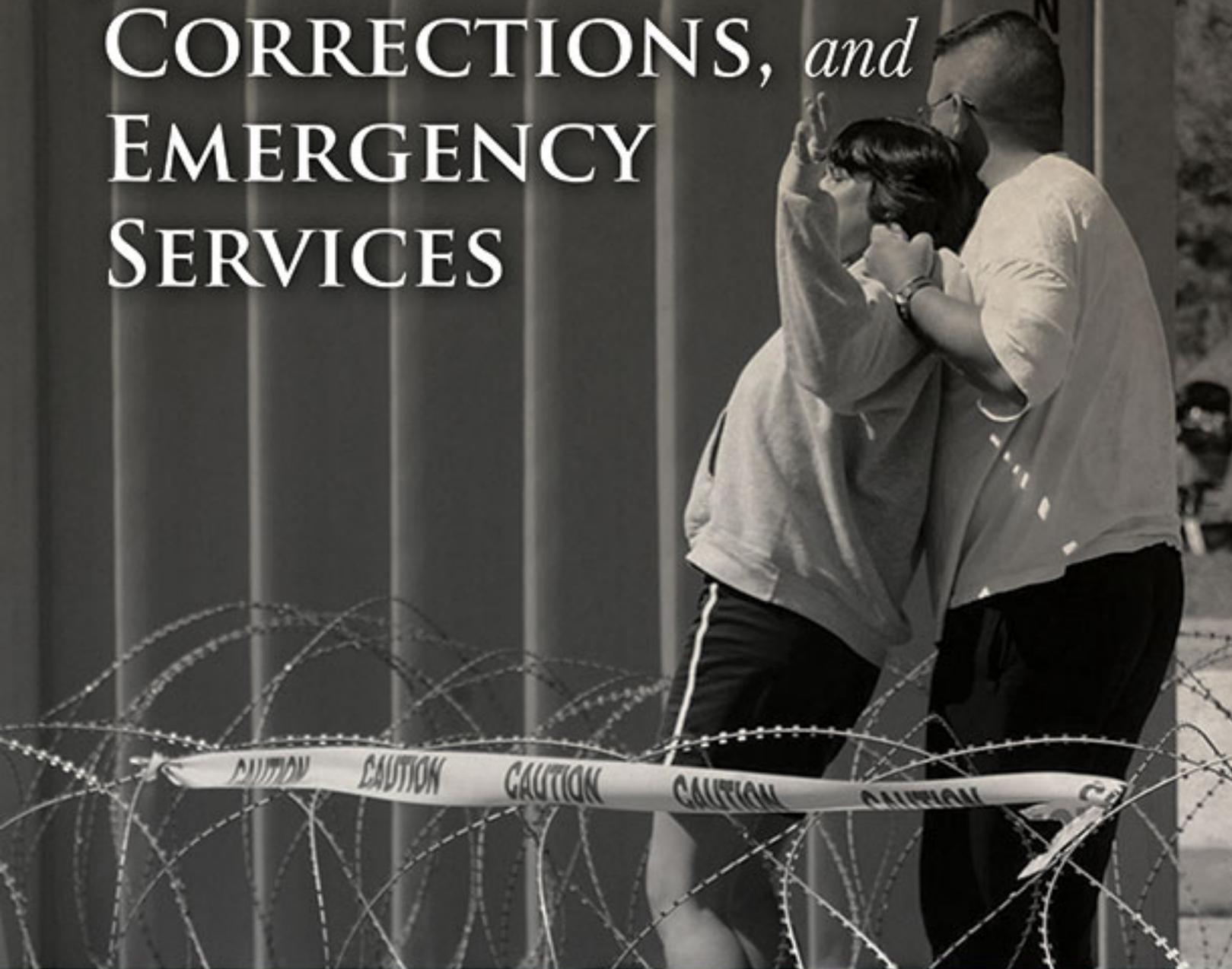


# CRISIS NEGOTIATION



*for* LAW ENFORCEMENT,  
CORRECTIONS, *and*  
EMERGENCY  
SERVICES



Crisis Intervention as Crisis Negotiation

**Arthur Slatkin**

**CRISIS NEGOTIATION FOR LAW  
ENFORCEMENT, CORRECTIONS,  
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. Arthur Slatkin** is a retired police and criminal psychologist in Louisville, Kentucky. He earned his Doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of Louisville in 1997. His professional work in psychology has been broad and varied. He has worked in the county jail, state corrections, and at the Louisville Metro Police Department, serving since 1986 as psychologist/mental health consultant on the hostage negotiation team. As an active member of the team, he has responded to hundreds of callouts involving hostage, barricade, and suicidal persons.

