



SUE PIVETTA, EDITOR

911 TRAINING CONNECTION

A MAGAZINE FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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AN EVER GROWING 911 HIRING CRISIS!

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THE HOUSE IS FALLING

IMPROVING YOUR REPUTATION

NO, YOU CAN TALK TO HER, SHE REALLY LISTENS

Supervisors! When working with someone with something to say, sometimes we do not follow good habits of listening to make the other feel as though they are heard. The result? The talker:

- a) repeats the story ad nauseum
- b) gets 'stuck' in the feeling or problem
- c) leaves with the same feeling or problem they came in with

This defeats the purpose of going to someone to vent. Will they come back? Not likely, they will stuff it — the result of stuffing? *Resentment and negativity.* Of course then we can all complain how so many workers are negative.

Follow these beginning listening how-to and eventually these purposeful actions will actually help you 'really' listen someday.

1. **Put your work away**, get out from behind a desk, ignore the phone, do not look away, ask people to not interrupt — go through the motions of giving the person the impression that what they have to say is of some importance to you.

2. **Bite your tongue.** Listen, really listening means that you do not talk. When your mouth opens, your ears shut. Stop the bad habit of interrupting no matter how much you want to, have something valuable to say, need to say — whatever. Wait until that person stops talking — totally. Or when that person asks you question they actually want answered — then talk.

3. **Smile or look pleasant** and lean forward. Try it, it's magic, look into someone's face.

4. **Ask a question**, even if you don't have one. But make sure it's relevant or hasn't been answered.

5. **Say nothing** until you do this, "So what I hear you saying is....." Repeat everything you heard almost like a grocery list. I did this recently to five people I interviewed and they were so grateful at being heard there was actual surprise on their faces.

BEING A BETTER SUPERVISOR

...when you expect a lot from them - Overtime

Be the one to bring it up. Recognize that OT is hard and make sure your people know that you recognize how hard they're working. Acknowledge their sacrifices and losses. It isn't true that is you don't mention it they won't thinking about it. To be sure,

they're thinking about it — they just internalize — causing stress and burn out. Sharing emotions is like exposing mold to sunlight — dries them up.


Make sure they know why. Workers are much more likely to do something if they know why. Explain the full picture and then ask the favor or place the burden of mandatory OT. This helps to gain a buy in or at least give them some sense of being an adult.

Give them extras. Ask if there is anything they need, anything you can do to make this easier. Maybe not, but you've asked. If you don't have the ability to give them what they feel would help them out — at least tell them you will recommend that to the right authority. Be an advocate.

Help if you can. Ask – anything that you can do – extra break – go get food – offer a treat – share a book – to let them know you want them to feel rewarded for this additional burden.

Don't make promises you can't keep. Offering time off later, or comp time or other incentives that aren't solid can be damaging. People would rather have the cold hard truth than be disappointed and lose faith.

Supervisors Recommended Reading
"Leadership by Encouragement"
 Don Dinkmeyer, Ph. D,
 St. Lucie Press



200 ? Challenge
 Test Your Trainee
WWW.911TRAINER.COM



Destination Unknown **Is Yours?**

911 Spirit

Today you are on the choo choo train of life. The track you chose leads you somewhere, but where? Your choices up to this time led you here, are you in a good place? If not, get off at the next stop and buy a ticket elsewhere. Sounds so easy, not so easy to do you say? Probably one of the most misunderstood facts of life is free will. Free will allows us to do what we want in our human life. How powerful is it? Free will is so powerful that we can witness its power in the news every day. We (humans) can choose to murder a baby — or— jump in a raging river to save a stranger. That is free will.

I Choose My Consequences

Our free will is so strong, we can even manipulate matter. We can change our own flesh through diet and exercise — even surgery should we choose to. Many of us feel trapped in our own body — yet maybe there is a different way to think about this. How about — I chose this body — and now what I learn from designing my body is patience, persistence, and determination.

Many of us feel trapped in ‘our own’ life. Yet your life is of your choosing. When you are a child, you relinquish free will to those more powerful, those who ‘know-what-is-best-for-you’. As an adult,

you know what is in your heart, mind and soul. You know your special needs, likes, dislikes and dreams. The incredible thing about being human is that we are all so unique. That uniqueness allows you to be different than others who may think they know what is best for you. They do not, unless of course what you are doing is self-destructive. But, even self-destructive behavior and acts are the gift of free will.

