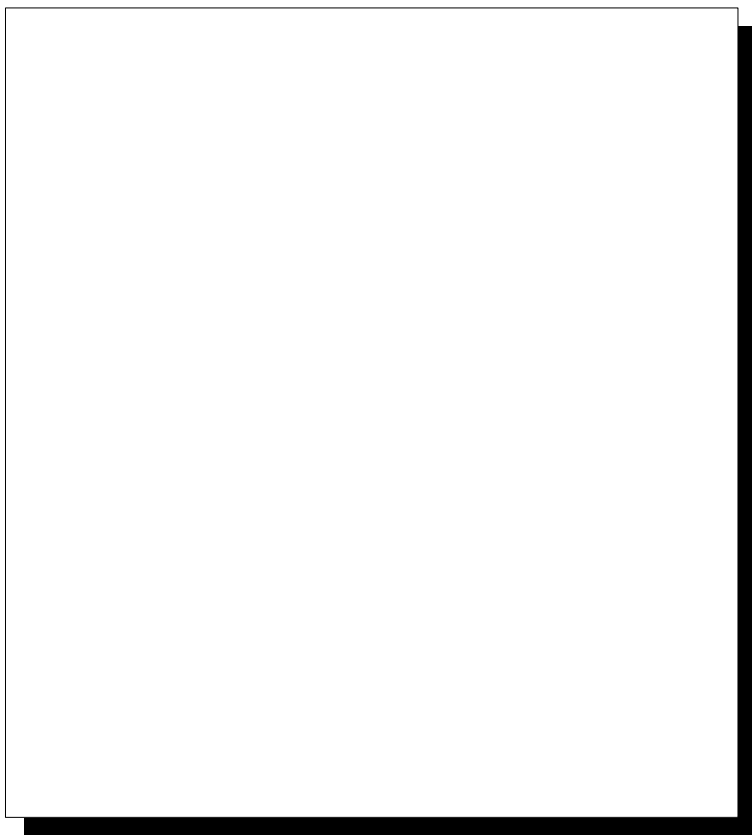




Tom Terrific



SCARED SPEECHLESS

How to Conquer Your Fear of
Public Speaking

Forty
techniques to
get your butterflies
flying in formation

Tom Terrific
Browitt and Coffman Publishing
Copyright © 2004
The Tom Terrific Company LLC

www.terrificpresentations.com

SCARED SPEECHLESS

How to Conquer Your Fear of Public Speaking

Copyright © 2004
The Tom Terrific Company LLC

Published by
Browitt and Coffman Publishing

<http://www.terrificpresentations.com>

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or hereafter invented, without written permission from the publisher, Browitt and Coffman Publishing, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

ISBN 0-9725970-1-8

To order this book you may call 314-849-5977,
fill out the order form in the back of the book,
or visit the website at
www.terrificpresentations.com

www.terrificpresentations.com

Scared Speechless

Special thanks go to my friends who have helped in the preparation of this book:

Gerry Puglisi

Patricia Corrigan

Pam Warren

Scared Speechless

Reasons to Invest in this Book

- You're "Scared Speechless" in front of groups and don't like feeling that way.
- Your self-confidence is low and needs a boost.
- Your new job requires you to stand and make presentations.
- You're interviewing for a new job and must project confidence and superior communication skills.
- You see other people in the company being promoted and want to become more aggressive about your career.
- Your sales presentations must now be made to a large group of people instead of one-on-one.
- You've agreed to give a toast at your friend's wedding.
- You're in school and must give a presentation as part of your grade.
- You're investing in yourself and that's the best investment you'll ever make.

Scared Speechless

Introduction

I still remember a speech I gave back in high school. I thought I had done a good job, sat down and patted myself on the back. But after class, one of the cute cheerleaders came up to me and said, “Tom, during your speech I counted 82 ‘ahs’.” I was mortified. I had no idea that I was so nervous, so unprepared and so dorky looking, all because of those stupid “ahs.”

Ten years later I lost out on a great job as a stock broker because of poor communication skills. While I had a degree in finance and a broad interest in the stock market, I didn’t possess the confidence, selling skills and communication leadership I needed to impress the interviewer.

A few years later when I finally gave my first speech, I still remember my hands shaking, my voice quavering, and my heart racing as if a lion were chasing me down the street. It was a nerve-shattering experience.

Does any of this sound familiar to you?
I’m sure it does, because many of us have gone through the same types of situations.

A few friends agreed to tell their stories here.

Scared Speechless

Bob R.

“A few years ago, I was approached by my boss to speak to our department at the upcoming town hall meeting. He wanted me to speak to approximately 100 people for ten minutes. I'm not sure, but I think I turned white with fright just at the thought of it. I told my boss I could not do it. If he had to fire me, so be it, I just couldn't do it. To my great relief, he agreed to get someone else.”

Bill W.

“My wife wanted me to say a few words about her father at the post-funeral dinner. My wife assumed that because I was in sales, I was accustomed and confident about speaking in front of large groups. As the time neared I became so nervous that I wasn't even thinking about the funeral as it was occurring, but rather what I would say at the dinner. I backed out at the last moment. The nervousness and expectation of failure in front of the entire family got the best of me. The people there did not know that I was supposed to stand and say something. No one knew but me, my wife and her family.

I have since felt bad that I not only passed on the opportunity, but I was not prepared to handle the situation. My lack of ability spoiled what could have been a great remembrance of a terrific man.”

Sue A.

“I recall an instance about five years ago, when I didn't apply for a promotion because the job description said, ‘Presentations to peers and senior management required.’ I was qualified for the position, but that requirement was too much.”

Scared Speechless

I've been a speaker for the last twenty years and have seen hundreds of people tell their stories of being limited by nervousness or a lack of self-confidence. In some cases people have been terrified over the thought of standing up and speaking to a group of people.

The good news is that I've learned that nervousness can be controlled and channeled—even used to your benefit. While all those butterflies won't necessarily go away, they can be taught to fly in formation, and I like to say “attack formation,” because you want to give an enthusiastic and dynamic speech. If you're too controlled and contained, then your speech will be dull and boring. You don't want that.

I'm telling you these stories not to scare you off or make you feel even worse, but to encourage you to take charge of those butterflies. All of the friends who shared their stories now have their butterflies flying in formation.

This book is a compilation of more than forty different techniques I've found that can help you take charge of your butterflies and have them fly in formation.

Tom TERRIFIC

Scared Speechless

The brain is a marvelous thing.
It starts working the moment we are
born and only stops the minute we get
up to speak.

- Anonymous

Thirty Minutes a Day

Instant gratification is part of the new millennium state of mind. We want it and want it NOW. With the advent of the Internet and Federal Express, we can have a lot of things now, or at least within 24 hours. Unfortunately, overcoming years of programming, negative thinking and fearful ways of behaving takes time, practice and energy.

What I'd like you to do over the next month is invest thirty minutes a day in yourself. If that means giving up a half-hour TV show or getting up 30 minutes earlier or using your lunch break, **JUST DO IT.**

During those thirty minutes, speak out loud and practice giving a speech. You can even read from the newspaper. (The Letters to the Editor is a good section to read.) The idea is to get used to speaking out loud and listening to the sound of your voice. Try to put as much energy and emotion into your voice as possible.

Stand up as if you were in front of a crowd. Visualize them, see them, hear them and pretend that they're in the room with you. When you speak, speak to the people in your room and make them part of your presentation.

By practicing for only thirty minutes a day, you will see a dramatic improvement, and the butterflies will start flying in formation.

Scared Speechless

The journey of a thousand miles
begins with one step.

- Lao Tzu

40 Techniques

I realize that having forty different techniques to overcome nervousness can be an overwhelming task. What I suggest is that you go through the book quickly and find one technique that you can accomplish easily and then follow the action plan for that technique. Don't try to put all the techniques into use at one time, as it will be too daunting. You're taking a journey and you just need to take one step at a time, one task at a time, one action at a time.

When you feel comfortable with that first technique, go on to another. Follow the action plan and before you know it your butterflies will be flying in formation.

Scared Speechless

The Action Steps



Action Step

You'll notice that at the last part of every section is an Action Step or two.