Dr. Slatkin trained at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, at the FBI's local field office, and with the NYPD pioneers of hostage negotiations, Harvey Schlossberg and Frank Bolz. He is the author of *Communication in Crisis and Hostage Negotiations* and *Training Strategies in Crisis and Hostage Negotiations* as well as numerous articles on hostage negotiations in several law enforcement publications.

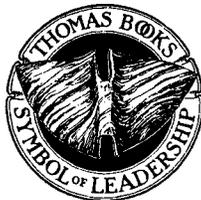
# CRISIS NEGOTIATION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, CORRECTIONS, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Crisis Intervention as Crisis Negotiation**

*By*

**ARTHUR SLATKIN, Ed.D**

*Police and Criminal Psychology  
Louisville Metro Police Department/Hostage Negotiation Team  
Louisville, Kentucky*



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*To the scores of officers of the Louisville Metro Police Department who have served on the Hostage Negotiation Team over the years of my tenure.*

*To my family for their love and support.*



## PREFACE

*Crisis Negotiation*, the third of three volumes, is meant to follow from the first two in a logic of my choosing. The first, *Communication in Crisis and Hostage Negotiation*, highlighted effective communication as the foundation of any human interaction, and the absolute keystone to crisis negotiations; the second book, *Training Strategies for Crisis Negotiations*, proffered a variety of training means and modes to develop skills and practice for operational effectiveness. This current book focuses on operational theory and practice for Negotiators by following a crisis intervention model for crisis negotiations.

*Crisis Negotiation for Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Emergency Services: Crisis Intervention as Crisis Negotiation* is the third in a series of handbooks principally for law enforcement, corrections, and emergency service Negotiators. My intention is to provide some depth and breadth of understanding for instructors, students, and, ultimately, line negotiators seeking excellence in their professional role of *hostage/crisis* negotiator. After 28 years as a police and correctional crisis negotiator and consultant, I have met hundreds of Negotiators; nearly none of them have any understanding of the roots, underpinnings, foundation, or structure of crisis intervention, the basis of crisis negotiations. In fairness to them, they have never been taught about it by those who had never themselves been taught it. For them, hostage negotiations is a stand-alone “thing” they do and from whence it comes is not their concern. Oddly, it has not hampered generations of police negotiators overall – their records of success are enviable. So why care? Why not leave well enough alone? You can’t argue with success. If it ain’t broke, why fix it?

Simply put, this book may not be for everyone – there are journeymen Negotiators who are “good enough” in most cases – but, I believe that those Negotiators who know more, and know more in depth and breadth what they are doing and why they are doing it, can apply their greater understanding of human behavior to be better than good enough. The real amalgam of art and the science of the field of crisis negotiations is knowledge in depth and its skillful, practical application in aid of others. This book is for those who want to be much more than just good enough; sometimes good enough is not enough.

*Hostage Negotiations*, as a law enforcement strategy, was introduced by Dr. Harvey Schlossberg, a working police detective and trained psychologist at the NYPD, after a spate of high-profile local and international incidents turned out badly, challenging police to develop more effective and life-preserving responses to high-profile and mundane public crises. Police tactics had been limited to violent tactical assault. Inevitably, when police kicked in a door, there were casualties – officers, hostages, bystanders, Subjects. In recognition of a failed one-option tactic, police officials tasked Dr. Schlossberg to develop an alternative strategy. Hostage negotiations was born of a mix of the wisdom from law enforcement experience and psychological principles; the strategies, tactics, and techniques developed by Dr. Schlossberg are grounded in sound police and psychological sciences and practices. Captain Frank Bolz, also of the NYPD, and his ESU teams field tested the new approaches.

Dr. Schlossberg has described the actions of hostage takers (barricaded Subjects, and public suicide-threateners) as “maladaptive,” that is, in an effort to cope with changing life circumstances, personal and external events, and demanding and stressful situations, a Subject attempts to maintain equilibrium or balance. In so doing, a person chooses a way or means that is unhelpful, makes things worse, or fails because of his or her poor judgment. People’s actions, and the poor judgment underlying, can be self-injurious, homicidal, or irrational. They may have turned a misdemeanor into a felony, so-to-speak. Clearly, it becomes the realm of both law enforcement officers *and* mental health professionals; each brings experience, expertise, and in the case of the police, a legal mandate to act in regard to breaches of public order.

