

CONFIDENCE BUILDERS: RESOURCE 7

How to Feel Less Nervous Speaking in Public

Public speaking can be terrifying, especially if you don't do it often!

Take comfort in the fact that 15 million Americans suffer from social anxiety, which affects men and women and often begins by age 13. Many people constantly experience a fear of speaking with others, where this fear is considered a “general trait”. For others, the degree of fear or anxiety depends on the situation, or “state”. It helps to build your self-awareness of what situations make you the most nervous, so that you can hopefully anticipate these feelings in the future and do your best to prepare for them.

Common Issues	Coping Tips
Fear of Evaluation or Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing your content – outlines and strategic scripting• Knowing your stuff – research on content and on the audience, to know what they will care about and relate to• Anticipate where the audience might get stuck, frustrated, or doubtful and work that into your talk• In a presentation situation: Find the noddors!
Uncertainty (unfamiliar ideas, unfamiliar audience, unfamiliar situation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions about the situation (what is the purpose of the talk, how many people, what are people expecting, what is the seating situation like, what is the sound situation like, where am I standing, is there a podium)• Talk to the people around you and ask them questions, get used to them• Come up with a routine for yourself for what you do before a talk, so you feel some sense of control



Difference in Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-talk: remind yourself that people are just people• Remember that you don't have to know everything – you can ask questions to learn – but also, that you have specific expertise to offer
Negative personal thoughts or inability to be yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing exercises• Calming activities: singing, listening to music, meditation, visualization exercises• Sleep, food, and water• Self-talk: think about what you are proud of and what are you excited to talk about• Get excited and pumped!• Humor and laughter• Have a secret weapon – a lucky charm, a favorite outfit, anything that makes you feel secretly powerful• Remind yourself to be okay with silences and pauses• Don't beat yourself up! Put things in perspective.
Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always practice your remarks out loud beforehand• Face your fears. Start with something small, but start creating practice experiences for yourself. It gets easier.