



OVERCOME YOUR FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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When you need to get up and speak do you feel butterflies in your stomach? Sweaty palms? Dry mouth? Shaking knees and hands? You are not alone. Fear of public speaking is #.1. Death is #4. So most people would rather get a root canal and pay their taxes than speak in front of an audience.

Here are a few techniques to help you reduce your nervousness and present like a pro.

1. Before you begin, drink some tepid water, take a few deep breaths and visualize your success. (cancel the coffee)
2. The audience wants you to succeed – so just treat them as your friends and speak in a conversational manner. You don't use notes when you speak to your friend, so don't use them now. At the most, you may use some note cards that include some key words for you to remember.
3. You can relax yourself as well as your audience if you remember to SMILE! Everyone is more at ease when they see you smile. Better yet, find some humor in the situation and get everyone to laugh, including you.
4. Practice, practice, practice. Get familiar with your material by speaking often. This really helps reduce your tension.
5. Find ways to speak – volunteer as a committee chair, lead a meeting, attend networking meetings so you can introduce yourself often and get comfortable hearing the sound of your voice and words.
6. Then ask yourself the big question: "What's the worst thing that could happen?" No you won't faint, or forget, what you plan to say. Remember when you speak to any audience, it is about them, not you. So be present with them as you would when speaking to your friend.
7. A great way to calm yourself is to arrive early and greet people as they enter the room. This is a way to relax yourself and encourage others to feel friendly towards you before you even start your speech.
8. Think about what you are going to wear. Choose clothing that makes you look good and feel good. Most people delineate their thoughts visually and your audience will form an opinion about you after looking at you for 30 seconds. My mother always encouraged me to "dress up" before taking a final exam – she said, "If you want a high grade, then look the part."
9. If you really want to be a masterful speaker, hire a speech coach . . . like me. No serious athlete or professional speaker would get very far without a coach.
10. And, finally, focus on having fun. President Theodore Roosevelt said, "If you can't find a way to make public speaking fun, why do it?"

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