These are important. The idea is to find the steps and techniques that make most sense to you and take action on them. That means writing them down, doing each one and then checking them off your list.

The problem with most books is that they require little, if any, effort other than just their reading. As Goethe, a German novelist and philosopher, once said, "Knowing is not enough; we must act. Willing is not enough; we must do."

Take Action Now!

These 40 techniques will not do you any good unless you put them into action on a regular basis.

Scared Speechless

Knowing is not enough; we must
act. Willing is not enough; we
must do.

- Goethe

Contents at a Glance



<i>Don't Get Nervous About Your Nervousness</i>	21
<i>We All Start at the Bottom</i>	25
<i>Be Prepared - The Boy Scouts Are Right</i>	29
<i>Starbucks Hell</i>	31
<i>Act As If or The "Jay Leno Technique"</i>	33
<i>Getting to Know You</i>	37
<i>You'll See It When You Believe It</i>	39
<i>Deep Breathing</i>	41
<i>Desensitization</i>	43
<i>Plan to Arrive Early</i>	47
<i>Lighten Up and Have Some Fun</i>	49
<i>Isometrics</i>	51
<i>You Don't Have to Be a Comedian</i>	53
<i>Leave the Lectern</i>	55
<i>Memorize Your Opening</i>	57
<i>Create Well-Prepared Notes</i>	59
<i>Don't Talk to 50 People. Talk to One</i>	61
<i>Pause</i>	63
<i>Practice, Practice, Practice</i>	65
<i>Practice on Location</i>	67
<i>Practice Right Before Your Presentation</i>	69
<i>Move Attention From Yourself to The Audience</i>	71
<i>Use Music to Relax Both You and Your Audience</i>	73
<i>Smile - It's Contagious</i>	77
<i>Join Toastmasters</i>	79
<i>Use Visual Aids</i>	81
<i>Visualize</i>	83
<i>Talk From Your Own Expertise</i>	85
<i>Dress for Success</i>	87
<i>Ma Pen Lai - It's all right, it doesn't matter</i>	89
<i>Meditation</i>	91

Scared Speechless

<i>Walk the Walk</i>	93
<i>Concentrate on the Message, Not the Messenger</i>	95
<i>The Power of Prayer</i>	97
<i>Write Your Own Introduction</i>	99
<i>Picture Your Audience</i>	101
<i>Love and Goodwill</i>	103
<i>Problems Can Be Good</i>	105
<i>Get Help from Others</i>	107
<i>Hold Hands with Your Sweetie</i>	109
<i>Hide Behind Power Point</i>	111
<i>Addendum (Drugs)</i>	113

<i>Book Order Form</i>	115
<i>How Can I Improve?</i>	117
<i>Notes</i>	119

Don't Get Nervous About Your Nervousness

Do you feel nervous, scared and upset before a presentation? Sure you do; that's why you're reading this book. It's okay. It's natural. It's what everyone else feels too. I want you to realize that you're not alone. You don't need to be nervous about your nervousness.

In the book, "The Book of Lists" by David Wallechensky, he lists the ten most powerful fears.

10. Fear of Dogs
9. Fear of Loneliness
8. Fear of Flying
7. Fear of Death
6. Fear of Sickness
5. Fear of Deep Water
4. Fear of Money Problems
3. Fear of Insects and Bugs
2. Fear of Heights.



The #1 fear of most adults is public speaking.

This fear, this nervousness, is not only natural, but it's all pervasive. You are not alone.

Almost all of us are nervous, especially when we start our presentation. It's natural. It's ok.

Scared Speechless

Even Mark McGwire, past home-run champion, confessed his nervousness. He said, "I'm always nervous before every game I play, no matter if I was in this situation or not. It's just the way I am as a player and it tells me I still love this game of baseball. If I didn't have this feeling, I think I'd be worried. That's a good sign if I feel like that before the game."

The actor George C. Scott played General Patton, Mussolini and many other roles, but in a magazine interview he confessed: "It's terrible when I have to make a speech. I really suffer. I'm a nervous wreck. When I get up, I shake all over like a dog shaking the water off."

A Toastmaster friend once told this story in a speech. He was part of a speech contest and was preparing for the contest at the hotel. He was in the bathroom and was combing his hair and he was nervous, but he didn't want anyone to know. His wife walked up to him and said, "Carl, are you nervous?" He answered, "Nervous? Me! Of course not. Why do you think I'm nervous?"

She said, "Well, then what are you doing in the women's restroom?"

Scared Speechless



Action Step

Mentally and verbally repeat to yourself.

“Being nervous is okay.

The best athletes and actors in the world get nervous,
so why wouldn't I?

I feel good about my nervousness.

It means my energy is high and I will give a dynamic
presentation.”

Scared Speechless

“It's terrible when I have to make a speech. I really suffer. I'm a nervous wreck. When I get up, I shake all over like a dog shaking the water off.”

- George C. Scott

We All Start at the Bottom of the Ladder

Many people feel that speaking is a gift, a natural talent, a God-given endowment. Not true. Most great speakers of the 20th century were not gifted orators when they started out. On the contrary, they were some of the worst. I'll give you three examples:

Zig Ziglar is probably one of the most well-known motivational speakers in America. Zig now makes \$25,000 for one speech. But you are a better speaker than Zig Ziglar - at least when he first started out.



Zig began by selling pots and pans, door to door, but his demonstration was awful. He was doing so poorly his sales manager decided to tape Zig's sales presentation. During the twenty-one minute talk, Zig had 187 "ahs." That's nine per minute. In my twenty-two years of speaking, I've never seen anyone as bad as Zig. If I had listened to Zig at the time, even I might have thrown up my arms in disgust. Zig was terrible when he first started out.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was known as another great speaker of his day, but when he was in college, he was appalling. Dr. Peale says this: "One time a professor kept me after class and said, 'Norman what's wrong with you?

Scared Speechless

You know this stuff, but when it comes to giving it back in class, you freeze, you can't do it. You won't amount to anything. You're just a fraidy cat.' ”

That was Dr. Norman Vincent Peale!

You are a better speaker than Dr. Norman Vincent Peale - at least when he first started out.

Les Brown, another great speaker, tells this story from his high school days. “My first public speaking experience and my first humiliation occurred in my junior year in high school, when my speech teacher and mentor Mr. Washington asked me to introduce a play that other students were presenting. I was determined to prove to him that I could do it. My voice however, had its own agenda. When I opened my mouth, Alfalfa (Of the Little Rascals) spoke. My voice was caught in the door between adolescence and adulthood. It screeched like new chalk on a blackboard. The students and the audience cracked up. I clapped my hands over my mouth, and then I ran off stage.”

You are a better speaker than Les Brown - at least when he first started out.

When you start to realize that all the great speakers started at the bottom of the ladder, just like you, it takes some of the pressure off you to perform. Relax and enjoy yourself. You're in good company.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

Repeat this new mantra to yourself every day.

“I’m a better speaker than Zig Ziglar,
at least when he first started out.
I’m a better speaker than Dr. Norman Vincent Peale,
at least when he first started out.
I’m a better speaker than Les Brown,
at least when he first started out.

I have enormous potential and
will climb the ladder to success
one rung at a time.”

Scared Speechless

“Norman, what's wrong with you?
You know this stuff, but when it
comes to giving it back in class,
you freeze, you can't do it. You
won't amount to anything. You're
just a fraidy cat.”

- Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Be Prepared!

The Boy Scouts Are Right

What happens if you're not prepared in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts?

If you don't have the right sleeping bag, you might get cold. If you don't have enough food, you could go hungry. If you're not prepared, you have to pay the consequences.



Be Prepared

The same principle works in speaking. If you're not prepared, it's going to cost you. You're going to be even more nervous.

Too many times, I've seen speakers furiously taking notes and trying to write out their speech as they eat their dinner. As a result, when they get up to speak, they fumble and use lots of crutch words . . . "ahs" and "uhs." They appear unsure, unconfident and uninspiring. No wonder they're nervous. They're not prepared.

In the Army I learned about the "6 P Rule." This is it. "Prior Preparation Prevents Pitiful Poor Performance." If you're not prepared in the Army, someone might die. Preparation is extremely important.

