

Prepared Confidence Speaks Volumes

By Cindy Campbell

AM A PUBLIC SPEAKER. Honestly, it was never one of my original career goals. Having said that, it's now what I do for a living and I love it. If someone would have told me 20 years ago that this would be my next professional endeavor, I most certainly would have laughed and thrown the delusional soul out of the confines of my safe little office. Fast forward to 2018 and here I am, relishing every single forward-facing moment of this truly rewarding career.

Perhaps like the old me, you don't aspire to become a public-speaking road warrior, and that's fine, but wouldn't it be wonderful to feel more confident about the presentations and speaking opportunities required of you in your current role? Let me answer that one: Sure it would. Having confidence in anything we do can greatly improve the outcome. So, what's a nervous parking professional to do? How do we overcome the fear factor associated with public speaking? Is that even possible?



Setting Goals

It's best to start with realistic goals. Fact is, it's likely that you will never completely get over feeling nervous about public speaking, and that's a good thing. A small amount of discomfort with public speaking can actually help you stay focused and on topic. The fear of public speaking can motivate you to be better prepared.

Here are a few key points to consider if you're someone who feels anxious or overwhelmed when called upon to present in public:

- Change your mindset. Use the fear you're feeling to your advantage. I'll admit it—I still have nerves every time I present. I know the feeling of adrenaline when I wake up knowing I'll be presenting that day. Over time, I've learned to change my view of that rush from anxiety to one of excitement. I am genuinely excited to be presenting because I've decided that's my reality. It was a difficult pivot for me at first, but

I'm now programmed to feel excitement and enthusiasm. It's become automatic and authentic, and audiences generally prefer energetic, positive speakers.

- Prepare and rehearse. Preparation includes rehearsing your presentation. Don't allow yourself to be lulled into a false sense of confidence. Never just wing it. Knowing your subject matter is different than being prepared to provide a timed presentation on a topic. We've all experienced that rambling speaker who somehow lost their way on a subject they knew well. One of the main reasons this happens is complacency. When we fail to practice due to complacency or being over-confident, we may not represent ourselves in a credible way. You will be a more effective speaker if you can use that anxiety as a motivation to rehearse your material, no matter how well you know it.
- Anticipate. Consider what the physical setting will be. What kind of lighting will be in the room during your presentation? Will it be very bright or very dark? Do you have detailed slides that won't be visible from parts of the room? The seating layout and lighting levels in a room can significantly affect your effectiveness. If you're using visuals (such as PowerPoint), slides with a dark background in a brightly lit room can render the presentation useless. Consider the size of the detail included on each slide. Be prepared to provide handouts if detail is necessary. Have you anticipated the likely follow-up questions from the audience? Are you prepared with those answers or resources? Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, we prepare to fail." Let me encourage you to invest a little extra time on preparing your next presentation. Make the time to be your best representative. [P](#)



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