

- **Performance:** For many of us, our anxiety about our own eloquence, fluency, ability to formulate and articulate what we mean on the spot chokes us up.

Hardly the picture of comfort and confidence, is it? And it's true for us whether it's a public questioning situation or we're being privately questioned by anyone in authority.

So now we have the foundation for this chapter—our intrinsic, conditioned response to questioning and how it affects what we do and say in such situations.

Our work will be to understand ourselves and the forces that push us well enough to be able to counter that negativity. To figure out how to handle being questioned, a seemingly powerless and anxiety-producing aspect of our working lives. Then, to find out how to feel free enough to let the mind work on what needs to be said, selecting what you want to say, and giving yourself time enough to choose how to say it. We'll also learn how to handle various types of questioners.

THE AUDIENCE VS. YOU: ANSWERING AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

Why Answer Questions?

Why indeed? Why set yourself up for a public grilling? Is it really useful? For whom?

For you! Inviting questions actually solves many problems of omission and commission in your presentations. Answering questions well helps you stay in control of what people *think* you mean or have said.

Here are some benefits you gain from the question/answer period:

Clarifies

If your basic intention in making a presentation to a group is to explain something you know a lot about, to inform and enlighten, shouldn't you find out whether they got it?

Although you may think you put everything in clearly and thoroughly when you prepared your speech, letting people ask you questions at the end shows you what they didn't get. It lets you fill in the gaps of what's still confusing or unfinished in their minds. Wouldn't you rather have a