

SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

Overcoming Nerves

Almost all people feel anxious before they present a speech. They experience butterflies in the stomach, sweaty palms, the feeling of dread and many other symptoms of anxiety. If you are planning a career where you will be presenting ideas to others on a regular basis, you should get used to these feelings. They can actually benefit you by introducing adrenalin into your system; something needed by all good performers.

Some Hints

Take down a list of all of your personal fears of speaking in public and analyse them realistically. For example:

The audience will laugh at me.

Why? What is so funny about you?

I'll freeze up or make a huge blunder.

You can overcome this by being well prepared. Arm yourself with good notes (both in full text and point form). Then, even if you forget, you can always go back to your notes.

The audience will be bored.

If you take the time to attempt to make it interesting and you feel that it is, it is likely that they will too.

After realistically appraising your fears, try some of the following:

- Understand that you will probably suffer the physical symptoms of anxiety (butterflies in the stomach, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dry throat, etc.) but they will probably recede when you get into your speech. Use them to your advantage and turn them into adrenalin ferocity rather than nervous anxiety.
- Take a few deep, cleansing breaths.
- Stretch and move. Before your speech, take a small walk outside.
- Avoid caffeine and sugar. These will raise your level of anxiety and reduce your ability to concentrate.
- Rehearse your speech, and then go through it in your mind before you take to the floor. If you feel that you have already done your speech (even if it is only in your mind), you will feel more competent.
- Remember, unless you are addressing a meeting of 'Sadist International', the overwhelming majority of your audience will want your speech to be a success. They are really on your side.

Planning Your Presentation

What are the main points I will be talking about?

- If you are presenting the material from an essay or report, be careful to put your talk in POINT FORM
- Don't read material directly from your notes
- Keep it simple and to the point

Consider you how will present the information clearly and interestingly.

How much time do I have?

Analyse the audience. Who will be listening to me?

- Use language that everyone will be able to understand.
- You may have to give some definition of terms or explain concepts.

What facilities do I have available to me?

- Overhead projector, Digital Video Projector, whiteboard and markers etc.

How can I make my talk interesting?

What are the appropriate visuals I can use?