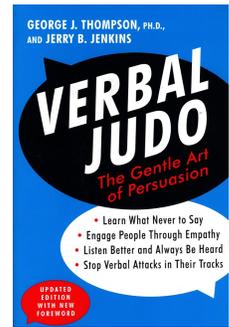


Verbal Judo

George J. Thompson & Jerry B. Jenkins (2013)



Notes by Bob Evely
Wilmore, Kentucky; 2021.

[Note: Thompson started his career as a police officer at age 35. He later became a college English literature professor, and a black belt in both judo and tae kwon do karate. He founded his Verbal Judo Institute primarily to train police officers – how to use their mouths instead of their nightsticks and guns. But his techniques also apply in the sales and customer service profession, as well as other walks of life.]

Let them save face

Learn to talk with people in such a way that neither of you loses face. (23)

Move WITH your opponent

The first principle of physical judo is to not resist your opponent. Instead, move with them and redirect their energy. In communications, ignoring or dismissing a question is the same as resisting it. It's important to always answer, rather than dismiss the question when someone asks "why."

Instead, leap into those questions, turn them into outrageous opportunities. See questions as invitations to explain yourself, to tell what you do, to fill someone in on your views. Here's the chance to educate a person, to win their respect, and provide them with deeper understanding so they won't go away angry. (33)

In judo, you're moving with the opponent – using their momentum to pull them off balance and then propel them to the ground. (79)

Difficult people

Difficult people built this country. We need to allow room in our system for them and their questions. If you can carry this mind-set with you, one that appreciates other people's sense of dignity and self-worth, curiosity, and healthy suspicion, you'll never be upset by people who initially challenge your authority. (34)

Become competent in words and body language

Verbal Judo teaches you to become consciously competent in both the use of words and in your nonverbal presence. (49)

Prisoners – and sadly, millions of other people who are not criminals – have never heard words that would make them feel good about themselves. They've never heard gentle encouragement or praise. Their lives have been full of relentless taunts, criticisms, and put-downs. (50)

The most powerful concept

The most powerful concept in the English language: *empathy*. You don't have to approve of the other person. And you certainly aren't required to agree with what they say. To empathize means to understand – to see thru the eyes of another. (53)

People under the influence

We all deal with people "under the influence" nearly every day. If it's not alcohol or drugs, it's frustration, fear, impatience, lack of self-worth, defensiveness, and a host of other influences.

Doesn't it make sense that we should develop a state of mind that will allow us to skillfully interact with these people? (61)

A habit of mind

A samurai warfare state of mind called *mushin* is the ability to stay calm, read your opponent, and attempt to redirect their aggression in a more positive way. The English word for *mushin* is disinterested (*impartial*).

The judo principle of controlling things is going along with them – mastery thru adaptation. (62)

Strip phrases

A strip phrase is a deflector that strips the insult of its power. “Well *I appreciate that*, sir, but I need to see your license.” You can *appreciate* where the other person is coming from – empathizing and trying to work with them. (63)

With a strip phrase you are responding, and not reacting, to the problem – keeping your cool and remaining professional. (64)

Immediately after the strip phrase (e.g. I appreciate that) there comes the “but.” After the word “but” use only words that serve your professional purpose. Everything after the “but” is designed to get the job done. (“I understand that sir, BUT I need to see your driver's license.”)

When you sense that the strip phrase might be a danger in itself, because the person is agitated that you're clearly deflecting and not dealing with the conflict at hand, skip the strip phrase and deal with the issues immediately. (65)

Principles for dealing with difficult people

Let the person say what they want as long as they do what you say. Insulting people don't mean what they're saying anyway, so what do you care what they say? They are upset.

Always go for the win/win solution.

Always treat the other person as you would want to be treated under identical conditions, even if they are not worthy of your respect. (67)

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase is to put another person's meaning into your words and deliver it back to them. You are stating things in your own words, which will be calmer. (69)

The benefits of paraphrasing?

- ✓ You've hooked the other person, and they're listening.
- ✓ You've taken control.
- ✓ The other person will see you're trying to understand.

