

him better if he said "flirt" may have a big vocabulary. But does he have a big thinker's vocabulary? Probably not. People who use difficult, high-sounding words and phrases that most folks have to strain themselves to understand are inclined to be overbearing and stuffed shirts. And stuffed shirts are usually small thinkers.

The important measure of a person's vocabulary is not the size or the number of words he uses. Rather, the thing that counts, the *only* thing that counts about one's vocabulary, is the effect his words and phrases have on his own and others' thinking.

Here is something very basic: *We do not think in words and phrases. We think only in pictures and/or images.* Words are the raw materials of thought. When spoken or read, that amazing instrument, the mind, automatically converts words and phrases into mind pictures. Each word, each phrase, creates a slightly different mind picture. If someone tells you, "Jim bought a new split-level," you see one picture. But if you're told, "Jim bought a new ranch house," you see another picture. The mind pictures we see are modified by the kinds of words we use to name things and describe things.

Look at it this way. When you speak or write, you are, in a sense, a projector showing movies in the minds of others. And the pictures you create determine how you and others react.

Suppose you tell a group of people, "I'm sorry to report we've failed." What do these people see? They see defeat and all the disappointment and grief the word "failed" conveys. Now suppose you said instead, "Here's a new approach that I think will work." They would feel encouraged, ready to try again.

Suppose you say, "We face a problem." You have created a picture in the minds of others of something difficult, unpleas-