

I Can Do This !

Overcoming Nervousness in Public Speaking

by Dr. Lynn Meade

Most experienced speakers get nervous before a speech. If you are nervous, You are normal.

I turn pale at the outset of a speech and quake in every limb and in all my soul.
Cicero

Nervous is too mild a word to describe how I felt. More like...guttled with trepidation. Bolts of fear. Electric anxiety. If we could have harnessed the power of my nerves that morning, I think the energy crisis would have been solved.
Monica Lewinsky

There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.
Mark Twain



IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A SIGN... THIS IS IT

This is your sign.
A sign that it is time to be the person that you always wanted to be.
A sign that it is OK to be yourself and to be confident.
A sign to let go of people who say "you can't" and start *believing* that you can.
You owe it to yourself to give it your very best so you can see what you are capable of.
This is your sign, this is your time.

Welcome to "Normal"

Most people will tell you that the thought of making a speech makes them apprehensive. A poll by the National Communication Association found that only 24% of Americans are very comfortable giving a speech. It is normal to be a little nervous when encountering a speaking situation. Just remember that nervous energy is energy—and energy is good.

These are some of the symptoms that **normal** people experience:

- Sweaty palms
 - Accelerated heart rate
 - A knotted stomach
 - A lump in the throat
 - Shortness of breath
- Can you relate to any of these feelings?

These symptoms let you know that adrenaline has kicked in. Adrenaline is a good thing. If you are a football player and you get an adrenaline rush before the big game, it's a sign that you are going to play the game well. In fact, many coaches, "pump up" players before they go on the field to increase the adrenaline rush. If you're a speaker and you experience an adrenaline rush, think of it as a sign that your body is awake, alert, and ready to go.

Just remember, most people experience some version of butterflies before they speak. If you are nervous, you are normal. Good speakers channel that energy into making a good speech. Good speakers know that you don't want to get rid of the butterflies, you just want them to fly in formation.



Most of us spend a lot of time worrying about things that never happen.

MAKE IT OK
Make the OK sign with one hand.
The act of touching your fingertips together actually relieves stress.
This is a good trick to try when you feel a little anxious because it really is going to be "OK."



FEAR
actually means
Feeling
Excited
And
Ready.

Quit Awfulizing

We all do it and it is ridiculous. We create scenarios in our head about what might happen. "I might say the wrong word and they will laugh at me" or "my mind might go blank and I won't know what to say."

It's just plain silly the way we torture ourselves. Most of us get worked up and miss out on sleep worrying about things that never even happen. We make up awful scenarios—we "awfulize."

Jerry Seinfeld once said, "According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy." He has a point—we really do have this fear of public speaking out of per-

spective. So don't you do it!, Stop awfulizing.

The first step to quit awfulizing and to get on the road to recovery is to "get real." So what if you say the wrong word and they laugh....

Will they fire you—probably not.
 Will they walk out—unlikely.
 Will they hate you—no way.
 Will your face turn red—maybe,
 but so what?
 Is it really that awful? —no

Snyder commented that no matter what happens in a speech that she can turn it into something good. Even if everyone walks out on me, I can still use that she tells. Next time I speak, I can say, "Last time I gave this talk the whole room walked out on me."

Taking a deep breath, faking that I'm confident, and focusing on the topic helped me manage my anxiety. After a few seconds, I would forget about the anxiety and really get into what I was speaking about!

Tara Johnson

Advanced Public Speaking Student, University of Arkansas

Make Your Body Work For You

When you get nervous, your body responds in very direct ways. Your breathing gets short and your muscles begin to tense up. Here's the good news! Your body and your mind work in a feedback loop. Let me give you an example:

If I am mad, my face makes a mad face and if I make a mad face, I feel mad. Now that you know there is a feedback loop, you can break into it. In the example I just gave you, I could break the mad feedback loop by smiling. If I smile long enough and add a "happy thought," then my body tells my mind that I am happy.

