handle a situation. It is a practical kind of power. If officers are to be able to create ap-

propriate roles to handle the action they confront, they must know what the communication options are and how these options or strategies can be manipulated and employed functionally.

The book has seven chapters, five of which detail the basic rhetorical elements: perspective, audience, voice, purpose, and organization. Chapters One and Two define the basic problems of street communication and show why the job is so verbally demanding. Because police officers do not "meet" people as others meet people — officers question, interview, and arrest others — their communication problems tend to be more difficult than for other professionals. Thus, the art of communicating with the public *as a police officer* deserves some special and intense study.

Chapter Three, "Perspective," analyzes the way an officer's habitual method of processing reality can hinder or cloud his ability to see clearly. The chapter explores some common biases and assumptions that typically prevent officers from establishing and maintaining an open and flexible mind during a street encounter. It also suggests several techniques officers can use to develop a state of "readiness" for such encounters.

Chapter Four, "Audience," shows how officers can learn to "read" an audience, to see as others see. Because "street savvy" is partly the ability to make oneself into what one has to become to handle a scene, this chapter defines what a rhetorical scene is, how it can be structured, how it may break down, and how it can be controlled using verbal strategies. The chapter also examines different kinds of audiences an officer can expect to confront and offers guidelines for analyzing and responding to them.

Chapter Five, "Voice," discusses how to adopt the proper voice (and tone) for the specific audience. It defines the three basic appeals an officer may use — the rational, the emotional, and the ethical — and describes how to harmonize the voice to the appeal selected. Stressing the chameleon nature of good police work, the chapter illustrates various kinds of voices, roles, and appeals that can be helpful in creating a suitable street "character" to handle difficult situations.

Chapter Six, "Purpose and Organization," defines various kinds of police purposes, shows officers how to define their purpose and handle multiple purposes in one scene, and how to structure their

communication to fulfill those purposes. The chapter teaches officers how to use a dramatic sense of structure to achieve their rhetorical ends. The chapter also analyzes how to use legal and departmental guidelines to structure an encounter scene. The author argues that the best structure harmonizes all three approaches to structure: the rhetorical, the legal, and the departmental.

At the end of each chapter are several "mini-cases," which were written to give officers practice in spotting good and bad uses of rhetorical strategies and practice in developing better, more appropriate ways to handle the case problems. Although the cases reflect problems experienced by city police, they are useful for any professional who has to deal with the public in crisis situations, because the principles of *Verbal Judo* can be applied in many different situations.

Verbal Judo, in short, is for the professional who wants to learn how to use others' force and energy to transform potentially explosive encounters into positive resolutions. The bottom line in good police work is officer safety and citizen safety, and the rhetorical skills presented in the text enable officers to approach street encounters with self-confidence in their ability to direct and resolve conflict.

The author, George J. Thompson, is a principal instructor with Communication Strategies, a private communications firm based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His professional background includes ten years as a university professor as well as five years as a police officer. He has applied his diverse experiences to problems of oral and written communication in widely diverse organizations. He is an expert on situational rhetoric: how language affects people in crisis. He is author of a training manual, also called *Verbal Judo,* which he uses in a program he presents to law-enforcement agencies at various levels. Articles based on his experiences have appeared in the *FBI Enforcement Bulletin* and *The Detective* (the journal of the United States Army Criminal Investigation Division).

Voted an Outstanding Educator of America in 1975, Thompson brings impressive credentials to the writing courses he presents. He directed the composition program at Emporia State University for nine years, and he has developed both remedial and advanced writing courses at the university level. In addition, he has served on projects intended to upgrade writing instruction at the secondary level.

Thompson received his B.A. from Colgate University, his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Connecticut, and he completed post-doctoral studies at Princeton University. His diverse personal interests enhance his professional expertise. An avid reader (and reviewer) of detective fiction, he has published numerous articles on Dashiell Hammett. He is also a student of martial arts; he holds a black belt in Judo and a brown belt (with black stripe) in Taekwondo. He feels that his avocation has helped him understand the nature of confrontation and the range of possible responses to threatening situations.

