



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article July, 2018

Let's see... Should I go with the grilled mcnugget meal today or stick with my usual number 4...?

"You better be good or that man is going to arrest you!"

We all know what happens next. We turn around throw a friendly smile at a curtain climber, who hides behind his daddy's knee and looks at us sideways out of the corner of his right eye, his left eye fully concealed in fear of us behind the jeans he's established a death grip on.

"No buddy. I'm with the good guys. I'm here to help you, not take you away from mom and dad because you were acting a little silly in a restaurant." I hope everyone has something similar they say in response. I cannot for the life of me understand why parents do this. Do they not understand the message they're sending to their kids? Sure, A healthy respect for law enforcement is appropriate. Adults should be a little nervous when we contact them. We expect it, and if they're not, or if they're overly nervous, we begin to ask questions. But do we need kids to hide from us because they're afraid we're going to take them away?"

One mission near the top of any officer's priority list should be improving community perceptions. It's not because we are ego-central and want everyone to like us. It's because it can save an officer's life down the road. We should always be thinking, during EVERY contact, about the impression we left and how it will affect the next encounter that person has. We may save the life of a cop four states away and five years down the road, by how we treat our contacts this evening.

In recent polls, 30% of Americans believe cops are liars. 30%. I don't honestly believe anyone reading this article, myself included, can wrap their head around that number. We strive everyday to do what's right. We group our lives in the essence of righteousness, and believe at our very cores that we are fighting for the people in our communities... And 30% don't trust us? In an effort to improve our perception in the areas most needed, allow me to share with you the demographics that tool the survey on cops and how they answered. 39% of those claiming to be democrats, answered they believe all cops are liars. 41% of people under the age of 25 of any political or racial background and 45% of blacks believe we are liars.

When we contact people who fit in these categories we should be professional and proficient at our jobs. Just like contact with anyone else, our jobs comes first. But we should also identify an opportunity to change our image. Give them a moment of hesitation in their minds before the next time they express dissatisfaction with police. The brain is wired to take information scholastically, and emotionally. If people are being fed information from friends, and media, that does not match their own emotional experiences, that will start to question what they hear, and we can begin to have an impact on their thoughts about our profession. Ultimately, if would be cop killers could think more highly of the officer in front of them, they may be less likely to take such drastic measures to escape our contact. Even better, we could influence them not to ambush us when we aren't even looking for them and just having a meal.

"Hey kid, if you get lost, you should come to me, not hide from me. I am the next best thing when mom and dad aren't around, and I hope you grow up learning to trust me, and look to me for help. Who knows kid. Maybe one day you'll see me in trouble on the side of the road and you could help me too. We all need to look out for each other. Here's a sticker."