



Presentation and Public Speaking

Get along with ~~Overcome~~
anxiety/nervousness/fear of public
speaking

Student Academic Support Service Center
Academic Support Workshop Series

Facts about Public Speaking Phobia

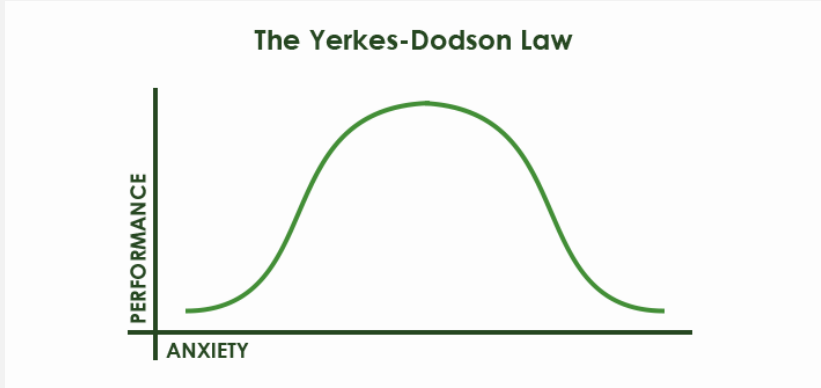
The fear of speaking in public is incredibly common. Approximately 25 percent of people report experiencing it [1].



“There are two types of speakers. Those who get nervous and those who are liars.”
— Mark Twain

Many *speakers* have this fear. But they still speak.

Is public speaking anxiety always bad?



Situation: You are required to give a presentation in front of a large group.		
No Anxiety	Moderate Anxiety	High Anxiety
A presentation you say? Eh, whatever. I'll wing it.	I know I can do this, but I need to be prepared. I'll plan and practice before I have to speak.	This is too much. I'm going to look like a fool. How can I get out of this? I feel sick just thinking about it.

The answer is definitely 'no'.

According to the Yerkes-Dodson law, elevated arousal levels can improve performance up to a certain point.

A person reaches **optimal performance** on a task with **a moderate level of anxiety**.

So, our task is not to eliminate 'public speaking anxiety', but to control and keep it to a moderate level.

Why are we scared of public speaking & how can we overcome it?

Many people fear of speaking in public because it is **our body's natural reaction to stress** kicks in. This reaction is called the “fight or flight” response which is caused by our body's sympathetic nervous system. When the sympathetic nervous system kicks in, we start to sweat, fidget, and our heart starts racing.



Fight or flight ?

Tips:

- **Take it easy.**
- **Prepare some inspirational cards before public speaking. E.g. ‘It is okay to feel nervous.’ ‘I am okay with this.’**
- **Acknowledge yourself every time you finish a public speaking task.**

Lack of Experience. Speaking in front of others is something you can get used to. The more experience you get with getting up in front of a crowd and talking, the more confident you will get in your abilities, which can lessen your anxiety about it.

Poor Planning. It may sound silly, but many people with a fear of public speaking also practice less than those without the fear. That's because they experience anxiety while practicing and try very hard to avoid that anxiety. Unfortunately that may cause them to be less prepared.

Tips:

- **Prepare, prepare, and prepare.**
- **Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse.**
- **Arrive early to get equipment, PowerPoint slides ready.**

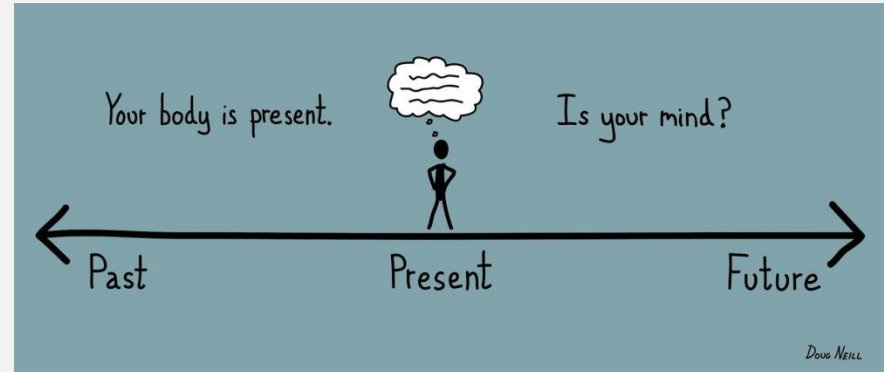
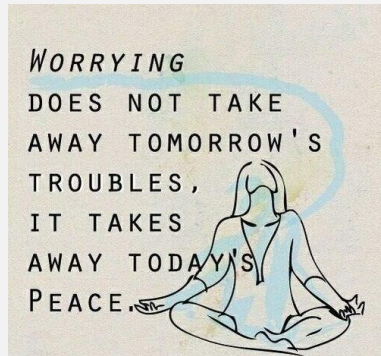
Negative Self-Talk. Some people like to imagine the worst case scenarios and over-analyze what occurred when speaking publicly. This negative self-talk inside our head only makes things worse.

Some people fear of public speaking because they fear of being judged or of not being good enough.

Tips:

- **Change your negative thoughts to positive ones.**
- **Think about your past successful public speaking experiences. Let go of the bad past experiences and know that they do not predict future failure.**
- **Change your focus during speech.**

Concentrate on **your message**, instead of yourself/the audience/the results of the speech.



Other tips for Presentation/Public Speaking

- **Don't bring A4 paper with whole scripts to the stage.** You don't have time to look at the papers on the stage and it makes you nervous.

You can use cue cards to remind yourself some keywords.

Use keywords, visualization (pictures) on PPT slides.

- **Prepare to start strong.**

First and foremost, no matter who you're speaking to or where, prepare yourself to start strong. You can't talk quietly and mutter and hope that you'll break out of it and be more confident later.

- **A good speech pace.**

Don't speak TOO fast during the whole speech. It will let yourself feel more nervous.

Do not attempt to speak in a completely steady pace, measuring out every word evenly: this could come off as monotone and boring. The combination of slow, fast, and medium speed makes your speech more engaging.

- **Be confident.**

Open your mouth and speak loudly.

You can fake it until you make it.

■ Use body language wisely.

This helps you feel more confident and in control, thus lower your anxiety level.

Some examples of good body language:

- Keep the right level of eye-contact.
- Bring movement to your speech.
- Open your arms and show your palms. Avoid closed gestures, such as crossing your arms or legs.
- Engage participation.



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They are the outward expression of your inner thoughts and feelings. Use gestures with purpose in public speaking situations and you will engage your audience, and help them comprehend and remember your message.

Videos

 <p>The 4 Public Speaking Gestures</p> <p>6:01</p>	 <p>4 essential body language tips from a world champion public speaker</p> <p>2:28</p>	 <p>5 Body Language Tips From the Best Public Speakers</p> <p>1:30</p>
<p>PublicSpeakingPower YouTube - Jan 1, 2014</p>	<p>Business Insider YouTube - Sep 10, 2016</p>	<p>Inc.com - Jun 23, 2017</p>

References

- [1] <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/smashing-the-brainblocks/201711/why-are-we-scared-public-speaking>
- [2] <https://sites.psu.edu/siowfa16/2016/09/16/fight-or-flight-the-battle-of-speaking-in-public/>