

Let's Talk: Public speaking

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Hi everybody, my name is Erica Hanlon. Let's talk about public speaking. So if you're afraid of public speaking don't worry you're not alone. In fact a Gallup poll shows that more than 40% of Americans report public speaking as their number one fear¹. This actually outranks the fear of death. And Mark Twain once wrote about this, he said, "There are two types of speakers "those who get nervous and those who are liars."

A natural fear of public speaking

So, why is public speaking so scary? After all it's just standing up in front of a bunch of people talking to them. Well, it goes all the way back to our ancestors who depended on their tribes in order to survive. So public speaking comes with the risk of standing out, doing something that might offend other people. And that meant possibly getting kicked out of your tribe. Also, standing up in front of a group makes you feel separate from them. So if you're afraid of public speaking it's only natural.

Tips to help you relax

Here are a few more tips that are a little bit more specific to public speaking to help you get through it. First of all, accept your nervousness. Don't fight it. The more that you try and fight it the more nervous you might feel. Also, take a deep breath. Deep breathing helps relax your body and your mind. Also, check out power poses. Amy Cuddy does a great TED talk on power poses and how they can help reduce your anxiety. And don't worry about blank stares from the audience. It just means that they're paying attention.

Be yourself

And here we go with our last three tips. First of all, if you make a mistake during your presentation don't worry about it. If you don't worry about it the audience won't worry about it. Also, instead of thinking of your presentation like it's a performance, which can put a lot of pressure on you, think of it like a conversation that you're just having with some friends. And then finally, just use your own style. Be yourself and have fun with it. After some practice and using these tips, who knows? Public speaking might not be so scary after all.

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¹ Newcomer, Linda. [Here's how to get over your fear of public speaking](#). Quill. February 10, 2017. Accessed June 2017.

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