

LESSON-30

SPEAKING WITHOUT FEAR

“Every failure will teach you a lesson that you need to learn if you will keep your eyes and ears open and be willing to be taught. Every adversity is usually a blessing in disguise. Without reverses and temporary defeat, you would never know the sort of metal of which you are made. “

What is fear?

Fear is defined as a strong, unpleasant emotion or attitude in response to painful, dangerous, or unexpected stimuli. The anticipation of the fear motivates the individual to avoid or escape from the threatening situation, although social norms often expect courageous behavior from the individual despite fear. Fear certainly occurs no less as a reaction to social situations than it does to physical threats. Usually, one's social experiences and culture define what is to be feared and what is not to be feared.

As Emerson said: “ Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.”

Why are We Afraid?

Many people fear that their problems are too many and cannot be overcome. They do not have the confidence that they possess the necessary skills and attributes which can enable them to present themselves in front of other strange people and situations. Some analysts believe that part of this difficulty is that those who are afraid of speaking in public often take it for granted that the others who are good at it, like politicians, ministers and teachers, etc. possess these abilities naturally and they are able to speak without real and conscious effort. Though it seems true that generally we find some individuals who have a natural gift of the gab and flair for public speaking, yet we do not realize that such individuals have to undergo a lot of hard work and practice for learning how to control feelings, to combat physical discomfort and to speak before an audience in a convincing manner.

The ability to speak well before groups may be absolutely essential in some professions like chartered accountants, lawyers, consultants, company secretaries etc. but the need to obtain the skill of public speaking arises in almost every field of work and at any time whenever the situation demands. This is particularly true especially if one wishes to move upward in one's career or profession. The significance of your ability to speak before groups of people can be understood from the fact that your inability to do so cannot only be embarrassing to you, it can even cost you a promotion, a loss of face and spoil your chance to demonstrate your expertise in your profession in the competitive life.

Symptoms of fear

People who have difficulty in speaking before groups exhibit three categories of symptoms:

- (i) Physical,
- (ii) Psychological
- (iii) Emotional,

Firstly, there are the physical symptoms of fear. Such symptoms may appear sometime before the actual presentation in the form of a nervous stomach or any such trouble of the physique or sleepless nights. However, the symptoms of physical fear during the speech itself may vary from person to person in different situations. The symptoms can include one or more of the following:

	BEFORE PRESENTATION
Physical symptoms	Feelings of sleepless nights Feelings of nervous stomach
	DURING PRESENTATION
Physical symptoms	Feelings of shaky knees Feelings of uneasiness to stand in front of a group Feelings of hot flashes Feelings of faintness Feelings of breathlessness Feelings of increased heartbeat Feelings of trembling of voice
Psychological symptoms	Feelings of accumulation of phlegm in throat Feelings of blanking out and loss of memory Feelings of inability to recall facts and figures Feelings of forgetting important points altogether Feelings of losing track Feelings of sudden stoppage of flow of ideas Feelings of struggling to find out what is intended to say next Feelings of illogical repetition of words, phrases.
Emotional reaction	Feelings of inferiority complex and shame Feelings of panic Feelings of discomfiture, awkwardness or upset Feelings of helplessness Feelings of terror Feelings of consternation or hysteria Feelings of embarrassment and humiliation

In your practical life of everyday experience you would notice the close interaction of these types of symptoms. The rapid and uncontrollable beating of your heart would be the first sign of a feeling of lurking fear in your mind when you reach the dais to introduce yourself before your audience. This symptom may accompany a feeling of choking of your throat making you feel nervous or distorted appearance. Such physical symptoms disturb your concentration thereby causing you to lose track of the effective management of your thought process and speech. A feeling of embarrassment and a loss of control may result when you helplessly search for words, repeat phrases, or leave out ideas. Such symptoms of anxiety and fear can at times upset even the most proficient speaker and even a trained and organized speaker may suffer a blank out. But the talented and

experienced speaker can bring himself back under control, as he knows how to overcome nervousness or come out of a sudden break in his thought management process.

Reactions to fear by untrained and trained speakers

RESPONSE Untrained speaker Trained speaker

Stimuli You have been asked to make a presentation for launching a new product You have been asked to make a presentation for launching a new product.

Your thoughts “Oh No, I have not done it before and chances are I will be a failure.”
“Wonderful, this is an opportunity to show what I can do.”

Feelings Panic, Embarrassment and Fear. Fully excited and raring to go.

Inner response Increased heartbeat and uncertainty of success. High level of enthusiasm to initiate action.

Outer response Avoidance tactics with lame excuses and no intention to accept the challenge. Ready and willing acceptance, getting ready to prepare for the presentation, organizing required inputs.

How this response works for you. To escape the certain humiliation and to protect yourself from this threat Performance and result oriented with the additional motivation of possible rewards and recognition.

