



Feel The Fear and Speak Anyway!

We all know - the fear of speaking is considered by many as their number one fear. For many the fear is greater than death or divorce. This is normal and completely 'human'.

There are legendary stories of high profile entertainers who undergo extraordinary bouts of stage fright immediately before they perform.

Many will experience blurred vision, nausea and headaches - even after performing hundreds of times. So, if these entertainers face anxiety on stage, is it any wonder that the rest of us may be fearful of appearing before groups? That anxiety may even prevent us from reaching our fullest potential since we tend to avoid speaking opportunities altogether, this in itself exacerbates the problem. Since practice makes perfect (we firmly believe that!) then avoiding making presentations does not help you.

Albert Mehrabian – a pioneering professor of the understanding of communications since the 1960s suggests that three elements of communication need to be in place for it to be effective. Here's an overly-simplistic interpretation.

- 7% are the *words* spoken, what you say / the content
- 38% is paralinguistic; the *way* that the words are said (enthusiasm / conviction)
- 55% is in your *physical* expression (your body and facial)

Presentation Ability is A Learned Skill

While there are many effective methods of relaxation that can help reduce our fear of speaking, the most important step is fundamental. We must begin by recognizing that making presentations is a learned skill. For most of us, it is not something we can simply get up and do effectively without having at least some basic training.

Many executives have unrealistic expectations about their speaking ability, believing that they can achieve proficiency without much effort. This attitude leads to significant frustration when their lax efforts fail to produce the desired results. Many managers and executive simply do not present often enough to overcome those fears of public speaking.

Once an executive accepts the fact that it takes time to develop his or her speaking skills, the pressure is off to become a "perfect" speaker. When such a small amount of time is devoted to public speaking, one cannot expect to excel without some coaching and a little practice.

Effectiveness is always a reasonable goal even with those executives who don't speak often. But perfection is unrealistic, and impossible.

Take Massive Action: Practice, Practice and Practice – at every opportunity, volunteer to give presentations to increase your exposure to the perceived fear.

Once you accept the fact that making effective presentations is a learned skill, taking the time to rehearse is a natural step. Rehearsing your presentation over and over again will greatly reduce anxiety.

The more familiar you become with your material, the more the words flow from you credibly and passionately. The more comfortable you feel with your words, the more naturally you present your speech. That's why good speakers practice - and practice again. Here are two simple ways for you to rehearse your presentation.



Filming - Nothing will improve your presentation more than seeing yourself on film. You will notice mannerisms about yourself that you never noticed before. And you will instantly begin to make changes

Audio tape - Listening to yourself on audio tape is another tool to use when you rehearse your presentations. Immediately, you'll know if you are speaking too quickly, too slowly, or if some words are difficult to understand. You will hear mistakes in grammar and inappropriate "ums" and "err's" that are quite easily removed from your presentation when you are aware of them. The audio sessions will also help you focus on content and vocal skills.

Perhaps the quickest way to decrease speech anxiety is to allow the emotion of the subject to 'fill you'. Those who speak with passion will most certainly have less anxiety. CEO of The Emmerich Group; Roxanne Emmerich says, "When you are so committed to the meaning of your message, you can't contain yourself and there is no energy left for being nervous." So, Now You're Ready!

The Presentation

You've just been introduced. You walk to the front of the room; you are about to say your first words. Pause.

Try this: pause for a few seconds and "take in" your audience. Establish eye contact with them, before you begin, establish eye contact with one.

Breathe deeply, smile, and allow yourself to relax for a moment. Now you are ready to begin! The connect eyes with another person – deliver one thought, pause, then connect eyes with a second person - deliver one thought, and so on.

What's the Worst that Could Happen?

In virtually every case, a person's fear of public speaking is unjustified. What's the worst that could happen? You could trip, freeze, forget a sentence, fumble a line, stammer, or shake. None of these is fatal. The worst that could happen probably won't. Yet if it does, you will live through it!

Top Tips

- 1- Get basic interactive presentation training – even if it's simply to expose you to the fear!
- 2- Practice, Practice, Practice. If you have a presentation to give, ensure you rehearse as much as possible. If at all possible film yourself and review several times, each time, making improvements.

To attend ImpactSkills' next FREE *interactive* Presentation Workshop:

Register Here: <http://www.impactskills.com/showcase-information/> or

Email: success@ImpactSkills.com

* * *

Suite 11, Beaufort Court, Admirals Way,
Canary Wharf, London, E14 9XL, United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales Company No. 6163401, VAT Number 736 0798 10