

vulnerable days. The anxiety about our own competence doesn't ever really leave us. Whenever you, the teller, present a challenge to move into the "Learn this, because there will be a test" mode, you can call up levels of performance anxiety. Thus the normal human instinct of self-preservation causes us, the recipients, to put our hands up in front of our faces and say, "Whoa!"

Competitive

Your idea, not mine. That fact can create resistance again. Not only because I didn't think of it, but because of the implication that you were smart enough, creative enough, even brave enough, to think of it. For many competitive people there's also the feeling that if I accept your idea, you're ahead of me and I'm in a weakened position.

Need the Familiar

New ideas are usually presented just that way—as *new*. Different. Unlike what's gone before. Bad news! This doesn't give the listener/learner any grounding or context or reason to believe he/she can tune in. We all need to feel some ownership of turf before we venture forth to the unknown. "Turf" in this case means knowing that past information and experience, one's background, is valuable and useful in a new situation. New data creates major resistance since one doesn't know how to listen to it, to relate to or even imagine it.

The safest way to discuss new information is to begin with what is known. To start with the familiar and then to add the new as variations or take-offs from the old. To establish and remind one of *what is*, then show how it leads to *what could be*.

Language

Words mean instant understanding if they are used well and if they are within the listener's vocabulary. Since words are exact, stating facts and concepts precisely—once we know a language, we expect its words to be accurate and clear to us, making an immediate image which is shared by everyone. We depend on processing words easily, knowing that they are the vehicle that will move us along in our comprehension. We don't expect to get stuck. We are challenged and concerned when we do. Therefore, how we use language has a great effect on how people can take in and understand us.