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FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING



TACKLE YOUR FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Have you been asked to give a conference speech...but you haven't because of a fear of public speaking? This eBook outlines how you can tackle your fear of public speaking. So you can, at last, speak with confidence.

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Tackle Stage Fright

Stage fright for some public speakers is totally debilitating.

It's first evident when speakers go out of their way to avoid a speech. They won't speak in public. And they won't give a presentation at work.

That's a problem. Not least because effective public speaking creates other opportunities for:

- employment
- job variability
- career progression
- investment and,
- social development



And you can tackle it more readily.

When you can't think what to say, when your mind goes totally blank or, your mouth feels that it's dried up:

- **Pause.** Take a breath. And then start talking where you left off. Remarkably the pause kick starts your mental picture of your speech allowing you to get going again.
- **Remind** yourself why it's you who's been asked to speak. Remind yourself what you have to offer on the subject. Pause...and start talking where you left off.
- **Remind** yourself how much preparation and planning you've invested in your speech. Pause...and start speaking where you left off.
- **Just pause.** Take a drink of water, have one or two deep breaths and resume your presentation.

If you've spotted the theme, well done. Get your breathing working for you . Your body and your speech will respond. Get your self-belief working for you. After all, there's an audience wanting to hear you and you don't have time for stage fright.

Will I Be Boring?

You certainly have a duty of care to your audience. A duty to make your presentation as exciting and interesting as possible. And why not? Who has time to sit around listening to boring stuff?

Your task is to make your presentation or speech exciting. Make it interesting.

And to do that you have to be interested. Get interested. Get passionate about your subject. When you are passionate about your subject, when you have a captivating speaking task, then you won't bore anyone.



You still want to keep an eye on the clock, of course. A 20 minute interesting speech doesn't become any more interesting when it's extended over 40 minutes. Your editing skills are as important as your passion and interest in your subject.

So, will you bore them? I don't think so.

Confident Public Speaking

How easy or difficult is it to speak with confidence? That's the question you might ask when you watch and listen to a competent public speaker. The thing is, it's really not that difficult. But you have to work hard at it. There are five key points you can't avoid when you want to speak with confidence:

1) **Plan** what you are going to speak about. Research your audience, considering what motivates them. Then take your time with your speech preparation. Don't be rushed.



2) **Prepare** your materials with detail in mind. Aim to have more speech material at the start of the process than you will have fully edited at the end.

You might like to write out a speech or a presentation...even when you are using PowerPoint slides. You will find it easier to practise that way.

And you must commit yourself to plenty of practice. Lots of practice. Speak out aloud as you practise your speech. It's the only way to fully test your voice, its tone and the meaning of your words. There's nothing to stop you having a small practice audience at this stage.

3) Before you speak **remind yourself** why it's you who is speaking. Why it's you who was invited to give a speech. The answer is obvious. It's because you have the expertise. The talent and the ability. Does that boost your confidence? It should.

4) **Stand tall** and don't slouch when you are speaking. Standing tall will assist your breathing which, in turn, helps your speaking.

Both inhalation and exhalation are essential for you to speak with clarity and volume.

Inhaling gives you breath (!) and exhaling provides clarity and volume. Slowing down the pace of your speech to a comfortable inhalation/exhalation pattern will do wonders for your public speaking.

5) **Breathe**. You can't perform at your best when your breathing is erratic. If you are one of those speakers whose breathing stops when you concentrate then you need to solve this!

Pause, breathe and speak. A solid approach to breathing creates good pauses and a great public speaking effect.

Is it difficult to speak with confidence in public?

No, not really. But you definitely have to work at it.

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Practice Makes Perfect

Public speaking shares one characteristic of everything else you might choose to do well in life. Practice. Practice makes perfect.

Yes it's true that the perfect golf drive might elude you after years of practice.

But just think what state your drive would be without that practice. Practising a swing, a move, a kick, a stroke or the spoken word makes for real improvement.

That's a real improvement in technique and a real improvement in confidence. When you know how much you've practised, your level of confidence rises proportionally.

You should aim for a good hour of preparation and practice for each spoken minute of a speech.

That's about the right level to aim for. That level of commitment will pay dividends making you a more confident and prepared speaker.



“The more I practise, the luckier I get”

Gary Player

How To Stay In Control

All of us like to be in control. In control of ourselves and our destiny. But, fears and insecurities often creep into our lives. And, in these occasions, we feel that don't have the control that we want.

That's a feature of life. And it's a feature of the workplace...just as it can be a feature of any new experience. So, it's the combination of limited control and perceived perils that drive our fear.



For example there might be physical perils associated with learning to drive. And the fact that we don't know how to drive a car ensures we are not in control. Fears without control combine to give us stage fright.

There's a connection between would-be public speakers with stage fright and presentation paraphernalia. When you are dependent on presentation paraphernalia for a speaking event you can be unnerved.

That's because you have lost control. Your mind focuses on the variables: power supply for the computer? USB and cable compatibility? The mouse? New batteries in the pointer? So, these questions will pop into your head. And typically **you'll** have answers to them. But, some would-be speakers won't. Their control is slipping and they know it!

Keep Control

If you feel that you aren't staying in control, then it's time for some questions:

1. Do you really need all that kit?
2. What does the kit do that you can't do without it?
3. How dependent are you really on the kit?
4. How well prepared and practised are you?

If you are getting positive answers to these questions...great.



If you don't need all the presentation equipment then strip out some variables.

Don't use a mouse with a presentation. Use a simple pointer. With more experience you can use a WiFi Logitech pointer.

Keep your presentation on your pc, accessible through a desktop link. Keep a spare copy only on your USB stick.

Try running the presentation without PowerPoint or Keynote. It's just as effective, isn't it!

Use cue cards instead. Or, how about using a script? A script will keep you on track and on time. You can't go wrong.

You just need to practise your pauses, intonation, tempo and speed. It's a perfect tool for someone wanting to make a clean break.

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Practice. When And How

So, when and how should you practise your speech?

Your task is easier because you know that practice will make you a more prepared, more confident speaker.

So, you should aim to practise your speech with plenty of time before the event. Perhaps a week or two. You don't want it to be rushed. And you don't want it to become a bore.



When you are tired with practice, you want to stop, without jeopardizing your practice schedule. That's important.

Practise your speech out aloud to give you the chance to edit properly. Edit for your audience, yourself and the clock. Make sure that all your edits are completed and fully familiar to you before the big event. Practising alone out aloud is best. You might even want to record yourself and play back the recording later?

You can always test your performance with others. You'll be looking for their feedback. So make sure it's structured feedback. And make sure you have the time to push through any amends that you need. You don't want feedback at the very last minute.

For many people a fear of public speaking can hold them back. It can hold back their career. And, of course it holds back their career aspirations.

Others dread to give a presentation. So they avoid them. They avoid presentations and this affects their outcomes at work, their profession and their career.

It's quite a problem. And it's something we wanted to help with.

We aim to encourage and motivate everyone to give solid, engaging presentations and speeches. That's business people, managers, professionals, academics and students. Everyone. Our ambition is to give all our clients the confidence and skills to speak in public. So they can be truly effective when they have to give a presentation.

Our class sizes are purposefully small so everyone can practise their skills. We offer ongoing feedback throughout the half-day, one day and two day courses. Our trainers enliven each course with practical exercises to boost your public speaking knowledge.

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