Control fear before you speak

Control Fear

Fear is a defense mechanism to protect us. We fear an injury to our guarded self-esteem. Our identity is precious to us. Other words about us seem like building blocks either supporting us or crashing in on us. Fear focuses on the worst thing that can happen. “I will fail”. “I will forget what I am going to say”. “I will be humiliated”. “I will panic”. “I will stop breathing”. Instead, shift your focus at once. You could be in anyone of the following situations before you start your speech:

You may be sitting in the midst of the group that you are about to address, and that you are required to get up from your chair, walk forward to the front of the group and turn to face them before beginning to talk.

You may be sitting in a chair on the stage, facing the audience and will need only to stand and walk forward to a podium. The distance between your present seat and the podium or the place you stand to speak is termed as the launching pad. It is from this position you will take off and from here onwards the success of your presentation will be measured. You can very well appreciate the adverse results if anything goes wrong at the launching stage itself.

In practical life, the loss of control begins at the launching pad itself particularly in the people who are fearful of public speaking. At this stage your body will show the first panicky signs of stress of speaking before public. You would notice sweat appearing on your palms, feel shivering legs, pounding heart and dizziness in your head.

FEAR FIGHTING

it is highly necessary to learn how to slow down and how to regain control. For this you need to undertake some exercises that will train you to sit still and concentrated, to resist the impulse to rush forward. With these measures and exercises, you can develop the skills necessary to make a calm, comfortable and dignified entrance.

I. Setting the stage

It is advisable that you have to place yourself in correct surroundings and in a position in order to concentrate on the exercises without any outside disturbance or distraction. Before you begin, it will be very helpful if you can stimulate a real life-like situation in your room as under:

- Imagine the location of your audience by placing some empty chairs for participants.
- Visualize where you will be sitting before the start of your presentation, i.e. whether you are sitting on the stage facing the audience or you are sitting with the audience and have to walk up to the stage.
- Place a chair in the position you decide for you and sit down.
- This visualization will prepare you to manoeuvre your responses.

II. Sitting on the chair

Your sitting posture would be the first indicator of your overall personality, frame of mind, level of confidence and presence or absence of fear. Therefore, in order to train you to control your fear response to the stress of the performance situation, the following exercises are suggested:

Exercises Actions

Centering 1. Mind your weight in the chair and make sure that you sit evenly balanced, with equal weight on the right and left hips.2. The muscles of your stomach are relaxed.

Concentration 1. Shut your eyes without straining them.2. Shake your hands forcibly five times.3. Your hands are placed in your lap.4. Concentrate on the feelings of tingling in your fingertips.5. Concentrate on your fingertips for thirty seconds.6. Open your eyes gently and without focusing, look straight ahead.

Slow Motion Standing 1. While sitting in your chair, focus on your fingertips 2. Continue focusing on your fingertips. Slowly push your body forward in your chair.3. Allow your arms to hang at your sides.4. Keep your hands at your sides, and straighten your head.5. Be sure that muscles of your stomach are relaxed.6. Continue standing with eyes straight ahead.

Balance Awareness 1. Check that the weight of your trunk is evenly apportioned between your right foot and your left foot.2. Your head should be exactly centred between your right and left shoulders.3. You must feel it, become completely aware of it.

Walking 1. Take a step with your right foot (Start walking).2. Take a step with your left foot (complete first step).3. Then move for five steps.4. Stop with both feet on the ground.5. Concentrate on your fingertips.6. Repeat the above exercise thrice7. During

your practice do not jump, swing or move fast.8. Do not touch your hair, body, clothes and do not put your hands in your pockets.

Eye Contact 1. Make eye contact with people in every part of the room.2. Do not look at only one or two people.

III. Important points to remember when you begin to speak:

1. Understand the facts about fear of presentation in public 1. You are not unique in your fear of speaking in public.2. The chief cause of fear of public presentation is simply that you are unaccustomed to speaking in public.3. To the extent possible stage fright is desirable.

2. Prepare in the proper way 1. Never memorize a talk word for word.2. Assemble and arrange your ideas beforehand.3. Rehearse your talk with your friends.

3. Determine your mind to success 1. Loosen yourself in your subject.2. Keep your attention off negative stimuli that may upset you.3. Give yourself a cheerful talk.

Preparing for a presentation: rehearsal

While beginning a presentation the untrained speaker is most likely to encounter problems. You may notice that among such untrained speakers one may talk much too fast, another person may stutter hesitantly, while a third one may speak just like whispering in an almost inaudible voice. Overcoming such problems require training of making the presentation in a step by step manner.

There are some important steps to rehearse your speech before giving your actual presentation. These are as under:

Rehearsal

1. Make sure that you have taken your card containing the bulleted important points of your speech to the place where you have to practise your presentation.

2. Sit in your chair and focus inward.

3. Place your card in your lap and shake your hands vigorously.

4. Try to get up on your feet slowly.

5. Move to your place from where you have to start your speech and ensure that you balance your weight evenly on both the feet.

