



MAKING PUBLIC SPEAKING EASIER

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Thanks to the Nashville SD Support Group.

1. Watch the Masters
 - a. If you've got a speech or presentation in your future, start looking for what makes successful public speakers so successful. Note their styles and habits and keep them in mind as good examples.

2. Fix up, Look Sharp
 - a. If you're in a position where public speaking is required, let's hope you've already got a handle on the importance of personal grooming. If not, take heed: the better you look, the more ready and professional you'll feel. A lot of people are going to be looking at you—make sure you look your best.

3. Hello, Room. Nice to Meet You.
 - a. If at all possible, check the specs of the room where you'll be speaking. Is it football-stadium big or conference room big? What about the sound system? If you'll be using a microphone, it's a good idea to test it out beforehand. The more familiar you are with your environment, the more comfortable you'll be at the podium.

4. Sober Up
 - a. If your speaking engagement is a social function (e.g. wedding, reunion), it might seem like a good idea to guzzle as much liquid courage as you can before your speech. But listening to a sincere speech from someone who's nervous is much better than listening to incoherent babble from someone who's loaded.

5. Know your Material
 - a. Winging it is not a good idea when you've got a speech to make. While going with the flow and being flexible is smart, trusting yourself to be brilliant without any preparation is something even the pros don't attempt. Do your research. Know your topics and what you're going to say about it and how you'd like to say it. The more you know, the more confident you'll be up there.

6. Practice, practice, practice
 - a. Once you're prepared, go through the speech. Then read it again. Then again. And then once more. Practice in front of a mirror. Practice to your dog. Grab a friend or family member and practice in front of a real human being. Every time you go through your presentation, you're adding another layer of "I know this stuff."
7. Visualize yourself being Fabulous
 - a. Negative thinking will get you nowhere but down in the dumps. If you believe that you'll be great, you will be. If you think you're going to fail, you probably will. It's as simple as that.
8. Know Your Audience
 - a. To whom are you speaking? If they're colleagues, they probably want to learn something from you. If they're friends, they're likely looking to be entertained. If it's a judge, well, he or she wants to be convinced. Know your audience and tailor your speech and delivery to them. Give them what they want!
8. Relax!
 - a. We're usually our own worst critics. If you forget to read a sentence off your notes, it's doubtful anyone will know. If you skip forward to the next image on the projector, again, few will notice.
9. Don't Give it Away
 - a. If it really, truly makes you feel better to announce to the room that you're so nervous before you begin, go ahead. But your speech will have a lot more weight if you don't. Chances are good that you're the only one who knows you're shaking in your boots—why show the cracks in your armor? Let them believe you have it under control, even if you don't feel like you do.
10. Slow Your Roll
 - a. One of the biggest indicators of nervousness is the lightning-fast talker. You might have the best speech ever written, but if no one can understand what you're saying, it doesn't matter. Pace yourself and remember to speak at a normal or even slightly slower pace when you're speaking publicly.
11. The Eyes Have It
 - a. People trust people who look them in the eye, so look at your audience when you're speaking to them. Don't look at the floor – there's nothing down there. Don't look solely at your notes – the audience will 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.
12. Go on , be Funny!

- a. Who doesn't like to laugh a little? You don't have to be a comedian, but a few lighthearted comments can help humanize you to your audience. Win them over with a smile and a well-timed clever remark, if you can. But be advised, too many jokes can weaken the validity of a presentation.

13. Your Errors are Okay

- a. So you tripped on the microphone cord. So what? So you said macro when you meant micro somewhere in your speech. So you accidentally said the name of your sister's ex-boyfriend during your toast instead of the name of her new husband—so what! Everyone make mistakes. Acknowledge them and move on.

14. Keep it Short, Please

- a. Even the President's State of the Union Address is only around an hour. Know what's expected of you and deliver that—and no more. We've all been tortured by a speaker who goes on and on caring little for the audience's interest or comfort level. Don't be one of those speakers—always leave them wanting more.

15. It's SO Not about You

- a. The more you can take the focus off yourself, the better. After all, it's not likely you're being asked to give a presentation of your life story. So concentrate on the message and find freedom in just being the messenger.

16. Fake It 'Til you make it

- a. The old saying "fake it 'til you make it" is actually pretty good advice. Even if you have zero confidence in yourself, try acting like you do. The longer you fake it, the more comfortable it will feel, until, voila, you're a bona fide confidence machine.

17. Be Yourself

- a. We're all human. We're all a little afraid of the podium, the microphone, or the boardroom. Despite what you may believe, 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' you can be.

18. Hydrate Yourself

- a. Nerves dry up the mouth. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Sips of water are good, but don't drink it like you've not had water for days—you may have to pause to visit the bathroom. Either that or you'll really embarrass yourself!

19. Make yourself Heard

- a. Most people tend to talk more softly when speaking in front of a crowd. When you rehearse have someone stand at the back of the room. Give them Nerf balls and have them shoot you when they can't hear you!

20. Don't Fill the Void

- a. Ums and ahs sound horribly unprofessional. Nothing wrong with the thought-filled silence. The pauses aren't as long as they seem. The audience will know you're still connected to them and you will keep their rapt attention.

21. Warm-up

- a. You may end up with a sore throat or sound like you've smoked a carton. Hum or do tongue-twisters—"the big black bug bled blue-black blood."