I Have No Choice

Think about free will and the things you do “because you feel you must”. You most likely *must* because you choose to. Often we hold consequences as our captor. “I would not get out of bed today if the consequences of missing work were not so harsh.” Your choice is not to face the consequences — you certainly could if you wished. Many of the women in prison that I work with made choices that resulted in dire consequences. Why did they make these choices? Does it matter, the consequences were theirs. You are today a sum total of your choices. How did I get here? Does it matter? The consequences are yours and so is the future and future choices and consequences.

When you make change for the better you are accepting the positive consequences. A person I know lost 40 pounds in the last six

months. Her choices in food and exercise has led her to this place — which is a better place for her. Her choices resulted in wonderful consequences. All choices result in consequences, it’s about your perception of the consequences. She could have perceived the loss of chips, and cake as dire consequences of committing to this diet. The difference? Which loss was greater? The loss of the pleasure of the food, or the loss of self esteem and physical comfort? She chose self esteem and physical comfort over food. Sounds too simple. The choice can be simple.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was traveling on a train. When asked for his ticket, he fumbled around, discovering it lost. The conductor was aware that this was the Justice and told him, “Don’t worry, Mr. Holmes. I’m sure you have your ticket somewhere. If you don’t find it during the trip, just mail it in to the railroad when you reach your destination.”

Appreciative, Holmes looked up and responded: “Young man, my problem is not finding my ticket. It’s finding out where in the world I’m going.”

What train are you on and do you know the destination? It’s your choice and it is that simple.

Emergency Communications - The Greatest Job On Earth!

Recommended Reading

“Free Will”

Mark Thurston, Ph. D.,
\$12.95





POISON! CONDEMNATION BEFORE INVESTIGATION

Some years ago I ran into the idea of condemnation before investigation. It just floored me. As a self directed learner in this world, I always took pride that I never did 'group think'. I could not be one of those Jones followers who swallowed poison at the direction of my leaders. I was an independent thinker, or so I thought. But then this little article about the McDonald's case came to me and I surprised myself that I was participating in group think in that I had formulated an opinion before I had all the facts.

My opinion before reading this? That some ridiculous woman sued McDonald's for something that was her own fault, her own responsibility and that we are sue-happy in the USA and the jury must have been out to lunch on this one. What were they all thinking? My opinion after reading this – well – read on.

THE ACTUAL FACTS ABOUT THE MCDONALD'S' COFFEE CASE

Reprint of web article posted 12/98

There is a lot of hype about the McDonald's' scalding coffee case. No one is in favor of frivolous cases of outlandish results; however, it is important to understand some points that were not reported in most of the stories about the case. McDonald's coffee was not only hot, it was scalding — capable of almost instantaneous destruction of skin, flesh and muscle. Here's the whole story.

Stella Liebeck of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was in the passenger seat of her grandson's car when she was severely burned by McDonald's' coffee in February 1992. Liebeck, 79 at the time, ordered coffee that was served in a styrofoam cup at the drive through window of a local McDonald's.

After receiving the order, the grandson pulled his car forward and stopped momentarily so that Liebeck could add cream and sugar to her coffee. (Critics of civil jus-

tice, who have pounced on this case, often charge that Liebeck was driving the car or that the vehicle was in motion when she spilled the coffee; neither is true.) Liebeck placed the cup between her knees and attempted to remove the plastic lid from the cup. As she removed the lid, the entire contents of the cup spilled into her lap.

The sweatpants Liebeck was wearing absorbed the coffee and held it next to her skin. A vascular sur-

Liebeck suffered full thickness burns (or third-degree burns) over 6 percent of her body...

geon determined that Liebeck suffered full thickness burns (or third-degree burns) over 6 percent of her body, including her inner thighs, perineum, buttocks, and genital and groin areas. She was hospitalized for eight days, during which time she underwent skin grafting. Liebeck, who also underwent debridement treatments, sought to settle her claim for \$20,000, but

McDonald's refused.

During discovery, McDonald's produced documents showing more than 700 claims by people burned by its coffee between 1982 and 1992. Some claims involved third-degree burns substantially similar to Liebecks. This history documented McDonald's' knowledge about the extent and nature of this hazard.