Ralph Slovenko

PREFACE

THIS book is both a theoretical and a practical account of the verbal street encounter, an area that has received very little intensive study. Because of my own experience and interest, I have focused on the police officer, but people in all professions that require changing or modifying human behavior for social good can profit from reading this book. The problem I address — how to use words rather than force to influence people — is of such great social importance that I can only hope that others will join me in trying to improve the training of all personnel who have the thankless task of manning the front lines of defense against social disruption.

The principles and techniques described in this book can be used in practically every verbal encounter, especially in those that involve some degree of conflict, real or potential. To some degree, the many good books on negotiation and conflict resolution have guided my thinking, as have the many books on rhetoric and communication. But few, if any, address the most difficult problem of the immediate street encounter, necessitating, as it does, quick thinking and almost spontaneous verbal response on the part of the officer. I have attempted to tailor my book to this particular arena, an arena in which an officer's rhetorical decisions often make the difference between success and failure, life and death.

As in any new attempt, I am indebted to many, both known and unknown. To the many citizens who endured my own lapses of rhetorical skill as I was learning to be a street officer, I can only give a belated thank you. To the many police officers with whom I worked day in and day out, I owe untold insights about and inspiration for my study of the unique communication situations they experience as a matter of course.

I am indebted to the Emporia Police Department for its continued support and assistance over the last seven years. Chief Ben Janacek and Captain Bruce Fair have greatly assisted my research into training methods on the subject of police rhetoric. The completion of five training tapes on street rhetoric is attributable directly to their cooperation and advice, as are many of the incidents and illustrations used in this book. Indeed, without their support, not a page of this book would have been written. Captain Fair kindly read the text in manuscript and offered countless valued and important suggestions. Though he cannot be held responsible for any weaknesses in this book, he is certainly responsible for any of its strengths.

I wish, also, to thank the English Department and Emporia State University for granting me a sabbatical leave to work full time with the Emporia Police Department and to pursue my research in rhetoric. Moreover, they have been understanding and supportive in what must have been to their eyes a somewhat eccentric field of academic study. To my colleague Denny Clements, who read and reread my work in progress, I owe an infinite number of stimulating thoughts and suggestions. His encouragement kept me working during the toughest periods, and his diligence prevented numerous stylistic blunders and lapses. To my other colleague, John Somer, I owe a debt of gratitude for his continuing friendship and support during my tenure at Emporia State University. The keen eye of Kate Weigand, my typist, prevented additional blunders in the final manuscript, a fact for which I am most grateful.

My greatest debt is to my family, past and present. To the memory of my grandfather, Professor George J. Thompson of Cornell University Law School, I attribute my abiding belief in the inherent justice and equity of our legal system. It was he who taught me that we must all work to make the law a humanizing force in our society. I can only hope that *Verbal Judo* is one step in that direction. To my grandmother, my surrogate mother, I owe an equal debt: a happy childhood, a fine education, and continued support for my professional work.

To Linda, my wife, who listened patiently and critically to each page of this book and who gave me the necessary emotional support to complete it, I owe an infinite debt. To my daughter, Kelley, and to my son, Taylor, I likewise owe more than I can ever repay. The

many nights I was not home because I was on the streets as a police officer — my second job — is but one of their many gifts to me, their daddy. If anything in this book contributes to making this world a better place for them to live, I will feel their sacrifice has been partially rewarded. I can only say that their love and devotion sustained me throughout.

G. J. T.

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VERBAL JUDO

You and your opponent are one.
There is a coexisting relationship between you.
You coexist with your opponent and become his complement,
absorbing his attack and using his force to overcome him.

Bruce Lee

A man who has attained mastery of an art
reveals it in his every action.