How can you be prepared as a speaker?
Have a checklist of things you need to get do.
Have you done everything possible to be prepared?

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Start working on your speech or presentation thirty days ahead of time.
- Use your thirty minutes per day preparation time to research, write and practice your speech out loud.
- Make a checklist of action items to accomplish before the speech.

Starbucks Hell

Are you a coffeeholic? Do you love that jolt of energy and surge of brainpower from caffeine? So do I. Coffee's my drug of choice in the morning. But unless you're particularly tired before your presentation, you should probably cut out the coffee and cola drinks ahead of time. If you're nervous in the first place, caffeine can put you over the edge, start you shaking and get that heart racing. If you don't need it, cut it out.



Just Say...No !

For speakers a glass of plain water, no ice, with a slice of lemon is probably fine. I actually prefer Gatorade, which seems to soothe my throat.

Also, a big heavy glass with lots of water will vibrate less in your hand if you do have the shakes.

Caffeine is a personal thing.

Answer the questions . . . How does caffeine affect me?

Will it add to or subtract from my presentation?

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- When you're offered coffee before your presentation, remember to say, "No thank you. I'll have plain water please, no ice."
- Bring Gatorade and a heavy glass or mug.

“Act As If” or The “Jay Leno Technique”



The “Act As If” principle is an old but tested model, one which will help you develop confidence and poise. In reality, you might be nervous and scared inside, but the technique tells you to pretend, to “Act As If” you were someone else. You did this as kids, “You be the mommy and I’ll be the daddy” or “You be the bad guy

and I’ll be the good guy.”

In this case you’re pretending as an adult. “Tonight, I’m going to pretend I’m Jay Leno.”

I suggest Jay Leno for a number of reasons. Watch his entrance as he starts the show and see how he strides out confidently. He’s smiling. His movements are natural. He interacts with the audience and this is even before he says a word.

As you practice your presentation, walk into the room or up to the lectern and “Act As If” you were Jay Leno. Start your presentation as he would.

Scared Speechless

If you need to, video tape yourself walking up to the lectern and compare yourself to Jay. Notice the difference and modify your style to make it more like Jay's.

It's amazing that by acting confidently we start to feel more confident and our presentation will become more relaxed and at ease.

**Action is the only answer to
conquer fear.**

- Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Watch and video tape the beginning of the Jay Leno show. Look at his manner and bearing as he walks out on the stage.
- Now practice the “Act As If” principle and pretend you are Jay. Physically, walk up to a “pretend” lectern, and smile as Jay would. Do this over and over until it starts to feel natural for you.

Scared Speechless

**Act as if you were already
happy and that will tend to
make you happy.**

- Dale Carnegie

Getting to Know You



Remember the song “Getting to Know You”? That’s exactly what you want to do. Get to know your audience. One of our main fears as humans is the fear of the unknown. While we’re comfortable with our family and friends, when we meet new people it’s always a little awkward and tension-filled.

One of the ways to reduce this nervousness is to get to know the audience ahead of time.

If you arrive at the very last minute, or keep to yourself before the presentation, you're going to see a bunch of unfamiliar faces and that has a tendency to scare almost anyone.

On the other hand, if you get to know the audience and see them as friends and allies, then your nervousness will be markedly decreased.

**Getting to know you,
Getting to know all about you.**

- The King and I

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Research the group you're speaking to. Talk to people on the phone. Read newsletters and company annual reports. Check their website and explore every link associated with the audience. Talk to previous speakers and find out their feelings for the group. Many professional speakers even have a few group members fill out a questionnaire ahead of time.
- Mingle with the audience beforehand. Talk to them and listen to their conversations. Ask questions rather than talking about yourself. What are they interested in? What's the hot topic of the day? Who are the friendly and upbeat people? Get to know a few people by their first names. Shake as many hands as possible.

You'll See It When You Believe It

The phrase, "You'll See It When You Believe It," is actually the title of one of Wayne Dyer's books. It's just the opposite of the classic Missouri line, "I'm from Missouri - show me." Wayne Dyer says to believe in yourself first to manifest that belief outwardly.

Norman Vincent Peale reiterates that same idea in his book, "The Power of Positive Thinking." Chapter One is "Believe in Yourself." Dr. Peale says, "Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers, you cannot be successful or happy."

It's always amazing to me the reaction I get from some people when I talk to them about taking a Presentations Skills course. They'll usually blurt out, "Oh, I can't do that. I could never be a good speaker. I get too nervous." It's true for them because it's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There also is a classic quote from Henry Ford, along the same lines. "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

You must believe in yourself before you can be a good speaker and calm those nerves.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- To reinforce and encourage a positive belief system, say the “Speakers Pledge” every day, out loud, five times. Say it with conviction and emotion.

Speakers Pledge

**I believe I can be.....a good speaker,
I believe I can be.....a great speaker,
I believe I can be.....a terrific speaker.**

Deep Breathing

What Basketball and Yoga Have in Common.

One of the cycles many people get themselves into when they're nervous and scared is to take short, quick breaths without even realizing it. As a result, they don't get much oxygen into their body and it starts to tense slightly, which makes them feel even more nervous - and the cycle continues.



Basketball & Yoga

One of the great tension relievers is slow, deep breathing. You've probably seen basketball players at the free throw line taking in a couple of deep breaths right before they shoot. They're trying to relieve some of the tension in their body. In yoga class they teach a similar type of slow, rhythmic, deep breathing to relax and invigorate the body.

If it works in yoga and basketball, it will also work right before a speech.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Here's a technique you can use as you sit in your chair before the speech.

Breathe in through your nose for a count of four, hold it for a couple of seconds and then breathe out through your mouth for a count of four. Do this as often as needed.

As your breath comes in, your stomach goes out. As you breath goes out, you stomach comes in. This is called diaphragmatic breathing and is the type recommended by speech teachers.

People won't even realize what you're doing and it will help to oxygenate your body and release some of your tension.

Desensitization

Desensitization is a technique to lower your response to a stimulus by coming into contact with the stimulus repeatedly.

If you've ever had allergy shots, that's exactly what the doctors are trying to do. By giving you very small doses of the allergen, they gradually desensitize your body.

My wife and I have even used this same technique to train a chipmunk. We've got a chipmunk that will come to our back door and then jump against it to get our attention. When we open the door, it will come inside and get a peanut from my hand. How did we train a chipmunk to do overcome its natural fear? The answer is desensitization. Initially, when we saw the chipmunk and opened the door, it ran away. The second time when we opened the door we threw some peanuts out. The



chipmunk ran away but noticed the peanuts. Gradually over time, the chipmunk started coming closer and closer to the door. It started losing its fear response and became desensitized to us.

It took about three weeks, but the chipmunk finally

If a Chipmunk Can Do It . . .

Scared Speechless

started coming inside the house and taking peanuts from my hand. If a chipmunk can do it , so can you.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain.”

Do what you fear in small doses, and over a long period of time your fear will diminish.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Write down your fears on 3-by- 5 inch cards. List one fear per card. Your biggest fear might be making a presentation to a group of 400 people. Somewhere toward the bottom would be the nervousness involved in telling a joke to friends.
- Starting with the least intimidating situation, mentally do it over and over in your mind. Visualize the situation and use some method of relaxation to calm your body. You can try deep breathing, hypnosis, yoga, or meditation. One good book to read about this state of mind/body is called “The Relaxation Response.”
- When you feel like you can handle the situation mentally, then physically perform the action. Keep doing it until you’re in control.
- When you feel in control of this first step, go onto the next card and use the same techniques. Continue through the stack of cards.

Scared Speechless

“I believe that anyone can
conquer fear by doing the things
they fear to do, provided they
keep doing them until they get a
record of successful experiences
behind them.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Plan to Arrive Early

Everyone is intimidated to a certain extent by new situations, new scenery and new people. The trick as a speaker is to be an “early bird” and familiarize yourself with the room, the equipment and the people, so they don’t have that intimidation factor. The more you know about the setting, the more comfortable you’ll feel when giving your presentation.