McDonald's also said during discovery that, based on a consultants advice, it held its coffee at between 180 and 190 degrees fahrenheit to maintain optimum taste. He admitted that he had not evaluated the safety ramifications at this temperature. Other establishments sell coffee at substantially lower temperatures, and coffee served at home is generally 135 to 140 degrees.

Further, McDonald's' quality assurance manager testified that the company actively enforces a requirement that coffee be held in the pot at 185 degrees, plus or minus five degrees. He also testified that a burn hazard exists with

any food substance served at 140 degrees or above, and that McDonald's coffee, at the temperature at which it was poured into styrofoam cups, was not fit for consumption because it would burn the mouth and throat. The quality assurance manager admitted that burns would occur, but testified that McDonald's had no intention of reducing the "holding temperature" of its coffee.

Plaintiffs' expert, a scholar in thermodynamics applied to human skin burns, testified that liquids, at 180 degrees, will cause a full thickness burn to human skin in two to seven seconds. Other testimony showed that as the temperature decreases toward 155 degrees, the extent of the burn relative to that

The quality assurance manager admitted that burns would occur, but testified that McDonald's had no intention of reducing the "holding temperature" of its coffee.

temperature decreases exponentially. Thus, if Liebeck's spill had involved coffee at 155 degrees, the liquid would have cooled and given her time to avoid a serious burn.

McDonald's asserted that customers buy coffee on their way to work or home, intending to consume it there. However, the company's own research showed that customers intend to consume the coffee immediately while driving.

McDonald's also argued that consumers know coffee is hot and that its customers want it that way. The company admitted its customers were unaware that they could suf-

fer third degree burns from the coffee and that a statement on the side of the cup was not a "warning" but a "reminder" since the location of the writing would not warn customers of the hazard.

The jury awarded Liebeck \$200,000 in compensatory damages. This amount was reduced to \$160,000 because the jury found Liebeck 20 percent at fault in the spill. The jury also awarded Liebeck \$2.7 million in punitive damages, which equals about two days of McDonald's' coffee sales.

Post-verdict investigation found that the temperature of coffee at the local Albuquerque McDonald's had dropped to 158 degrees fahrenheit.

The trial court subsequently reduced the punitive award to \$480,000 — or three times compensatory damages — even though the judge called McDonald's' conduct reckless, callous and willful.

No one will ever know the final ending to this case.

The parties eventually entered into a secret settlement which has never been revealed to the public, despite the fact that this was a public case, litigated in public and subjected to extensive media reporting.

Trainers: Use this story as an example of non-examined beliefs about other cultures, rumors, fear. Critical thinking means examining or thinking about thinking.

Trainer's Recommended Reading

"The Exceptional Trainer"

by Professional Pride,
\$25.95



911 SPEAKER'S BUREAU

The 911 *Training Connection* mission is to be a link between those doing the fine work at our Com Centers and those offering services, products and help to our heroes. Our way of following our mission is to provide space to bring together professional trainers and agencies. Meeting planners rejoice! Professional Pride does not evaluate these speakers, however. Speakers, trainers, submit your services today.

TRAINING
BETTER...
EASIER...
FASTER...

SIMULATION

RULES FOR AGING

1. *It doesn't matter*
2. *Nobody is thinking about you*
3. *Age is a strength*
4. *Wisdom is silent*
5. *Forgetaboutit – find distractions*
6. *Wear whatever you want*
7. *Age is no excuse – for anything*
8. *Be gracious with yourself*
9. *Avoid magnifying mirrors*
10. *It doesn't matter*



SEMI- SOLO: A TRAINING NO-NO!

Damon N. Gardner

Fort Worth TX Police Communications, Assistant Supervisor/Training Coordinator/APCO Agency Instructor

Semi-solo is an age-old emergency communications practice. Presumably it was long-ago abandoned but I've found it is still being utilized. Here is the scenario:

Funky Town Police Communications Center is grossly understaffed. Fast approaching is the mother of all disasters for a Comm Center – New Years Eve of the new millennium. So, what is a Supervisor to do, now mandatory overtime and still understaffed? The Answer? – Place the trainees in Semi-Solo status.

In Semi-Solo status a trainee is assigned to work a call-taking position alone while the trainer is assigned to a call-taking position next to or in close proximity. I believe this practice leaves the agency vulnerable to lawsuits.