Samurai Maxim

To win one hundred victories in
one hundred battles is not the highest skill.
To subdue the enemy without fighting
is the highest skill.
Sun-Tzu

The readiness is all.
Hamlet

INTRODUCTION 1
Problems of Street Communication

VERBAL Judo: Words for Street Survival addresses directly those men and women who engage in one of the toughest jobs imaginable — policing the streets of this country. The book's title also refers to all kinds of "confrontation rhetoric," thereby encompassing in its audience any professional who has to deal with the public in a control-management role. Parole officers, social workers, park rangers, social security investigators, psychological case workers, juvenile case workers, even psychiatric nurses and airline security personnel — all have to communicate with others in situations of stress and tension and to maintain control and direction in the encounter scene or they fail. It is to these people that I direct this text, and I hope that something within these pages will help to make their work more efficient, more rewarding, and safe.

Day by day, the job of enforcing the law becomes more difficult. Crime keeps rising, communities expect more and more from their

officers, and the legal system, in its entirety, seems bent on frustrating the street officer at every turn. Admittedly, the states and the federal government have tried to help; over the years officers have received better salaries, better equipment, and improved educational opportunities. This has been all to the good, for today officers have a professional standing and a set of expectations that rival those of other respectable professions.

But no amount of money or support can guarantee that the street officer will use good judgment, make the right choices in a situation of stress, or use the most effective words in any given situation. Officers face John Q. Public daily, on a one-to-one basis, and often under trying and emotionally charged circumstances. Whether they will succeed in the one-to-one encounter depends greatly on their individual strengths and weaknesses as human beings. The law serves as one guide for officers, but by itself it is not sufficient to ensure good law enforcement. The legal and departmental codes (local, state, and federal) only tell officers what they *may* do in a situation of particular circumstances, they cannot tell them *how* to do it. This book offers some practical and theoretical advice on the "how" of the street encounter.

Rhetoric is a strange word, possessing several meanings. The oldest and strictest meaning refers to the art of communication. As I use the word throughout the book, rhetoric is *the art of selecting the best available verbal means of communication at any given instant.*

The ability to communicate effectively with the public is, I believe, the most important skill an officer can possess, both for his own safety and for the greater good of the social community. But the task of effective communication is made doubly difficult by the very nature of police work. Police officers do not "meet" people as other ordinary people meet; more often than not, police officers confront some, question others, interview others, and arrest others. Such meetings are unusual communication situations. Even when an officer does not see a meeting with John Q. Public as a "confrontation," the citizen will. Unless, indeed, a citizen is in deep trouble and in need of assistance, any meeting with a police officer will be a disturbing event. Rare is the individual who meets a police officer without feeling anxiety, fear, or anger.

Thus, the communication problem for the officer is more diffi-

cult than for other professionals. Police rhetoric, then, or *the art of communication with the public as a police officer,* deserves some special and intense study. Many officers admit that their weakest area of training lies in communication, written or spoken. Generally, police academies offer little in this area other than report writing and some general guidelines for dealing with the public, and few officers arrive at such training centers well versed in the communication arts.

In the more demanding police departments, to be sure, a college education is now required, but even this does not ensure that recruits will have acquired the subtle skills necessary to communicate with precision and effectiveness under stressful circumstances. Courses in classical rhetoric are of little value to the officer-in-training, as are courses in writing and grammar, because they seldom focus on the specific problems posed by the verbal street encounter.

Courses in writing *can* be valuable to officers for their report writing burdens, and indeed much of the latest research that informs modern writing texts can be of some aid to the street officer *if* it is *translated* into concepts and theories that can be *used* by the working cop. *Verbal Judo* aims to provide just such a service; as such, it is a new kind of text, a step into a hitherto dark area of communication theory. In writing this book, I have tried to draw on the best available research in the fields of rhetoric and communication and translate this research into practical street strategies. Many of the strategies we use to teach writing can be applied to strategies for verbal encounters. It is my hope that by reading this text, you, the individual officer, will be able to sharpen your rhetorical skills to the point where you will be able to feel confident in your verbal power under stress. Such confidence makes for professional action on a daily basis.

