



ALL EYES ON YOU:

**CRAFTING PRESENTATIONS
THAT OVERCOME EXPECTATIONS**



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Your notes shake in your hands. When you push your chair back to stand, its echoing squeak is the only sound in the room.

Every face turns to you.

There's no spotlight, but your face burns nonetheless.

Whether you're presenting to employees or board members, public speaking still feels like a bad dream- especially since at times women are up against unfair and inaccurate preconceptions.

So how do you stay in control?

With these specific strategies, you can conquer the fear of public speaking and give confident and memorable presentations.

Step One: Use the Fear

Stage fright is natural – it happens even to professional speakers and actors. How do they conquer it? They don't.

They use it.

- Stage fright means you care and want to do a good job. Don't think about how you'll look – focus on the audience and on how you're serving your team. This will help you feel comfortable and be yourself.
- Other experts recommend imagining that you're hosting a party, or think of your audience as a group of long-lost friends you haven't seen for ten years. Adopting either of these mindsets will help you relax and come across as energetic and personable.
- Use self-talk to pump yourself up for a presentation. Address yourself in second person – **“You can do this”** provides more confidence than “I can do this.”



Step Two: Practice and Preparation

Most of the work of a presentation should occur beforehand.

Record yourself practicing or find a small group you can present to, and try these strategies:

- **Eat half a turkey sandwich** (this provides protein without making you feel stuffed), **a small coffee** (this can help you focus without a huge jolt), **and a stick of gum** 30-60 minutes before speaking (this improves alertness, enhances your mood and speeds up reaction time).
- **Try practicing with a metronome** if you notice you have a tendency to speak too fast (especially common while saying a list). This will help you slow down and speak rhythmically.
- **Do challenging math problems** in your head to activate the rational, strategic parts of your mind - what's fifteen times six hundred and twelve divided by twenty-three? This robs the emotion of its power.
- **Practice conscious breathing.** A deep breath in through your nose, then out from your mouth will help your body settle. Psychologists combat anxiety this way.



Step Three: Stay in Control

When you're speaking, it can feel like your body is working against you. No matter how confident or prepared you are, you may still be fighting an uphill battle.

- If your mouth tends to go dry, **picture yourself biting into a juicy lemon**. Don't have that kind of imagination? Try biting the tip of your tongue with your back teeth.
- If filler words like "um," "ah," and "you know" seem to spill out by accident, try to **pause and take a short breath instead**.
- If you make a mistake, **don't draw attention to it by apologizing for mistakes**. Your audience doesn't know what you meant to say, so just take a deep breath, regroup, and say, **"Let me clarify."**
- If body language is a challenge, try **standing with your arms at your sides** - it may feel awkward, but it actually frees you up to gesture naturally as you speak.



Presentations are a challenge for every speaker – even seasoned professionals – because stage fright is a natural, physical fear response.

With these simple tools, you can overcome it and use it to your advantage the next time you need to speak to a group.





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