

Policing is a very specialized, many faceted and important job in our communities. It is my opinion that the attitude of law enforcement must be changed. A larger emphasis should be in meeting people in a non-confrontive, more helpful and friendly manner. In normal traffic stops, crowd control, homelessness, etc. the law enforcement person should be a local familiar member of the community instead of a drive up cop with backup and definitely not one in body armor displaying a shotgun or taser.

In many cases other less confrontive companion skills such as peer counselors, social workers, or other counseling specialists might be needed to diffuse situations. These should be attempted before armed law enforcement is used. In no case, other than violent crime, should poison gas or so called "less than lethal" methods be used because of unintentional or collateral damage results.

In my 60 year secondary teaching career, mostly with gang members, I learned that if I was confrontational to students, I was met with confrontation. When I was respectful and friendly and polite the young adults were often more cooperative. This technique may not work in all situations but it is a good starting point. I used my authority as a last resort.

It is important to keep in mind that the lawmakers job is to pass laws and they seldom remove laws that have been passed. The result is that there are laws that cover most things that affect society. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that most of us are sometimes guilty of unintentionally and unknowingly breaking laws. Since it is law enforcement's job to enforce these laws, they must be very selective on which laws they enforce. This increasingly affects society's reaction to law enforcement. How do we overcome this problem?

It might be an interesting experiment to see if communities are capable of policing themselves.

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