

## HOW TO TALK SO PEOPLE LISTEN

- To know what *we* really mean—inside—before it ever gets to the outside world.
- To be able to make informed choices about what we say and how we say it.
- To use some of that instinctive knowledge of other people we picked up in our fight for survival to predict how other people would respond to what we'll say.
- To discover the best and most productive way to put our requests and to give our bad news.

That's the background for the problem. Now, let's focus on work itself. Let's take a good hard look at how we work and why. What we expect from it beyond the paycheck; where our personal investment—the one that can make communicating difficult—lies.

## WHAT MOTIVATES WORK

We spend three fifths of our waking hours working. During that time we not only work; we deal continuously with some of the most critical and stressful problems of our lives—the unresolved personal hungers we try to feed in everything we say and do. We find it hard to acknowledge these hungers in a work environment where the medium of exchange is not feelings but tasks and accomplishments.

Still, those deep and ongoing personal needs continue to create a noisy turmoil beneath the smooth and unreadable facade we try to present in the workplace. They scare us whenever they surface into our consciousness. We try to banish or conquer them for fear we will sound immature or emotionally impoverished. We work hard at being sure others don't know about them, trying to find acceptable ways of getting what we really want. Let's look at what's going on just below the surface, what hidden emotional agendas we carry that affect, even undermine our ability to communicate well and freely at work.

### **Status**

We each seek to establish our identity in the outside world through relative status, based on what our society says it admires. Of course, many people come up with different subsets of what's most important—