Verbal Judo does not suggest that physical force is never necessary. Force is sometimes quite necessary and proper, but words are more powerful, when correctly used, than is often believed. To put it another way, if you know the *limits* of words skillfully used, you know more precisely when force is needed. Training in self-defense and the martial arts tells us that force against force is not as effective as learning to move with the force of another. Judo, for example, meaning literally "the gentle way," gives us the power to use another's

force to our advantage. So is this true, too, with the skillful use of rhetoric: you size up the person you have contacted and use his energies to achieve your purposes. Police rhetoric, then, is verbal judo, a way to use words and communication strategies to modify or change the behavior of others. Any time an officer manages to defuse another's desire to resist through using the spoken word, he has, in judo terminology, "thrown" him. There can be a far greater sense of self-satisfaction and POWER in talking potentially dangerous subjects into a patrol car than in having to subdue them with the use of physical force.

To perform such feats of rhetorical judo, however, presupposes that the officer will feel confident in his verbal ability, be capable of skillfully reading an audience (the "other"), and be sure of his purpose. This book is designed to help the street officer develop the expertise necessary to use the power of rhetoric in his daily encounters with street people. Being a "street-wise" officer involves mind games and verbal games — strategies intended to keep perpetrators off balance. Some of these "games" are common sense; others require training to work under the pressures of stress and tension. Although many officers possess an innate ability to relate to the people they encounter, some training in theory and practice can improve the chances that they will use such skill more consistently and effectively.

My own personal experience led me to write this text. As a professor of English, whose hobbies have included judo and Taekwondo, I have always been interested in the relationship between words and actions, and the various uses of physical energy. My interest in police work led me into five years of street work, both as a reserve and as a full-time officer. I thus lived in two different worlds: the world of the college professor and the world of the street cop. At first, the most obvious differences struck me. Gradually, however, I came to see that my training in rhetoric and communications could be put to good use in my street work. Having to encounter one stress situation after another, I began to focus on the relationship between language and stress. I found myself playing many different roles during the course of any one shift. Like a stage actor, I learned I had to create my role as I went along. I had to improvise quickly and shift roles effectively, often with little or no warning. I came to see that much of what we call "street savvy" is the ability to create or *make a self* that can harmonize

with the street situation.

Rhetorical skill, then, is partially the ability to make yourself what you have to be in order to handle situations. It is clearly more than a "PR" approach to police work, though it can help in this area as well. Primarily, rhetoric is a crucial factor in officer *safety* and *performance.* It is a practical kind of power. If officers are to be able to create appropriate roles to handle the action they confront, they must know what the options of communication are and how these options and strategies can be manipulated and employed functionally.

Verbal Judo explores street communication from this practical angle. The text provides both theory and practice. Each chapter details one of the five basic rhetorical elements: PERSPECTIVE, AUDIENCE, VOICE, PURPOSE, and ORGANIZATION (PAVPO). Each demonstrates how the rhetorical element can be more thoroughly understood and used on the street. At the end of each chapter are several "mini-cases" that are written to give officers practice in spotting good and bad uses of rhetorical strategies and in thinking up better, more appropriate ways to have handled the problem presented. Although the cases generally reflect problems experienced by the city police officer, they can be useful for any professional in control management of human behavior because the principles of shrewd verbal control can be applied in many different situations.

The benefits that can result from good training in rhetorical strategies are numerous, both for administrators and for police officers, which may be reviewed from the following list.

Benefits for Police Administrators:

1. Fewer formal complaints.
2. Fewer informal complaints.
3. Fewer internal affairs investigations.
4. Greater officer efficiency.
5. More efficient retraining of officers who establish a profile of violent street behavior.
6. Better public image for police departments.

Benefits for Officers:

The training will make officers better able to:

1. Control their own biases and PERSPECTIVES. (P)

2. Analyze an AUDIENCE quickly and skillfully. (A)
3. Create appropriate VOICES to influence audience. (V)
4. Define and sustain a clear sense of PURPOSE. (P)
5. ORGANIZE verbal strategies to achieve purpose. (O)
6. Apply the elements of rhetoric (PAVPO) to the hard realities of the street encounter, i.e. verbal judo.
7. Solve street problems using flexible and alternative thinking.
8. Earn increased respect from the public for professional action.
9. Develop greater self-confidence and self-respect in their work.
10. IMPROVE OFFICER SAFETY — the bottom line in all police work.

