



An Introduction to PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public Speaking is a common fear – one that can prevent people from connecting with and inspiring others. If it is something that makes you uncomfortable, here are eight steps to help you relax and develop confidence.

1. PICK THE RIGHT SUBJECT

The public speaker Simon Sinek has an easy cheat for overcoming his fear: “I only talk about things I care about, and I only talk about things I understand”. What do you really care about and understand?

2. PRACTICE

In front of a mirror. In front of friends. Record yourself using the camera on your mobile phone or computer and look for any opportunities to speak in more relaxed environments. All of these will help you build confidence and experience.

3. THINK ABOUT PURPOSE

What do you want people to do as a result of hearing your talk? Ideally, it should be one simple thing. Focus on this.

4. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Get to know the space in which you will be speaking, and introduce yourself to one or two people in the audience as they arrive. Both of these things will make you more at home when you speak.

5. HAVE A STRONG START

A strong start makes people sit up and listen, and will boost your confidence too. It might be a memorable story. It might be a joke. Whatever it is, practice it.

6. SPEAK SLOWLY

When you are nervous, your heart rate quickens, and it is tempting to speak faster too. Don't do it! Take your time and breathe. Silence allows the audience to think about what you have just said, and can make them eager to hear what you say next.

7. USE POWERPOINT CAREFULLY

It is hard for an audience to both read lots of text, and listen to someone speak. If you have to use Powerpoint, keep text to a minimum. Instead, use simple images, questions or key points that reinforce what you say.

8. NERVES ARE GOOD!

Athletes use their nerves and turn them into excitement and energy. You can do the same: try to think exciting thoughts, rather than negative ones, so that you step onto the stage with an energy that will excite your audience.