

Cheap Trick No. 4

How to Avoid a Speeding Ticket

The best and safest advice about how to get out of a speeding ticket is simply DON'T SPEED. If, however, you are stopped for speeding and you'd like to avoid the punishment, or you feel the ticket is genuinely unfair, there are several cheap psychological tricks you can use to your advantage.

Patrol officers are taught to keep conversation to a minimum. For legal reasons this makes sense (the case may go to court, and the less said now, the better). Officers also are trained to keep their objectivity; if they talk to you, they are more likely to identify with you. In other words, trying to talk your way out of a ticket is probably not going to work. Crying can actually *increase* your chances of receiving a ticket; the officer is forced into an uncomfortable position and may want to remove him- or herself from the scene as soon as

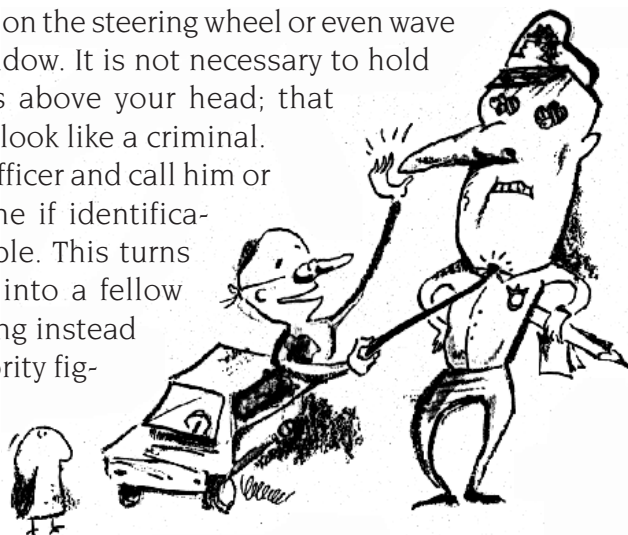
Cheap Psychological Tricks

possible. It is also easier for officers to view you as a subordinate when you are bathed in tears.

The best thing you can do is try to reduce the officer's anxiety. *You* are feeling anxiety because you've been caught and another person now has control of you. The patrol person is experiencing anxiety because he or she knows nothing about you. The officer may even fear that your behavior is unpredictable. His or her life may be in jeopardy, and in these violent times, that is a very understandable apprehension. As you ease the police officer's anxiety, you will reduce the probability that you will be given a ticket.

Follow these steps:

- ⌘ Stop immediately after seeing the blue lights. Your compliance will help reduce the officer's anxiety.
- ⌘ As quickly as possible, show both hands. Put both hands on the steering wheel or even wave out the window. It is not necessary to hold your hands above your head; that makes you look like a criminal.
- ⌘ Greet the officer and call him or her by name if identification is visible. This turns the officer into a fellow human being instead of an authority figure.
- ⌘ If it looks as if you are going



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to receive a ticket, ask the officer for a warning and state your reasons for leniency. *Make sure the reasons are plausible.* If you believe you were stopped unfairly, tell the officer courteously, but only after you've reduced his or her anxiety. Never argue; if you do, you immediately start a power struggle, and you will lose.

⌘ If the officer gives you a warning instead of a ticket, immediately ask for directions—even if you know where you are. This turns the patrol person into a helper, something most officers would prefer to be rather than an enforcer. Providing you with directions helps him or her deal with “caving in” to your wish for a warning.

What's the cheap psychological trick? The rule is to do everything you can to reduce the officer's anxiety as quickly as possible. Your demeanor will probably be so refreshing and unusual to them that they will not see you as just another speed demon. When an officer has shown you special courtesy or fairness, write a letter of commendation to the state or local commissioner.

But why go through all this? Just don't speed unless it's a bona fide emergency.

REFERENCES

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