Speech Anxiety

Choose a topic that interests you

It is easy to get excited and be energetic about something that has relevance to your life. When choosing a topic for a speech, think about the type of speech and something that you can put a passion behind. If you enjoy giving it, chances are the audience will reflect your passion. Excitement about your topic will help lessen your anxiety.

Be familiar with your surroundings

Speaking in front of a crowd of people can be scary. Having to figure out where to put your presentation materials creates even more uneasiness. Before you give a speech, make sure you familiarize yourself with the area in which you will be presenting. Make sure you can work the presentation equipment and are able to retrieve any audio visual materials. Developing a level of certainty about anything when you are presenting creates confidence for you.

Don’t read a paper

Believe it or not, making eye contact with your audience members decreases anxiety! That’s right. You are “facing the dragon” and you will see that the audience (just people) can’t hurt you. So, keep your eyes on your audience.

Rehearse

Failure to practice your speech will be reflected in your delivery. Asking a friend for help with homework is just as easy as asking them to listen to your speech. Practice is key to successful public speaking. The more you rehearse, the more confident you will become in speaking in front of others.

Confidence

Maintaining a positive attitude in preparing for a speech is one of the biggest factors in having a successful speech. Imagine yourself succeeding and it is likely you will. Confidence is key!

Exercise

Do something physical on the day of your presentation. When you get nervous, your body releases a big shot of adrenaline. Think in terms of a car idling at a red light and you put it in park. Then, you accidentally step on the gas and you hear a huge roar from the engine. That is what the adrenaline is doing in your body. So, you need to get rid of some of that adrenaline (nervous energy). Use up that energy—take a walk, do an aerobics class, play basketball...you get the idea. Exercise will help!