

THE HUMBLE HANDBOOK

A Practical Manual for Peacekeepers

Compiled and tested by members of the Humble Boys.

For all who stand between harm and the innocent.

This is a field manual. Learn the methods. Follow the code. Pass it on.

Save as many lives as possible.

Other movements may involve disruption, confrontation, or forceful advocacy. Those efforts have their place. Ours is different. Being a member of Humble Boys requires stability, de-escalation, and restraint. This manual defines that role and our code of conduct.

Note: This handbook is a grassroots field guide for nonviolent community peacekeeping. It is not legal advice, nor a substitute for official security or medical training. Share responsibly, and always adapt to your local laws and community context.

THE HUMBLE CODE

1. **Commit to nonviolence.**

No initiation of violence. No retaliation. You may protect or restrain (discussed later). You do not strike.

Why: You model what others can follow. You de-escalate by example.

2. **Preserve life.**

All life. Even those you oppose.

Why: If the mission is protection, there are no disposable people.

3. **Obey the law.**

On duty and off. Violence, vandalism, or lawbreaking leads to removal.

Why: If we go rogue, not only do we break trust, we put others at risk. The badge we wear is discipline.

4. **Use restraint.**

Grey rock is not weakness. CLARA is not agreement. You stay in control.

Why: Power comes from composure, not dominance.

5. **Remember the mission.**

You protect the future. That makes the cost worth it.

Why: Without vision, tactics collapse.

6. **Stay accountable.**

To each other. To the public. To the code.

Why: Trust must be earned and maintained.

If you can't uphold this, step down.

Before you act, have a plan. You won't always have time to think, but you'll have time to fall back on something.

Doctrine is a guide and it is also important to trust your instincts.

STRATEGIC MISSION FRAME

Your role is **limited, but vital**.

You are not here to win.

You are here to **reduce harm, protect civilians**, and **create the conditions** for peaceful expression.

Scope of Operation

- Maintain nonviolent presence
 - Block escalation
 - Protect the vulnerable
 - Extract those at risk
 - Document abuse without inflaming it
 - Redirect crowd tension when it spikes
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Know Your Limits

- You will not always be the best person for a job
 - Ask for help when needed
 - You do not have legal authority to compel people's actions
 - You cannot stop all violence
 - You cannot fix broken strategy mid-event
 - You will not always succeed
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The C.L.A.R.A. Method

C.L.A.R.A. is a structured approach to de-escalation. Each step builds upon the last. Use it to stabilize tense situations, reduce risk, and protect everyone involved.

Each section that follows breaks down one letter of the method:

- **C — Calm**
- **L — Listen**
- **A — Affirm**
- **R — Respond**
- **A — Add Information**

C — Calm

Definition: You cannot lead, protect, or de-escalate if you're reactive.

When: Always, before contact, during tension, after resolution.

DO:

- Breathe slow, steady.
- Keep voice and movement controlled.

- Maintain an open, neutral stance.
- Take space if needed, reset and return.

DON'T:

- Mirror their energy.
- Argue or match tone.
- Rush in before assessing yourself.

L — Listen

Definition: Active listening gathers emotional and situational data.

When: After calm is established and throughout any escalation.

DO:

- Use short acknowledgments.
- Let pauses hang.
- Watch for fear, not just words.

DON'T:

- Interrupt or correct.
- React to bait.
- Assume intent.

A — Affirm

Definition: Affirm emotion and presence, not beliefs.

When: After listening and when a person feels unseen or on edge.

DO:

- Acknowledge feelings (“You’re clearly upset”)
- Reflect human dignity, not ideas

- Match emotional tone without feeding escalation

DON'T:

- Fake empathy
- Affirm hate speech
- Pretend understanding

R — Respond

Definition: Use words to stabilize, redirect, or clarify.

When: After affirming and not with the intention of winning an argument.

DO:

- Use short, clear phrases
- Offer next steps (“Let’s step over here”)
- Re-center mission

DON'T:

- Debate
- Ramble
- Escalate tone

A — Add Information

Definition: Offer a new fact or reframe to break tension loops.

When: Once the situation is stable enough to hear it.

