**Ask the Negotiator**

*By Dr. James L. Greenstone*

Ask the Negotiator is designed to afford our readers with the opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of negotiations and provide them with answers from experienced negotiators in future editions of the magazine. Please direct your questions to John Baker at editor@negotiatormagazine.com. We will only publish your first name or the nom de plume you suggest along with your country when your question is published. Your question will be answered either by John Baker or by a member of The Negotiator Magazine's growing list of outside negotiation resources.

Dr. Greenstone is a Psychotherapist, Mediator, Arbitrator, Negotiator, Author, Professor, Police Officer and Police Behavioral Health Specialist. He is well known as a Police Hostage Negotiator and Trainer. Formerly, he served as the Director of Psychological Services for the Fort Worth, Texas Police Department and as the Operational Police Behavioral Health Specialist for the Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Team. Currently, Dr. Greenstone is Director of Behavioral Health Services and a Deputy Constable for the Tarrant County Precinct 4 Constable's Office. Dr. Greenstone is the author of *The Elements of Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiations: Critical Incidents and How to Respond to Them*, The Haworth Press, Inc., 2005, *The Elements of Disaster Psychology: Managing Psychosocial Trauma* was published in 2007 by Charles C. Thomas, Publishers. *The Elements of Crisis Intervention, 3rd Edition* was published in 2010. He is the Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of the *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations* and served on the governing Council of the Committee on Publication Ethics. Currently, he is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Police Emergency Response: The International Journal of Police Hostage Negotiations and Crisis Intervention*. Additionally, he is a Diplomate of the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology. His newest book, *Emotional First Aid: Field Guide to Crisis Intervention and Psychological Survival* will be available June 2016. Recently, Dr. Greenstone was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine in London, England. Also, he was a Collaborating Investigator for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM 5) published by the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Greenstone may be reached at drjlg1@charter.net.
"Negotiating With People With Psychological Disorders ...."

Good day! How are you? It is possible to negotiate with schizophrenic people or with the people with the psychological problems? Please. Thank you!
Yelena - Russia, Moscow.

Yelena,

The short answer is yes. A slightly longer answer would refer you to the following book: The Elements of Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiations, Chapter 5, published by Routledge. It is also available at Amazon.com.

An important key to negotiating with anyone, including those with schizophrenia or other mental disorders, is to understand the personality and behavior of that subject. An Operational Police Behavioral Health Specialist or Police Psychologist as a member of your negotiations team can help in this regard. Often, they can provide insights into the illness or personality that can help you to formulate your negotiations strategy. Even without the OPBHS, every negotiator needs to be familiar with the diagnostic characteristics of those with whom they are likely to encounter in the field. Once in the field, a current evaluation must be performed by the negotiations team, including the Psychologist if you have one available. Knowing what to expect and formulating your strategy accordingly will increase the probability of your success. Work as a team to understand the hostage taker or barricaded subject and then work as a team to apply those understandings. Chapter 5 in the recommended book will get you started.

Negotiators negotiate. How they negotiate is dependent on what they understand about the person with whom they are talking. All negotiator training should include practical information about personality types likely to be encountered in the field. In the field, resources must be available to the team as needed to understand any encounter. Being able to, “Get into the head,” of the taker or barricaded person is the responsibility of each and every negotiator deployed.

Dr. Greenstone, OPBHS
“How does a person with a psychology degree move into crisis or hostage negotiating ....”

I am a psychology graduate and have worked for five years mentoring teenagers. I am 30 years old. I have been told that I have excellent negotiation skills and would like to know how best to move into other areas, in particular crisis or hostage negotiations. Many thanks,
Adam

Adam,

For a good in-depth answer, I would refer you to the following book: The Elements of Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiations, Chapter 6, published by Routledge. It is also available at Amazon.com. Read the section on “How to Select a Mental Health Professional.”

Responding only to the limited amount of information that you have provided in your question, I would suggest that you become a Police Officer. Another alternative is to become a Psychologist, then a Police Psychologist and also a Police Officer. There is very limited likelihood that without this extensive background that you will ever be placed in a position to do police hostage and crisis negotiations. There are, of course, many other areas of life in which your skills as a negotiator may be welcomed. You mention this in your question. Civilian groups are often looking for mediators, negotiators, arbitrators, etc. You may need some additional training but these should be easily available to someone with your background and skill level. The Elements of Mediation, also available on Amazon may help you in this regard.

I hope this helps. Contact me at the email address listed below if you need more information. However, before you contact me, please read the references I mentioned above.

Dr. Greenstone, OPBHS