

information and words and how that's changed involve *passivity* and *pace*.

To see what makes this true and to discover the effect television has had on us both psychologically and in how we communicate, and then to assess the implications this has for you in your workplace, let's look back at the last hundred years.

How It Used to Be

We used to *want* to listen—and to read. We delighted in words. They were our major means of exchange. Written language and skillful orators were sources of pleasure. Family entertainment meant reading aloud in the evening. Elocution teachers were the rage. People recited (even wrote) poetry to express their deepest emotions. And we loved to read; to go inside ourselves quietly, let someone spin a web, and take us with them. Slowly. To let our imaginations take off from the springboard of another's words and do the rest ourselves.

This reflected the rhythm and phrasing of our lives then. Listening and words took time. And time ticked at a clippety-clop pace, in tune with how we lived. The world went by slowly, seen on foot or courtesy of a horse, touching all our senses.

Every household chore took time.

Going for the doctor took time.

Crafting things by hand took time.

Getting information from afar took lots of time.

So we were accustomed to waiting until we got what we wanted. We could wait to hear the whole story. We actually *enjoyed* the detours and nuances that someone "telling" could provide—the little asides, the descriptive phrases that triggered our imagination to hum along and become an active part of the story ourselves.

Our very lives were lived with more commitment and effort. We were used to—and willing to—go more than halfway to get what we wanted. We didn't depend as much on external help to make our lives better. We developed self-reliant skills and actively pursued what we wanted, knowing it would never just come to us. And that was reflected in how we communicated, too.

But time passed and the world and its timing changed.

We saw our landscape speeding by from the windows of our cars, tightly rolled up.

Airplanes distorted our natural world into a geometric collage, where time measured the reward of getting there fast, and earthly wonders, the old realities, increasingly became abstractions.