

## Question Authority

By Todd Bender

Over my years of coaching the shooting sports, I have learned that it's not so much what you say, but also how you say it. And more importantly, how the recipient of the information pictures what you say. Great coaches of many sports may or may not have created earth-shattering technique, but it was how that technique and or information was imparted to the student, that's what differentiates the common from the great.

On a daily basis, I hear comments from my clients that make me cringe. "They told me to shoot it (the target) faster". That's like fingernails on a chalkboard to me. Why would such a seemingly innocuous statement make the hair on the back of my neck stand up straight? It irks me because such a statement lacks understanding or recognition of a core problem.

Making such a blanket statement to the uninitiated, 'Shoot is faster', could be addressing a myriad of problems, and can be interpreted many ways by a student. It could mean your hold point is either in too close causing you to chase the target, or out too far and you're waiting for it to catch up with you. Maybe you are looking in the wrong place for the target, and you don't acquire it visually as fast as the "pros". This has nothing to do with ability, rather its the knowledge of where or how to look at react to targets. You're not an idiot, you just don't see the target fast enough to react. Maybe you should look in a different place, but where should you look?

Maybe that's not it though. Maybe the shooter just lacks confidence. Maybe it means you are actually on the target, but are afraid to commit by pulling the trigger, sometimes called "riding the target". Sometimes you are "measuring", meaning that you are uncertain of the lead required, so you get careful. Both of these are sure signs of an unconfident shot.

It could mean that there is an eye dominance problem and because the brain is getting differing messages from each eye, the brain can't decide which picture to believe, hence the target is taken out further, until the brain decides which picture to believe. Lots of problems that would require different corrections.

But you get the "one size fits all" solution.

“Shoot faster.” Thanks a lot.

On numerous occasions, clients of mine get in trouble because, “Well, this guy said I should try this”. Then they come to me to get untangled. From a shooter’s standpoint, you need to figure out, is the information that I am receiving nothing more than speculation about a specific problem or the factual analysis? And even if the speculation is correct, you may not be receiving the “what” is the “cause” of the problem, and “how to” of the solution. You need to know what’s causing this, what’s the correction, and how do I implement the correction.

So how do you discern good information from bad? Quite simply, no matter what information you receive.... ask why. Take for example, you are shooting at your local club on Saturday morning, and you get advice from a squad mate about a particular problem. No matter how well intentioned the advice is, ask why. Why would you have me do this? And tell me why what I am doing is wrong, and tell me the benefits of what you are telling me to do to fix it. If the response to your question makes sense, and it sounds reasonable, the theory may hold water. If there is no basis for the given information and it sounds goofy, it probably is.

For teachers and coaches, it really is simple. Your job is to assess the situation, understand the problem, and come up with a solution. But know why the solution works. Understand that there are causes to every problem. Guessing at a solution to a known problem without knowing the true cause will in most cases just create more problems. The core problem will still exist.

My concern is that many of my clients, and other shooters are victims of **bad** information. Information that reduces their enjoyment of the game, and either sends them to me, or completely out of the sport to some other less frustration endeavor. Skeet shooting is my passion and my desire is that the sport continues, thrives and prospers into the future. So be carefully what you say, and try to pay attention to how you are talking to whomever you are talking to, and most importantly, pay particular attention to how they are hearing your message.

My job is to get people to shoot skeet better, so if I can help you, please contact me. Hit me with questions at [bendershima@aol.com](mailto:bendershima@aol.com). It’s what I do, and contacting me is free. And if you are unsure about the advice you receive in return, feel free to just ask, “Why would you have me do such a thing?”

*For information about Todd Bender Performance Systems and for Todd's 2015-16 clinic schedule, go to [toddbenderintl.com](http://toddbenderintl.com) or contact Todd Bender at [bendershima@aol.com](mailto:bendershima@aol.com). Todd will be in the UK March 2-12, 2016.*