

become involved in, yet the agenda items don't always concern you. Meeting goes generally don't have any input into the agenda and the proceedings till the end, when they're tired and dying to get out. That's when **the** leader says, "Any new items you'd like to bring up?" Groan!

Boring

"They're usually endless and dull, with people talking in circles. "

Because meetings are so product-oriented—"Let's get down to work and get this over with. X number of items on the agenda. Let's start with #1"—people just don't take the time to build in persuasive or involving techniques the way they would when delivering a speech. Sitting through a list of disconnected issues, hearing report after report and perfunctory discussions, group members are rarely stimulated except when they may get to the one or two items that might directly affect *them*.

People Don't Listen

"I don't think they ever heard what my report was really about."

Although meetings are meant to be a clearinghouse for ideas, what's brought up at meetings often falls on deaf ears. You often find several people talking at once or interrupting each other. Comments rarely flow in response to what was just said, but more from "Now it's my turn. Listen to *my* idea."

Many of us aren't good at listening in the best of times, suffering from both the perfectly human tendency toward self-involvement and the conditioned response to the usual level of speakers. But given all the facets of what's at stake personally at a meeting, it's little wonder that we're really bad at listening there.

Grandstanding

"Two or three people always seem to dominate or try to get control. Feels like you can't get a word in."

The more powerful or outspoken members may try to take over meetings—talking too long or too often, pre-empting the "last word" position, and generally putting a damper on effective participation by less aggressive attendees.

The Power of the Leader

"**How** much can you disagree? After all, he's the boss."

The fact of a person in power, usually your boss, leading the meeting