The same is true with communication apprehension. When you begin to feel nervous, your muscles tighten and your breathing changes. The more your body acts nervous, the more your mind believes that you are nervous.

The good news is that you have the power to break into the cycle. You can stop the physical reaction of nervousness.

How, you ask? You can stop many of your nervous reactions by relaxing your muscles.

- Roll your shoulders, loosen your arms.
- Try sitting with your palms open and facing up on your lap.
- Notice if your neck and facial muscles are tense. If they are, make a point to relax them.
- Slow your breathing by taking deep breaths.

"Fake it until you can make it" really applies here. If you walk confident and talk confident, your body will tell your mind that you are confident.

If you act like you know what your doing and you act like you are confident, not only will the audience believe it but you will start to believe it too.

Care So Much About Your Topic That Nervousness Doesn't Matter

What you have to say matters. Remind yourself that your presentation is important and focus on the fact that you are helping others. One speaker imagined passing out \$1,000 dollar bills to each audience member to remind himself that he was "giving" the audience something by speaking.

If you pick a topic that you are passionate about and if you believe in it, you will begin to care more about the importance of the topic and less about your own personal discomfort. If you feel a little nervous, think about how your information can improve lives or change people's perspective. Make your topic so important that you forget to be nervous. Ambrose Redmoon said, "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear."

Quit being so self-centered. It's not about you— it's about the audience. *They* need something and *you* have it. Don't be selfish. It is worth a little discomfort for the awesome privilege you have to change, educate, motivate, and persuade your audience. They need this information and you are the one lucky enough to get to give it to them. It's about them!

When you spend all your time thinking about how to connect with the audience and how to help them understand what you have to offer, you have less energy to spend on worrying about if you are nervous.

Marianne Williamson says, "Your playing small does not serve the world." It is time to get over yourself and get on with it. y

When All Else Fails.... Breathe

BELLY BREATHING

One way to change your kinesthetic state is to do deep breathing. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Feel the breath go in. Let the breath completely fill up your lungs—inhale for 15 seconds. You should feel the hand that is on your stomach rise. Now, open your mouth and let the air out slowly over 15 seconds.

Repeat this. Each time try to fill up your lungs fully. Taking as little as 3 belly breaths can increase your oxygen allowing you to relax.

**Before you speak,
take a few deep
breaths.
This increases your
oxygen which makes
it easier to think
clearly.**

THE NOSTRIL SWITCH

Put your finger on the side of your nose and push the nostril closed. Breathe in through the nose and out through your mouth. Now, push the other nostril closed. Breathe in through the nose and out through your mouth.

Do this until you have taken 3 breaths on each side. Now, take 3 big breaths in through the mouth and out through the nose with both nostrils open.

This should deepen your breathing and relieve some of the stress. Most important—Don't just read about deep breathing— DO IT!

The Audience Wants You to Succeed

When you see someone mess up in a speech. What do you think? Do you all of a sudden dislike them because they messed up a word or their voice was a little shaky? It's unlikely that you dislike someone just because they gave a bad speech. Chances are you are not that shallow of a person. I have news for you, neither is your audience (well, most of them anyway).

Now apply this to your speech. If you give a bad speech or if you mess up, most people will still like

you. Most people listening to a speaker want that speaker to succeed.

The audience is on your side. When you mess up (and eventually you will mess up), the audience is cheering you on hoping you will recover. So you should do just that—recover and recover well.

When the time comes and you make the mistake, look out smile, pause, and move on. If you don't make a thing of it neither will your audience. People don't judge that you messed up, they judge whether you recovered well.



It's not the nervous feelings that cause people problems, it is how people interpret those nervous feelings that cause the problems.

