

8 Beliefs that Cause Speakers Anxiety

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Walter Cronkite stated, “It’s natural to have butterflies, the secret is to get them to fly in formation”

It’s reported in surveys that fear of speaking is the #1 fear of most Americans followed by death at a distant 6th.

The challenge for many of us is we must get past the beliefs and behaviors that cause fear. When we focus on these fears it can make each presentation unnerving at the least and totally debilitating at its worst.

Below are some of the beliefs and behaviors that cause us to get “speakers anxiety”

1. Surveys say that public speaking is the #1 fear – Don’t let surveys determine your fear. According to Melissa Lewis, speaker and presentation skills coach, , “I traced this vague reference about speaking fear to a tiny blurb in a British newspaper from over 30 years ago and we’re still treating that list as if it’s valid today. Time to let this one go.”
2. Some of the audience may not love me or my performance – Does everyone you meet love you?
3. I don’t have the physical appearance or the natural ability. My talents and looks are limited. – Good presenters come in all shapes and sizes. Just remember one of the best orators of all times, Winston Churchill, stuttered and had to repeat 8th grade 3 times in a row because of his poor use of the English language.
4. Willard Scott, Barbara Streisand and Johnny Carson have feared it. Therefore, I ought to fear it and avoid it- Don’t let others determine how you should feel.
5. The audience wants me to fail. The audience is the enemy.- The audience wants you to succeed. After all they have to sit through your presentation.
6. I failed before in a speaking situation. I will probably fail again. – We have all made mistakes in the past and we will make them in the future. Just look at actors and actresses. Everyone has had good and bad performances, however they keep going!
7. Speaking is dangerous to my well being. – Do you know anyone who has died from speaking?
8. I don’t possess the necessary skills – Join toastmasters, take a class, get a coach, and continually work on your skills

9. I feel uncomfortable, therefore I am doing a bad job, comfort and effectiveness are not necessarily linked. You can be extremely uncomfortable and still do a perfectly good job of getting the information across. Likewise, you can be absolutely at ease and do a poor job. If you feel uncomfortable, that's OK. Just don't let it snowball into a belief that you're failing.

Look at your list of beliefs and behaviors. Get rid of the ones that hold you back and focus on positive affirmations. You'll soon enjoy every presentation and will look forward to delivering them.

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