Skillful communication can produce such practical and socially beneficial results. Good police work, which involves enforcing the laws of our country in a fair and judicious manner, is a cornerstone of a free society. Ultimately, the benefits that accrue to police administrators and police officers contribute directly to the improvement of society as a whole. It is my hope that *verbal judo* can serve in some small way to strengthen the society we now have.

To know and to act
are one and the same.
Samurai Maxim

THE RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE 2

MORE powerful than mace, the nightstick, or the revolver, effective rhetoric can be an officer's most useful tool in the field. Loosely defined as effective communication, rhetoric is exercised numerous times each day by every officer on duty, whether in civil or criminal matters. Repeatedly, an officer's ability to select the appropriate means of communication, often under surprising and stressful circumstances, is the measure of good police work and good public relations.

Considering the daily pressures of police work — dealing with numerous people whose backgrounds, needs, points of view, and prejudices vary dramatically, moment to moment, as the officer encounters them — it is distressing that so little has been done to prepare officers to anticipate and to handle such complex social situations. Part of an officer's success in handling other people in stress situations comes from a learned habit of mind, a way of viewing the communication situation. The rhetorical perspective is just that — a way of viewing communication, a *stance* one assumes in attempting to deal with others.

The word "rhetoric" is often understood to mean only inflated or

exaggerated language, as when one might comment that the president's last speech was "all rhetoric," meaning all froth and no substance. But rhetoric has a second and more classical meaning; from the early Greeks on, it has meant the art or skill of selecting the best available verbal means of persuasion at any given moment. I see it as consisting of five basic elements: perspective, audience, voice, purpose, and organization. The acronym PAVPO represents these five elements.

Perspective may be defined as the viewer's point of view; in the case of an officer on a car stop or at a public disturbance, it is *his* view of the situation. *Audience* is the person (or persons) with whom the officer has made contact. *Voice* is the tone in which the officer conveys his information, his verbal personality. *Purpose* is the officer's goal or end, whether it be an explanation, a warning, or an arrest. *Organization* is the way in which the officer chooses to present or structure his communication; the officer must choose when to say what and how much to say. The shaping of his communication or message often depends on his interpretation of the first four elements of rhetoric and it often determines the eventual outcome of the rhetorical situation.

Perspective, the first P in the acronym PAVPO, is extremely important. The officer's own point of view is generally influenced by the written legal code. On most scenes, an officer represents not himself but society; he is society's spokesman and authority. Yet he is also a human being, with his own personal points of view and biases, and the many typical police calls (e.g. child abuse, beatings, and rapes) wrench his personal feelings, making fair and impartial judgment difficult. As much as possible, the good officer must try to blend his own personal feelings with his sworn legal perspective, letting his humanity come through when it can improve a situation and suppressing it when it threatens to make him an avenger rather than an enforcer of the law.

An officer's task is further complicated by the necessity to understand the perspective of those with whom he is dealing, citizens often quite unlike himself in every way. These citizens, an officer's audience, constitute the most difficult and challenging rhetorical problem for the police officer. Hour by hour during a daily shift, officers carry the pressure of having to see from another's perspective. It is

Subject: Hey, listen, Jack. I don't have to take all this crap! I've shown you my ID and I passed your crummy tests. Why don't you just shove off!

Fitch: Yeah, it's tough, isn't it? We've had some lizard burglarizing the neighborhoods around here and you kind of fit the description. You been filling your pockets with other people's stuff, Jack?

Subject: That does it! You got nothing on me! I'm leaving! *(Subject turns and opens his car door to get in)*

Fitch *(Keeps car door from opening all the way):* You don't mind if we search your car, do you, Jack?

Subject *(Pushes Fitch aside and tries to slam the door):* Take off, asshole. I'm within my rights. You got nothing!