Early on, a jurisdictional dispute arose among the two camps – the police and the mental health professional community; each saw their expertise as more expert! In the end, the legal mandate could not be abridged nor traded off and so, law enforcement remained in charge of crisis management. Mental Health Professionals (MHP) were relegated largely to training police in grounded psychological and crisis intervention theory and practice. MHP bring a winning strategy – Crisis Negotiation – a derivative of the successful Crisis Intervention treatment modality.

This book, like the other two: *Communication in Crisis and Hostage Negotiations: A Handbook for Law Enforcement, Corrections and Emergency Service Personnel in Managing Critical Incidents* and, *Training Strategies for Crisis and Hostage Negotiations: Scenario Writing and Creative Variations in Role Play*, are written principally to enhance Negotiator confidence and competence, well-grounded in the deliberate and effective use of self as an intervener and Negotiator in critical incidents.

The history of crisis negotiations should be taught and learned if negotiators are to grow the field and grow in the field. A true story: When I wrote

my first book, I asked Captain Frank Bolz and Harvey Schlossberg, as I had trained briefly with both, to each write a quotable blurb to promote the book. About the ideas and content of the book, Frank wrote that “It might work in a psychologist’s examining room but that that stuff wouldn’t work in the dark hallway of a tenement building with a cardboard megaphone.” Harvey, on the other hand, was more sanguine; he thought “it was what was needed to add to the evolving science of a new and vital field.” In light of the changes you have witnessed in police science and technology and the constant striving (demands) to do more and better (often with less), I’ll let you decide whether getting better at saving lives is an imperative. I believe it is.

This book, like the other two, is distilled from my many experiences: jail and prison psychologist, crisis counselor and psychotherapist, and, mostly from my 28 years as mental health consultant for the Louisville Metro Police Department’s (LMPD) Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT). In the 28 years with the HNT, I responded to 12 to 15 callouts a year (do the math).

A. S.



# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Preface</i> .....	vii
<b>PART I – NEGOTIATION AS CRISIS INTERVENTION, CRISIS INTERVENTION AS NEGOTIATION</b>	
Introduction .....	5
<i>Chapter</i>	
1. NEGOTIATION AS CRISIS INTERVENTION, CRISIS INTERVENTION AS NEGOTIATION .....	9
Crisis Intervention .....	9
<i>Roberts’ Seven-Stage Crisis Intervention Model</i> .....	13
<i>Hostage Negotiation as Crisis Intervention and Negotiation</i> .....	15
<i>Differences in Crisis Intervention and Crisis Negotiation</i> .....	18
Summary .....	18
2. STAGE I: RAPIDLY ESTABLISH RAPPORT AND A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP .....	19
Rapport .....	20
<i>Respectful Engagement</i> .....	22
<i>Engagement: Tolerance, Acceptance, Suspension of Judgment, and Empathy</i> .....	23
<i>Some Helpful Negotiator Qualities</i> .....	24
Effective Communication .....	25
<i>Voice Quality</i> .....	26
<i>Tone</i> .....	26
<i>Breath Control</i> .....	26
<i>Pitch, Meter, Rate, Intensity, Fluency, Manner</i> .....	27
<i>Loaded Words and Phrases</i> .....	27
<i>NLP, Representative Systems, and Mimesis</i> .....	28
<i>Lying</i> .....	29

	<i>Active Listening</i> . . . . .	31
	<i>Suicide Prevention</i> . . . . .	33
	<i>Use of Humor</i> . . . . .	33
	<i>Self-Disclosure</i> . . . . .	34
	<i>What Not to Say</i> . . . . .	35
	<i>Signs of Rapport and Indicators of Progress</i> . . . . .	36
	Summary . . . . .	38
3.	STAGE II: CONDUCT CRISIS, BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL AND LETHALITY ASSESSMENTS . . . . .	39
	<i>Situational Incident Assessment</i> . . . . .	41
	<i>Assessment of the Person</i> . . . . .	45
	Lethality . . . . .	48
	<i>Resistance</i> . . . . .	50
	<i>Beyond the Content</i> . . . . .	51
	Summary . . . . .	51
4.	STAGE III: IDENTIFY THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OR CRISIS PRECIPITANTS . . . . .	53
	<i>Sample Dialog</i> . . . . .	57
	Summary . . . . .	58
5.	STAGE IV: EXPLORE FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS . . . . .	59
	<i>Some Considerations</i> . . . . .	61
	<i>Active Listening</i> . . . . .	62
	<i>Reframing</i> . . . . .	66
	<i>Resistance</i> . . . . .	66
	Summary . . . . .	67
6.	STAGE V: GENERATE AND EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES . . . . .	69
	<i>Baseline</i> . . . . .	70
	<i>Alternative Behavior and Options</i> . . . . .	72
	<i>Brainstorming</i> . . . . .	73
	<i>Sample Interventions</i> . . . . .	73
	<i>Looking Backward, Looking Forward</i> . . . . .	74
	<i>Sample Dialogs</i> . . . . .	75
	<i>Giving Advice</i> . . . . .	75
	<i>Resistance</i> . . . . .	76
	<i>A Plan</i> . . . . .	77
	Summary . . . . .	77