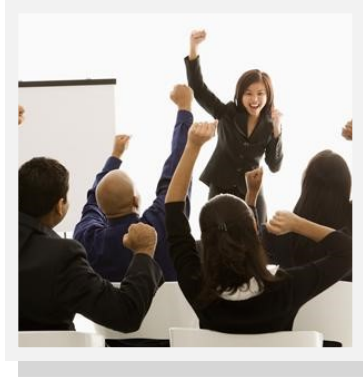
A good speaker tells themselves, "I'm nervous, that must mean it's going to be a great speech."

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. Marianne Williamson

The most valuable thing that I have learned is practice makes perfect!! It is SO true. If you practice giving your speech to your parents, your dog, an empty room... when the time comes, you won't be as nervous!

*Kelly Swartzbaugh
U of A Speech
Student*

If You Don't Have Confidence.... Borrow Someone Else's



Still feeling a little unsure about yourself? No worries—just pretend like you are an actor playing the part of someone confident. Think about a confident speaker you know. When you are mentally preparing for your speech, imagine that you are that person: How would they walk, how would they talk, how would they gesture?

When I make a professional presentation, I often think about my former boss who is a powerful communicator. I think, how would he enter the room and shake hands? How would he walk to the podium? How would he move around during the speech? I steal his confidence to get started.

When you start your speech, imagine you are that person. Use their confidence going into the speech. You will be amazed at how the confidence you think that person would have becomes the confidence that you now show.

Practice....Practice.... Practice

PRACTICE 3 TIMES

The best way to practice speaking is to practice speaking. It may sound obvious but it is true. Make sure you practice your speech at least 3-5 times from start to finish.

PRACTICE GETTING FUNKY

After you have practiced your speech with your notes, I suggest you go someplace comfortable and practice your speech without notecards. Don't worry if you don't know all the details—just wing it! I like to call this "Getting funky." Do something a little crazy like sing your speech, do your speech in a wrestlers voice, rap your speech, or dance around while saying your speech. Relax, have fun, get funky. This will help you associate speech with being relaxed and having fun.

For "funky" speech practice, it is less important that you get the words right and it is more important that you relax your body, put a smile on your face, and have fun. After doing this exercise, go back and do your speech with notes and in a serious tone. You'll be amazed at how much more relaxed you feel.

PRACTICE TO A LIVE AUDIENCE

It is one thing to practice to a mirror, it is another to practice to a living thing. Find a friendly face, a roommate, a friend, or a dog and practice your speech to a live audience member. Practicing with a set of watching eyes makes a big difference.

PRACTICE AND RECORD YOURSELF

Record yourself giving your speech. Sit back and watch your video recording and make notes of areas where you need to make adjustments.

PRACTICE IN YOUR MIND

Sit in your chair and imagine yourself giving your speech. Imagine your confidence as you walk to the podium, as you give the speech and as you conclude.

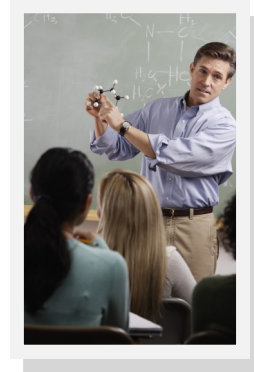
We are
what we repeatedly do.
Excellence is not an act
but a habit.

Aristotle

Mistakes Happen: Plan on Recovering Well

Everybody makes mistakes. This is especially true for speakers. Just remember that the audience doesn't judge that you made a mistake but rather how you recover from it.

If you do mess up, don't make a big deal of it. Most of the time, your better off not even mentioning it at all. If your quick on your feet, you might say one or two funny words but then go on. You have great things to say, don't let a little bump in the road slow you down. Plan on being perfect but if that doesn't work out, plan on recovering well.



*If you pretend you didn't make a mistake,
chances are the audience won't notice, and certainly won't dwell on it.
Interrupting your speech by apologizing or panicking
will make your mistake more noticeable and will throw you off.*

Jennifer Conner

U of A Speech Student

I Hope You Mess Up At Least Once— I Really Mean It !

