



Going Public

A two part series on Public Speaking and Presenting

By Helena Kaufman

In every communication, there is a time to listen, and a time to talk. Surveys claim that the fear of speaking publicly tops the lists of what people fear most – even death.

Everyone has their reasons for why they are nervous. After all, a person exposes their presence, intellect and voice. There are solutions. They can make the times when standing up at a meeting, or addressing any group and presenting ideas or materials a bit easier. If nothing else, dear reader, today you are assured that if you have any anxiety about speaking publicly, you are not alone. And, if you are a confident speaker happy to jump up and share, then these points may help make you even smoother!

Consider these tips on talking:

1 Frame the experience in a positive light. Use it as an opportunity to shine and share your knowledge, make contacts and get feedback. For many the first reaction is to avoid what can be a positive experience.

2 Face your fear and break it down. Speaker fears often concern potential failure. You may fear being exposed as a fake, yet, no one expects you to be perfect. Listeners want information that is organized, prepared and clearly presented.

3 Practice, practice, practice. Familiarity and practice with your message helps you through the fear or losing your place or forgetting. Having a strong memory of successful readings from practice will give you confidence no matter what happens in the room – timing, lighting, audience reaction or your own nerves.

4 Stumbling or making a mistake happens to everyone. Try not taking yourself too seriously. A light comment and acknowledgment of the mistake can set things right with the audience, and give you time to recover.

Remember this! Your audience wants you to succeed. They want to hear your message. Deliver your thought out and well rehearsed message and help relax your listeners with body language such as looking at them, moving about and keeping a confident stance.

Ahhh. One more tip. Breathe. Take a good breath and exhale before you begin speaking. It will focus you and alert your body to prepare for action.

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You are never given
a wish without also
being given the power
to make it true.

– *Richard Bach*