DO:

- Offer useful, specific info
- Break fixation (“We’re almost through”)
- Use time, direction, or logistics

DON'T:

- Argue ideology
 - Overload or interrupt emotion
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GREY ROCK METHOD

Use Grey Rock when someone is seeking attention through provocation, harassment, or escalation. This includes livestream agitators and aggressive hecklers.

Principle: You become uninteresting. No reaction = no reward.

Tactics:

- Neutral tone. Avoid emotional responses.
- Short answers. Don't elaborate.
- No eye contact unless necessary.
- Don't explain, justify, or debate.

Example Use Case:

An agitator with a camera tries to provoke a crowd. You stand nearby, remain calm, answer only what's necessary, and redirect attention away from him. You deny him content.

CHOOSING BETWEEN C.L.A.R.A. AND GREY ROCK

Situation	Use C.L.A.R.A.	Use Grey Rock
Person is upset or confused	✓	
Person wants to be heard	✓	
Person is trying to provoke you	✓	✓
Person is seeking attention for content		✓

Use CLARA to build trust or to direct a bad actor's attention onto yourself. Use Grey Rock to deny attention.

The wrong method at the wrong time can escalate tension.

FIELD CASE STUDIES

Driver in Tension:

A black-clad demonstrator was escalating conflict with a driver trying to pass. One peacekeeper approached the vehicle, calmly explained the route was almost finished, and pointed out the driver had a child in the car. De-escalation succeeded.

Livestream Agitator:

An agitator walked the crowd, camera in hand, hurling insults and baiting reactions. A Humble Boy shadowed him, intercepting tension from the crowd and redirecting energy. The agitator never got the reaction they were seeking.

Speaker Disruptor:

A pro-gun demonstrator with a megaphone disrupted a scheduled speech. Rather than engage him directly, peacekeepers buffered the crowd, created space, and calmly diffused flashpoints without confrontation.

Route Diversion Attempt:

Masked demonstrators tried to hijack a march by diverting it. Humble Boys calmly redirected people, using posture and presence to keep the march on course, without engaging the provocators.

TACTICAL CROWD TOOLS

From field manuals and grassroots innovations:

US Army FM 3-19.15 | Pt'chang | Meta Peace Team | Standing on the Line (Australia)

Physical Tools

- **Signs** – Soft barriers between groups
- **Bikes or Barrels** – Non-aggressive lane blockers
- **Vests, Tape, Flags** – Define roles, prevent confusion

Positioning Techniques

- **Box-in Buffer** – Create calm zones (kids, elders, medics)
- **Turn-away Shield** – Block provocateurs with bodies
- **Absorption Line** – Soften pressure points by spacing

Crowd Flow

- Guide gently, avoid shoving or giving orders
 - Pair gesture with verbal: “This way,” *while pointing*
 - Let people feel guided, not controlled
 - Redirect anger safely: *don’t cork it, steer it*
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THE BUDDY SYSTEM

Definition:

Every Humble Boy operates with a partner. No one deploys alone.

Purpose:

Accountability, safety, and stability. A partner helps you see what you miss, stay grounded, and exit safely.

Why it matters:

- **Accountability:** Your partner watches your conduct. You watch theirs. This keeps the code intact.
- **Safety:** If something goes wrong, medically, emotionally, physically, your partner can assist you.
- **Rotation:** When you need to step out, your partner steps in. Roles stay filled.
- **Bias Check:** Partners can check each other for tunnel vision or emotional drift.
- **Witness:** If force is required, your partner documents and supports.

Each team has a **Primary** and **Support**.
Roles are flexible, swap as needed.

Primary

- Takes point in engagement
- Speaks for the pair
- Monitors crowd or subject

Support

- Watches the Primary's state
- Intervenes if escalation occurs
- Handles documentation or backup calls

Rotation

- Switch roles on signal or when one person fatigues
- Speak up if tunnel vision occurs
- If one disengages, both disengage

Communication Protocols

Clear communication keeps teams cohesive under pressure. Use precise verbal commands and nonverbal signals to reduce risk and increase clarity.

Verbal Protocols

- **Keep it tight:** Use short, clear phrases that direct action. "Pull back." "Swap."
- **Acknowledge clearly:** Let your partner know you heard them. "Copy." "Got it." A second of clarity beats ten of guessing.