6. If you have walked forward from a seat in the audience, turn slowly to face the audience, your arms at your sides.

7. Carefully and slowly focus your attention on each part of your body. 8. Read out your joke, loud in a normal voice.

9. When you finish reading your joke, determine which part of your body feels most uncomfortable.

10. Now walk back to your seat slowly and sit quietly while you take 10 gentle breaths.

11. Then stand up again and repeat the entire routine until 10 minutes have passed. For the second part of this exercise, do exactly the same thing, including all steps, but this time try to tell your joke from memory, without using your card.

Special Remedial Measures

You need to know various symptoms of fear or tension or anxiety and to understand how to get over it. Here, we will discuss some special remedial measures to overcome the following symptoms:

- Loss of control
- Forgetting the first words of a talk
- Talking too fast
- Nonverbal fillers
- Controlling your hands or grounding yourself .
- The bobbing head habit
- Regulating your breathing

Symptoms	Suggested Remedial Measures
Loss of control	1. Stop at the end of your sentence. (Pause)2. Concentrate immediately on your fingertips.3. Resume the telling of your joke. Once again, always continue from where you left off.
Forgetting the first words of a talk	1. Imagine in your mind the scene relating to your story or the joke or the theme. 2. Visualize the actual scene or recreate the scene in your mind to get to the sequence of events. 3. While making your card, mark a spacious line between the two sentences. 4. Give a pause while reading from your card and avoid talking too fast.
Inhibiting Nonverbal Fillers	1. You may use an audio recorder to tape your speech.2. Play the recording back and notice when you hear yourself using fillers.3. After you have noticed these vocal fillers in your speech, speak out as if you are addressing an audience and notice once again when you hear yourself making an unnecessary verbal noise to fill a pause.4. Each time you feel the impulse to use nonverbal filler, take a deep breath instead and blow the air slowly out through your mouth.5. Repeat the procedure for five days, using the tape recorder first, and then going through the talk twice without the tape recorder.6. After five days, the number of marks you make on your paper will have decreased significantly. Continue the exercise for a second week.
Controlling your hands	1. Keep your hands at your sides during the first few minutes of your talk.2. Keep your body under control.3. Use only expressive gestures with your hand and arms along with body movements to supplement your oral message.

Symptoms

Suggested Remedial Measures

Regulating breathing
1. Take your seat in the chair and sit down with all your muscles fully relaxed and with your weight evenly balanced on the hips. Focus inward. 2. Fold your arms and place them gently just below your chest so that you could feel the expansion and contraction of your lungs as well as that of your

belly.3. As you feel this rhythm, look at the tip of your nose and take a long but slow breath through your nostrils. While doing so count up to four. Then inhale through your mouth, blowout a gentle exhalation to the count of four. Each time you inhale and blowout, constitutes one complete breath. Repeat this 10 times. Counting is very important because it holds your attention on yourself and keep yourself feeling fully concentrated and composed.

How To Overcome Stage Fright

Let us concentrate on the positive results of public speaking; think of the contacts and prospective clients one can generate with just 20 minutes in front of an audience. However just thinking about the positive gains isn't enough to keep the butterflies in one's stomach, before one steps up onto the podium. So take time to work through these exercises to help channel all that nervousness into energy.

Physical Preparation

. . Warm up and relax your body and face.

. If you're wearing high heels, take them off. Now, stand on one leg and shake the other. When you put your foot back on the ground, it is going to feel lighter than the other one. Now, switch legs and shake. You want your energy to go through the floor and out of your head. This sounds quite cosmic; it isn't. It's a practical technique used by actors.

Shake your hands...fast. Hold them above your head, bending at the wrist and elbow and then bring your hands back down. This will make your hand movements more natural.

. Warm up your face muscles by chewing in a highly exaggerated way. Do shoulder and neck rolls. Imagine that you're eye level with a clock. As you look at 12, pull as much of your face up to 12 as you can; now move it to 3, then down to 6 and finally over to 9.

All of these exercises serve to warm you up and relax you. Those exaggerated movements make it easier for your movements to flow more naturally. Now concentrate on the potential benefits that you achieving with your talk. You would get a warm feeling about the activity immediately.

Strategies To Fight Stage Fright

Before we learn how to speak in public, it is important to be ready to speak in public. Stage fright is a phenomenon that one must learn to control if one wants to be good at public speaking.

Symptoms of Stage fright

Dry mouth.

Tight throat.

Sweaty hands.

Cold hands.

Shaky hands.

Nausea.

Fast pulse.

Shaky knees.
Trembling lips.

Actually, stage fright isn't the most accurate term for the nervousness that occurs when considering a speaking engagement. In fact, most of the fear occurs before one steps on-stage. Once were up there, it usually goes away. Try and think of stage fright in a positive way. Fear is our friend. It makes our reflexes sharper. It heightens our energy. When we are nervous about speaking, we are more conscious of our posture and breathing. With all those good side effects one will actually look healthier and more physically attractive.

When making public performances, many of the top performers in the world get stage fright. Stage fright may come and go or diminish, but it usually does not vanish permanently. One must concentrate on getting the feeling out in the open, into perspective and under control. Lets understand some of the strategies to help get oneself under control. Realize that we may never overcome stage fright, but we can learn to control it, and use it to our advantage.