Negligent Supervision

Semi-solo is in fact solo. If a trainer is not monitoring the conversation from both ends he/she has no idea of what is really going on with the call. The trainer will only hear the trainee's responses (if the trainer is not busy taking a call). A trainee could ask all the 'right' questions while recording all the wrong answers. If the trainer is not listening to both ends of the conversation, the trainee's actions cannot be corrected until it's too late! In

court the trainee's level of responsibility is the same as the Trainer, but without direct supervision. Something as simple as transposed number could result in serious consequences and eventually inadequate or negligent supervision.

The Call-Scan Scam

An additional bad practice during semi-solo is the call-scan. The trainer evaluates the trainee's performance during semi-solo by scanning their CAD printouts – after the fact. Of course being semi-solo the trainee's conversation with the caller was not monitored so who knows.

To demonstrate the consequences of this dangerous practice I planned an activity for my trainers. I printed and distributed a call scan and asked them to evaluate how the call was handled.

Call #1: coded as a Suspicious Person

"Two juveniles in the rear of an apartment complex standing by a window, unknown if they live on property."

After each trainer examined the call scan, there was a short discussion about the wording of the details not being very clear, however the consensus was that it was an acceptable call. A majority said it was difficult to make a fair assess-

ment without having listened to the call.

Sucking them in, I asked "Do you think listening to the whole call makes a difference"? At this point I played the call. To my trainers 'horror' they discovered what the caller actually reported was:

Two juveniles were observed climbing over the rear fence onto the property of an apartment complex, one subject appeared to be the look out, while the 2nd subject was attempting to open a window to a apartment unit.

RULE #1: Until the trainee demonstrates the ability to ask appropriate questions, they are still a trainee. If a trainer only hears part of the conversation an accurate assessment of the trainee's skills and abilities cannot be determined, therefore they should not assume the full responsibility of a call — staffing crisis or not.

Remote Monitoring

Industry experts in the field of Emergency Communications Training such as APCO, tell us that the trainee is never separated from his or her CTO or trainer. If the trainer is going to leave the trainee for a period of time, the trainee is not to be left alone to work the position. So how can you allow the Trainee the ability to work alone, while monitoring?

Remote Monitoring — still there is the problem with staffing. From what I've read from industry publications, staffing at PSAPS across the country are indeed in crisis mode, but as a trainer are you responsible for the staffing at your agency? No, you are responsible for TRAINING.

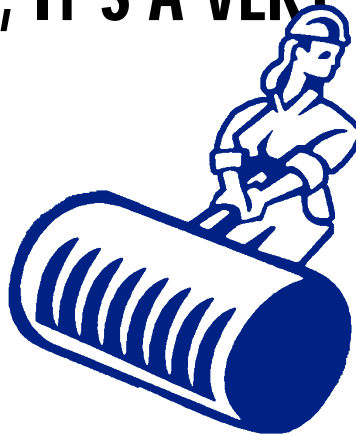
Let the administrative powers solve the staffing crisis, but by no means let them bully you into releasing a trainee to work alone when you know they are not ready! If the powers that be insist - ask them to sign off on their training manuals. Take your trainer responsibility serious.

In conclusion, keep in mind working semi-solo is like being a little bit pregnant. If after months of training you believe your trainee is ready to take calls solo, they must be tested, monitored, evaluated and promoted to work SOLO. No more semi-solo or its OFF TO COURT YOU GO!

MANAGER'S CORNER

BASHING, IT'S A VERY GOOD THING

I love this word, not because it's violent, but because it gives us the freedom to question our own beliefs without defense. If you watch a "celebrity bashing" you will see the target sitting with fixed humor on their face listening to what is probably very close to the truth – maybe exaggerated. Occasionally laughing out loud when the truth really hits home. What bashing is to an organization is taking a very cold hard look at stuff that isn't working. Bashing is one way to get off the we-tried-to-fix-this-and-it-never-



changes-attitude. Employees don't follow the SOP's laid out for them? Why? Is it the problem with the policy, or accountability, or understanding. We aren't bashing the SOP, we're bashing

the belief that nothing can be done. In bashing we notice everything that isn't working, isn't believed, keeps happening and we work it over until we come up with some reasons, solutions. We do this without any fear of retribution, criticism of criticism — with permission to be negative for this purpose. Often after a bashing, great discoveries happen.

