

THE BASICS OF COMMUNICATING

Why and How People Listen

Imagine for a moment that you're preparing to make a presentation about an important project in which you have a large stake. How do you start planning for it?

Don't you start from "I"? *"I'll begin by . . ."* "Then *I'll* tell them . . ."
"Them" doesn't really enter into it except as the recipients of what *you're* planning to do. And that's one of the major problems in getting others to listen.

Most of us think of "communicating" as a one-way process. We get all involved in what *we're* saying, how *we're* saying it, what choices *we* should make to communicate it better. But, in our zeal to achieve our goal and get our message across to others, we forget that at the other end of our message is an *"other"*—someone with his own goals, his own zeal, and his own concerns. These often do not coincide with ours, especially at the outset of something we alone have dreamed up to say.

TELLING AND LISTENING

The One-Sided Nature of Telling

Perhaps the greatest single stumbling block to real communication is the one-sided nature of telling. The first person—very singular—talking from one point of view.

Truly effective communication can't be a monologue in which only the sender is at work. To persuade, inform, or change the listener, both parties—the teller *and* the receiver (be it one or many)—must be