

Here's How to Overpower Your Fear of Public Speaking

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The [statistics](#) on public speaking speak for themselves – 74% of people are afraid of addressing an audience. If you are one of the ones who can do this proficiently, and even enjoy it, you will have more ease in your work life and an edge in today's competitive world.

I am all too familiar with the challenges of speaking to the public. I used to be so shy that it was hard for me to talk on the phone even to a friend and harder still for me to say my name in a room full of people. I have transformed to such an extent that I am now a [communications](#) expert and coach and passionate about sharing the tools that I used to convert my worst fear into something I now enjoy.

Here are the top seven things I have learned along the way to be a more confident public speaker.

• Acknowledge your awareness

Although this isn't something that we tend to talk about a lot, we are often acutely aware of what is going on for other people. We already know that most people would rather not be, or are actually frightened of, presenting to groups. So, when you are about to talk, you may find yourself aware of other peoples' thoughts, feelings, and emotions about speaking in public.

The trick here is to remind yourself that just because the thoughts are in your head, they are not necessarily anything to do with you. Your reality may be completely different.

▪ **Engage your audience**

Most presentation strategies focus on being crystal clear on what you are delivering, and then repeating it in several different ways. Unfortunately, this tends to end up with the speaker “pushing” ideas onto their audience. This frequently results in the audience resisting you and pulling away from your message.

An alternative to this is to imagine a connecting thread from behind the audience, through them, and through you. When you do this, a kind of magic occurs – your audience feels engaged with you, and enthusiastic about what you are saying rather than resistant.

▪ **Move your body**

Often when we are stressed, tension builds up in our bodies, and then when we get on stage to make our presentation, our bodies may start to shake, or we might feel tension in different places. If you move your body before you give your talk, this can release or alleviate your symptoms.

You may go for a jog or run on the morning of the talk, or you may, like me, go to the rest rooms and jump up and down in the few minutes before your presentation. Either way, your body will feel good and more relaxed after exercise, and your symptoms may well lessen or even abate entirely.

▪ **Anchor yourself**

It is sometimes the case that our nerves make us feel like we are going to be pushed over as we stand in front of our audience. Whilst it is unlikely that we will fall over, there are a couple of techniques you can use that will make you feel more present in the room and unassailable.

I suggest standing with your feet planted firmly apart, feeling yourself supported by the ground. At the same time imagine yourself expanding outwards. This combination means you feel and look confident

• **Speak to your specific audience**

It goes without saying that you will be well prepared for your talk, so I don't need to include that here.

What often occurs is that we have a "message" that we want to share at all costs. Even when we notice that the audience is not responding as we had hoped, we still plough on regardless.

I suggest asking some simple questions that allow you to tune into what will inspire rather than bore your audience: "What can I say that this audience can hear? What can I say that would be of interest to this audience?"

Again, when you ask this before your presentation, a kind of magical transformation occurs. Without trying, you find yourself speaking the content that is relevant to them in a way that is easily accessible.

• **Fear or excitement**

Often, when we were little and excited about something, our overly anxious parents assumed we were afraid and handled us accordingly. It is likely that from that point, we have conflated excitement and fear.

When you feel the familiar signs of what appears to be fear I recommend asking: "Is this fear or is this excitement?" Having done this, you might well find that you are actually excited to share your message with the world.

• Don't worry if you go wrong

We often believe we have to be perfect. The problem with this is that striving for perfectionism can lock us up. Being so afraid of making a mistake, we can be too afraid to even open our mouths.

If you do fluff a line, the best thing to do is smile and apologise, without making yourself wrong. When you don't make yourself wrong, your audience will not judge you either. This can give you an untold freedom that will make it much easier for you to be "up front".

I love reminding myself of these simple tools that have allowed me to enjoy giving talks and presentations. I hope that they will give you the freedom that you are seeking, too.



About the Author: *Fiona Cutts was a painfully shy child who excelled academically, a strength that led her into a profitable career as an accountant. By 30, however, she was unhappily divorced, suffering with back pain, depression, and eventually, a debilitating bout of chronic fatigue. Her journey of health restoration led her down all the conventional medical routes to no avail. It was the tools and processes of Access Consciousness and Right Voice for You that enabled Fiona to attain the vibrant, expansive, joyful living she enjoys today. Today she travels the world facilitating [Right Voice for You](#) programs, a specialty program of [Access Consciousness](#), offering others the tools and strategies to experience this level of change and possibility in their own lives. Follow on Twitter [@Fiona_Cutts](#).*