I love hearing stories of how people messed up in speeches. My favorite one is of a mega-church pastor who attempted to say that the 'church is a living organism' but he accidentally said another much more embarrassing "O" word. Guess what—he's still preaching.

I love showing videos of where Obama says there are 52 states and I laugh at how Bush says that many Americans are working to put food on their family. Guess what—they still manage to get things done. I love to see the video of where the local TV anchor's tooth falls out during a broadcast. Guess what—he's still the anchor.

I love to tell the story of how I tried to say, "I want to start with an analogy" but instead I said, "I want to start with an antecedent." I also did fundraising and meant to say that "we help the underserved people" but instead I said that "we help the undeserving people." Guess what— my audience still donated considerable amounts of money. In fact, two people who called me out on my mistakes joined my board of directors that day. I messed up but still got results. Being human and making mistakes makes you more approachable.

What's the point? The point is that mistakes will not kill you. Mistakes give you good stories to tell.

I hope that you mess up at least once so when you are old and you are sitting in your rocking chair surrounded by your children and your grandchildren, you can tell them of your most embarrassing speech blunder and then everyone can have a good laugh. And laughter after all...is good for you.

HARNESS THE GREEN MONKEY

Whatever you do, do not think about the pink elephant. Stop!

Don't think about the pink elephant with cute pink ears and a hot pink tail. How are you doing? If you are like most people, not too well. Now, try this. Think about a green monkey. Go ahead. Picture its green curly tail and it fluffy green fur. So here's the question, when you were thinking of the green monkey, did your image of the pink elephant go away? For most people, it did.

What's the point? The point is that before a speech, most people tell themselves, "I won't be nervous, I won't be nervous, I won't think of the pink elephant." Do you see where I'm headed with all of this? Telling yourself not to be nervous rarely helps. The more you say it, the more you think about it, the more you reinforce it. So how did we get rid of the pink elephant? By thinking of the green monkey of course. Apply this to speaking. Instead of saying, "I won't be nervous" or "I won't forget what to say," say things like, "This speech is going to be great! I can do this." or "My audience will love the part where I..."

Conquer your fear with positive self talk.

Tell yourself that you will be relaxed, articulate, and confident...
and you will be.

I tell myself that what I have to say in any speech is important for people to hear, and that I prepped for it, and am well versed in it.

So basically knowing that what I have to say is worth hearing makes me confident in saying it.

Andrew Powell
U of A Student

Do not
let your
fears
choose
your
destiny

I can do this



Don't Say These... Pink Elephant

- I'm afraid my voice will crack
- I'll mess up and say the wrong words
- I'm so nervous
- I hate doing speeches

Do Say These... Green Monkey

- I can do this
- The audience will like my topic
- I am confident
- I know my stuff
- I am smart and capable
- I will speak with power and authority
- I've got this

Write Yourself a Friendly Note

On the top of your speech notes, put positive messages to yourself. Write "I've got this" in bright colors on the top of the page. Add a little cartoon character that makes you smile. Put a picture of your loved one making a funny face., a picture of your dog, a cartoon picture that makes you happy. One Ted Talk Speaker said she wrote on her notes, "This Matters, I've got this!"

I've been teaching for years and I still get nervous on the first day of class. On the notes that I take with me to class on the first day I always draw a smiley face and some positive message. Usually I write, "I love being a teacher!"

REWARD YOURSELF FOR YOUR EFFORT

Developing a Growth Mindset

When you think about speaking are you tempted to believe, “Some people are just born good speakers.” or “I just wasn’t made for this public speaking stuff.” If that’s you, you may have what Stanford researcher, Carol Dweck calls a “fixed mindset.” It is the belief that you either have it or you don’t. While her research was done with intelligence, there are principles we can apply. She said that people either had a fixed mindset, believing that people were just born to be good at things or a growth mindset, believing that with effort, people could learn new skills.

