

To show you some specific ways to handle two kinds of one-on-one questioning sessions, let's create a scenario or two and play it out.

## Answering Informational Questions

*Scene:* The boss calls you in for a performance appraisal. This is a kind of questioning encounter in which the atmosphere is basically evaluating and the exchange of information is a key focus.

BOSS: "Well, Janet. It's that time again. Tell me, how do *you* think you did at your job during this period?"

A common ploy: it may throw you off-guard. It can also smoke out some problems the boss may not know about, and give the boss a chance to hear your opinion of your own work.

If you answer:

*"(Defensively)* Why, I thought I did very well, don't you?"

you haven't told him/her anything except that you're not sure you did and you seem to have nothing but the *boss's* affirmation to back you up.

If you use the same words but answer belligerently, you're on the attack, expecting the worst, and nothing has really happened yet! That can make the boss suspicious about why you're so belligerent.

Let me give you a series of suggestions about how to handle the information-getting kind of questioning encounter.

### *Assume the BEST, Not the Worst*

The old conditioning about how we answer *any* question makes us walk into most such sessions nervous and defensive. Start out feeling *good*, not bad, about the session. This will be an exchange. You'll talk and ask and clarify on *both* sides. It's a chance for you to get things straight—directly, not third hand.

### *Learn What the Meeting's About*

Be sure you always find out what the subject of the meeting will be. You can always ask "in the interest of being prepared for whatever you'll need to know."