- **No debating mid-field:** If a call is made, follow it. Adjust later. Field time is action time, not consensus time.

Nonverbal Signals

- **Shoulder tap:** Confirm switch or support.
- **Two-finger point:** Indicate move or direction.
- **Palm down sweep:** Slow down, reduce tension.
- **Short raised fist:** Hold position.

Situational Adjustments

- **Media present:** Assume you're being recorded. Stay neutral, clean.
- **Law enforcement nearby:** No sarcasm. Keep it sharp and respectful.
- **High noise/crowd density:** Default to hand signals and direct touch cues.

General Advice

- Don't raise your voice unless necessary.
- Confirm partner understanding.
- Don't leave your partner uncertain.

RESPONDING TO ARMED INDIVIDUALS

I. Weapon Visible, Not Hostile

DO:

- Notify team, never engage alone
- Maintain appropriate distance, close enough to act and not to intimidate (be prepared to restrain the individual. If they reach for their weapon, **restrain immediately and hold**

until law enforcement arrives. Restraint is a team action.)

- Calm, clear tone: “I see you’re armed.”
- Offer space to speak privately
- Use barriers or body to separate them from crowd
- Seek trusted intermediaries if possible

DON’T:

- Touch them
- Give commands you can’t enforce
- Draw attention unless absolutely necessary
- Argue, escalate, corner

GOAL:

Lower stress, prevent panic or trigger response

II. Weapon Drawn, Not Firing

DO:

- Anchor yourself and *do not convey panic*
- One person speaks, others shield crowd and move them away
- Use a calm tone: “You don’t need to use that.”
- Keep hands visible
- Offer safe exit or de-escalation route

DON’T:

- Shout or threaten
- Advance
- React emotionally
- Allow crowd to escalate

GOAL:

Delay action, maintain distance, give options

If needed, alert law enforcement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Peacekeepers are only effective if the people trust you.

That trust is built *before a crisis*, not during it.

Guidelines

- Introduce yourselves before actions
- Offer help, not command
- Learn local norms
- Respect community leaders
- Speak plainly, no activist jargon or internal hierarchy

Checklist

- Have organizers agreed to your presence?
 - Have medics, legal observers, media been briefed?
 - Are you trusted in this space?
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TRAINING MODULES

1. Verbal De-escalation Drills

- Practice unpredictable reactions
- Use CLARA on agitators, civilians, officers
- Practice exit phrases: “Let’s move back,” “This way please”

2. Grey Rock Exercises

- Stand still while being verbally insulted
- Film interactions for feedback
- Focus on breath, posture, tone

3. Crowd Flow & Formation

- Practice moving buffers
- Simulate crowd corridors with cones or chalk
- Practice ‘absorption line’ spacing

4. Armed Individual Simulation

- Roleplay ‘visible weapon, not hostile’
- Assign team roles: speaker, support, evac lead
- Practice neutral engagement tone

5. After Action Review Practice

- Conduct mock AARs
- Focus on facts + emotional self-report

- Practice constructive critique
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AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

Purpose:

Reflection for growth, not blame.

Five Questions:

1. What was the mission?
2. What actually happened?
3. What went well?
4. What could have gone better?
5. What will we do next time?

Best Practices

- No blame
 - Specific examples
 - Include emotion
 - Document outcomes
 - Act on lessons
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PEACEKEEPER SAINTS

Real lives. Real courage. Tactical inspiration.

Daryl Davis

A Black musician who peacefully befriended KKK members and persuaded over 200 to leave. His tool was conversation. His armor was calm.

Antoinette Tuff

A school bookkeeper who talked down a heavily armed gunman through empathy and vulnerability. Over 800 lives saved.

Pardeep Kaleka

After his father was killed in a hate shooting, he forgave the attacker and co-founded a deradicalization initiative with a former extremist.

Zarina Sheikh

A Muslim activist who formed human chains of women to prevent religious riots in Gujarat. Her action saved hundreds from mob violence.

You do not need to be famous to belong in this lineage.

If you stand steady, protect your enemy, or prevent one unnecessary fight—you are one of them.