Fitch: Sure we do, stupid. We got assault and battery on a police officer. You're under arrest. Now, GET OUT. *(Fitch pulls subject from car and cuffs him, reading his rights while doing so)*

James *(Looks through car):* Nope, nothing here but big grocery bags. If he had anything he must have hidden it elsewhere.

Fitch: That's okay. Let's roll with this jerk and take some prints while we're at it, whatcha say?

Scene: *Officers roll with subject. Subsequently, the subject's prints prove a match for those found in a burglary case in Great Bend. Under questioning, the subject admits that he had been involved in the apartment house burglary and several others in the area. He told officers where he had hidden the stuff he took that night.*

THE PROFESSIONAL PROFILE 7

VERBAL JUDO has stressed the chameleon-like nature of police work: the ability to make oneself into what one must become to handle street encounters.

One underlying stress in this book has been that as a police officer, you are a professional partly because you are a knowledge worker who has to apply what you know under constantly varying and changing circumstances. Your ability to remain rhetorically flexible and shrewd in the face of tension and crisis is crucial to your safety and the safety of others. It is also what distinguishes you from the citizen; people call you because you possess the disinterest they lack. They need mediation. It is part of your professional profile.

So, too, is your "police perspective," the habit of seeing and reacting you develop from street experience. Like other professionals, you have a process of perceiving and responding to reality quite different from the outsider, the citizen. On the whole, such development is necessary and good; it is one of your strengths. It marks you as a pro, someone who knows how to deal with problems others cannot. You have a professional eye.

Yet, ironically, a latent danger exists in such perceptual development: you can lose yourself in your profession. Although your professional eye lets you see much that others can't, it also threatens to blind you to certain kinds of understanding, particularly the ability to see as others see. Surgeons forget what it's like to face an impeding operation, and lawyers forget the emotional trauma of testifying in court. Like these other professionals, you too can easily forget what it feels like to be stopped and questioned. In other words, profes-

sionalism, by its very nature, distances the practitioner from the non-practitioner.

One reason, then, that this book has argued for the rhetorical perspective, PAVPO, is that it insists that you never lose sight of the world as the other sees it. The acronym PAVPO reminds you, the practitioner, to see through the eyes of the subject, if only momentarily. A second value to PAVPO lies in its ability to help us "look harder" at an encounter. When we use it, it helps us not miss the necessary steps in scene analysis. It helps us be "ready."

But an acronym by itself is not inherently valuable; it is only valuable if you can make its meaning part of your automatic responses. One mark of your professionalism will be your ability to make the five rhetorical elements, PAVPO, part of your *system* of processing reality. PAVPO must become, in other words, part of your professional *struction,* not merely *instruction.* Consider, for example, another pro, the jet pilot. He habitually goes through a series of checks of his aircraft before he takes off; these "checks" are not written down — although they may have been in flight school — nor are they necessarily in the forefront of his consciousness. Automatically, almost unconsciously, he has internalized these steps. They have become part of his professional *struction.* PAVPO must become internalized in a similar manner; when this happens, you have turned instruction into *struction,* thereby streamlining your learning. Such streamlining makes for good spontaneous responses on the street. To possess this internalized process is another mark of the professional.

At this point we can say that as a police officer you share three criteria of professionalism with other professionals:

1. You are a knowledge worker who must apply your knowledge under constantly changing and varying circumstances.
2. You must be able to communicate effectively with those outside the profession.
3. You employ a process of action that requires *struction* as well as instruction.

But we know that being a police officer involves even more; it involves intense training in self-defense and weaponry. Along with your training in the law and police procedure, you receive hundreds of hours of instruction in the controlled use of force and firepower.

Verbal Judo has not addressed this part of your professional training, but a book on the use of words and verbal strategies cannot be complete without examining your professional necessity to occasionally use force. A full professional profile must suggest the proper blend of words and force.