I like to arrive at a new location at least an hour early, so I can get used to it and make sure everything is ready for my audience. I set up the room. I set up my equipment. I might rehearse my program a bit and then I talk to the people as they arrive.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Plan on arriving at least an hour early. I've even heard of speakers arriving four hours ahead of time! Check out the room a day ahead of time, if that's possible.
- Check out the setup. Do you have everything you need? Is everything working? Is the room too warm or too cold?
- Move the lectern, tables and chairs around to suit your speech.

Note: I've got a room checklist on my website to help you control as many of the variables as possible.

Examples:

Tables for displays

Chairs and tables

Lectern - type and placement

Microphone type and cord length

Lighting

Heat/AC controls

What's the temperature set at?

Room Size

Restrooms

Lighten Up and Have Some Fun

Loosen up and have some fun when you give your speech. No one said a speech has to be formal, stodgy and boring. On the contrary - your audience wants to be entertained as well as informed, so lighten up.

One way to lighten up any speech is to have some planned fun. I've seen speakers use balloons, kazoos, music, candy, costumes, puppets, juggling balls and games. The benefits are twofold. The audience loosens up, relaxes and is more responsive, and a lot of your initial tension and nervousness drain away.

Enjoy yourself. If you're having fun, the audience will too, and everyone will be less nervous.



Lighten Up

Scared Speechless



Action Step

Plan a fun activity for the first five minutes of your speech. Get your audience involved.

- Music and songs
- Games
- Audience participation
- Candy
- Teams
- Balloons
- Decorations

What's your favorite fun activity?
Email tom@tomterrific.com

Isometrics

One of the great ways to reduce some of the tension and butterflies you feel right before a speech is to exercise.

Now obviously, you can't start doing jumping jacks or push-ups in the room, but you can do isometrics.

Isometrics are a type of exercise in which the muscles act against each other or a fixed object.

You can do isometric exercises while sitting in your chair, without anyone knowing. It's an easy way to curb some of that excess tension.



Isometrics

Scared Speechless



Action Step

Exercises to Try

- **Exercise #1**
Reach down underneath your chair and pull up on the chair bottom for about three seconds. As you pull up, inhale and then hold your breath. Then relax and exhale slowly.
- **Exercise #2**
Press your palms together tightly. Inhale and hold for three seconds, then relax and exhale slowly.
- **Exercise #3.**
Pull your hands apart at the fingers. Hold for three seconds and relax.

Repeat these exercises as many times as necessary. When you're done with the exercises, let your arms fall toward the floor and shake them out gently.

You Don't Have to Be a Comedian to Use Humor



If you're comfortable using humor, it's a great way to get the audience on your side and it allows you to release some tension.

The question is, should you start your speech with a joke or humorous story?

I've read at least a hundred books on speaking. Fifty said you should never start off a presentation with a joke. The other fifty said humor is a great way to start a presentation.

Which is correct?

Here's my answer. It all depends. It depends on you and if you're comfortable using humor. Can you tell the story well? Have you tried it out before? Does it always get a laugh? Is the material appropriate? Does it tie into your topic?

If you can use humor well, use it. It gets you and the audience smiling and is a good way to get those butterflies to relax.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Write down humorous things that happen in the office, with clients or in your home. These are much funnier than any joke book you could ever buy.
- Start building a file of good clean humor on 3-by-5 inch cards or in a file on your computer.
- WRITE IT DOWN! You'll never remember it otherwise.
- Self-deprecating humor is best. Making fun of yourself is generally the safest bet.

Think about which of the stories you've written down would be fun to use and would make sense in your presentation.

Leave the Lectern



Many speakers, when they first start out, seem stuck to the lectern. They literally won't move six inches either way and in some cases their hands seem to have been super-glued to the lectern top. They are stuck in place.

As a result, all of their excess energy expresses itself in quavering voices, knocking knees and shaky hands.

There is no law which says you **MUST** stay at the lectern.

In fact, one trick many speakers use, especially at the beginning, is to get away from the lectern, move around and use up some of that explosive energy.

Walk away from the lectern and use your hands and body. Move around, even if it's only for a minute or two. It will help to dissipate some of that nervousness.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Figure out a way to get away from the lectern during the opening of the speech to work off some of the excess energy.
- Plan on some activity that allows you the freedom of walking away from the lectern.
- Use one of the “Lighten Up” activities to walk around.

Memorize Your Opening

Almost any book on speech preparation will tell you to not memorize your speech. That is great advice. It's too easy to get "brain freeze" when those butterflies are flying all around. Suddenly the speech which you knew word for word five minutes ago has suddenly disappeared.



There is however, an exception. Memorize your opening and have it down cold. Know exactly what you're going to say and how you're going to say it.

People are most nervous at the beginning of a speech, so to help combat that nervousness, simply memorize the first minute. After you get past the opening and into a rhythm, most of your initial nervousness will be gone.

BUT - and I do want to emphasize this - don't, don't, don't try to memorize your entire speech. You're just asking for trouble.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Memorize your first minute of material. Know it so well you can do it in your sleep.
- Add emotion and excitement, hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expression to that first minute. Get people's attention.

Note: This benefits not only you and your butterflies, but your audience will be impressed to see a speaker looking directly at them and obviously so well-prepared and enthusiastic.

Create Well-Prepared Notes

Many professional speakers use notes and note cards, so don't feel intimidated if you need them. The trick is to create cards which are easy to read and follow.

Having good notes will give you a sense of security and control even if you are otherwise nervous. Even if you don't use the cards, they're a good security blanket if there's a problem.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

Here are a few ideas on notes and note cards.

- Type them out. Handwriting, even if it's your own, is too hard to read.
- Use a large font, so they're easier to read.
- Number the pages. I like to put the number in the upper right-hand corner. This way if you drop your notes and they get mixed up, all you need to do is look at the numbers, set them up again and start again.
- Have an extra copy of notes with you.
- Review your notes just prior to speaking.
- Use a highlighter to mark key ideas.
- Don't staple papers together. Use a paper clip.
- Use only one side of the paper.
- When you're done with one page, slide it off to the side.

Don't Talk to 50 People Talk to One

When many people visualize giving a speech, they might envision 50 people, one hundred eyeballs all staring at them. No wonder it's a nerve-racking experience!



One mental trick is to concentrate on talking to one person at a time. Anyone can do that. We do it all day long without any problem. When you look out over your audience, focus in on a single friendly person in each section or area. Talk to that one person; look at them and speak as if you were having a one-on-one conversation. Then, move onto another person and have a conversation with that individual.

We don't get nervous talking, one on one, to people during the day, so just enlarge the technique and concentrate on one person at a time in your audience.

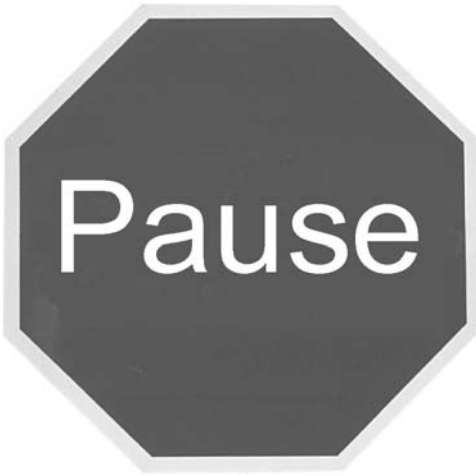
Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Arrive early and find the friendly and upbeat people who will form your audience. Encourage them to sit up front. Then during your speech, find these same people and just continue your conversation with them.
- Mentally remind yourself to talk to one person at a time. Instead of giving a speech, remember to create an extended conversation with one person at a time in the room.
- On your note cards write the phrase “1 to 1” to remind yourself that you’re going to have a conversation with one person at a time.
- After you’ve spoken to one person for a 30 seconds or so, switch your attention to another individual in a different area.

Pause



Many times when we start a speech, it's like the beginning of a horse race. You're anxiously waiting to start. You hear the introduction and bang - you're off and running in a flash. That pent up nervous energy explodes through your body.

Here's a small trick. Right after you're introduced and have walked up to the lectern or onto the floor, pause. Stand in front of your audience, stop and pause. Take a breath and mentally say the word "Relax." Set up your notes; look at your audience, and then start into your presentation.

It's amazing how just this little act of pausing will calm you down and set the right tone for the rest of your speech.

