Fear of Public Speaking

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Anxiety and Fear of Public Speaking

Fears come in many shapes and sizes. While there are many different forms of anxiety, most people have a fear that arouses their anxiety and sends their mind racing. If you ask people from teens to adults their fear, many will state a fear of public speaking.

Public speaking is an unusual situation where you feel vulnerable and exposed as you stand in front of a group of people that are silently judging you. This increases your anxiety and gets you feeling very self-conscious. The anxiety diminishes your ability to perform up to your expectation and this further increases your anxiety. When anxiety builds this high, you begin to avoid situations where public speaking is an option.

Public Speaking Superstar

Great public speakers are not gifted with special abilities; they prepare, practice and take measures to reduce their anxiety. Some people can go without speaking in front of audiences, but this is a necessity for others in their school or work. Avoid no longer. Here's how:

- **Believe in yourself.** Do you believe that you can improve your public speaking? People that answer "no" are wrong. Everyone has the ability speak in public and do well. Some people seem better than you just as some people are better at baseball or gardening. Since you are not a natural, you will have to work harder.
- **Set a goal.** Be realistic with yourself. You probably won't be on a national lecture tour anytime soon, and that's okay. Having expectations that are overly high will result in you feeling let down and disappointed. Rate your current speaking ability and set a goal that is one or two notches higher. This will motivate you to reach an attainable goal.

- **Knowing your tendencies helps you prepare.** Do you rely too much on visuals? Do you get distracted too easily? Does your anxiety overwhelm you? Acknowledge what has tripped you in the past, learn from it and pursue other avenues. Prepare your mind by reassuring yourself that people want you to succeed. Prepare your body by completing helpful relaxation techniques. Whether your presentation is about whales, walnuts or Wyoming, know your material. If your grasp of the information is solid, you will do better to improvise when you veer off course.
- **There is no substitution for the real thing but practice helps.** Don't reserve your practice to giving the same speech over and over again, though. Find ways to practice speaking to new people across settings leading up the presentation. This desensitizes you to the feeling of talking in front of new people. Engaging a waiter or cashier lets you become comfortable with your own voice.
- **Public speaking is a great opportunity to perform like an actor on a stage.** Imagine that you are part of a production and your scene is giving a presentation to a group of people.
- **Or be genuine.** Trying hard to be someone you're not may be problematic. If you are nervous about standing in front of people, tell them. If you lose your place, let your audience know. You don't have to be

something you are not.

Conclusion

Even if it seems impossible, you can be an effective public speaker. Believing that you can and setting realistic goals will help on your way. If all else fails you can always imagine the audience in their underwear. On second thought, that might be a bad idea