



Verbal Defense Feedback Sheet

Red Light Messages = Stop. These messages inhibit expression
Yellow Light/Neutral Messages = No inhibiting or encouraging effect
Green Light Messages encourage people to continue and escalate their behavior

Non-verbal Messages (45 – 85% of meaning)	Green	Yellow	Red Light
Eye Contact Direct, level gaze. Control of <i>emotional content</i> . Break eye contact directly – use a level gaze (past) or break gaze by looking up.			
Facial Expression Eyes narrowed. Eyebrows down. Serious or animated expression. No inappropriate smiling.			
Breath Use centering and breath awareness. Use belly muscles as your breath control mechanism (<i>breath keys</i> .) Maintain deep, even breathing. Pause before responses; control <i>pace</i> .			
Control of Space Use of <i>eye contact</i> , expression, gesture, posture, alignment and movement. Use physical boundary skills to reinforce your choices.			
Stance Weight forward, evenly distributed. Lowered center of gravity.			
Posture Expansion, rather than collapse or withdrawal. Head up, chin in, back straight. Use appropriate alignment to the aggressor. Use body shifting to set boundaries and de-escalate.			
Movement Conscious holding or giving ground. Train for balance, stepping and sliding, and 180-degree turning.			
Gesture Hands on hips, arms folded, or calm, expansive moves. Reinforce words with <i>arm barriers</i> and boundary skills to maintain distance.			
Verbal Content Signals	Green Light	Neutral	Red Light
Voice Quality and Use of Breath Control pace, intensity, volume, tone, inflection and emotional content. Use centering and breath skills to control tension.			
Word Choice Minimal engagement, according to your goals. Use neutral phrasing or “I messages” with self-directed, neutral, or power semantics.			
Effective Semantics Effective assertion is direct, appropriate, and not false. Avoid: apology, explanation, fillers, negations and qualifiers.			
Use of Strategies Use and control questions. Set, reset, and enforce boundaries. Use <i>Personal Safety Confrontation</i> and strategies of naming, accountability and goal-orientation.			