

How to Give an Amazing Presentation

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What's scarier than spiders and high places? For many adults, the answer is public speaking. According to the National Social Anxiety Center, more than 70% of Americans have at least a mild case of glossophobia, otherwise known as fear of public speaking.

While it's natural to be nervous in front of an audience, it could also be holding you back in your personal and professional life. **Increasing your confidence is the key to raising your visibility and sharing what you know.**

With patience and practice you can overcome your stage fright. Try these tips for reducing stress and strengthening your communication skills.

Learning to Relax:

1. **Rehearse your speech.** Set yourself up to succeed by going over your presentation thoroughly. Ask a colleague or friend to be your test audience. If you're on your own, practice in front of a mirror or record yourself.
2. **Remember your purpose.** You'll feel less anxious if you focus on helping your audience rather than overthinking your performance. Identify your core message and why it matters. **Ask yourself what you're trying to achieve.**
3. **Straighten up.** Your body language counts too. Lift your chest and relax your shoulders. Project confidence by standing tall and avoiding nervous hand gestures.

4. **Monitor your breath.** Taking deep full breaths will make you feel calmer and happier. It will also enhance the quality of your voice.

5. **Enjoy the excitement.** Reframe your thoughts. **Think of yourself as being energized rather than nervous.** Feeling stimulated can help you to appear dynamic and communicate effectively.

Developing Your Presentation Skills:

1. **Build rapport. Make it easy for your audience to like and trust you.** Smile and maintain eye contact. If possible, arrive early to greet them and engage in casual conversation. Offer to stay afterwards to answer questions and continue the discussion.

2. **Start strong. The first few minutes are critical for capturing your audience's attention.** Lead off with an interesting statistic or a question that will stir up curiosity.

3. **Tell stories.** You can liven up any subject by throwing in some characters and a plot. Draw from your own personal experience or find relevant material in current events and pop culture.

4. **Slow down.** Do you talk faster when you're nervous? Pace yourself and insert some meaningful pauses.

5. **Limit text.** Written notes can be helpful but resist the urge to read extensively because your audience may tune you out. Similarly, keep slides and other supporting materials brief and easy to scan. Consider handouts if you need to provide more detailed information.

6. **Recover quickly.** What if you freeze and forget what you were going to say next? What if you tell a joke and no one laughs? **Embarrassing moments are more likely to be forgotten if you keep your composure and move on.**

7. **Welcome feedback.** Learn from each experience. Hand out evaluation forms and give out your contact information. Watch your audience to see if they're listening closely or becoming bored or confused.

8. **Seize opportunities. Speaking more often is usually the most effective way to strengthen your presentation skills.** Start small with a familiar and friendly group, like your book club or the local chapter of your professional association.

9. **Find a role model.** You can also learn by studying the speaking styles of celebrities or anyone you admire. Watch Ted Talks and YouTube videos. Attend lectures and panel discussions. Experiment with new techniques and adapt them to your own personality.

Your hard work is more likely to pay off if you learn how to demonstrate your knowledge and connect with your audience. Giving amazing presentations will help you to impress others and make the most of your abilities.