

Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.
 -Marie Curie

For many of us public speaking tops the list of things we fear. According to one study, at least 75 percent of students in public speaking courses approach the course with anxiety, while some other surveys show public speaking to be the number-one fear, mentioned more often than death at number two.¹ Even accomplished speakers often feel jittery before they give a speech. It turns out

What Makes Speakers Anxious?

Researchers have identified several factors that underlie the fear of addressing an audience. These include lack of public speaking experience (or previously had a negative public speaking experience), feeling different from members of the audience, and uneasiness about being the center of attention. Each of these factors can lead to the onset of public speaking anxiety (PSA) or anxiety associated with either actual or anticipated communication with an audience as a speaker.⁴

Anxious anticipation is a natural reaction to new experiences, especially those that are challenging or novel. For those who have had no public speaking ex-

THE SURVEY found that female speakers (55 percent) were more likely to experience public speaking anxiety than their male counterparts (45 percent). The survey also revealed that 75 percent of speakers who experience anxiety do so because of the fear of being judged by the audience. This fear is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. As a result, speakers may experience physical symptoms such as a racing heart, sweating, and a dry mouth, which can further exacerbate their anxiety. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

Public Speaking Anxiety

For many people, public speaking anxiety (PSA) arises as a result of a fear that they will have to give a speech at some point in the future. This fear is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. As a result, speakers may experience physical symptoms such as a racing heart, sweating, and a dry mouth, which can further exacerbate their anxiety. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

BEING THE CENTER OF ATTENTION

Speakers often comment about how audience members appear to behave toward them during a speech. Listeners might fail to make eye contact with the speaker, or they might appear to be bored or disinterested. This can be a source of anxiety for the speaker, as they may feel that they are not being heard or that they are not making a good impression. It is important for speakers to remember that the audience is often more interested in the message than in the speaker's performance. Focusing on the content and delivering it with confidence can help to overcome these concerns.

PRE-Preparation ANXIETY

Some people feel anxious the minute they know they will be giving a speech. This pre-preparation anxiety is often the most intense and can be a significant barrier to giving a speech. It is characterized by a sense of dread and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

Pre-Preparation

Pre-Performance

Pre-Preparation: This stage of anxiety occurs before the speaker has even begun to prepare for the speech. It is often characterized by a sense of dread and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

Pre-Performance: This stage of anxiety occurs as the speaker begins to prepare for the speech. It is often characterized by a sense of nervousness and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

During the Speech

During the Speech: This stage of anxiety occurs as the speaker is giving the speech. It is often characterized by a sense of nervousness and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

Post-Speech: This stage of anxiety occurs after the speaker has finished giving the speech. It is often characterized by a sense of relief and a feeling of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is often rooted in a lack of confidence in one's own abilities and a tendency to overthink every detail of the speech. It is important for speakers to recognize these signs and take steps to manage their anxiety, such as practicing the speech in advance and focusing on the message rather than the audience's reaction.

Remind yourself that the audience is interested in the message, not in you.

Take a deep breath and focus on your message.

Remember that you are the expert on your topic.

Practice your speech in advance.

Focus on the message, not on the audience's reaction.

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Focus on the message, not on the audience's reaction.

Remember that you are the expert on your topic.

Practice your speech in advance.

Figure 5.1



Check

to the date each item is started and completed. Place a check-mark in the box at the top of each item to indicate its completion.

Active

When will I receive the assignment? When did I receive the assignment? When did I receive the assignment? When did I receive the assignment?

Staged

Staged. I think of it as an extension of an already conversational. I feel less threatened and more relaxed about the process. And with each successive

VISUALIZE SUCCESS

Visualization is a highly successful way to reduce nervousness and help you prepare effectively for your speech.¹⁴ Speech communication professors at

discover, as much information as possible about the audience and the occasion. (See Chapter 8.)

Have I allowed enough time to research the material, find key points? (See Chapters 8-10.)

Have I organized and outlined main and supporting points? (See Chapters 11-13.)

Have I practiced my speech out loud several times? Have I practiced my speech out loud several times? Have I practiced my speech out loud several times?

Have I planned and constructed any necessary presentation aids? (See Chapters 20-22.)

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and to remind yourself that it is an opportunity, not a threat. One educational researcher has shown that altering one's thinking about public speaking from a performance orientation to a communication orientation can significantly reduce anxiety.

When will I need to spend time in the library? When will I need to spend time in the library? When will I need to spend time in the library?

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...now you see yourself approaching the stage from either side with you will present
 You are feeling very good about this presentation. You are moving
 ...forward. All of your audiovisual materials are well
 ...planned and clearly aid your presentation.
 ...needed improvements and problems to avoid in
 ...but relying
 ...cause self

Stress Control Breathing

When you feel stressed, the center of your mind
 ...judging whether
 ...vice that
 ...feedback to
 ...about
 ...stage two
 ...slowly
 ...Modify
 ...Accept
 ...Concentrate
 ...Visualize
 ...Analyze
 ...enjoy the occasion

ENJOY THE OCCASION

Although no one can be forced to enjoy something, most people ultimately find

Move as you speak

...a positive attitude
 ...making it work for you and visualizing success
 ...this makes public speaking both a more
 ...stand chances are it will come out

...evaluation
 ...USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE
 ...adjustments
 ...evaluated by you, instructors
 ...planned and delivered well, your
 ...know
 ...stage two
 ...slowly
 ...Modify
 ...Accept
 ...Concentrate
 ...Visualize
 ...Analyze

...what you do. You can learn a lot by evaluating your own behavior
 ...on the objective evaluations of others often is even more helpful
 ...REVISIT
 ...feel
 ...planned and delivered well, your
 ...know
 ...stage two
 ...slowly
 ...Modify
 ...Accept
 ...Concentrate
 ...Visualize
 ...Analyze

...breathing while
 ...hand on your
 ...Natural
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