After the paraphrase, immediately follow up with something like, “OK, *you're feeling X because of Y – true?*” (71)

Using “the sword of insertion”

The sword of insertion is to put a wedge into the harangue – like “*Whoa!*” or “*Listen!*” (spoken earnestly), or “*Wait a second.*” (70)

The ultimate empathetic sentence

"Let me be sure I heard what you just said." This simple sentence is so empathetic, so full of conciliation and cooperation. What you're really saying is, "Let me be sure I understand you." (70)

Force options

When force options are necessary to generate voluntary compliance, the first is your mere presence – the way you show up, the way you approach, carry yourself, stand around – even the way you project your feelings onto your face. (81)

Delivery

90% of your success will lie in your delivery style, not the words used. (85)

Explaining why

Of ten difficult people, at least seven will do what you ask if you only tell them why. (86)

Provide options

By providing options, you leave the power of choice with the other person. (88)

A powerful sentence

"Is there anything I can say or do at this time to earn your cooperation?" And always follow up with, "I'd sure like to think there is." Notice how pleasant and positive this is. It's so pleasant it keeps them off balance. (89)

Translation

Translation is the ability to put what you say in the most proper, fitting, assertive, and powerful words possible. The goal is to put the precise meaning in your mind into your listener's mind. (99)

Take the responsibility to be a good communicator. Get people to listen by the power and manner with which you send your message. (103)

Mediation

The essence of mediation lies in the personal appeal – the ability to reach people by putting what you want them to do in terms of what they have to gain or lose. It is the ability to skillfully present options. (111)

See yourself as a professional

You can learn to take more verbal abuse with greater style if you begin to see yourself as a professional who treats people with dignity and respect. (113)

People don't go around thinking they're irrational, especially when they truly are. So never put a person down. Focus on the goal of gaining voluntary compliance, and always allow a person to save face. (113)

You may think you're handling a situation well and are being professional, but if the other person sees you as pushy and aggressive, as ineffective, biased, and intemperate, where does the truth lie? It lies with how you're seen and not with how you see yourself – even if you're right. They will react based on how they see it, not how I see it. (114)

Three elements of communication

There are three elements of communication.

- ✓ The content carries roughly 7-10% of the impact.
- ✓ Your voice carries 33-40%
- ✓ Other nonverbals make up 50-60% of your impact.

On the phone, content still only carries 7-10% and your voice makes up the rest. (115)

As for voice, the most important element is tone. The other elements are pace, pitch, and modulation. (118)

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of verbal appeal or verbal persuasion. It is the art of finding the right means and the right words to generate voluntary compliance. (121)

Preparation → Certainty

The more thoroughly you know what you know, the more powerfully you will present it. You will have an aura of certainty that comes only with preparation.

Consider your audience. Analyze to whom you will be speaking. How do they think? Who are their constituents? What will their objections be? Put yourself in their shoes. (123)

Purpose

Purpose is your bottom line – the result you must professionally achieve. You’d be surprised at the number of people who go into a presentation or an argument concerned only with preparing, knowing their audience, using their voice properly, and being satisfied that they have done these things – only to realize later that they did not achieve their purpose. If all you care about is the means and not the end, you’ll be thrilled if you perform well. But I want to see the purpose achieved. (125)

Organization

Organization is simply how you want the encounter to unfold from beginning to middle to end. (126)

Win them over

Make it your goal, your business, to win the person over. Remain professional and keep your eyes on the purpose. You want what the customer wants – satisfaction and a happy result. Let nothing stand in the way of that. (130)

“I’m absolutely certain we can work this out to your complete satisfaction. My name is _____ and my job here is to get to the bottom of just these types of matters. Let me tell you what information will be most helpful in being sure this is taken care of.” Then ...

“Based on what you’ve told me, here is what I am prepared to do.” (131)

The language of calming people down

Consider the language of calming people down – the language of reassurance. It consists of *empathy*. Empathy absorbs tension. Empathize, empathize, empathize. (140)

Show respect and dignity. Take your hat off. Show people respect. (141)

While empathizing essentially means standing in the shoes of another or seeing thru the eyes of another, I’m not suggesting you have to agree with that person.

There are four types of appeals you can make to get people to voluntarily comply with your wishes.

- ✓ Ethical
- ✓ Reasonable. First calm them, then try logic.
- ✓ Personal. You’re putting what you want them to do in terms of what they have to gain or lose.
- ✓ Practical. The use of offbeat strategies, like humor, redirection, refocusing.

Empathizing will help determine which of these might be most effective initially. (154)

Questions

General questions and opinion-seeking questions do more to generate voluntary compliance. They make you appear empathetic, caring, open, and unbiased. Direct and leading questions anger people much of the time. The moment you see in the eyes of someone that they’re becoming tense, they’re probably feeling attacked. That’s the time to move back to a general question. (158)

Summarizing

Summarizing must have three qualities. It must be brief, concise, and above all inarguable. (159)

Personalization

Give your name. This gesture personalizes the dispute and shows there is no fear of being identified and being accountable for our decisions.

Slow it down. Give it some weight and sincerity. (168)

Praise

The misunderstood motivator is praise. It makes one feel understood and appreciated. But suspicion of praise is universal because it so frequently precedes criticism.

Effective and genuine praise does far more than make people feel good. They tend to do voluntarily what they are praised for.

Praise must be believable. It must never be followed by criticism. If you must, criticize first, then leave them with praise. And make praise as specific as possible. (173)

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