Here are some easy to implement strategies for reducing stage fright.

Visualization strategies that can be used anytime
Concentrate on how good you are at public speaking.
Pretend you are just chatting with a group of friends.
Close your eyes and imagine the audience listening, laughing, and applauding.
Remember happy moments from your past.
Think about your love for and desire to help the audience.
Picture the audience in their underwear.

Strategies in advance of program

Be extremely well prepared.
Get individual or group public speaking coaching. Listen to music.
Read a poem.
Anticipate hard and easy questions.
Organize your speaking notes.
Absolutely memorize your opening statement so you can recite it on autopilot if you have to.
Practice practice, practice. Especially practice bits so you can spit out a few minutes of your program no matter how nervous you are.
Get in shape. No one knows why it helps stage fright, but it does.
Remember Stage fright usually goes away after you start. The tricky time is before you start.

Strategies just before the program

Be in the room at least an hour early if possible to triple check the public address system and everything else on your checklist. You can also schmooze with participants arriving early.
Notice and think about things around you.

Concentrate on searching for current and immediate things that are happening at the event that you can mention during your speech (especially in the opening).
Get into conversation with people near you. Be very intent on what they are saying.
Yawn to relax your throat. Look at your notes.
Build a cushion of time in the day so you are not rushed, but not too much time. You don't want to have extra time to worry.
If your legs are trembling, lean on a table, sit down, or shift your legs.
Take a quick walk.
Take quick drinks of tepid water.
Double check your AN equipment including the public address system, projectors, etc..
Don't drink alcohol or coffee or tea with caffeine.
Concentrate on your speaking ideas.
Hide speaking notes around the stage area so you know you have a backup if you happen to draw a blank.
Concentrate on your audience.
Listen to music.
Read a poem.
Shake hands and smile with attendees before the program.
Say something to someone to make sure your voice is ready to go.
Go somewhere private and warm up your voice, muscles, etc.
Use eye contact.
Go to a mirror and check out how you look.
Breathe deeply, evenly, and slowly for several minutes.
Don't eat if you don't want to and never take tranquilizers or other such drugs. You may think you will do better, but you will probably do worse and not know it.

Strategies when the program begins

. If legs are trembling, lean on lectern. If able, shift legs or move. Try not to hold the microphone by hand in the first minute.
Don't hold notes. The audience can see them shake. Use three-by-five cards instead. Take quick drinks of tepid water.
Use eye contact. It will make you feel less isolated.
Look at the friendliest faces in the audience.
Joke about your nervousness. What's the right wine to go with fingernails?
Remember nervousness doesn't show one-tenth as much as it feels. Before each speaking engagement make a short list of the items you think will make you feel better. When speaking in public use these steps to control stage fright so it doesn't control you.

Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity training is a technique used for solving the problem of communication barriers. It helps to break down to communication barrier and acts as an aid for improving leadership skills, motivation and group interaction within the company. It is a laboratory type group training method. The study conducted by Gordon Lippitt indicates that this method includes case studies, informal group discussions, information exchange sessions.

This technique as suggested by Lippitt is quite different from other methods. Sensitivity training is mainly a behavior learning experience. It is one of the tools of organizational communication management. It is used both for individual development not only for the job and performance, but also on the job group and improving on the job performance.

Gordon Lippitt has described sensitivity training group as follows:

Sensitivity Training Groups: Here, the participants meet with a professional trainer in groups of eight to fifteen. They have no formal agenda or prior-determined leader. Normally, the groups meet once a day for two hours, but many meet twice a day. They struggle with making decisions about how to spend time profitably and how to provide structure and leadership. They have time to “thrash out” their struggles and examine their group life. As they do, they begin to gain an insight into the forces that are at work things like the leadership struggle, group structure, group objectives, accommodating individual objectives to group objectives, group standards to guide their conduct, what improves and lessens the appeal of the group, how decisions will be made, how to handle the participation of members, how one’s own behavior is influencing the group, and how the behavior of other members is influencing one’s own behavior.

As the group pauses to study the parts of their group life in which those have interested them, the trainer helps them to understand the forces at work at that moment. From time to time, an individual member may want to test out with others the effect his behavior on them - how they see him - and may ask for reactions and information (feedback) - and the members try to help him see himself as they see him in the life of the group.

Application of the Technique

The technique of sensitivity training can be applied to the following kinds of problems, situations as identified by Gordon Lippitt:

- (1) There is an otherwise effective manager whose attitudes, skills, relationships with his workforce, relationships with other persons and sub-units, effectiveness in meetings, and ability to diagnose personal relationship problems in their embryonic stage are seen as inadequate.
- (2) The basic face-to-face units of the organization do not seem to be achieving a level of morale and productivity that is in keeping with their abilities.
- (3) The organization is concerned with public relations, and its staff has enough contacts with outside groups so that the totality of these contacts can materially affect the organization’s image.
- (4) It is important for communication to flow as uninhibitedly as possible. between peers, between the subordinate and the superior, and between work units, even though -they appear as separated elements on the organizational chart.