The fourth criterion for professionalism is to know when to move from words to force. It is tempting to say that you should use force when your safety, or that of others, is directly threatened, for few would disagree. But the difficult question for the pro is, how can this necessity be determined? How can apparent threat be distinguished from real threat? One factor that makes police work so psychologically demanding is that there is no absolute answer to these questions. There is only probability. Such probability is determined by signs; one concrete sign of danger occurs when a subject couples aggressive *words* with *present ability.* A subject has present ability when he has the means and the opportunity to inflict injury. As a pro, you know that when a subject says he intends to hit you and he couples this verbal threat with an overt act, such as a lunge or some other violation of your private "space," you must be prepared to counter using force.

But situations are not always this clear. What about the subject who speaks non-aggressively while furtively reaching into his coat pocket? Here you face conflicting signs: words suggest one thing, but actions suggest another. Again you find yourself working in the area of probability. Depending on the general nature of the encounter, you will have to anticipate which to trust, but most experienced officers have learned to trust actions over words. A good street principle, then, might be stated like this: *when words and actions disagree, trust actions.* Although you must surely keep in mind that actions, too, can be misleading, whenever words and actions disagree you will be alert and ready to use force. This principle becomes part of your anticipatory mechanism that becomes internalized through repetition and experience.

You are *unlike* most other professionals in that you sometimes have to use force in the performance of your duty, but you are nevertheless *like* other professionals because when you make such responses you do so based on a professional process of decision making. You are not simply the victim of situation; you react accord-

ing to internalized anticipatory patterns, patterns that have been shaped by training and past experience. Above all, these patterns are sensitive to your professional eye, your ability to read a scene for its latent danger. Hence, as a professional, your use of force will be both *selective* — you will know what kind of force and how much to use — and *appropriate* to your professional purpose. You will use force in a controlled, purposeful manner.

The amateur officer lacks such control. He uses force when he is personally challenged, or verbally abused, or feels he has lost face, or has tensions he wants to release. He will allow force to control him. Once he has used force, he will continue to think in terms of force. By contrast, the professional officer knows that even though he may have had to use force during a certain street encounter, he may *return* to words and verbal strategies once the threat to his safety (or that of others) is over. This ability to *return to words as soon as possible* is the fifth criterion of professionalism. The officer who can do this is working in harmony with the principles of common sense and rhetorical sensitivity.

The professional also can recognize "the special case," the subject who is reacting to drugs or to mental illness. Police departments are doing more than ever to train their officers in how to handle these special cases. For you on the street, it is imperative that you possess the knowledge to recognize by a subject's overt action that he is being compelled by some substance or some disorder out of the ordinary. Although you may still have to respond with force to such subjects in order to restrain them, you must act consciously in the knowledge of these special circumstances. Having possession of such knowledge, you will know what special steps you must take to apprehend, to restrain, and to provide assistance.

The seventh criterion for professionalism is the ability to *evaluate your own performance.* Like other professionals, you are constantly being appraised and evaluated by superiors. Precisely because police work is so rhetorical, so dependent on situation and audience, good evaluation is so difficult, particularly if the evaluator wasn't on the scene at the time. How many times, when you were negatively evaluated by a superior, did you find yourself thinking, "But he wasn't there; he can't know what it is like?" The typical police supervisors, from "the old Sarge" to the chief, have risen through the ranks. They

have served their time on the street. But it is a fact that once a peer has risen to supervisory status, he ceases to be regarded by his former colleagues as a peer. He is different. He is "one of them," not "one of us."

The "old Sarge" ceases to be "one of us" because he wears a different pair of glasses; he finds himself concerned with new emphases: what the chief wants, what the public wants, what the statisticians want. Being held accountable by those above him, he now values accountability from those who work under him much more strongly. Good performance becomes defined as what he wants, what he thinks appropriate, and you find yourself thinking, "But he just doesn't know. . . ."

To be a professional you must be able to evaluate your own performance, both to yourself and to your supervisor. It first requires that you know why you did what you did in any given situation. You must develop the ability to be CONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT while you are performing so that later, in retrospect, you can review your actions intelligibly.

