

Seven Secrets for Overcoming Public Speaking Anxiety

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1. **Learn your material well.** The more confident you are that you know your material, the less anxious you will be. Focus your attention on what you have to say rather than on your anxieties or the audience reaction. Don't think about "How am I doing?" Instead, concentrate on what you have to give to others and how it will help them.
2. **Practice** aloud by yourself utilizing a recorder, then with your friends or family. Look for opportunities to give presentations so that you can gain more experience. Write out the opening paragraphs of your presentation or tell a personal story, something that lets you warm up to the audience. This can help you get beyond the initial anxiety and into the flow of the performance.
3. **Learn Anxiety Reduction Techniques** that work for you. Don't wait until the day of the presentation. Use deep breathing, exercise, affirmations, and relaxation to calm your nerves. Caffeine, sugar and not eating can increase your anxiety.
4. **Use positive self-talk** and healthy optimism by developing an affirmation. "I am well-prepared, offering useful information that people will enjoy and learn."
5. **Imagine yourself presenting the speech beautifully.** The power of visualization can be used for your benefit. See yourself speaking confidently with the audience receptive and impressed. Talk one to one even in a large group. Make connections with one person at a time.
6. **Fake it until you make it.** Often your audience has no idea how nervous you are. Act confident, and concentrate on how well you are doing.
7. **Know that your audience is on your side.** They want to learn from and enjoy your presentation and are rooting for you to do well. Let others see your real self rather than projecting an image you want them to see.

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