

Seven Tips to Overcome Public Speaking Fear

1. Remember You Are In Control

If you expect there to be questions then decide in advance whether you'd like to let people ask them as you go along or leave them until the end. If someone asks a question that you can't answer then say so and agree to find out and get back to them.

And remember that people don't always have the same views whether it's at a presentation or anywhere else. And that's ok because how dull would life be if we all thought and acted the same?! They are 100% entitled to their view and you are 100% entitled to yours – neither has to be 'right' or 'wrong' - they can just be different.

2. Know Your Stuff

To feel confident and calm you need to know your material. When you know what you are talking about, you can trust yourself to say what you want to say.

There will have been many times in your life already when you've done just that – whether it was with friends or when talking about a hobby or interest. You just relaxed and allowed the words to come out in their own way.

3. Learn to Speak Comfortably

You can practice your speech or presentation in advance, getting used to the sound of your own voice and delivering the key points you intend to make. Imagine how your voice would sound if you were completely confident and allow yourself to speak out loud in that way, getting used to your confident voice.

It can also be useful to practice in front of someone you trust to give you honest feedback – speaking out loud in front of someone is a very different experience to speaking out loud on your own or just saying it in your head (make sure you choose someone you can relax with and remember that any feedback is designed to help you improve so you perform at your peak when you need to so just listen and be open to what they say).

4. Give Them Something To Look At

Using visual aids, whether it's handouts, flip charts or something else, is a great way to help the audience relax and listen attentively. It helps people remember and gives them something to do other than look at you the whole time.

5. Solve Problems In Advance

Many people spend the lead up to a speech or presentation thinking about everything that could go wrong and then feeling even more anxious. It can be useful thinking through some of the things that could go wrong – you may even want to write a list. But then think of at least one solution for each that would help you get back on track.

For example, you may worry that you'll forget what you are talking about or freeze. To solve this you can make a postcard with bullet points of your structure on so all you have to do is glance at it and you'll get back on point.

6. Rehearse Success In Advance

This links with point 6 in many ways. When thinking about your public speaking, notice what sort of pictures you have in your mind about things going badly. As these things haven't happened yet then it's just your imagination and you can choose what you imagine because the future hasn't happened yet!

Find time to relax before the event and when you are relaxed, picture in your mind a movie where you see yourself performing perfectly. You walk and stand confidently, deliver with a calmness and smile on your face, and handle anything that crops up easily and effectively. You can also notice how positively the audience respond to you – they may even give you a standing ovation and three cheers at the end! Get your mind used to how good it can feel when you succeed.

7. Your Inner Confidence

If you've ever felt confident in any situation in your life then you already know how to do it. So all you need to do is go back and get those feelings and thoughts and bring them into this situation instead of that old fear.

Remember a time when you felt confidence in the past and were able to relax as you spoke. Imagine returning to that time and into your body so you see what you say, hear what you heard and feel that confidence and calmness inside. Imagine a confidence dial inside and keep turning it up to the max as the feeling of confidence flows inside, notice how you talk to yourself and how the sounds and things you see become bigger, brighter and crisper as you keep replaying that time in your mind. Then with that feeling flowing inside you, imagine stepping up to make that speech and notice how everything happens perfectly, exactly the way you want it to.

For additional help and support, contact Dan by e-mailing dan@elymindcoaching.co.uk or call 07724 155715.