

for discussion and work hard to keep the exchange factual, easy, and friendly. One big advantage of a one-on-one discussion is the fact that there are only two people, so, unlike a group meeting, you can each have *lots* of turns and be heard, and can also focus more directly on each one's ideas *and* subtext.

Listen

We usually start out *trying* to listen. The problem arises when the sides differ and the discussion deteriorates into a series of interruptions and counterarguments.

How to fix that?

What do you think of: "Gee, Dan, I keep trying to make my point and you cut me off"?

Well, it's truthful. But is it persuasive? Not really. It's very judgmental and accusative of Dan. How about:

"Gee, Dan, we're both so hot to get our point across that I don't think either of us is listening! Let's each take five minutes apiece and present our point of view, uninterrupted"?

The advantage of the latter idea is that the speaker said *both* were not listening (which has to be true because the person who is interrupted spends some time seething, *not* listening!). This allows both to save face and begin again.

Consider the Idea

Stay open! Give credibility to *each* idea. We do have a tendency to close down just because it isn't our idea.

Ask

Before you go off half-cocked, ask questions! Be sure you understand the *whole idea* before you answer, defend, or counter-punch.

Be Clear

In order to be convincing in a discussion, listen to yourself! Sometimes when you talk of something very familiar to you, you use shorthand and your opposite number may not get it.

Notice and Comment On What's Being Discussed

"I see you want to know more about X. Is that an important issue?"
Become very conscious within a discussion about the underlying