The pause is also a great device to use as speaker. When a speaker doesn't speak; when there's silence in the room, it gets people's attention. "What's going on," they ask themselves. They look up and pay attention to you.

Scared Speechless

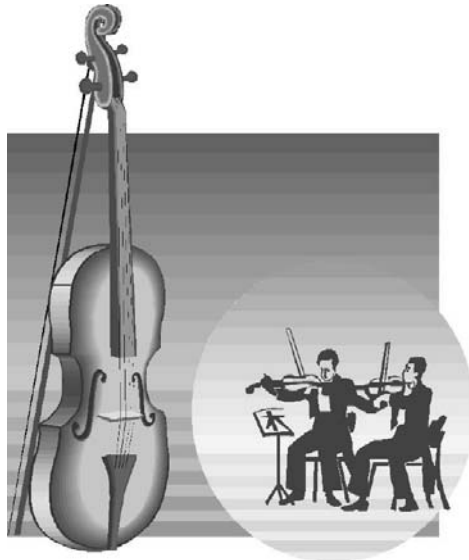


Action Step

- As you write out your speech and note cards, put the word “Pause” right at the beginning of your speech.
- Practice your speech with the pause in place and go through the motions of being quiet, setting out your note cards and saying the word “Relax” to yourself.

Practice, Practice, Practice

There's an old joke which goes like this:
A couple of tourists are visiting New York City and they're walking around seeing the sights. They want to go to Carnegie Hall and see this famous building, but they don't know how to get there. Just as they're about to give up, they see an old man carrying a violin case walking toward them. So they walk up to him and say, "Excuse me sir. We hate to bother you, but could you please tell us, how do you get to Carnegie Hall?" And the old man answers, "There's only one way to get to Carnegie Hall. Practice, practice, practice."



Practice

That's also a great way to become a good speaker and help control those butterflies.

One reason to be nervous is if you don't know your material very well. If you practice, practice, practice, until you do know it, then your nervousness will definitely decrease.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Start practicing 30 days ahead of time. Practice every chance you get. In the beginning, when you're not very confident, you need to put in extra practice to help overcome that nervousness.
- One rule in speaking is an hour of preparation for every minute of speaking time. A five minute speech would require five hours of preparation and practice.
- I've heard professionals say they practice a speech or sections of speeches 30 to 50 times. If they have to practice that much, why shouldn't you?
- Practice sections of your entire presentation rather than trying to learn the entire presentation all at once. Learn one part, one section, one story. When you can do it well, work on another section. The speech is just a combination of all your different sections.

Practice on Location

Another reason people get nervous is because they're in a strange setting. It could be they'll be in a different room or building when they give their presentation and this strangeness can add to tension.

To help overcome this fear, if possible, visit the room and/or building where you're going to speak and run through your entire presentation. Do it exactly as if you had an audience.

This will definitely help alleviate some of your tension when you do give your presentation, because it will be your second run-through on location.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Find out where you're going to give your presentation and make a point of visiting.
- Check the layout - where the chairs will be, where you'll be standing, etc.
- Practice your entire presentation in the room just as if your audience were there.

The more familiar you are with the room and location, the easier it will be when you do your speech.

.

Practice Right Before Your Presentation

One year I was watching the NBA basketball championships. It was the Chicago Bulls vs. the Los Angeles Lakers. Even though the Lakers lost, Magic Johnson was quite impressive, not only because of what he did during the game, but because of what he did before the game. Magic Johnson, the Laker's star, was at the basketball court two hours before game time. He was on the court in full uniform, no other players around, and he was practicing free throws. One of the most talented guys that ever played the game, yet here he was practicing one of the fundamentals, over and over and over.

If I'd asked Magic why he was there so early, I'd bet his answer would be something like, "I was so nervous and tense waiting for the next game, I thought I'd come out to the court to loosen up, relax and get into the right frame of mind."

If it helps Magic Johnson to practice right before the big game, it will also help you.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- If your meeting is at 9 a.m., get in the room at 8 a.m. and give your presentation to an empty room. Even though you may have rehearsed the day before, it's good to practice right before the real thing.
- Visualize your audience. See them sitting in their seats and give your speech as if they were there. It's a great way for you to help get those butterflies in formation.
- If you don't have time to do your entire presentation, run through your opening and first few minutes. This will help get you started smoothly when you do give your speech.

Move Attention From Yourself to the Audience



Normal Speaking Pose

One of the reasons most people get butterflies is because when you're up in front of a group, you're the center of attention. Literally, everyone in the room is looking at you. How do you change that situation? You turn the

spotlight away from yourself. You ask a question of the audience or give them a task to do and suddenly you're out of the limelight. Now you can rest for a minute, look at your notes and be ready for your next part. This is an easy way to release tension.

Some speakers even use this technique during the first minute of their speech, when stress is at its worst. Give it a try.



Moving Attention to Your Audience

Scared Speechless

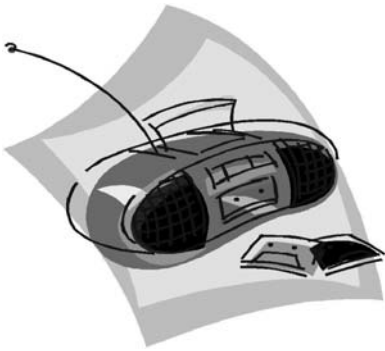


Action Step

Plan on specific times during your speech to get the audience involved as the center of attention. Here are some easy techniques to try:

- Break the audience into small groups and have them discuss a question. Then have them stand up and give a mini-presentation. You might say something as easy as, “Stand up and talk to your neighbor about . . .” or “Find two strangers and . . .”
- Ask questions of specific audience members. “Angela, would you mind standing up and tell me why . . .”
- Ask for volunteers to answer a question. (Note: If you give them a little reward for volunteering, more people will likely raise their hand.)
- Have your audience members stand up when they answer or participate. This way they draw even more attention to themselves and away from you.

Use Music to Relax Both You and Your Audience



Robert Fulghum, author of “Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,” uses music in his speech right at the start. He gets the audience to sing the song “Itsy Bitsy Spider” and then follows with “Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.” Anthony Robbins,

a dynamic speaker, uses music to help pump up the audience. I’ve personally had the audience sing and perform blues music, rock and roll and even taught them line dancing.

Music is a great device to relax both you and your audience and put a smile on everyone’s face.

Caveat #1

Sing music only if you’ve got a halfway decent voice. You don’t have to worry about being Barbra Streisand or Frank Sinatra, but you do have to be able to carry a tune. Find music or sing in a key which is good for you. Turning up the background volume is also a viable option if your voice is marginal.

Scared Speechless

Caveat #2

Depending on the situation you might have to worry about music copyrights. Do a little research in this area. The book, “The Public Domain” by Stephen Fishman is a great resource for copyright and public domain information.

Caveat #3

Check out your music system ahead of time. Make sure it’s working properly. Get someone to help you so you can concentrate on the speech and less on the mechanics of turning the music on and off. Work out some hand signals with your helper to raise and lower the volume.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

Ask yourself these questions:

- How can I use music in this particular presentation to loosen up both myself and the audience?
- What's the age of the audience and what kind of music would they enjoy?
- Is there a particular song I can use to make a point?
- Get a helper to control the music. Give them a sign when to start or stop and hand signals to increase or decrease the volume.

Scared Speechless

Smile - It's Contagious

I was in a department store one day and noticed a female clerk at the counter smiling at me. Now of course it could have been my devastatingly good looks . . . NOT! I walked up and asked, "You sure seem to be happy today." She answered, "Well, I saw you smiling first." I didn't even realize I was smiling. It's contagious.



The more you smile and laugh and show the audience you're having fun, the more they will return that smile and laugh. They relax, you relax and you're off to a great start. When you walk up to the lectern, smile. When you say "Good morning," smile. When you tell a funny story, smile.

Unfortunately, the odds are that someone in your audience is feeling crabby. Someone doesn't feel like smiling. They may not want to be there. Maybe their boss said they had to go. They may have a negative attitude 99% of the time. You know the type. I have a very simple strategy for these type of people. Don't look at them. Scratch them off your list when you go for audience participation. Avoid them - they will only bring you down.