7. STAGE VI: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ACTION PLAN . . . . .	79
<i>Sample Dialog.</i> . . . . .	83
Summary . . . . .	83
8. STAGE VII: FOLLOW-UP. . . . .	85
Summary . . . . .	87
<b>Part II – HOSTAGE, BARRICADE, AND SUICIDAL SUBJECT NEGOTIATIONS</b>	
Introduction. . . . .	97
9. HOSTAGE SITUATIONS AS CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS . . . . .	99
Demands . . . . .	101
Negotiable versus Nonnegotiable Demands . . . . .	102
<i>Negotiation Strategies, Stratagems, Tactics, and Techniques</i> . . . . .	103
<i>Strategies.</i> . . . . .	103
<i>Tactics.</i> . . . . .	104
<i>Stratagems.</i> . . . . .	105
<i>Techniques.</i> . . . . .	106
<i>Stockholm Syndrome.</i> . . . . .	107
<i>The Process</i> . . . . .	108
<i>Power and Control.</i> . . . . .	108
Summary . . . . .	108
10. SUICIDE AND ASSAULT: DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS . . . . .	111
<i>Some Principles</i> . . . . .	115
<i>Intervention Strategies for Dealing with a Suicidal or Homicidal Person.</i> . . . . .	116
<i>Contracting for Safety.</i> . . . . .	117
<i>Interrupt the Plan by Removing the Means</i> . . . . .	117
<i>Encourage Ventilation Cautiously.</i> . . . . .	118
<i>Reality versus Fantasy</i> . . . . .	119
<i>Explore Alternatives.</i> . . . . .	120
<i>An Instrumental Negotiator</i> . . . . .	120
<i>Plumb Meaning and Purpose</i> . . . . .	121
<i>Reasons to Live and Die</i> . . . . .	122
<i>Inculcating Hope</i> . . . . .	123
<i>Reigniting Self-Reliance and Self-Efficacy.</i> . . . . .	123

<i>Power and Control</i> .....	125
Summary .....	125
11. BARRICADED SUBJECT SITUATIONS .....	127
<i>Considerations</i> .....	128
<i>Further Considerations</i> .....	130
<i>Strategies and Tactics</i> .....	130
<i>Subject Strategy</i> .....	134
<i>Power and Control</i> .....	134
Summary .....	135
<i>References</i> .....	137

**CRISIS NEGOTIATION FOR LAW  
ENFORCEMENT, CORRECTIONS,  
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**



**PART I**

**NEGOTIATION AS CRISIS  
INTERVENTION, CRISIS  
INTERVENTION AS NEGOTIATION**



## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, instructing police and corrections officers in hostage negotiations, I have often introduced my presentation with this: Earlier in my career, as a psychologist at the county jail, I had an experience that brought my professional practice to the edge of an understanding of crisis and hostage negotiations. My duties and responsibilities included the assessment and short-term treatment of pre-trial detainees, misdemeanants serving time, and convicted felons awaiting transfer to state prison. The welfare, health and safety of inmates, staff, and the security of the institution and the public, and the preservation of property constituted my daily concerns; it entailed seeing most new inmates, particularly those with mental health or substance abuse problems (most inmates!) and following-up on those seen previously. I was ethically bound to treat everyone without regard to their charges and without discrimination; they were my “patients.”

An 18-year-old manchild, undernourished, acne marked, and, by all appearances, of low intelligence and educational attainment (high school dropout) was referred to me for evaluation of his risk for suicide. He was charged with the rape of a six-month-old – a shocking crime that involved the penetration of this female infant. He had been asked by the child’s mother, a neighbor, to babysit, as he was always available – an inadequate adolescent who had no friends and no social skills or outlets; he was by himself on that weekend night. He watched television as he smoked pot. The baby woke from sleep fitfully and cried. He tried to quiet the fretful infant by dandling her on his lap. The wet diaper, the warmth, and the pressure on his genitals caused a physiological, mechanical event – he got an erection. The disinhibition of the marijuana in this inadequate young man nudged him toward the sexual abuse of someone so vulnerable. A horrific crime for reasons well understood by my audiences. It pained me in what then was the worst