De-Escalation
Jedi Conflict Resolution

Part I: Introduction

Introduction

• Behaviors may become escalated when they are presented with feelings, circumstances or situations with which they are unable to cope.

• If you choose the quick and easy path as Vader did…you will become an agent of evil.

• How it works

• Effective de-escalation techniques feel abnormal. We are intuitively driven into “fight or flight” mode when scared. However, in de-escalation, we can do neither. We must appear centered and calm even when we are terrified. Therefore these techniques must
be practiced before they are needed so that they can become “second nature”.

• When do people become violent?

DeBecker’s “JACA” formula:

  ▪ Justified
  ▪ No Alternative
  ▪ No regard for Consequences
  ▪ Able

   *Adapted from DeBecker, G. (1997). *The Gift of Fear*

**Identifying Escalation**

  ▪ Raised Voice
  ▪ High-pitched Voice
  ▪ Rapid Speech
  ▪ Pacing
  ▪ Excessive Sweating
  ▪ Balled Fists
  ▪ Excessive Hand Gestures
  ▪ Erratic
- Movements
- Fidgeting
- Aggressive Posture
- Shaking

• Be aware of the dark side.  
  Anger...fear...aggression

**Part II: Self-Awareness**

**Jedi Mind Trick**

• You must be in control of yourself

• First element of de-escalating yourself is to admit to yourself that you can be emotional and irrational. This undermines the fanatical dogma and power of telling yourself that YOU ARE BEING REASONABLE!

Anger is one letter short of danger

• "You don't know the power of the dark side!"

• Signs the Dark side is winning

• You start to like or dislike an individual

• You feel disrespected, challenged or insulted
• Your focus changes from fixing the problem to proving that you're right
• You seek an excuse to dismiss the other person words and views

Part III: Why it works

How information is stored
• Memories of similar emotional content is more easily accessed in the same emotional state
• For example, think angry thought and angry memories will be more easily thought of
• The same applies to other emotions including sadness
• You need to help the person out of the negative thoughts
• The Pink Elephant
• Don’t think about the Pink Elephant
• When you ask someone not to think about it, it is all they can think about
• Consequently, we want to distract them, not instruct them on their thoughts

Communication (Mehrabian)
• Words account for 7%
• Tone of voice accounts for 38%
• Body language accounts for 55% of the liking

Culture-based Conflict
• US and Canadian culture is concerned with communication among disputants, problem solving and coming to an agreement
• Win-Win is important

Many Non-Western Cultures
• Other cultures such as Afghanistan, Vietnam and China are also concerned with finding a Win-Win
• Communication between disputants that explicitly addresses the issues at stake in the conflict can be perceived as very rude, making the conflict worse and delaying resolution
Non-Western Cultures
In some cultures when having a conflict collective thinking plays a large role

• How to talk someone down
• Non-verbal
  Panicking never helps
• Verbal
  Attempt to remain calm and think

Part IV: Non-Verbal De-escalation

Non-verbal De-Escalation
Being R2-D2

How R2 Does it
  1. Appear calm
  2. Maintain limited eye contact.
  3. Maintain a neutral facial expression.
  4. Keep a relaxed and alert posture.
  5. Minimize body movements.

“Control, control. You must learn control.” - Yoda

  6. Position yourself for safety:
Never turn your back for any reason
Maintain a distance of at least two arms’ length.
If possible, casually position yourself behind a barrier such as a sofa, desk, large chair, counter, table, or other large object.
Position yourself closer to the room entrance than the escalated person if indoors.
7. Always be at the same eye level.
8. Do point or shake your finger.
9. Do not touch them.

Thinking and Talking like Yoda
Verbal De-Escalation: Reasoning with an enraged person is not possible. The first and only objective in de-escalation is to reduce the level of arousal so that discussion becomes possible.

**Part V: Verbal De-Escalation**

**Verbal De-Escalation**
1. Goal: bring the level of arousal down
2. Use a calm tone of voice
3. Do not get loud or try to yell over a screaming person.
4. Do not be defensive even if comments or insults are directed at you.
5. Be very respectful even when firmly setting limits or calling for help.
6. Answer only informational questions no matter how rudely asked.
7. Be honest. However, do not volunteer information which may further upset the person.
8. Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, but respectful tone. Give choices, where possible, in which both alternatives are safe.
9. Empathize with feelings but not with the behavior.
10. Suggest alternative behaviors where appropriate
11. Do not solicit how a person is feeling or interpret feelings in an analytic way.
12. Do not try to argue or convince.
13. List consequences of inappropriate behavior without threats or anger.
15. Trust your instincts.

A Jedi gains power through understanding and a Sith gains understanding through power. PALPATINE, *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*

- Emotional Ties
- Use their name
- Make a connection, find common ground, “What do you enjoy doing?”
- Focus on commonalities not differences
- Ask about their future dreams and plans
- Anger out of fear or real anger
- “You're asking me to be rational. That is something I know I cannot do. Believe me, I wish I could just wish away my feelings, but I can't.”
- Practice
• You must practice in front of a mirror or video camera to be effective at doing this.

The fear of loss is a path to the Dark Side.-Yoda Episode III

**The words to use**

• Hearing
• Doing or Kinesthetic Learners
• Visual Learners.

**Visual Learners:** These people create mind movies and learn best through the use of visual aids, flip-charts, video-tapes, basically any medium that is graphically presented to them.

**Hearing:** Some people learn best by hearing lectures, engaging in discussions, or listening to audio tapes.

**Doing or Kinesthetic Learners:** Others are very good at learning by doing and exploring; practice exercises, role-plays, or group activities where people interact with others.
Examples of Things to Say

• How did you know my middle name?
• What would you like to order?
• What would you like to change?
• What do I need to change right now?
• Examples
• George, let me get this right. You are pissed off because If these things cannot change what are you going to do?
• What is the first thing you are going to do when you leave?
• What do you like to do for fun?

More Distracters

• Apology for you are feeling really bad
• “I feel like throwing a chair.”—thank him for telling you.
• Just threw a chair. Thank you so much for not throwing it at me and having a lousy aim
“George, I am having a really slow day. Help me understand this.”

Never say, “Stop that!”

“Please have a seat.”—mentally cannot attend both

Make Them Laugh

Even more Distracters

George I know this is not going the way you want it to, but I need you to have a seat.

“Your fly is down, barn yard is open.”

“I could really use one of those burritos right now.”

“Can I get you a glass of water?” (Dehydration EPS)

Part VI: Summary

SAVES

Space

Assertive posture
• Voice steady
• Eye contact
• Safe stance
• Summary
• Look like R2-D2
• Think and talk like Yoda
• Practice these techniques in front of a mirror
• Compile a list of distractive statements that feel natural to you.
• “Mind what you have learned…Save you it can.”-Yoda