Find the smiling, happy people. Pay attention to them. Look at them. Get them to participate. Nervousness seems to melt when you're looking at a smiling face.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- In your notes, write the word “SMILE” at the top or draw a big smiley face:



- You want to remind yourself to put a smile on your face right at the beginning, to get the speech off on the right foot.
- Before your speech, talk to the audience and note who are the friendly, smiling people. These are the people you’ll want to look at during your speech.
- Don’t be afraid to laugh and smile and have a good time during your presentation. When you smile, the audience will smile back.

Join Toastmasters

Toastmasters is a nonprofit organization which helps individuals develop communications and leadership skills. I've been a member for more than 20 years, and think it's a great way to develop and grow as a person.

Toastmasters allows you to practice your presentation in a safe and encouraging environment. If you've got a big presentation to do at work, it's a great place to try it out ahead of time. You'll be much less nervous when you have to give the real speech.

Meetings are usually once a week and range from one to two hours. Most members attend for eighteen months or more.



Scared Speechless

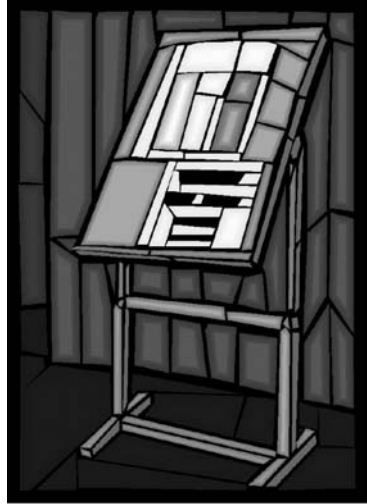


Action Step

- Find the local Toastmasters clubs. Visit them and find one which seems best for you. Give them a try for at least a year and I guarantee you'll show great improvement in controlling those butterflies.
- Here's the web site to find a club close to you:
<http://www.toastmasters.org>

Use Visual Aids

Visual aids are an easy way to take away attention from yourself, especially at the beginning of a speech. You can have your audience look at a chart on the side of the room, show them a picture from a projector or bring out an object to show them. The idea is to draw attention away from yourself during those initial moments, so you can settle down and relax.



However, don't hold things which might show your nervousness. If you hold a sheet of paper in your hand, the odds are it's going to shake, rattle and roll, and your nervousness will be evident to everyone, especially yourself. Glasses of water can also be particularly bad, if you try to take a sip during your speech.

Tip: Wait until the audience is involved in an activity and then have your drink of water. If your hand shakes, no one will notice.

Visual aids are a great way to take attention away from yourself and give yourself a few moments of relaxation.



Action Step

A few general rules about using visual aids:

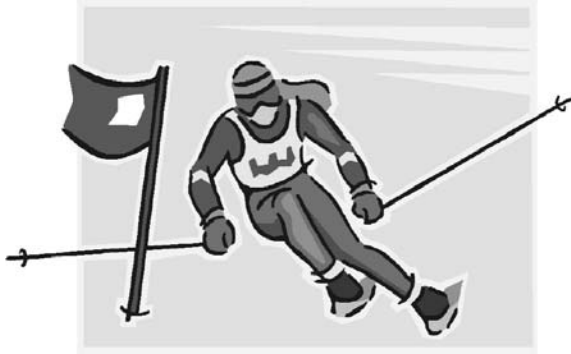
- Make them big and bold so everyone can easily see them.
- Keep the visual aid out of sight at the beginning. Use it, make your point and then when you're done with the visual, put it away.
- Practice with the visual aid, just as you practice your speech.
- If the visual is large and bulky, enlist some help before your program begins.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What sort of large visual aid can I use that lends itself to this particular presentation?
- How can I use the visual to draw attention away from myself?

Visualize

I was watching the winter Olympics a few years ago and before the skiers would make their run, I noticed they would get off to the side, close their eyes and move their head



Visualize First

and body back and forth. What were they doing? They were going through the course mentally. They were visualizing every turn, every bump, every flag on the course. They were visualizing a perfect run.

Mark McGwire, the one-time home run king, would close his eyes when he was in the batter's box. No, he wasn't taking a ten-second nap. He's visualizing what's going to happen when he gets up to bat. He sees that perfect pitch come in and him hitting the ball.

Golfers visualize making that perfect putt and basketball players visualize making the three point shot.

If athletes realize the importance of visualization, then we need to follow their cue and visualize giving the perfect speech, feeling energized and in control.



Action Step

- **Here's the process to follow for a quick visualization.**

Find a quiet spot and close your eyes. Take a deep breath; hold it for a couple of seconds and then let it out. Do this a half dozen times. Now visualize this situation. You're introduced as a speaker. You stride confidently up to the lectern. You're smiling and happy to be there; looking forward to talking to this eager audience. You pause, and then give one of your best speeches ever. You're confident, relaxed and in charge. Your butterflies are flying in formation and are energizing you and your speech. The audience is enthralled with what you have to say. When you tell a humorous story, the audience smiles and laughs. When you make an important point, they nod in agreement. They love you and your presentation. Finally, at the end of your speech you close with a powerful story and the audience rises to its feet and gives you a standing ovation.

- Do this every day before your presentation and then also the day of your presentation. It's a great way to keep those butterflies under control.

Talk From Your Own Expertise, Examples and Experience

I've seen the same speaker give two different speeches. In one speech, she was in front of the lectern talking without notes, smiling, gesturing and gave a great speech. In the second speech however, she stood behind the lectern and read 90% of her speech. She had pages of notes and used few hand gestures. The difference between the two speeches was that in the first speech she was talking about her grandmother and telling stories of her life. In the second speech, it was obvious she had to do a lot of research and wasn't familiar with the topic.

The lesson is obvious. Talk from your own expertise, examples and experience, not something you had to research from a book.

A great deal of our nervousness comes from unfamiliarity. We're unfamiliar with the setting, the people and the subject. You can reduce your nervousness by one-third by talking from your own expertise, examples and experience.

Choose a topic with which you're familiar and have lots of experience. You don't have to be an expert.

You just have to know more than your audience.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Start writing about your topic every day and see what memories, anecdotes and humorous stories you can recall. Write them down in vivid detail; word for word. Keep a small tape recorder with you, and as new ideas come to you, record them. This is the basis for your speech. If you have to do lots of research about your topic, you may be giving the wrong speech.
- You need to start this process weeks ahead of time. You've got years of experiences, but it will take time to remember them. Talk to your family and friends so they can jog your memory.

Dress for Success

When you stand in front of a group, one of the things they judge you on is how well you're dressed. Before you even say one word, the audience will make judgments about you based upon what you're wearing. You know it and I know it, so why not take care of this worry right off the bat.



Know that you're dressed appropriately for your presentation.

The general rule is to dress to the level of the audience, plus an extra ten percent. You want the audience to feel comfortable with you and the way you're dressed, but at the same time you want to stand out just a bit.

Get out your best clothes. Press them or send them to the cleaners and make sure they're in great shape. Shine your shoes, get a haircut, manicure, etc. Do whatever it takes to look your best.

You also want people to pay attention to your message rather than your jewelry, so don't wear gaudy pins, watches, or earrings.

I once saw a speaker make a presentation in a coat and tie, but he was wearing white tennis shoes. It caused his whole speech to be off kilter. I found out later he had hurt one foot and that was the reason for the tennis shoes. If you do have to wear something unusual, explain it to your audience before you get into the main part of your speech.

Scared Speechless



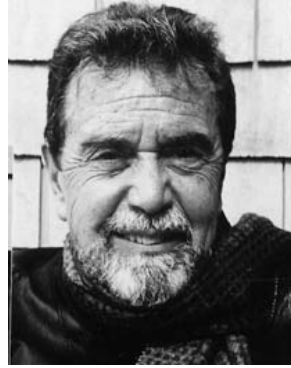
Action Step

- Find out ahead of time how the audience will be dressed. Dress to their level, but add something extra which will say, “I’m the speaker. Pay attention to me.” When in doubt, always dress up. The audience will appreciate knowing that you respect them enough to look sharp for the speech.
- Work on your wardrobe the day before your speech. Have it set out and ready to go. Press your pants, skirt or suit. Shine your shoes. Get a haircut. Do everything possible ahead of time, so that the day of your presentation you’ll be ready. Look at yourself in the mirror and ask if any of the jewelry you’re wearing will distract from your message.
- Buy one of the books which deals with your image. I recommended either “The New Professional Image” by Susan Bixler or one of John T. Molloy’s “Dress for Success” books.
- Just before you go on, do a mirror check and see that everything is in place and you’re looking sharp.

