

Dealing with Nerves

According to some surveys, the fear of speaking in public is one of the most common fear among people. (The fear of dying comes out lower!) Almost everyone feels nervous when giving a presentation or speaking in public so if you feel nervous, it is perfectly natural and understandable.



Tips to deal with anxiety

Be organised

Make sure you have well prepared your presentation and your notes and your visual aids are all in order. Ensure that you know the room and the equipment so that you are confident about how everything works.

Practise

The secret to being able to perform even when you are nervous is to practise, practise, practise, practise. Present your speech to your friends and family, for your cat, in front of the mirror. The more you practise, the more you are able to do your presentation well even if you are feeling nervous.

Breathe

Breathe slowly in and out about 6 times before you stand up to give your presentation. Do it as slowly as you can. This helps to slow down your heart rate and increase the amount of oxygen to your brain and makes you calmer. Nerves make us talk more quickly. Don't be afraid to pause, slow down and breathe.

Act confidently

When you first stand up - Smile! Your audience will react warmly to you if you smile and at least look relaxed.

Giving an oral presentation is a performance—you have to be like an actor. Don't ever tell your audience that you are nervous or apologise for your presentation. If you act the part of someone enjoying themselves and feeling confident, you will not only communicate these positive feelings to the audience, you will feel much better, too.

If you think your hands might shake use cards instead of paper for your notes. A4 sheets held between two shaking hands will draw your own and everyone else's attention to the fact that you are nervous and will distract from the content of your talk.

*The trick is to be well prepared,
then smile and get in and do it*

Imagine it

A good technique is in the weeks/days leading up to your presentation, do some positive visualisation. Sitting quietly or lying in bed, imagine yourself standing in front of the group, feeling very calm and relaxed, speaking in a loud, assured voice. Run this through your head over and over and your mind will tend to remember and repeat it when you do the actual presentation.

Most people deal with nerves before a presentation, even professional speakers and performers. The trick is to be well prepared and rehearsed, smile and get in and do it.

PHOTO REFERENCE

KHER, 'Fear of Public Speaking Phobia ', In:
<http://thepublicspeaking-tips.blogspot.com/2009/06/fear-of-public-speaking-phobia.html>, ed, 2009

