

The sad fact was, he didn't have any phrases. He told me I should be more persuasive, more reasonable, and try other tactics, but I left with no concrete examples. All he said was, "Don't let it happen again." I went home, snapping like a Doberman. I'd come in for a letter of commendation and gone away with a condemnation, so I was not a happy camper.

The only thing I learned that night was that there was something I didn't know. I didn't have a clue to the goal of persuasion. That's why I teach it now. I don't teach reasoning, I don't teach argument, I don't teach debate. I don't even teach logic. I teach the lost art of persuasion, how to effect voluntary compliance.

Because of my frustration and the newspaper-and-phone approach used by Bruce Fair several days later, I soon began to learn more about communication on the streets than I ever had learned in a college classroom. It was clear that the vast majority of police work was verbal, not physical. Recent studies have shown that police work is 97 to 98 percent verbal interaction. (It's even higher in most other professions.)

As I analyzed the verbal and nonverbal communication of the cops I worked with, patterns began to emerge. There were peacemakers and troublemakers, some officers who could end a brawl with a few choice words and others who virtually started fights by lumbering on to the scene as if ready to take on all comers.

Different cops used different styles, but the effective ones invariably employed the same profound and—I believed—definable principles I knew from the martial arts. I soon realized that these principles worked in all sorts of situations. They could help anybody get what he or she wanted—whether that meant arresting a thug without a fight or persuading a storekeeper to issue a refund. If I was right, the same principles would work on everything from soothing an angry boss to motivating an MTV addict to do her homework.

After five and a half years of police work, I went back to teach for a year at Emporia State. This time I stayed away from all the committees. I wanted books, students, a class-