

Fast and Effective Ways to Conquer Stage Fright

Embracing public speaking might feel like a daunting challenge, but it's within reach. Start by recognizing that your passion for the topic is likely captivating for your audience. Remember, they are focused on your message, not your nerves or speaking abilities. Here are 10 practical tips to help you tackle stage fright with ease.

1. Get your head in the right place.

Speech anxiety is unpleasant enough that you may focus on how awful you're feeling instead of what really matters: the response of your audience. Put yourself in their shoes and think about what they're hoping to get out of this presentation. You'll be on the right wavelength, which is that of your audience.

2. Belly Breathe.

Modern life with all its gadgets and digital assistants makes it easy for you to becoming a "talking head," which includes breathing shallowly and rapidly. The fight or flight response to any kind of fear exacerbates this type of respiration cycle. To counter these habits, learn how to breathe diaphragmatically. Yes, it will help you to have a resonant voice; but it will also calm you and slow your heart rate.

3. Turn that negative talk into positive statements.

The longer you stay in negative territory concerning your response to public speaking, the more that place will seem like home. We're all experts at beating ourselves up and creating negative self-talk. Turn each of your self-destructive statements around by finding the flipside of the negative point you're focusing on. Create a positive groove you can stay in.

4. Stand straight and open your chest.

Posture matters both in terms of public speaking confidence and whether you look like a leader. It's also a neglected area of body language. Try hunching your shoulders slightly; now stand straight allowing your chest area to come forward as your shoulders drop into their natural position. This tip will help you look and feel confident.

5. Let intrusive thoughts float away.

Focus is one of your most important tools as a speaker who knows how to reach and engage audiences. But you're human, which means off-the-grid thoughts will intrude while you're speaking. Learn not to engage these thoughts or resist them; instead, notice them and let them float away. Come back to your message and its reception

6. Greet your audience and smile.

One of the most effective ways to feel like you have a relationship with an audience (and therefore feel less anxious) is to take a moment to allow that to happen. You do that in your moment of greeting. Invest yourself in this moment, letting listeners know that you really enjoy being there. Again, you too will feel it!

7. Talk, don't present.

Edward Everett was the famous orator who delivered a two-hour address at Gettysburg in 1863. But we remember the other guy, who gave the two-minute speech known as the Gettysburg Address. Ever since then, speeches public and private have been getting more conversational. Your speech nerves come partly from the thought that you're there to give A SPEECH. In reality, you'll just be talking to some people. Sounds enjoyable, doesn't it?

8. Visualize a successful outcome.

Athletes, chess grandmasters, and theoretical physicists do a lot of visualizing, and you should join them. In other words, learn how to use positive visualization to create a successful presentation. It just makes sense: the more time and effort you spend anticipating positive outcomes, the better prepared you'll be to respond that way in the real situation.

9. Turn the spotlight around.

This too is a visualization technique. Speaking in public can feel like standing alone in a hot bright spotlight, where every move you make takes place in a harsh glare where you're naked and vulnerable. So in your mind, turn the spotlight around. Now you're in the cool dark and the spotlight is on the audience. After all, aren't you supposed to "illuminate" listeners?

10. Move!

Ever feel like you're in a pressure cooker when speaking to a group? That's because the fear response is releasing adrenaline into your bloodstream. It's called the "fight or flight" response because stress hormones are pushing you to physically fight the threat, or get away fast. If you stand stock-still, the pressure will just build...so move!