Ma Pen Lai

Ninety-nine percent of our nervous energy is caused by our way of thinking. If we can change our thinking, then we can reduce our nervousness.

The late Dr. Leo Buscaglia, in his speeches, told of a phrase he heard over and over in Indonesia. It was “Ma Pen Lai.” Literally it means, “It’s all right; it doesn’t matter.” That’s a great mental attitude to have about your speech. Do your best. Learn from each presentation and then move on. Rest assured everyone else will.



Dr. Leo Buscaglia

Jean Claude Killy, the Olympic skier from France, said it a slightly different way. At the starting gate he told himself, "I have done everything I can to get ready for this race. I've trained for years. I'm healthy. I have the talent to do it and I'm going to try to win. But if I don't win, my friends will still be my friends. My enemies will still be my enemies and the world will still be the same." Those words right before each race helped to keep him relaxed.

Richard Carlson also repeats a similar idea in the title of his book, “Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff, and It’s All Small Stuff.”

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Mentally talk to yourself before your presentation. Realize that the world will move on after your speech, so don't get hung up. It's not that important, so just do your best and move on. Ma Pen Lai. It's all right, it doesn't matter.
- If you still haven't figured out the "Ma Pen Lai" philosophy, visit a friend with cancer or visit a cancer ward and talk to a patient. They'll give you a different view of what's really important in life.

Meditation

Phil Jackson, former coach of the World Champion Chicago Bulls, wrote a great book titled, “Sacred Hoops.” In the book, the basketball player-turned-coach is as much a philosopher as anything else. He had a three-day meditation course for the Chicago Bulls in the preseason and used meditation in training camps and before games.



Can you imagine Dennis Rodman meditating? It sounds wacky, but it must have worked.

Phil says, “We show players how to quiet the judging mind and focus on what needs to be done at any given moment.” If the Chicago Bulls, former World Champions, practice meditation to get ready for the big game, you may want to consider this technique for yourself.

Mark McGwire, the former home run king, also meditates on a daily basis and it sure seemed to help him.

Those two examples may provide the impetus to give meditation a try.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Buy a book on meditation or check out several from your library. If you're looking for a non-eastern approach, I'd recommend "The Relaxation Response," by Herbert Benson. My local library has more than a hundred books and tapes available on the subject of meditation, so check your local library. Give it a try and it should not only help to control your butterflies, but it may also help you find inner peace.
- Read the book, "Sacred Hoops" by Phil Jackson.

Walk the Walk

One major component of nervousness is a rush of adrenaline and excess energy.

One technique to loosen up your body and release some of that extra energy is to take a walk or even go jogging, if possible, before your presentation.

It could be as little as five minutes or even a half hour; whatever you can spare. Walk in the halls if you have to, but get out of your chair and move. While you're walking, use some of the mental, verbal and visual techniques we've already talked about to calm yourself down.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Instead of fidgeting before a presentation, find a time when you can take a walk or jog. As you walk, talk to yourself positively and visualize a dynamic and fun presentation.

Concentrate on the Message Not the Messenger

Most of you have been to a presentation where a speaker starts out and initially stumbles, is very nervous and obviously not very professional. Yet, as the speaker gets into the topic and starts talking about it with emotion and conviction, he or she is transformed into a different person. The speaker becomes confident, in charge and passionate delivering their message to the audience. The message, not the messenger, becomes the focus.

It's a lesson not to be forgotten. Talk on a topic about which you're passionate. Speak from your heart and less from your brain. Speak about something you care about and your butterflies will easily fall into formation.

In many speaking situations we're nervous and concerned about our appearance or what the audience is thinking, and we forget why we're there in the first place - to share our message. Concentrate on the message rather than the messenger. When you tune into the message and sharing that message with your audience, you tend to forget your nervousness.

Obviously this technique won't work for every situation, but if you've got a choice of topics, choose one that has meaning for you.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

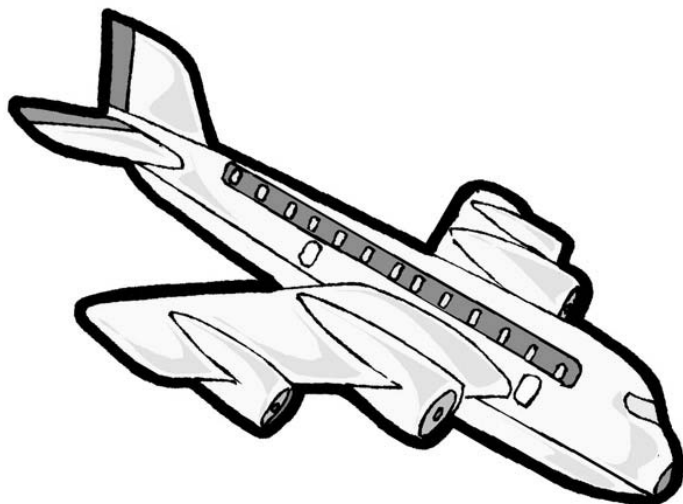
- Ask yourself the question if you are passionate about your message. If not, what topic should you be talking about?
- What is the message? Why is it important that I share it with my audience?
- Concentrate on the message, not the messenger.

The Power of Prayer

Art Linkletter, on his old TV show, was interviewing a young boy and asked him what he would do in this situation: “You’re the pilot of big jumbo jet. You’re up about 50,000 feet and you look at the gas gauge and realize it’s on empty. You forgot to get gas at the last airport. Your airplane engines quit. What do you do?” The little boy thought for a while and then started praying, “Our Father, which art in heaven.”

Now, giving a speech isn’t quite as traumatic as that, but for many people it’s close. You might want to take this young boy’s advice and give prayer a try.

If you’re religious, saying a silent prayer right before you go on might be a great way to calm down those butterflies.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Just before you go on, consider saying a short prayer to calm your nerves.

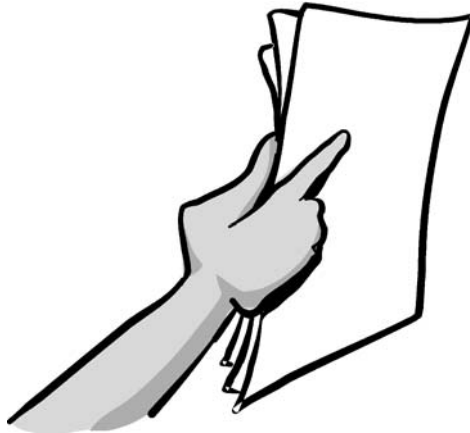


Write Your Own Introduction

Giving a speech is similar to going into battle in that you want to control as many of the variables as possible. One of the small items you can control is your introduction.

Most introducers are terrible. They're not prepared. They haven't done their homework and will wing it when it comes to introducing speakers. As a result, your introduction is butchered and you may start off on the wrong foot, which makes everyone uncomfortable.

Control this variable by writing out your own introduction. Make it interesting, fun and humorous, when appropriate. You want the audience in a good mood when you start. Send it to the introducer as soon as possible and suggest he or she use it as written.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Write your introduction and send it to the introducer well ahead of time. You want that individual to have time to read it over and be comfortable with the wording. Make the type large and easy to read. Say it's very important to read the introduction as it is printed.
- Take a copy of the introduction with you as you go to the meeting. The introducer may have misplaced the introduction and will need another copy.
- Ask the person introducing you to practice a few times ahead of the meeting, so "we" can get the presentation started on a good note.
- If possible, read the introduction to the introducer so they can get an idea of how you would like it done.
- Use some humor in your introduction to set a positive mood.

Picture Your Audience

I've heard a number of versions of this technique from different speakers.

One speaker says, "Picture your audience as all sitting there in their underwear." A different speaker says, "Picture your audience as all sitting on the toilet."

