

feelings about meetings. Therefore, meeting goers feel wary and guarded, attending much more to their safety than to the business at hand.

### *Potential Conflict*

"Will I take a chance and publicly disagree and get into an argument? Will I, should I, stick my neck out?"

Most people are not accustomed to living life by walking uphill, against the prevailing wind. It requires much inner strength and motivation to fight for a cause against the popular consensus or to argue for an unpopular thought, if yours is not a basic "oppositional" mentality. By nature, we like to avoid conflict. It's personally costly and can expose you to attack by the majority.

Dissenters can also feel isolated or unpopular—not just at a meeting but in the workplace itself. A distaste for the dangers of conflict causes many people to bite their tongues and *not* speak out at meetings.

Anticipating that, for safety's sake, you may have to throttle your desire to speak out and that you'll make yourself play dead at the meeting, makes you enter with anxiety and with another kind of hostility toward the meeting process.

### *Prior Relationships Brought to Meeting*

"I know who'll side with whose position before I even go in. It doesn't matter *what* the facts are."

There are often factions or pre-aligned groups in the workplace who pull against each other, acting out a power struggle over issues and turf. Also, feelings of personal animosity or competition with people in your shop get heightened as you sit around a table watching each other. Public visibility, vying for position, and the intensity these cause can make meetings unsuccessful and unwelcome.

### *Concern About Consequences*

"What will be required of me?" "If we decide X, how will it affect my job?" "Can I do what the new plan will ask of me?" "What can I do to stop something I see being planned that can affect me adversely?"

Meetings often mean change. You can see how these concerns would make going to a meeting an uneasy and unwelcome experience as you think, "Okay, what are we going to change now?"