

just given you one glancing blow, I'm sure there are many things still not clear. I welcome your asking me anything."

This says, "I won't be insulted that you didn't get it or think you're dumb for *not* getting it. " Another one:

"Well, you've been such an attentive audience and I've talked non-stop for quite a while. I should calm down now, change the pace, and let it be your turn to ask me questions."

There's a nice, warm, human touch in this one that says you know how they feel and that you empower them by inviting them to join you in a group endeavor.

### *Do It Yourself*

I don't think it's very encouraging or stimulating to an audience to have the moderator or chairperson suddenly appear and ask for questions. It's intrusive and looks like an audience test. Tell him/her you're much more comfortable doing it yourself. He/she can stand there to help pick out who's got questions or to call them by name, if you wish, but *you* do the introduction to the Q&A period yourself. It's an important moment for establishing rapport and developing an encouraging environment for questioning.

### *What If No One Asks?*

Gulp! That dreadful moment while you stand there with an expectant smile and no one raises a hand. Makes you feel like your speech was a dud, that they're too bored or confused to ask. How to handle it? Humor!

From my own experience, having used it *many* times myself, I ask my clients to say:

"You know what's happening now? A classic thing all audiences do. It takes about forty-five seconds to a minute" (this makes them feel good; it says they're not unusually dumb or slow). "You've probably got a question in mind and you're testing it, thinking, 'I don't know if that's such a terrific question. Not sure it sounds very smart. Maybe I'll wait till someone else asks one first to see what that's like.' So you're all sitting there, waiting for someone else to start, right? *Then* you'll chime right in!"

Result? Big laugh and four hands are raised.

You can also try:

"Okay. I see everyone's gotten the old Army word about never volunteering!"

The key is to confront what's happening, not just stand there smiling