

Glossophobia: The Fear of Public Speaking



By Dian Griesel, President of [Dian Griesel International](#)

Did you know that as many as 75% of all people suffer from the affects of Glossophobia? Yes, that's right: Glossophobia or, as it is more commonly known, fear of public speaking. For many, fear of public speaking is a fear greater than death. Fortunately the terror and sweats can be overcome. Like all obstacles in life if one chooses to make a concerted effort, enhanced communication and conversation skills...as well as general comfort over the symptoms can be gained.

These six essential tips can help anyone conquer Glossophobia. Test them out. They will make any speaker feel more confident in front of a crowd or just help with everyday communication skills.

1. What you know. To be an effective public speaker, it helps to be well-read and up-to-date on current events. Keeping abreast of current issues will not only increase credibility in a presentation, but also help anyone contribute intelligently to any conversation.

2. Listening. People might ask questions during or after a presentation, or even come up to you afterwards to chat about your speech. If you don't know an answer, be honest and tell them you'll get back to them at a later date. In a conversation, people will be able to tell if you're actually

engaged with what they are saying or if you're just smiling and nodding. You will gain more respect, and likely have a deeper conversation, if you are an active listener.

3. Eye contact. It's as important to maintain eye contact with a large group as it is in a one-on-one conversation. Even if you are reading from note cards, make it a point to look up at the audience after every other sentence or so. You can even make a mark in your speech where you should look up. It will make you seem confident and help the audience connect with you. While you're at it, a smile doesn't hurt either.

4. Kidding around. A little bit of humor can go a long way in breaking up a long speech or diffusing tension. As long as it is kept in good taste, humor can make you seem more approachable and might encourage people to talk to you after a large presentation.

5. Me, myself and I. It might be awkward at first, but practicing your speech in front of a mirror will help you become more comfortable with your material and even more comfortable in listening to your own voice aloud. If you trip up in certain places, it might mean you need to rewrite or rethink your words and phrases.

6. A role model. Who do you know who speaks well in front of a crowd? Maybe it's someone you're close to, such as a community leader or teacher you admire, or maybe it's a public figure like the President or a celebrity. Either way, pick out a quality that you think makes them a good speaker and try to emulate it. After all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Although these key elements might not cure you of Glossophobia, they could bring you one step closer to becoming a master orator.

About the Author: Dian Griesel is a strategic visibility

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