APPENDICES

Practical reference, not replacement for judgment.

These appendices are designed to support in-field decisions. They are tools, not scripts. Be mindful when using them.

Appendix A: Trauma-Informed Tactics for Peacekeepers

This is not therapy. It's a peacekeeper's field lens.

COMMON TRIGGERS IN HIGH-STRESS CROWDS:

- Loud, sudden noises (sirens, shouting, explosions)
- Being touched or grabbed from behind
- Uniformed authority (especially male-presenting)
- Spotlighting someone verbally ("What's your name?" can feel invasive)

- Being cornered or followed

DO SAY:

- “You’re safe right now.”
- “You don’t have to explain anything.”
- “You’re allowed to feel overwhelmed.”
- “We’ll stay nearby without crowding you.”

DON’T SAY:

- “Calm down.”
- “You’re overreacting.”
- “I’m just trying to help.”
- Anything that implies blame, force, or pity

GROUNDING TOOLS (IF NEEDED OR REQUESTED):

5–4–3–2–1 Technique

- 5 things you see
- 4 you can touch
- 3 you hear
- 2 you smell
- 1 you taste or breathe in

Offer sensory anchors:

- “Feel your feet in your shoes.”
- “Hold this water bottle.”

- “Let’s step to the sidewalk for a second.”

REMEMBER:

Triggers don’t always look logical.

You don’t need to understand, just don’t escalate.

Safety is felt before it’s explained.

Appendix B: Legal Boundaries for Civilian Peacekeepers

This is not legal advice. Know your limits.

YOU ARE NOT LAW ENFORCEMENT.

- No powers of arrest, search, seizure, or detainment
- You may only restrain to prevent imminent harm

RESTRAINT IS ONLY JUSTIFIED IF:

- Someone is actively reaching for a weapon
- A person is attacking someone else or attempting to
- All non-physical methods have clearly failed
- A team is present and restraint is coordinated

AFTER PHYSICAL INTERVENTION:

- Release immediately once danger has passed
- Notify law enforcement if present or accessible
- Document the event internally (AAR recommended)
- Film if possible and legal for accountability, not exposure

NEVER:

- Detain someone after threat has passed
- Use force to punish, humiliate, or compel apology
- Extract compliance through physical dominance

Suggested training disclaimer:

“We operate under the law. We are not enforcers. We are guardians of peace, not agents of power.”

Note: State and local laws vary. Peacekeeper leads should coordinate with legal observers for local briefings.

Appendix C: Navigating Law Enforcement Presence

Coexist without compromise.

IF APPROACHED BY POLICE:

- Open hands, calm tone
- “We’re with a nonviolent safety team. We’re unarmed and here for crowd de-escalation only.”
- Ask: “Is there anything you’d like us to avoid?” (Signals cooperation, not obedience)

IF POLICE BEGIN ESCALATING:

- Do not physically intervene
- Buffer civilians if safe (use body as shield, not as force)
- Signal retreat routes to others
- Document interactions legally and discreetly
- Take mental note of badge numbers, unit behavior

TO AVOID ‘VIGILANTE’ OPTICS:

- Avoid giving commands like “Move back!” or “Disperse!”
- Use quiet coordination, hand signals, and posture
- Let civilians know you're independent from police
- Stay out of law enforcement's direct lane unless invited

IN ALL CASES:

Remain humble. We're not there to compete, we're there to protect.

Appendix D: Localization Checklist

Every crowd is different. Every context matters.

Before any action, ask:

LEGAL & OPERATIONAL:

- Have we reviewed relevant local use-of-force and self-defense laws?
- Are legal observers or civil rights attorneys aware and available?
- Have we briefed on likely law enforcement posture for this event?

CULTURAL & STRATEGIC:

- Are there cultural or community sensitivities we should know?
- Are any groups at elevated risk (e.g., undocumented, targeted by policy or identity)?
- Have we introduced ourselves to community leaders or organizers?

COORDINATION:

- Have we confirmed roles with medics, observers, marshals?
- Are internal hand signals, roles, and rotation schedules clear?
- Is an After Action Review plan in place for the team?

You don't need to control the event. You just need to support it wisely.
Preparation is protection.