

How to Be Confident When Speaking in Public

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"Speaking in public makes me nervous and frightened. If possible, I would like to avoid doing it."

Have you ever had such feeling? Is it true? Why do we need to speak in public? And if you have to do so, what should be done in order to speak confidently?

These questions will be discussed in this article.

Public Speaking and its Nature

Public speaking is a kind of conversation with a group of listeners, which may be large or small. The listeners always expect to get something while they are listening to the speech. They attend the gathering with their specific purposes in minds. It is unlike normal conversation with friends, colleagues and acquaintances, where you talk on any topic you like and so can speak in a random and informal way without preparation. In contrast, speaking in public is formal and it is about a certain topic. Therefore, this kind of conversation must be well-prepared with a careful plan of the content to be presented, the proper language to use and the appropriate delivery according to the type of listeners. Consequently, public speaking can be viewed as a frightening and complicated thing to do.

However, is public speaking really that hard? Speaking in public is a skill thing which everyone can develop by practice, like playing a guitar. It seems hard at the beginning, but it will become easier and skill will come with practice.

Why Speaking in Public

Speaking is the most effective way of communication in community, especially for business purposes. It is a short cut to make new friends, to influence people around you, to move people to action, and to influence people's attitudes. This means that it is a valuable tool for you in making new friends and customers, entering new social circles, and obtaining promotion and advancement. These all bring position, money, success, and reputation.

Possible Difficulties in Public Speaking

As said earlier, public speaking is a formal conversation with a specific group of listeners. Speakers may face a lot of frightening problems such as having nothing to say, not performing well, a hostile audience and a breakdown of audio-visual equipment while speaking. These feelings cause speakers to be scared and over-excited. As a result, they lack self-confidence, and this is a serious obstacle in delivering a speech.

These fears are common to every speaker even experienced ones. However, all these problems can be solved by following this advice.

Tips for Speaking Confidently in Public

1. Have a strong will to speak.
2. Know your topic thoroughly.
3. Prepare what you are going to say by :
 - a. Setting down your purpose in sentence form.
 - b. Gathering materials from your own background, from interviews with others, and from printed sources, preferably in that order.
 - c. Writing notes on index cards.
 - d. Outlining your talk
 - e. Preparing a beginning that will arouse interest and lead into the subject by using:
 - 1) A striking statement
 - 2) A question
 - 3) A reference to the occasion
 - f. Develop your ideas logically and persuasively by :
 - 1) Explaining

- 2) Restating
- 3) Stating advantages and disadvantages
- 4) Giving examples
- 5) Giving statistics
- 6) Making reference to authorities
- g. Restate important ideas
- h. Prepare a conclusion that will impress the controlling idea of your talk on your listeners.

Ways to cope with fears

1. Speak on a familiar topic.
2. Know your audience.
3. Organize ideas in three main parts, i.e., an introduction, a body and a conclusion, using simple words and sentence structures.
4. Practice talking out loud three or four times in private and then talk to friends to get some feedback.
5. Feel brave when you have to speak.
6. Make a conscious effort to relax by taking deep breaths before speaking.
7. Establish eye contact with your audience before speaking so that they pay attention to you.
8. Act confidently as if you love speaking to people.
9. Smile and start your speech slowly.
10. Have a message and keep it in your mind and heart.
11. Be enthusiastic by being lively and sincere.
12. Be brief and to the point.
13. Remain polite and courteous when facing aggressive questions.
14. Don't be too critical of yourself after the event.

These guidelines are crucial for being confident in public speaking and being an effective speaker. For more information, readers should consult the references provided at the end of the article.

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