

## The Other Side of Question Asking

*...that is a very good question. I don't know the answer.*  
- Arthur Miller

The other side of question asking resides in the *After Zone* and has to do with answers.

**How will you know a good answer when you hear it?**

This may sound like the silliest of Dumb-Smart questions, but it's for real — you don't always get the precise answer you expect, and sometimes you don't even know what to expect.

**What's the difference between a surprising  
(or perhaps even alarming) answer and a poor one?**

According to Toastmasters International, good answers have several distinctive characteristics. They

- ▶ **are stated** *positively*.
- ▶ **are expressed in terms the** *listeners can understand*.
- ▶ **don't include** *loaded or slanted words (even if such words are used by the questioner as bait to set the listener up)*. They **don't sound** *antagonistic, evasive or defensive*.
- ▶ **tend to be** *specific and concise*. They **don't include more information than necessary, but they do capitalize on opportunities in the question to offer the answerer's viewpoint**.