(5) There is good reason to believe that managers in the organization are, by organizational practice or climate, discouraged from being inventive or creative, from exercising or receiving appropriate responsibility, from delegating authority, and from exercising initiative in meeting operational problems.

(6) The organization gets its work done in a large measure through the use of group meetings, conferences and informal group activities:

Stage Fright Strategies

Stage fright Is Good and Makes You Better Looking Too!

Before you learn how to deliver your lines, it is important to be ready to deliver your lines. Stage fright is a phenomenon that you must learn to control. Actually, stage fright isn't the most accurate term for the nervousness that occurs when considering a speaking engagement. In fact, most of the fear occurs before you step on-stage. Once you're up there, it usually goes away. Try to think of stage fright in a positive way. Fear is your friend. It makes your reflexes sharper. It heightens your energy, adds a sparkle to your eye, and color to your cheeks. When you are nervous about speaking you are more conscious of your posture and breathing. With all those good side effects you will actually look healthier and more physically attractive.

Many of the top performers in the world get stage fright so you are in good company. Stage fright may come and go or diminish, but it usually does not vanish permanently. You must concentrate on getting the feeling out in the open, into perspective and under control.

Remember Nobody ever died from stage fright. But, according to surveys, many people would rather die than give a speech. If that applies to you, try out some of the strategies in this section to help get yourself under control. Realize that you may never overcome stage fright, but you can learn to control it, and use it to your advantage.

Symptoms of Stage fright

Dry mouth.

Tight throat.

Sweaty hands.

Cold hands.

Shaky hands.

Give me a hand (Oops, I couldn't resist).

Nausea.

Fast pulse.

Shaky knees.

Trembling lips.

Any out-of-the-ordinary outward or inward feeling or manifestation of a feeling occurring before, or during, the beginning of a presentation (Wow! What a dry mouthful!).

Here are some easy to implement strategies for reducing your stage fright. Not everyone reacts the same and there is no universal fix. Don't try to use all these fixes at once. Pick out items from this list and try them out until you find the right combination for you.

Visualization strategies that can be used anytime

Concentrate on how good you are.

Pretend you are just chatting with a group of friends.

Close your eyes and imagine the audience listening, laughing, and applauding.

Remember happy moments from your past.

Think about your love for and desire to help the audience.

Picture the audience in their underwear.

Strategies in advance of program

Be extremely well prepared.

Join or start a Toastmasters club for extra practice

Get individual or group presentation skills coaching.

Listen to music.

Read a poem.

Anticipate hard and easy questions.

Organize.

Absolutely memorize your opening statement so you can recite it on autopilot if you have to.

Practice, practice, practice. Especially practice bits so you can spit out a few minutes of your program no matter how nervous you are.

Get in shape. I don't know why it helps stage fright, but it does.

Strategies just before the program

Remember Stage fright usually goes away after you start. The tricky time is before you start.

Be in the room at least an hour early if possible to triple check everything. You can also schmooze with participants arriving early.

Notice and think about things around you.

Concentrate on searching for current and immediate things that are happening at the event that you can mention during your talk (especially in the opening).

Get into conversation with people near you. Be very intent on what they are saying.

Yawn to relax your throat.

Doodle.

Draw sketches of a new car you would like to have.

Look at your notes.

Put pictures of your kids/grandkids, dog, etc., in your notes.

Build a cushion of time in the day so you are not rushed but not too much time. You don't want to have extra time to worry.

If your legs are trembling, lean on a table, sit down, or shift your legs.

Take a quick walk.

Take quick drinks of tepid water.

Double check your A/V equipment.

Don't drink alcohol or coffee or tea with caffeine.

Concentrate on your ideas.

Hide notes around the stage area so you know you have a backup if you happen to draw a blank.

Concentrate on your audience.
Listen to music.
Read a poem.
Do isometrics that tighten and release muscles.
Shake hands and smile with attendees before the program.
Say something to someone to make sure your voice is ready to go.

Go somewhere private and warm up your voice, muscles, etc.
Use eye contact.
Go to a mirror and check out how you look.
Breathe deeply, evenly, and slowly for several minutes.
Don't eat if you don't want to and never take tranquilizers or other such drugs. You may think you will do better, but you will probably do worse and not know it.
Strategies when the program begins
If legs are trembling, lean on lectern /table or shift legs or move.

Try not to hold the microphone by hand in the first minute.
Don't hold notes. The audience can see them shake. Use three-by-five cards instead.
Take quick drinks of tepid water.
Use eye contact. It will make you feel less isolated.
Look at the friendliest faces in the audience.
Joke about your nervousness. "What's the right wine to go with fingernails?"
Remember nervousness doesn't show one-tenth as much as it feels.
Before each presentation make a short list of the items you think will make you feel better. Don't be afraid to experiment with different combinations. You never know which ones will work best until you try. Rewrite them on a separate sheet and keep the sheet with you at all times so you can refer to it quickly when the need arises.

Use these steps to control stage fright so it doesn't control you.

