

The Reluctant Speaker, how to overcome your anxiety and deliver an excellent presentation.

Public speaking is one of the greatest and most common paralyzing fears. Interestingly, it can be one of the most rewarding and empowering exercises one can imagine.

There are several ways to overcome this fearful undertaking.

- It is important for you to predetermine your mind to succeed. Approaching public speaking with the right attitude will take you more than half-way to the goal. Remember that you have been invited to speak at this Session because you are a respected member of the concrete community. It is because of your intellect, discipline, and commitment that you have been courted for this opportunity.
- Lose yourself in your subject. You must sell yourself on the importance of your topic, and your ability to sell it to the audience. It is impossible to deliver an engaging and successful presentation if you do not whole-heartedly believe in its importance and validity. If you don't have passion for the topic, the audience won't either. Talking about something that you are interested in, or an expert on, will help you forget about your fear.
- Give yourself a pep talk. Practice cultivating confidence. Often, we aren't naturally confident, many times, we have to practice. In other words, fake it 'til you make it. Those who have approached you, extending the invitation to speak at their Session, have the highest confidence in your ability. If you embrace the confidence of others, you will be able to over-come your feelings of anxiety, and enjoy the benefits and rewards of public speaking for many years to come.
- Make the effort to thoroughly prepare yourself for your presentation. By practicing your talk and rehearsing it with a friend or colleague, you will feel more comfortable with the material.
- By stopping by the meeting room before your presentation, you will also be able to better prepare by familiarizing yourself with the equipment you will be using. Testing out the microphone and other pertinent audio visual equipment, you will help to avoid fumbling with unfamiliar or potentially dysfunctional technology.
- Take a few moments to relax before your presentation. Take a walk, get a drink of water. If possible, talk to a friend or colleague who always sends you away with a positive outlook. Keep this in perspective, in 24 hours, it will be over, and you'll be back in your comfort zone, with a great experience under your belt!