To be consciously aware of your own performance standards is a necessity. Professionals set their own criteria for good performance; they have that model in mind when they work. They keep that model constantly before them when they attempt an objective review of their performance after the fact. I suspect that much of the stress of police work, and perhaps a major cause of officer burnout, lies in an officer's inability to develop an appropriate and stable model for self-evaluation. The officer who repeatedly ends his day with questions that he finds he cannot successfully answer (Did I do the best I could given the situation? Did I have to use violence? Was there another way I could have handled the scene?) and who finds himself at the mercy of "the old Sarge's" estimates of the quality of his work is not going to last long as a professional. He must, like other professionals, learn to evaluate for himself the quality of his daily work.

Although every officer will have to develop his or her own performance model, let me suggest several criteria that ought to be part of such a model. First, use PAVPO to assess your work in review, as well as using it to guide your performance. Did you keep your *perspective* disinterested? Did you analyze your *audience* well? Did you adopt the proper *voice* to communicate? Did you keep *purpose* clearly

in mind? Did you *organize* your communication and your handling of the scene as skillfully as possible, given the present constraints? Through such a review you will be able to assess your rhetorical skill in the scene that you are evaluating.

Another measuring rod might be to ask yourself whether you eliminated the *source of conflict* that occasioned the call. Was the problem taken care of, or will the subject or problem continue to be trouble for some other officer? For example, you may have made an arrest that was necessary, but you may have done it in such a fashion that the next officer to contact the subject or to go into the area will have a very difficult time of it. In solving one problem, you may have caused others. Another way of putting this question is, how much negative fallout did I cause because of the way I responded? If you caused none that you can see, you should feel that, at least from this perspective, you acted professionally.

In objectifying the quality of your work, especially in scenes in which you had to use some form of violence, you should ask, "Did I employ that force selectively and appropriately? Did I use the most suitable type of force? Did I use just what I need for the occasion, or did I become excessive?" As a professional, you should have responded according to those internalized patterns of anticipation that we mentioned earlier; analyze whether in fact you reacted to these or whether you became a victim of circumstances — something a pro never wants to have happen.

More important than my analysis at this point, however, is your own as you read these pages. Fill in your own criteria for your total professional model. Ask yourself, "What other criteria do I consciously or unconsciously believe are important for me as a police officer? In order to feel good about myself as a professional, what must I manifest, how must I act?"

I will close with one final observation about job performance, one I believe most clearly distinguishes the professional from the amateur. You must be capable of sharing your evaluation of your own job performance with your superiors. You must be capable of *describing and characterizing your performance.* To me, this is the sign of being fully CONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT. Not only must you be able to describe what you did and why, but you should be able to show that what you did was based on a principle of professional ac-

tion, on the *struction* you have developed as a street officer. Amateurs at best are UNCONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT. That is, they may respond well to a given situation, but they will not be able to describe why they acted the way they did. Their successes are often chance and accident. A professional, by contrast, will be able to *describe* what he did and *characterize* his actions as part of a larger, more definable pattern of behavior. This is the full meaning of the phrase CONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT.

Your total professional profile, then, involves knowing how to use words skillfully and how to employ force selectively. By way of summary, a list of the major criteria of professionalism follows, but you must complete the profile for yourself. Although most citizens do now know (or do not appreciate) how fully professional police officers can be, you as the individual police officer must know. You must know for your own continued growth in the profession, and you should be able to define to others what it is you do and why you are proud to do it. In this way, not only will your department attract better and better recruits, but the message of your professionalism will gradually become understood and accepted by society at large. To move in such directions can only make society a safer and a more civil world in which to live.

A Checklist for the Professional Officer

- Professional officers apply knowledge under changing and varying circumstances.
- Professional officers communicate effectively with those outside the profession (PAVPO).
- Professional officers employ a process of action that relies on *struction* as well as *instruction.*
- Professional officers know when to move from words to force.
- Professional officers employ force both *selectively* and *appropriately* because they react according to an internalized process of decision making.
- Professional officers know that even if they have had to use force, they can return to the use of words as soon as possible.
- Professional officers can recognize the "special cases" where

subjects are driven beyond their control by mental illness or controlled substances.

- Professional officers can evaluate their own performance.
- Professional officers are capable of describing and characterizing their performance to their superiors.

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