Sticky Note Day: Put "You Are Wonderful" on a sticky note – and put it where it's needed the most.

THE HOUSE IS FALLING

SUFFERING THE CONSEQUENCES OF YEARS OF NEGLECT

Authored By Sue Pivetta

Every November for the last four years I have attended a retreat. The first year Jane came wishing to lose weight, Andrea had a problem with her husband, Tom wanted to quit smoking. The first year every person sincerely wanted to change, and the second year, and the third year and the fourth year, they sincerely wanted to change. Nobody has changed. So Jane still suffers from low self esteem, she seems to get bigger each time we see her. Andrea can't leave Keith and they're both miserable — now Andrea is having an affair. Tom has some nerve health thing going on and still smokes. So, again we are reminded that 'nothing changes if nothing changes'. And even worse, things do deteriorate if neglected. Deteriorate is a harsh word, and certainly our Com Centers are not deteriorating — no, on the contrary — most Com Centers are beautiful, well equipped and well done. It's not the equipment, or the furnishing or the level of service, or the expertise of the workers. Yet the house is falling and it's not Chicken Little crying foul.

The house is the human resources, they aren't applying and they aren't staying.

This house is dilapidated and in serious need of repair. The roof is leaking, the yard has weeds, mice and ants are everywhere, the plumbing is clogged, the carpets are tragic, the windows let in the cold, the fireplace can't be used because it smokes you out.

There is not just ONE problem that we can easily solve in our industry. There are many areas in need of repair, here are some thoughts:

It is NO mystery that the pay is at times inadequate. Inadequate to attract good candidates, inadequate to keep good employees, inadequate to enable workers to feel valued or heard. They claim it isn't pay that keeps workers around, just like other human services jobs such as counseling, caring for the mentally ill — the pay IN ITSELF probably would not be the reason people don't come and people don't stay, it's like many chemicals — alone they are not toxic, combined with other chemicals can be deadly. In fact, one Center Director in California pays commensurable with officers — very high and they still won't apply and don't stay. But let's say the pay is low. Pay combined with the following other ongoing issues have become deadly:

Inadequate pay +

- Inattention to recruiting — getting the wrong or no message out there
- Nurturing the public opinion that this is a 'stressful' job
- Allowing the job to BE that stressful
- Training programs that do not care for adult learning needs
- Negativity on the floor, poor working atmosphere
- De-valuing employees through poor attention to needs
- Putting money into 'effects' instead of people

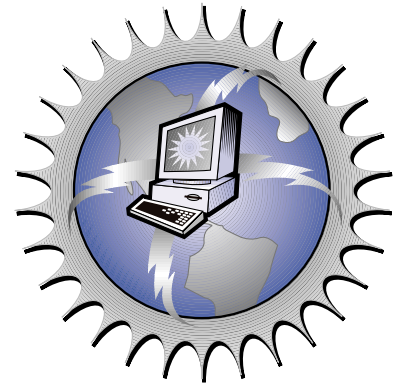
One, two or all of these could be reasons why any agency is having a hiring or retention crisis. It's about history and now it's time for the hard work of repairing the damage, getting rid of the pests, replacing the pipes, spending the money, putting in the labor and being patient and persistent with the process of rebuilding.

If this sounds a bit overwhelming — yet it is rare that even in the face of crisis will administrators reach out to specialists to help. And again, it's perspective (history), they think they can paint, build, exterminate, repair without any professional help such as consulting — and maybe they can repair and rebuild — but meanwhile what — the leaking roof has now

ruined the floor, the fireplace started a fire, the ants bit the baby, Jane keeps getting bigger, Andrea is now in love with two people.

If your agency is not having a hiring/retention problem, please drop us a note and tell us what you're doing right, we'll include it in the next issue.

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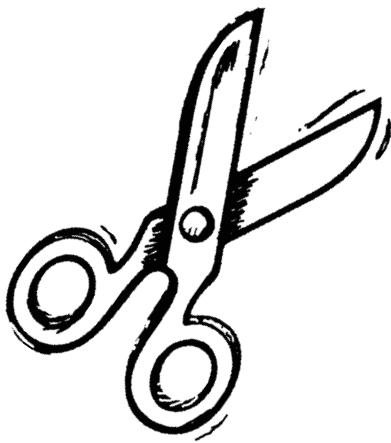
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