thinking. Then you could say how valuable an idea that is (strengthening them) and that you'd like them to share it with the group when you reconvene.

Controversial or dangerous subjects

For ticklish subjects where there may be general reluctance to speak out, it helps to break into small groups of three even if your group isn't that big. This is a safer environment for truth telling since the smaller groups come back with a consensus report, avoiding individual exposure.

Just remember that not everyone is equally creative or comfortable. Know your troops. At the meeting itself, ask of them only what you know they can give. Delegate specific assignments for reports, in advance, to those reluctant dragons who *can't* improvise in order to get total participation.

Getting Agreement

Voting publicly can be tricky; it broadcasts opinions that people may not want public. They may equivocate or change their vote. There's also the age-old phenomenon of wanting to be part of the group. Watching how many and whose hands go up affects what you say and vote for publicly.

If you want a real reflection of how people feel about an issue, use a secret paper-ballot form of voting. If you've discussed a subject to death and everyone has pretty well made their views clear, the consensus is usually obvious and doesn't need a formal vote; controversial or potentially damaging issues do. Sometimes it helps to *start* the discussion with a secret ballot to find out the group's mental set. We're funny about telling the truth—many forces change what and how much we'll tell out loud.

Getting Group Attention

Meetings can become unruly, especially when they get overheated and several people talk at once. It requires a louder voice than theirs to be heard and get people calmed down. Use it. "Okay," "Hey, people, " "Hold it"—informal, relaxed, but firm. Don't get heavy-handed and "bossy." That's a sign of weakness and feeling out of control. Just set up the rules at the beginning and remind them by saying again why it can't work this way and what your goals are.

To introduce each new item and get attention for it, remember to