



Top Tips for speaking in public

Fear of public speaking (glossophobia) is a common phobia. It can range from slight nervousness to paralyzing fear and panic. Many people rank the fear of public speaking higher than the fear of death! Many people avoid public speaking situations altogether, or they suffer through them with shaking hands and a quavering voice. Fear of public speaking really boils down to fear of being ridiculed, rejected, and publicly humiliated. But preparation and persistence, and the following tips, can help overcome the fear.

1 BE YOURSELF.

You may not be the world's fastest runner or greatest golfer but you are the only person in the world who knows what it is like to be YOU – make the most of it. People don't want you to fail. They ultimately want to see you succeed. Give them what they want by just being the best you can be.

2. MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT

Maintain eye contact throughout. Touch the eyes of everyone in the room over and over again. Don't forget those at the sides. Don't look at the floor -- there's nothing down there. Don't look solely at your notes – you don't want the audience to think you haven't prepared. You appear more confident when your head is up, which puts your audience at ease and allows you to take command of the room.

3. STRUCTURE

Structure your talk. Make sure you have:

A strong opening – to hook the audience – issue a challenge, use a joke or quotation

A good body to the talk

A confident and strong finish – the audience remembers the last thing they heard

4. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Avoid jargon – unless you are speaking to people who know what it means and, even then, avoid it if possible.

5. POWER OF THE PAUSE

Much more effective than 'er' and 'um'

6. PACE

Pace yourself. Make sure you don't speak too fast. Speak at a normal (or even slightly slower) pace when speaking publicly. Give your audience time to take in what you are saying.

7. KEEP TO TIME

If you say "in conclusion" make sure it is. Know what's expected of you and deliver that -- and no more. Always leave an audience wanting more.

8. USE YOUR VOICE TO BEST EFFECT

Elevate and project your voice to the back of the room

9. SPEAK FROM THE HEART

Be animated, be excited about your message – bring it alive with gestures and vocal variety

10. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE

Practice in front of a mirror. Practice to your dog. Practice to a friend or family member. Every time you go through your presentation, you're adding another layer of "I know this stuff." Request feedback – though maybe not from the dog!

OR why not

Get support. Join a network, organisation or group in your area like a Speakers Club that offers support for people who have difficulty with public speaking that can offer you the opportunity to practice.