The idea is that visualizing the audience in a compromising situation puts a smile on your face and breaks the tension, even if it's just for a couple of seconds.

I personally don't use this technique, but it might help you to smile for a couple of seconds and loosen up.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- On your speech notes, write the phrase,
“Picture your audience as _____.”
Fill in the blank yourself.

Love and Good Will

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale used a special “Love” technique before every speech.



Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

Dr. Peale said, “It's my practice before a speech to send out thoughts of love and goodwill toward them [the audience]. Sometimes I select one or two people who seem to be either depressed or even antagonistic and send my prayers and thoughts and goodwill toward them.”

Part of our “fight or flight” nervous response is because you may see the audience as an enemy. You feel like we’re going into battle and naturally you’re upset and nervous.

Instead, follow Dr. Peale’s advice and try to see your audience as new friends who need your help to succeed.

Your mission changes into helping the audience, and sending them love and goodwill, instead of fighting with an enemy.

By filling your heart and mind with love and goodwill, there is much less space left for the jitters.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Before your speech, you may want to check out the audience. Send them thoughts of love and goodwill, before your presentation as Dr. Peale did. Concentrate on the mission of helping them, loving them and bringing them a caring message.

Problems Can Be Good

Most of us are so obsessed by the possibility of failure or making a mistake, we don't realize that problems can be blessings in disguise. I remember one presentation where I would take out a starter's pistol and fire it into the air. I pulled out the pistol and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. I tried again - still nothing. By this time the audience was laughing and having a great time, and when I finally did get the pistol to fire it got a round of applause.

Later, one of the participants told me that he didn't know if the problem with my pistol was planned or not, but I should keep it in the presentation.

When Jay Leno, entertainer extraordinaire, muffs a punch line, he always has a quick retort which inevitably gets a bigger response than his planned joke. If one of the best entertainers in the world can miss a line, so can you.

The audience wants you to succeed and is forgiving when you do have problems. They see themselves up there and realize it could be them instead of you. When you do falter, it shows your human side and your audience will understand and empathize.

Instead of worrying about problems and mistakes, see them as opportunities to have fun with the audience. When there is a problem ask yourself, "How can I have fun with this situation?"

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Audio tape or video tape your presentation. When things don't go exactly as planned, see how they may add or detract from future speeches.
- Watch and tape the "Tonight Show" with Jay Leno. See how he handles himself when he misses a line and what he does to have fun with the situation. Don't be afraid to borrow some of his techniques, comebacks and lines.
- Knowing how to handle problems and being prepared for them will help you to feel more confident.

Get Help from Others

Just because it's "your" speech, doesn't mean you have to work on it alone.

Get some supportive help. Find people whose judgment you trust and who will give you an honest opinion, along with useful suggestions.

Knowing that your speech has been gone over by at least one other person means you'll be more confident when you actually make your presentation.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Make a list of people who will give you constructive and honest feedback on your presentation. Have them read your typed out speech and/or listen to you deliver it ahead of time.
- Stay clear from caring and loving people for this action step. They usually will whitewash your presentation and give you little helpful information.
- I like to use the phrase, “In what three ways can I improve this speech?” It then gives people permission to be critical.
- Video tape your presentation and share it with speech evaluators. Don’t just ask, “What do you think?” Ask them for ways in which you might improve your performance.

Hold Hands with Your Sweetie

Dr. Karen Grewen of the University of North Carolina has done some interesting research on the effect of touching on blood pressure and heart rate.

Some 185 couples were first told they were going to give a speech.

One hundred couples were then told to sit and hold hands while watching a ten minute video. They were then told to hug for twenty seconds.

A second group of eighty-five couples were told to watch the same movie, but they were separated and not allowed to touch.

When the no-contact individuals gave their speech, their blood pressures increased by 24 points. The group which had held hands had their blood pressures only rise 12 points, a fifty percent reduction.

Similar results were found with heart rates. The contact group had their heart rates increase five beats per minute, while the no-contact group had their rates increase by ten beats per minute.

The results are dramatic and easy to understand. Touching is an easy way to reduce speech nervousness.

Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Bring your spouse or loved one with you to your next speech and try to have as much contact with them as possible before the talk.
- If the situation doesn't allow the above, try to shake as many hands or hug as many people as possible.

The “Power of Touch” is one which is too often neglected. I do a one-hour speech just on the benefits of touching, which is not only good for you, but for the other person involved.

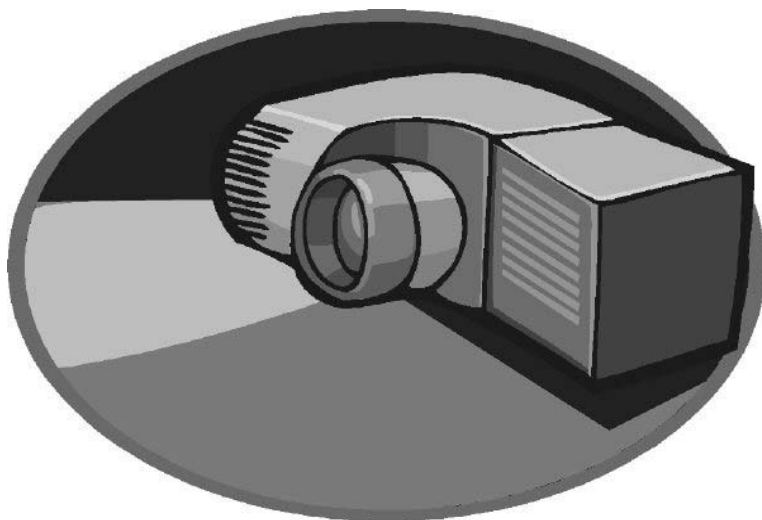
If you want to lower your blood pressure and lower your heart rate during your speech, start holding hands and hugging.

Hide Behind Power Point

Although I've listed this technique last in my book, in actuality it's the first line of defense for most speakers.

They spend days putting together a Power Point presentation and then hide in the corner as the presentation plays. They may have to talk using a microphone, but at least it's in a dark room with no one watching them.

While there are some good things about Power Point, for many speakers, it's just an easy way to hide from the audience and not have to practice or use any presentation skills.



Scared Speechless



Action Step

- Design Power Point slides to draw attention away from yourself.
- Use graphics rather than text whenever possible.
- Put the screen off toward the corner. You still want to be center stage. When the slide is shown, people will look toward the corner and away from you.
- When you're not using Power Point, blank the screen, usually the "B" key or you can also just create a black slide.
- Practice your presentation with the Power Point slides ahead of time.
- Check out the room to make sure it's conducive to a Power Point presentation. (Lighting, electricity, seating, etc.)
- Have a helper control the lights. Work out details ahead of time.

Addendum

When All Else Fails - Drugs

A few speakers, magicians, musicians and singers use medication to control their anxiety.

This should be used as the **very last option**, but if all else fails, go to your doctor and discuss it.

Propranolol (trade name Inderal), is the most common drug used. It's a beta-blocker that prevents the heart from racing, which causes palpitations and shakiness before a speech. These drugs aren't sedatives, so they won't affect your mental acuity.

There are some other newer drugs available these days which do the same thing, called SSRI's.

Of course there are side effects, so weigh the benefits vs. risks.

Scared Speechless

Scared Speechless

To order copies of this book, please fill out the form below and send your check or money order to:

The Tom Terrific Company LLC
9016 Robyn Road
St. Louis MO 63126

Qty. _____ @ \$19.95 _____

Postage and handling:

(\$2.00 for one book, \$1.00 for each add'l). _____

Subtotal _____

Sales Tax: Missouri residents add 7.575% _____

=====

Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If you would like your book signed and personalized,
indicate here:

Scared Speechless

How Can I Improve?



I'd appreciate your comments and ideas on how to improve this book. This book, like myself, is evolving, changing, and growing. I'm always looking for new ideas and different ways of looking at things.

I know your experiences might be helpful to me and future editions of this book. Won't you share them with me? Thanks.

Email is the most efficient way to communicate.

Have a Terrific Life !

tom@tomterrific.com

Scared Speechless

[illegible]

[illegible]