9.14: Changing Attitude and Stasis

Critical thinkers need to remember that before anyone can be persuaded to do anything, that person must be pushed off their stasis. As long as a person is comfortable in his attitudes and behavior, he will not change. Only when a person experiences a significant amount of discomfort can an alternative attitude be substituted. This new attitude, once adopted, will allow him or her to get back to a state of comfort or stasis, restoring the balance between his or her beliefs, values, and attitudes.

As long as you are comfortable with your weight, you will never diet. But your doctor, who you really trust, says that you have to lose 35 pounds or be at risk of acquiring Type II Diabetes. This news knocks you off your stasis and to return to comfort, you go on that diet and create a new stasis.

As communication professors Reike and Sillars write:

"Values and beliefs function in systems. Thus, several values and beliefs are operative in a given argument over a specific attitude. Within value systems people will share values and beliefs but may also disagree on how they are applied in a specific situation. There will also be disagreements on which values are appropriate to a given situation. Changes in attitude rarely result from adding a new value or eliminating an old one. Changes will most often result from redistributing, rescaling, redeploying, and re-standardizing values." ¹ (Rieke, 1993)
Reference