

- Do you know what I want (need) to know?
- Do I like or admire you already?
- Can I trust you?
- Am I usually comfortable with you?
- How can or do you affect my life?
- What's my past experience with you?
- Are you reasonable (negotiable, rigid, stubborn)?
- What (or whom) do you represent?

Each of us asks: Is this *my* version of what a leader (expert, staff member, co-worker) should be and how one should behave?

Look at the list again. What else would you add? What are *your* hidden questions about "Who's Telling?" Those you don't really need to bring to the conscious surface but that color and filter how you receive information and enter into a dialogue? Think about them a moment, consciously.

Can you see how your resistant, wary "tests" and the opinions you form—often in advance—could shape the outcome of any communication directed at you? That they would shape the *way* you would listen as well as *if* you would listen.

Instinct Plus Thought = Decision

The process of deciding "Who's Telling?" has two parts: visceral and cerebral. But they're not distinct and separate. Although you bring your head into it, all the cerebral answers depend on and are filtered through your feelings.

Most of us don't consciously think first. *We feel* first. We like, trust, believe, follow because our sensory antennae tell our heads we should.

Instincts were there before our earliest learned material. Dealing with basic survival, this subconscious system puts up the first row of defense and danger signals as we deal with the world. First comes STOP, LOOK, LISTEN. Then comes THINK ABOUT IT.

Now, listening is hardly life-threatening, but the visceral evaluation system for people's behavior is in place and we use it everywhere. Therefore, our sensitive instincts "process" who's trying to tell us something and how we feel about them. And about their message. Then our business head starts operating, adding and weighing hard information. It's the combination of the two that gets us to listen and satisfies our wish to qualify the bearer of the message.