CONTROLLING YOUR COMMUNICATION ANXIETY

Almost all speakers, veterans as well as rookies, have some degree of communication anxiety. International students, or students from marginalized cultural groups, often have a great deal of it.⁴ As you give your first speech, you may experience it as well. In fact, there might be something wrong if you didn't have some feelings of anxiety. The absence of any nervousness could suggest that you do not care about the audience or your message. We once attended a banquet where an award was presented to the "Communicator of the Year." Before sitting down to eat, this recipient confessed privately to us, "I dread having to make this speech!" We were not surprised when this person, who is now governor of Tennessee, made an effective presentation.

There are many reasons why public speaking can be frightening. *Speak-ing before* large groups of people, where one is the center of attention; is not an everyday occurrence for most people. Moreover, the importance of communication in such moments is usually great; much depends on how well we speak. This element of risk, combined with the feeling of strange-ness, can explain why many people dread public speaking. The

important thing is not to be too anxious about your anxiety. Accept it as natural, and be assured that the general effect of the public speaking class is to reduce such anxiety's. Even more significant, you will learn how to convert these feelings into positive energy. *One of the biggest myths about public speaking classes is that they can or should rid you of any natural fears.* Instead, you should learn how to harness the energy generated by anxiety so that your speaking is more dynamic. No anxiety often means a flat, dull presentation. Transformed anxiety can make your speech sparkle. The late Edward R. Murrow, prize-winning radio and television commentator, once said: "The best speakers know enough to be scared. . . . The only difference between the pros and the novices is that the pros have trained the butterflies to fly in formation."

How can you train your butterflies to fly for you? If you find yourself building to an uncontrollable state of nervousness before a speech, don't stand around and discuss with your classmates how frightened you feel, especially with other speakers scheduled that day. You will only increase your own anxiety, and make theirs worse as well.⁶ Instead, go off by yourself and practice relaxation exercises. While breathing deeply and slowly, concentrate on tensing and then relaxing your muscles, starting with your neck and working down to your feet. These relaxation techniques will help you control the physical symptoms of anxiety.⁷ While you are relaxed, identify any negative thoughts you may harbor about yourself as a speaker, such as "Everybody will think I'm stupid" or "Nobody wants to listen to me." Replace them with positive messages that focus on your ideas and your audience, such as "These ideas are important and useful" or "Listeners will really enjoy this story." This approach to controlling communication anxiety by deliberately replacing negative thoughts with positive, constructive statements is called cognitive restructuring's. A final technique to help you control communication anxiety is visualization, in which you systematically picture yourself succeeding as a speaker, then practice and present your speech with that image in mind. Athletes often employ visualization to improve their performances.⁹ Using this technique, you picture a day of success, from the moment you get up to the moment you enjoy the congratulations of classmates and teacher for an excellent speech. To make visualization work best, you will have to develop and enact the kind of script we suggest in Application 4 at the end of this chapter.!! You must have a vivid sense of your successful day for visualization to be effective.¹²

There are other things you can do to control communication anxiety. First, select a topic that interests and excites you, so that you will get so involved with it that there is little room in your mind for worry about yourself. Second, choose a topic that you already know something about so that you will be more confident. Then build on that foundation of knowledge. Visit the library and interview experts. The better prepared you are, the more confident you will be that you have something worthwhile to say. Third, consider whether you might use a presentation aid - a chart, graph, object, or model. Preparing a presentation aid helps you think through your speech. Referring to a visual aid "during your speech encourages gesturing, and gesturing helps release excess energy in constructive ways. (For advice on preparing a presentation aid, see Chapter 9.) Fourth, practice, practice, and then practice some more. The more you master your message, the more comfortable you will be, and the more successful you can expect to be.¹³ Fifth, develop a positive attitude toward your listeners. Don't think of them as "the enemy." Expect them to be helpful and attentive.

Finally, as we stated earlier, act confident, even if you don't feel that way. When it is your turn, walk briskly to the front of the room, look at your audience, and establish eye contact. If appropriate to your subject, smile before you begin your presentation. Whatever happens during your speech, remember that listeners cannot see and hear inside you. They know only what you show them. Show them a controlled speaker communicating well-researched and carefully prepared ideas. *Never place on your listeners the additional burden of sympathy for you as a speaker* - their job is to listen to what you are saying. Don't say anything like "Gee, am I scared!" Such behavior may make the audience uncomfortable. If you put your listeners at ease with your confident appearance, they can relax and provide the positive feedback that will make you a more assured and better speaker.

When you reach your conclusion, pause, and then present your summary statement and concluding remarks with special emphasis. Maintain eye contact for a moment before you move confidently back to your seat. This final impression is very important. *You should keep the focus on your message, not on yourself.* Even though you may feel relieved that the speech is over, don't say "Whew! I made it!" and never shake your head to show disappointment in your presentation. Even if you did not live up to your aspirations, you probably did better than you thought.