People with a growth mindset believe that skills and intelligence can be developed and challenges should be embraced. Growth mindset people know that effort is needed for mastery. People with a growth mindset seek to apply themselves, get help from others, and try new strategies when needed. Adjusting your belief to a growth mindset frees your self-limiting beliefs and allows you to move beyond what you thought was possible.



In the end, those who think they got their success from effort often are able to go farther with their skills and feel better about what they accomplished. The good news is that you can change your mindset. The key to making the change is to recognize your effort : “I gave it my best, I really stretched myself today, I put a lot of time into this and I can tell it made a difference.” Believe that if you work hard enough, and practice enough, and get help when needed that you can improve and grow.

The Power of Yet

Never say, “I can’t do this” but rather say “I can’t do this yet”

Never say, “ I can’t remember the name of that song”
but rather say, “I can’t think of the name of that song yet but it will
come to me.”

In one case, you tell your brain to be open to possibilities,
in the other version you telling your brain to quit trying.

YET

Which Version of You Will You Bring To Your Speech?

Awfulizing Me

“What if I mess up? ”

Overcomer Me

“I’m tough, and can take on any challenge”

Insecure Me:

“What if they don’t like me? They will hate me.”

Confident Me

“I’ve got this, because I have practiced and know my stuff”

Did you know that you have multiple selves.

Shy for example is not who you are
it is a way that you act sometimes.

Confident is not who you are,
it is a way that you act sometimes.

So you get to decide how to act this time. Which
version of you will you bring to your speech?



BUTTERFLIES

It's OK to have butterflies
fly in your stomach
Just get them to fly in formation.
Helen Keller

They Will Never Know Your Nervous... Unless You Tell Them

You know the feeling that goes through your mind: "I'm so nervous. I bet everyone can tell." Well guess what—they can't. At least that's what research suggests. It's called the "illusion of transparency." Put briefly, speakers tend to overestimate how nervous they appear to an audience. Speakers believe that an audience can see right through them but it simply isn't true. When researchers asked speakers how anxious they were and then they asked the audience to rate how anxious the speaker was, the answers were different. Speakers thought that the audience could see hands shaking and could hear the voice shaking when the audience noticed very little or not at all. Most speakers thought the audience could see right thru them but they were wrong. The bottom line is this—speaker anxiety is not very accurately detected by audiences.

Even better news! Speakers who were taught about the illusion of transparency and then reminded that the audience couldn't tell how nervous they felt, actually felt and acted less nervous. In this case "the truth can set you free." Knowing the truth about the illusion of transparency set participants free from the cycle of anxiety that can plague those who engage in public speaking.



¹Savitsky, K. & Gilovich, T. (2003). The illusion of transparency and the alleviation of speech anxiety. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39, 618-625.



ADRENALINE

IT'S A MATTER OF
PERSPECTIVE.

Think about the locker room before the big football game. The players get all pumped up because they know that adrenaline is good. People pay good money and stand in long lines to ride rollercoasters because adrenaline can feel good. People go zipping and parachuting, because adrenaline rushes can be fun.

When your heart races and you feel your heart beat before a speech remember that adrenaline can be good. Just like football players before the big game it means you are "all pumped up."

Don't be afraid of the adrenaline rush, take it as a sign that you ready to go. Think about it, some people pay a lot of money to ride roller coasters and to jump out of airplanes just to get an adrenaline rush. Yours comes free with each speech.

FAKE IT UNTIL YOU BECOME IT

Life begins
at the end
of your comfort
zone.

Neale Donald Walsch

Fear is only
as deep
as the mind
allows
Japanese
Proverb

Whether you
think
you can
or think
you can't
your right.

Henry Ford

Stand like Wonder woman with your legs spread and your hands on your hips. Now hold that pose for two minutes. Do you feel powerful yet?

Amy Cuddy, Harvard Researcher, had test subjects power pose (tall stance open arms, open torso) for as little as 2 minutes before subjecting them to a stressful job interview. She tested the subjects stress hormone, cortisol and their confidence hormone, testosterone before and after. She found that taking a confident pose caused decreases in the stress hormone and increases in the confidence hormone. Subjects who power poses reported feeling more confident and less nervous.

