

coming to my house. Would you be willing to stop at the Supermarket and pick these up?" You would better give him a list of the 14 items, or he is not going to get it right.

Then there is a third level of difficulty of message--the highly critical or crucial message in life--and I claim it always should be face-to-face communication. Throughout history no great and wise decision ever was made without speech and listening being involved. If you are going to fire a man, call him in and tell him so, face to face. If you are going to tell a manager he has to reform his whole program, go and talk to him, face to face. The great, the crucial, the critical decisions ought to be eyeball-to-eyeball communication, in my conviction.

So you use oral communication for the simple and the crucial, and the detailed things you may have to write out.

QUESTION: How do you train yourself to stop evading the difficult when you are listening to a speaker?

DR. NICHOLS: Through the "intention to report," I think that the best technique I personally have hit on for this is to say to myself, "Nichols, can you give a report of this to somebody? I am going to force you to give a report." If I give myself the assignment of saying, "This is tough. Gosh it is getting technical," I say, "But I have to tell my wife or my youngster about this when I get home." If I give myself the responsibility of reporting what I am hearing, it sometimes helps me to try to tackle that difficult content.

QUESTION: In one of your 10 items of making listening difficult, you say that the problem was a differential between the hearing and the speaking, that it was 400 versus 100, or something. Why in this particular question-and-answer period have you reverted back to the level of 100 words a minute, when you said it was better to talk faster?

DR. NICHOLS: I wasn't aware that I had reverted back to 100 words a minute. It could very well be that I have done so, however. If so, it may be a lack of enough familiarity with the content to answer your questions at 200 words per minute. I have to think more carefully as I go along.