



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

CONTROLLING YOUR FEAR



The Better
Speaker Series



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**



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The Better Speaker Series

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Item 272A



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THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's The Better Speaker Series is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Controlling Your Fear" helps participants identify the fears that trigger their anxiety and offers techniques for managing it. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

In Your Own Words

The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this program as visual aids, you make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
- ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in the online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of becoming a Distinguished club—or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

CONTROLLING YOUR FEAR

Introducing the Presenter

TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Controlling Your Fear” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmasters Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

CONTROLLING YOUR FEAR

Outline

It is common for both experienced and beginning speakers to be nervous about giving a speech. The difference is that the experienced speaker knows how to control this nervousness and use it to enhance the speech. By understanding the causes and symptoms of the fear, a speaker can harness that seemingly negative energy and channel it toward a positive outcome. The experienced speaker also knows how to appear confident in front of an audience. To obtain a confident appearance, a seasoned orator applies the proper methods and techniques for relaxation.

ANXIETY TRIGGERS

- ▶ **New and unknown situations** – New experiences are stressful. The inability to anticipate the unforeseen causes high levels of anxiety.
- ▶ **Risk of failure** – From childhood to adulthood, we dream of success, victory, and achievement. To not finish first or be the best often increases nervousness and anxiety.
- ▶ **Potential for appearing foolish** – Beyond achieving goals, we all want to appear circumspect in the way we accomplish our goals. No one wants to suffer disgrace. The possibility of embarrassment causes great fear and panic.
- ▶ **Possibility of boring the audience** – A speaker's hope is to engage and enamor the audience. The fear of not connecting with the audience, of being considered boring, brings about insecurity, apprehension, and worry.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

When confronted with a situation that causes anxiety, the body responds by increasing the flow of adrenaline. Adrenaline causes the heart to beat faster. Extra blood and oxygen rush to the muscles and brain. This natural rush provides extra energy that enables quick responses, but it also can have some less desirable effects:

- ▶ Increased heart rate
- ▶ Butterflies in the stomach
- ▶ Incontrollable shakes
- ▶ Lightheadedness
- ▶ Dizziness

MANAGING ANXIETY

Anxiety is common to all speakers who are concerned about their performance. This nervous energy is valuable if used properly. The key is learning to manage it. There are three major methods for handling anxiety:

V1

V2

V3

V 4

► **Experience** – Studies show that one of the best methods for reducing anxiety is practice. Repeatedly giving speeches reduces fear and helps to build confidence. After speaking a few times, you begin to put your anxiety into perspective. Try these techniques to gain experience:

- Practice in front of a mirror.
- Rehearse in front of family and friends.
- Deliver a speech before your Toastmasters club.
- Give presentations before other groups, anywhere you can.

► **Visualization** – Research shows that vividly imagined events are recorded as memories. To the brain and central nervous system, these memories are indistinguishable from actual experiences. Thought processes cause physiological changes that affect performance. Mentally rehearsing employs thought processes to achieve positive results. Close your eyes as you mentally walk yourself through the following scenario, vividly imagining each action:

1. You are introduced to an audience.
2. You walk up to the lectern confidently, smiling to people as you pass.
3. You breathe deeply several times before beginning to speak. (As you imagine this, take deep breaths.)
4. You speak clearly and forcefully, remembering all of the points you wanted to make.
5. You captivate your audience with your words, gestures, and vocal variety.
6. When you finish, the audience applauds in appreciation.

Repeat this visualization until your confidence has increased and your anxiety has decreased.

V 5

► **Relaxation** – Because the mind and body are connected, feelings often affect the body physically. As anxiety builds, so does physical stress. Relaxation and breathing techniques alleviate physical tension and calm the mind. Isometric exercises reduce stress by increasing circulation and the flow of oxygen to the brain. Practice these techniques to reduce tension:

- Focus on areas of concentrated tension, such as the shoulders. Tighten your muscles there for a few seconds and then release. Systematically do the same for each major muscle group, starting with the feet and working up to the facial muscles.
- Stand, inhale and stretch your arms toward the ceiling. Then exhale as you bend to touch your toes, keeping your knees straight. (Only bend as far as you comfortably can.) Repeat this several times.
- Hold your arms out to the sides, parallel to the floor and rotate them in small circles, first forward 10 times, then backward 10 times.
- Drop your head to your chest, rolling it to the right, to the back, to the left, then forward again. Repeat this several times. Then reverse the procedure, rolling your head first to the left.
- Breathe from the diaphragm. This reduces shortness of breath and supports your voice for better projection and resonance. To learn to breathe correctly, lie on your back with a book on your stomach. Take a deep breath. The book rises as your diaphragm expands. As you exhale, the book should go back down.

Presenter:

You may want to demonstrate the relaxation techniques and have your audience do them, too. Be sure to warn your listeners to stop if they feel pain or discomfort.

CONCLUSION

Even after practicing and mentally rehearsing your speech, it's normal to feel somewhat nervous before your presentation. You want some adrenaline flowing to help you speak energetically.

Keep in mind that your audience likely won't notice your nervousness. Audiences are often unaware of the signs the speaker thinks are embarrassingly obvious. If you walk and speak confidently, the audience will not know that your palms are sweaty and your heart is pounding.

The next time you are about to give a speech, as your heart pounds, you have butterflies in your stomach and your knees quiver, turn your anxiety into positive energy using the methods discussed. Your audience will be impressed with your confidence and listen to every word you say.

V6

Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name _____

Presentation Title _____ Date _____

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



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