How Do You Police Youth?

Every interaction that a police officer has with a teen is an opportunity to influence behavior, represent the values of our profession, and demonstrate the caring professionalism that we want every citizen to know about their police. Each contact leaves an impression that will be remembered by the teen for the rest of their life. How will you be remembered?

**TRANSACTIONAL APPROACH**

To transact: exchange, make a deal, process

- Predicated on the link between action and effect or effort and reward/result.
- Responsive and oriented to dealing with present issues.
- Assumes behavior is based on motivation and can be changed with the right kind of motivation.
- Relies on standard forms of inducement, reward, punishment and sanctions.
- Motivates people by setting goals and promising rewards for desired conduct.
- When typical approach fails, has no “Plan B.”
- Perceives success as completion of interactions with clear outcomes.

**TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH**

To change, to correct and improve

- Predicated on understanding the relationship between people’s motivation and their behavior.
- Goes above and beyond the normal parameters of interactions.
- Values proactive interventions.
- Takes individualized consideration of each incident and person.
- Charismatic approach stimulates people to work for goals that go beyond self-interest.
- Speaks in terms of vision and ideals, “expect up.”
- Treats interactions as teachable moments to stimulate efforts to solve problems
- Develops strong, enduring emotional bonds.

Sources: Comparison studies of different transformational authors, including Bass, Cacioppe, Gronn, Hughes.et.al, Popper & Zakkai, by Vanisha Balgobind, June 2002.