But wait, there's more. When they asked the job interviewers what they thought of the interviewees, they had a preference for those who had power posed before the job interviewer. Their effect not only influences the speakers but the listeners.

When observers view you *acting* confidently, they treat you like you are confident which guess what....makes you *feel* more confident.

Amy Cuddy challenges the notion of fake it until you make it and suggests that you should fake it until you **become** it. Act confident to feel confident.

For more on this topic go watch *Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are* by Amy Cuddy on Ted.com



The Facial Feedback Hypothesis states that when you make a facial expression, it can influence the emotion that you are feeling. For example, when you force yourself to smile, you may actually begin to enjoy the moment more. The more you smile, the more you may alter your own perception of the situation.

As a speaker, when you fake confidence with your body and face, you may actually begin to feel more confident.

Hebb's Rule: Neurons That Fire Together Wire Together.



Your brain communicates by the firing of neurons. These neurons are like an interstate system in your brain. The more often a neural route is used, the larger it becomes. When you take the same road over and over in your thoughts, the messages transmit faster and faster. If the road is used repeatedly, then those thoughts become automatic. That's why when you practice — playing piano, driving a car, putting a golf ball, you get better and it becomes easier. Eventually, it's like you are on autopilot.

If you think positive thoughts over and over, then those positive thoughts become automatic. If you think negative thoughts over and over, those thoughts become automatic. If you keep thinking negative thoughts, you make the pathway so large and strong that it becomes your default setting. Once you are on autopilot, they will keep playing over and over until you do something to consciously stop them.

In order to stop the automatic negative thoughts concerning public speaking, you need to consciously take control. You need to (1) recognize that negative thoughts are a choice and you can choose to think positive thoughts. (2) say positive things out loud and often (3) use visualization techniques to visualize yourself being successful at presentations. Repeat this often so these pathways become automatic.

Your attitude determines your direction

When You Talk About Yourself... You Listen In Stereo

It's time to start talking nice to yourself. In the book, *Communicating from the Inside Out*, the authors note that thoughts about ourselves trigger up to 100 times more brain activity than random thoughts. In addition, when we talk out loud to ourselves, our brain activity increases 1,000 fold. Did you catch that? When you talk about yourself, you activate your brain in powerful ways—when you listen as you say things about yourself, you activate your brain even more. When you say things, good or bad, you hear yourself as if you sat in the car and cranked the volume up. Make sure that the “song” that you are playing to yourself is a good one.

The lesson here is this—be careful what you tell yourself, because you are listening more than you know. Take charge of your thoughts and replace any negative thoughts with positive ones. Talk nice.... Your brain is listening.

Gesturing— A Surprising Way to Release Nervous Energy

I love the movie clip from *Talladega Nights* where the racecar driver, Ricky Bobby, is being interviewed and he keeps making his hands float up awkwardly. After struggling with his hands a while, he finally blurts out, “What do I do with my hands?” I am always amazed at how I don’t even think about my hands most days but when I get up to give a speech, suddenly, there they are unsure of what to do with themselves. If you are like me and like most speakers, you struggle with your hands during presentations.

Researchers did a study where they had people tell about what they did that day. When the participants could tell the story using their hands, they added more details to their story, they spoke more fluidly, and were able to think better. Gestures seemed to help the speaker to speak. It has also been noted that even people who are blind from birth, gesture. This leads us to believe that gesturing is innate, we are born to do it and it helps us. But what does this mean for you?



It means that you are meant to gesture. It suggests that when you gesture, you will be able to think of ideas more clearly and thus speak with better fluidity. In addition, gestures can help you to release nervous energy. When you gesture, you can relieve cognitive stress, you can relieve nervous energy, and you can appear confident.