Do these techniques really work, and is such advice helpful? Research on communication anxiety has established the following conclusions: (1) *such techniques do work, and* (2) *they work best in combination.* Keep in mind that controlling communication anxiety takes time. As you become more experienced at giving speeches and at practicing the suggestions in Speaker's Notes 2.3, you will find your fears abating and should improve your ability to convert communication anxiety into positive, constructive energy.¹⁴

Ten ways to control communication anxiety

1. Learn and use speech skills to develop confidence.
2. practice relaxation exercises to control tension.
3. replace negative, self defeating statements with positive statements.
4. visualize yourself being successful.
5. select a topic that interest and excites you.
6. select topic you know something about and research it thoroughly.
7. use a visual aid to release energy through movement.
8. practice, practice, practice!
9. expect your audience to be helpful and attentive.
10. act confident, even if you don't quite feel that way.

Thus far, we have discussed controlling communication anxiety in terms of what the speaker can do, but the audience also can help speakers by creating a positive communication climate. As an audience member, you should listen attentively and look for something in the speech that interests you. Even if you are not excited about the topic, you might pick up some techniques that will be useful when it is your time to speak. When you discuss or evaluate the speeches of others, be constructive' and helpful. That's an attitude you will appreciate when others comment on your speech.

Overcoming Your Fear of Presenting

According to the Book of Lists, 41% of those surveyed said their top fear was speaking before a group. As a speaker, how do you deal with the fear? One of the best ways is to use a self-evaluation exercise to break down your fear into manageable components. It's simple to do and it really does work! Here is an easy exercise you can do if you, like so many others, have a fear of speaking.

Top Ten Fears

1. Speaking Before a Group
2. Heights
3. Insects and Bugs
4. Financial Problems
5. Deep Water
6. Sickness
7. Death
8. Flying
9. Loneliness
10. Dogs

Self-Evaluation Exercise

Tell yourself exactly what you are afraid of.

I am afraid of speaking in front of a large group.

Explain to yourself why you are afraid.

I am afraid because I think everyone will laugh at me. I am afraid something will go wrong.

Tell yourself why you shouldn't be afraid.

I have never seen a speaker get laughed off the stage. No one has ever laughed at me during a presentation. If something does go wrong, I can fix it.

Close with positive thoughts about yourself.

I am a smart and out-going person. I can give a solid presentation and impress my audience.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR-AN EXPLORATORY EXERCISE by David Richo, PhD You may find this worksheet helpful in taking a personal inventory of your fears and in designing affirmations to clear them. It combines the three elements of freedom from fear: admitting it, feeling it fully, and acting as if we were fearless. Read it onto a tape to hear it daily in your own voice or recite or read it regularly. Form an image of yourself acting out each affirmation. This list is meant for a wide audience so add or delete entries to fit your unique situation: I trust my true fears to give me signals of danger.

I admit that I also have false fears and worries.

I feel compassion toward myself for all the years I have been afraid.

I forgive those who hypnotized me into unreal fears.

I suggest now to myself, over and over, that I am freeing myself from fear.
I have fearlessness to match my fear.
I trust my powers and resourcefulness as a man (woman).
I trust my abundant creativity.
I trust the strength that opens and blooms in me when I have to face something.
I believe in myself as a man/woman who handles what comes his/her way today.
I have it in me to rise to a challenge.
I am more and more aware of how I hold fear in my body.
I stop storing fear in my body.
Now I relax those holding places.
I open my body to joy and serenity.
I release my body from the clench of fear.
I relax the part of me that holds fear the most (jaw, shoulders, neck, etc.).
I let go of the stress and tension that come from fear.
I let go of fear-based thoughts.
I let go of basing my decisions on fear.
I stop listening to those who want to import their fears into me.
I let go of finding something to fear in everything.
I let go of fear and fearing and of believing that everything is fearsome.
I am more and more aware of my instant reflex fear reactions.
I am aware that I have habituated myself to a certain level of adrenaline.
I forego this stressful excitement and choose sane and serene liveliness.
I let go of my obsessive thoughts about how the worst may happen.
I trust myself always to find an alternative.
I see the humor in my fears.
I see the humor in my exaggerated reactions to unreal dangers.
I find a humorous dimension in every fear.
I find a humorous response for every fear.
I play with the pain of fear.
I smile at my scared ego with tough love.
I am confident in my ability to deal with situations or people that scare me.
I have self-healing powers -and- I seek and find support outside myself.
I have an enormous capacity for re-building, restoring, transcending.
I am more and more sure of my abilities.
I am less and less scared by what happens, by what has happened, by what will happen.
I trust an uncanny timing that I keep noticing within myself: I love how I awake or change or resolve or complete at just the right moment.

Nothing forces me; nothing stops me.
I let go of any fear I have of nature.
I let go of my fears of natural disasters.
I let go of my fears of sickness, accident, old age, and death.
I cease being afraid of knowing, having or showing my feelings.
I let go of my fear of failure or of success.
I let go of the fear behind my guilt and shame.
I let go of my fear of aloneness or of time on my hands.
I let go of my fear of abandonment.

