



The Public Speaking Guru - Confidence Builder

Three-quarters of us are at least a bit spooked by speaking in public.

In fact, the average person ranks the fear of public speaking – or glossophobia, as it's sometimes called – higher than the fear of death.

But you, you aren't going to let it paralyze you. You know the best way to fight your fears is to face them, you big brave thing, you.

But before you go out there to speak to the masses, have a look through this workbook.

It'll give you some help when it comes to overcoming your anxiety and building your confidence.

Which is why we called it what we did.

NAME



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK?

This workbook is best used a good while before you're due up on stage.

Its role is to give you information. It's your job to put it into practice.

Practice being the key word.

Not that you can't keep referring back to the workbook throughout the process of writing and rehearsing, but it's good to get the key info ASAP.

There's nice "takeaway" sections with easily digestible critical info, and question sections to help the learning stick.

The workbook complements our other learning material, like the infographic and video course, so feel free to read this alongside those.

Who should use this workbook?

- Anyone who has to make presentations for work
- Anyone with a big speech or presentation coming up
- Anyone who has to engage in public speaking generally

Key Insights

- Background on anxiety and stage fright
- How knowledge and preparation can allay your fears
- Tips and tricks to build confidence

PICTURE THEM IN THEIR UNDERWEAR. NEXT.

If anything, a semi-nude audience would make me more nervous!

So, what can you do to overcome the pre-presentation jitters?

Well, there are two crucial elements to lessening your anxiety.

And, annoyingly, they're both as obvious and ordinary as you'd expect.

KNOWLEDGE and PRACTICE.

Doesn't make them any less important.

Let's look at what they mean:

KNOWLEDGE

We fear the unknown. Makes sense then that by minimizing the unknown, through knowledge, we minimize fear.

That means you need to know as much as you can about your material.

That's both the subject matter, and your presentation itself.

We're not saying you should remember your presentation word-for-word (in fact, it's better not to, as it can make you sound robotic).

But you should be in a position to comfortably answer any realistic question about your material that you could be asked.

The more confident you are with your topic, the more confident you'll feel giving your speech.

PRACTICE

What does practice make?

Exactly.

Rehearse your presentation to yourself. While you do, pay attention to:

- Your facial expressions
- Your gestures
- Your body movements
- How welcoming you appear

Having an idea of how you appear to the audience means there's less you don't know. And what do we fear? The unknown. So knowing this = less fear. Simple.

Then, once you're happy with your performance to yourself, practice your presentation in front of family and friends.

It's always easier performing in front of people you know than strangers. Plus, even though, realistically, there's no big difference between talking to a small audience than a large one, it can feel like there is.

Practising in a safe environment can help you feel more confident when you get to the real thing.

What's more, you can use this as an opportunity to get some useful audience feedback. Take any comments and use them to improve your presentation.

TAKEAWAY

Knowledge and practice are the cornerstones of reducing presentation anxiety. There's little substitute for them.

Takes time, but learn your stuff inside out and then rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING TIPS AND TRICKS

Researchers have argued that while specific self-confidence is a state of mind, general self-confidence is a personality trait.

That means everyone's idea of confidence, and what it takes to get them there, is as individual as you are.

With that in mind, there are thousands of little hacks you can do to help yourself feel less nervous when giving speeches. Some'll work better than others. Try some of these, try 'em all, mix'n'match, see what works for you.

- Learn what you sound like. Record your voice on tape or video. Play it back to yourself, and get used to it (yes, we know it's weird). Besides being able to take notes on how you could improve, it'll stop you worrying about how you sound.
- Breathe. Yes, we know you breathe all the friggin' time, but think about it: when you're nervous, what happens to your breathing? It goes crazy. And with shallower breaths, you feel more panicked. So focus on your breathing when you practise and during your speech. It gives your voice more resonance, keeps you from rushing, and helps you relax. Vice versa, the more you rush, the faster you breathe, so take it slow.
- Visualize positive outcomes of your speech. Sounds a little new-agey, but it can help to keep you calm, which in turn, can help you achieve the positive outcome. Self-fulfilling prophesy, I think they call that.
- If you get a chance to meet the audience before the event, speak to them. Make friends. Especially if you can talk to people sitting in the front few rows. That way, you can look out for them during the presentation, make a bit of eye contact. By doing so you'll feel more confident, as well as establishing a greater connection with your audience.
- Why not take some public speaking classes? There are not-for-profit outfits like Toastmasters that help people get over their fears by helping people practise. You could also try getting a tutor, coach or mentor.
- Try a little light exercise before you deliver your speech. Nothing too strenuous - don't throw your back out. A quick walk or some light knee bends will get your blood flowing, which helps oxygen getting to your brain, and your brain is the main bit you'll be using during your presentation.
- Stay hydrated! Sipping warm or room-temperature water helps lubricate your throat. A few drops of lemon can also help. Take water up with you if needs be. However, avoid hot, fizzy and thick drinks, which can dry you out and make you mucousy.

TAKEAWAY

There are many different actions and rituals people use to avoid stage fright. Even if it is all in the mind, the physiological response is very real.

Try out however many tips you need to find the balance that's right for you.

QUIZ

Now, don't be nervous, but we're going to quiz you on what you've learned.

Don't worry - it's not to trip you up.

Similar to memorizing your presentation, recalling the information now will help embed it in your memory.

Let's go!

1. What are the two critical cornerstones of overcoming anxiety, and what do they entail?

2. What are the four things you should pay attention to when you rehearse?

3. Give five of the tips you've learned about in the workbook. Your top five in order, why not?

4. What's the technical term people use for stage fright? HINT: Begins with 'G'. For a bonus point, what does it literally translate to?

FINAL SUMMARY

Remember, nerves are a totally natural physical response to presentation fear.

But these fears are almost always unfounded. Audiences are generally sympathetic, so don't worry.

Now you've completed the workbook, you know about the twin pillars of knowledge and practice.

You've also got a few confidence-building tips and tricks under your belt.

So get out there and do your thing.

We're sure you'll be great.