

# Overcoming Speakers Anxiety – Best Practices

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- People do not want you to fail. Nobody is hoping that you will be boring or bad. Be yourself and cover the material with clarity.
- Go early – Meet everyone you can. By the time you start, you've already make some friends.
- Be prepared. Keep it simple. Use the windshield wiper method. Draw two columns. On one column write the point you want to make and on the other list the stories, examples, anecdotes or facts you are going to use to support the point
- Practice, Practice, Practice. The more you know your material the calmer you will be.
- Limit caffeine and sugar. Eat a light meal with whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Drink decaf tea.
- Visualize yourself delivering a good presentation. See everybody smiling and giving applause. Don't focus on what can go wrong
- Take a walk around the building
- Memorize the opening and ending and focus on 3 to 4 points in your presentation
- Every day for a week before your presentation, write down 25 to 50 times, "I am the greatest speaker in the world"

- Get rid of self-doubt and limiting behaviors that by carrying an index card around you with all your accomplishments. (i.e. I kayaked the Potomac river, this should be nothing)
- Realize no one is perfect. If you make a mistake no one will know, unless you stop or apologize. Even the best speakers make mistakes, however they are still around.
- Look people in the eye. Focus on the smiling face in the audience.
- Smile. Bring a photo that makes you smile (i.e. family, pet, cartoon)
- Ask yourself what is there to fear? Realize that what you're frightened of won't happen. Remind yourself that fear stands for False Evidence Appearing Real
- Realize people don't see your nervousness
- Use positive language. Don't say, "this will be bad" say, "I am excited to be here and this will be a great presentation"
- Don't let audience reactions scare you. Yawning, bored expressions or other negative factors are not about you. Some people will always be bored, many are tired and no matter how good you are, this will not change.
- What is the source of your fear? Is it the fear of being judged, not measuring up, making a mistake, getting hurt, getting fired, etc.
- Dig your heel in the ground. If you are shaking, the process of digging your heel in the ground will stop the shaking
- Relaxing exercises
  - Take a deep breath lasting about 5 seconds, then take about 5 seconds to let it out. Do this for about 5 repetitions

- Relax your muscles. Tense your hands then let go, then tense your face then let go, next is your feet and so on ...
- Do the wall push. This technique was attributed to Yul Brynner. Stand about 18 inches away from a wall and place your palms flat on it. Push against the wall. As you push, your abdominal muscles will contract. As you breathe out, hiss and contract the muscles below your rib cage as if you were rowing a boat against the current. Do this a few times and you'll banish all feelings of stage fright.