I let go of my fear of engulfment.
I let go of my fear of closeness.
I let go of my fear of commitment.
I let go of my fear of being betrayed.
I let go of my fear of being cheated or robbed.
I let go of my fear of any person.
I let go of my fear of loving.
I let go of my fear of being loved.
I let go of the fear that I will lose, lose money, lose face, lose freedom, lose friends, lose family members, lose respect, lose status, lose my job, lose out.

I let go of my fear of having to grieve.
I keep letting go and I keep going on.
I let go of my paranoia.
I give up my phobic rituals.
I let go of my performance fears.
I let go of my sexual fears.
I let go of fears about my adequacy as a parent or child, as a worker, as a partner, or friend.

I let go of the need to be in control.
I acknowledge control as a mask for my fear.
I let go of my need to be right, to be first, to be perfect.
I let go of my belief that I am entitled to be taken care of.
I let go of my fear of the conditions of existence: I accept that I may sometimes lose; I accept that things change and end; I accept that pain is part of human growth; I accept that things are not always fair; I accept that people may lie to me, betray me, or not be loyal to me.

I am flexible enough to accept life as it is, forgiving enough to accept it as it has been.
I drop the need for or belief in a personal exemption from the conditions of my existence.
I acknowledge my present predicament as a path.
I trust a design in spite of the display.
I let go of more than any fate can take.
I appreciate all the ways that things work out for me.

I appreciate the graces that everywhere surround and enrich my life.
I find the alternatives that always exist behind the apparent dead-end of fear.
I open myself to the flow of life and people and events.
I am grateful for the love that awaits me everywhere.
I feel deeply loved by many people near and far, living and dead.
I feel loved and watched over by a higher power (God, Universe, etc.).
I believe that I have an important destiny, that I am living in accord with it, and that I will survive to fulfill it.

I let myself have the full measure of: the joy I was meant to feel, the joy of living without fear.

I let fear go and let joy in.
I let fear go and let love in.

I let go of fears and enlarge my sympathies.

I am more and more aware of others' fears, more and more sensitive to them, more and more compassionate toward them.

I am more and more acceptant of all kinds of people.

I enlarge my circle of love to include every living being: I show my love.

I am more and more courageous as I live my program for dealing with fear: I let go of control; I let the chips fall where they may; I admit my fear; I feel my fear by letting it pass through me; I act as if I were free of fear; I enjoy the humor in my fears; I expand my compassion toward myself and everyone.

I have pluck and wit.

I let go of being on the defensive.

I protect myself.

I am non-violent.

I am intrepid under fire.

I am a hero: I live through pain and am transformed by it.

I am undaunted by people or circumstances that may threaten me.

I let people's attempts to menace me fall flat.

I give up running from threats.

I give up shrinking from a fight.

I show grace under pressure.

I stop running; I stop hiding.

More and more of my fear is becoming healthy excitement.

I meet danger face to face.

I stand up to a fight.

I take the bull by the horns.

I run the gauntlet.

I put my head in the lion's mouth.

I stick to my guns and hold my fire.

An automatic courage arises in me when I face a threat.

I dare to show myself as I am: afraid and courageous.

I hereby release the courage that has lain hidden within me.

I am thankful for the gift of fortitude.

I let go of hesitation and self-doubt.

I am hardy in the face of fear.

I have grit, stamina, and toughness.

I take risks and always act with responsibility and grace.

I let go of the fear of being different.

I let go of the need to meet others' expectations.

I cease being intimidated by others' anger.

I let go of my fear of what may happen if people do not like me.

I let go of my fear of false accusations.

I let go of having to do it his/her/their way.

I acknowledge that behind my exaggerated sense of obligation is a fear of my own freedom.

I let go of my terror about disapproval, ridicule, or rejection.
I dare to stop auditioning for people's approval.
I dare to give up my act.
I give up all my poses, pretenses, and posturings.
I dare to be myself.
I acknowledge that behind my fear of self-disclosure is a fear of freedom.
I dare to show my hand, to show my inclinations, to show my enthusiasms.
I let my every word, feeling, and deed reveal me as I truly am.
I love being found out, i.e., caught in the act of being my authentic self.

I explore the farthest reaches of my identity.
I dare to live the life that truly reflects my deepest needs and wishes.
I give up the need to correct people's impressions of me.
I give up being afraid of my own power.
I am irrepressible.
I draw upon ever-renewing sources of lively energy within me.
I am great-hearted and bold-spirited.
I dare to give of myself unconditionally -and- I dare to be unconditionally committed to maintaining my own boundaries.

I am open to the grace that shows me the difference.
I fling open the gates of my soul.
I set free my love, till now imprisoned by fear.
I set free my joy, till now imprisoned by fear.
I honor and evoke my animal powers, my human powers, my divine powers.
I let true love cast out my fear.
As I let go of my fear, I free the world from fear.
May I and all beings be free of fear and full of love.
For all that has been: Thanks! For all that will be: Yes! —Dag Hammarskjöld From:
When Love Meets Fear by David Richo, Ph.D.