

creates still another area of tension. He/she is the person to please; the one you have to keep working for; the one who called the meeting with certain expectations and goals. This creates an "acting" challenge—to "act like" you're there and "with it" wholeheartedly—when you may not feel that way and are actually being very careful about what you do. Even if the meeting caller is not your ultimate boss, for the length of that meeting he/she has the power to direct, to cut you short, and most of all, to remember . . .

Foregone Conclusions

"Group discussion is a waste of time since the boss will already know what he wants to do."

The leader who called the meeting often has already reached a conclusion and knows how he/she wants the decision to come out. Therefore, if the group begins to move in another direction, there is a tug of war or manipulation by the leader. This makes the group feel that it doesn't matter whether there is consensus or not, the end product is a foregone conclusion.

Not Useful

"You often walk out not sure exactly what was decided and what to do next."

One of the greatest problems with meetings is the need for good, definitive closure. Unfortunately, coming to some conclusions about an issue seems to feel like enough to many people. Participants often walk out without a clear action or follow-up plan or a sense of how the new decisions will fit into the total scheme, what the consequences will be, etc.

"Feeling" Issues

Fear of exposure

"I'm visible to my peers and the people in my group, as well as to the people in power. What I say (or don't say) is registered for all to see. I could even be in for some public criticism in relation to a project!"

This is one of the subconscious responses, not brought to the surface or admitted, but fear of being exposed is an active part of people's