

have no power?). It puts you in the position of *looking for* approval instead of giving it.

*Response:* The fact is you have enormous power. It's your material. You own it. You are still totally in charge of what you'll tell, how much you'll tell, how you'll tell it. Even more than that, you have the power to ask questions *back*—not just to receive them! You can deflect, reroute, add on, analyze, and challenge.

So, recognize that the first obstacle to answering questions well is your feeling that you lost your power and that you think your audience now has it. And that's not true!

- *Nervous*

You feel anxious about whether or not you can do it well, and most of all, whether you'll get trapped into saying something you don't mean or would rather not say. We all worry about public extemporizing and its consequences (shades of those early school years again). We all worry about performance and have great expectations of ourselves—wanting perfection.

Perhaps most of all your nervousness deals with not having time enough to think up a good answer, and a carefully edited one, without looking like you're stalling or can't think of anything to say, and still sounding articulate.

*Response:* Remember there is no *perfect* way to do this. This question/answer period never existed before. You, your speech, your audience, the time and place it's happening, all never came together before. Therefore you're writing on a clean slate.

Think to yourself: "I will do this *my* way and *that's* the right, best, and only way to answer these questions this time. I'm talking about *my* material. I'm prepared. They'll ask me about what they've just heard, which *I* told them. I *can* handle whatever comes."

- *Exploited*

Since you have declared open season on yourself, you can begin to feel put upon. You're up there as a target and they can shoot at you. This is a dangerous feeling because you then begin to see the questioners as *taking* something from you rather than *asking* benignly for positive reasons. This can make you testy and hostile.

*Response:* Although they ask, they do so at your invitation. You're giving a gift. See yourself as Santa Claus—sharing yourself with this one, giving an extra tidbit of information to that one. See each momentary relationship as personal and intimate. The action is from you to them.