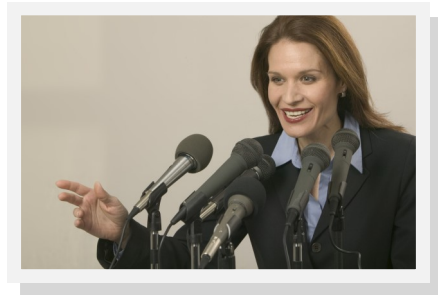
Gestures also help the audience listen and understand. Studies show that audiences who see speakers gesture rate them as more persuasive, more likable and see them as having more leadership potential. Gesturing—good for the speaker, good to relieve stress, and good for the audience!

MEMORIZE YOUR OPENING AND CLOSING

The hardest part of the speech for some is getting started and winding it up. During those two parts, speakers tend to be the most nervous. For that reason, it is very helpful to memorize the first few sentences and the last few sentences of your speech.

When you start off powerful, you feel powerful, and the audience expects you to be powerful. Knowing exactly what you are going to say the first few sentences sets you up to succeed.

When you begin to wind down your speech, your audience is preparing to clap. They don’t want to clap too soon or too late so they are on high alert. Having a planned out closing, not only helps you own the last point, but it gives them a definitive notion of when to clap. As the speaker, you might get a little extra nervous near the end because you want to finish strong. By memorizing the closing, you are helping to relieve that tension and finish in a way that demonstrates your confidence and knowledge.



BEAT STRESS

Cortisol is the stress hormone. It is released when you are anxious, upset, or scared. Public speaking can be a source of stress for many and if that is you, you benefit yourself by working on ways to reduce that beast-cortisol. Changing your mindset is your first step to reduce your cortisol reaction. The biggest battle is in your mind. Change your thinking.

In addition, Amy Cuddy says that adopting a large posture for two minutes before a stressful activity can also reduce cortisol. Finally, exercise before and after a speech can be a powerful way to help your body reduce the effects of cortisol. A Psychology Today article, *Cortisol: Why “the Stress Hormone” is Public Enemy Number One*, suggests these ways to lower your cortisol levels.

1. Physical activity: exercise, walk, do yoga
2. Meditation and deep breathing
3. Spend time with friends
4. Laughter
5. Listen to some of your favorite music

A Few More Tips Directly from Toastmasters

Use color. Mark your notes with colorful symbols that mean something to you

Breathe out. Take slow deep breaths in and then release your breathe from the bottom of your abdomen to get the maximum benefits of release and relaxation

Get rest. Nerves may keep you awake, but try to get an adequate amount of sleep prior to your speech to ensure optimal mental alertness

Fuel your mental engine. Eat a light meal at least 20 minutes prior to your speech

If you Have
to Give Up,
Give Up
your Fear
Dan Waldschmidt

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Visualization



By visualizing yourself successfully delivering your speech, you decrease your negative thinking and you reduce nervous behaviors.

Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself rising from your chair and walking towards the podium. In your minds eye, hear the first few words that you say and hear your pacing and inflections. See yourself using visuals, making gestures, and speaking clearly.

Visualization works

Richmond and McCroskey reported that 80% of those who used positive visualization strategies were able to reduce their level of anxiety. When students visualized giving a speech, they could reduce negative thinking and lower their communication anxiety. Students who visualized giving their speech had better gestures and fewer “ums.”

Visualization, it's easy, it's free, and it works. Try it!

DR. LYNN MEADE

I teach Advanced Public Speaking, Honors Public Speaking, Communication in a Diverse World, Persuasion, University Perspectives, and Nonverbal Communication, and Study Abroad classes at the University of Arkansas. I have a degree in Higher Education College Teaching and a degree in Communication. In addition, I train university and public school teachers classroom strategies and I train business leaders how to use communication principles to improve their interpersonal, nonverbal, leadership, and management skills. I have been a manufacture's representation, a director for a nonprofit organization, a regional sales manager, a DJ, and a corporate speaker.

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