Look at the structural differential below. We have two individuals viewing the same event, (the dog). On the silent level, they probably have a very similar object. However, when they apply their first label to the object very distinct differences arise. Your friend labels this as a large vicious animal, intent on doing him harm. The youngster labeled his object as a large friendly hound, quite willing to make friends. The resulting semantic reactions paralyze your friend and encourage the youngster to embark on a dangerous course of action.

Your friend's paralysis resulted from the series of abstractions that he included in his map of the Event. The youngster's potential for danger resulted in not checking a higher order abstraction (Does he bite?) prior to taking action. Like your friend's map of the event, the youngster's map too was flawed. Flawed maps can paralyze us or put us in harms way.

As an exercise, insert your friend's labels on the Structural Differential below. Insert a few higher order abstractions the youngster might have considered?

Consider some of your own maps. Have you created some using a lot of higher order abstractions that get in your way? Do you find yourself in trouble, or actually in danger because you do not consider higher order abstractions in such thing as driving, sports, or relationships? Think about it.