

# 'Now You're Talking'

## Learn to enjoy public speaking



### **Lose the Fear of Speaking in Public – Stand up and Speak!**

The fear of speaking in public is considered by many as their number one fear, outdistancing death and divorce. Mark Twain once said –‘There are two kinds of speakers –those who are nervous and those who are liars.’

Many actors and entertainers have suffered from stagefright. They've experienced nausea and headaches - even after performing hundreds of times. So, if they face anxiety on stage, is it any wonder that the rest of us may be fearful of appearing before groups? That anxiety may even prevent us from reaching our fullest potential since we may tend to avoid speaking opportunities altogether that could advance our career. But you *can* harness the butterflies in your stomach and learn to use the adrenaline to give you energy, pace and focus.

### **Speaking in public is not a gift – it CAN be learnt.**

While there are many effective methods of relaxation that can help reduce our fear of speaking, it is not something we can simply get up and do effectively without having at least some basic training.

Many people have unrealistic expectations about their speaking ability, believing that they can achieve proficiency without much effort. This attitude leads to significant frustration when they fail to achieve the desired results.

Once you accept the fact that it takes time to develop your speaking skills, the pressure is off to become a "perfect" speaker. When such a small amount of time is devoted to public speaking, one cannot expect to excel without some coaching and a little practice. Effectiveness is always a reasonable goal - perfection is unrealistic, and impossible.

### **Rehearse and then Rehearse Again**

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Once you accept the fact that making effective presentations or speeches is a learned skill, taking the time to rehearse is a natural step. Rehearsing your presentation over and over again will greatly reduce anxiety. It has been said that "The single most important thing you can do for sweaty palms is rehearse. The second most important thing you can do for sweaty palms is rehearse. Guess what the third thing is?"

The more familiar you become with your material, the more the words flow from you credibly and passionately. The more comfortable you feel with your words, the more naturally you present your speech. That's why good speakers practice - and practice again. Here are two simple ways for you to rehearse your presentation.

Video or audio tape. You will notice mannerisms about yourself that you never noticed before. And you will instantly begin to make changes. Listen to yourself and immediately, you'll know if you are speaking too quickly, too slowly, or if some words are difficult to understand. You will hear mistakes in grammar and inappropriate "um's" and "ah's" that are quite easily removed from your presentation when you are aware of them.

## **Passion Eliminates Fear**

Perhaps the quickest way to decrease speech anxiety is to allow the emotion of the subject to fill your heart. Those who speak with passion will most certainly have less anxiety. "The Presentation"

You've just been introduced. You walk to the lectern and are about to say your first words. Wait! You have one more chance to unwind.

Try this: pause for a few seconds and "take in" your audience. Establish eye contact with them. Breathe deeply, smile, and allow yourself to relax for a moment. Now you are ready to begin!

## **What's the Worst that Could Happen?**

What's the worst that could happen? You could trip on stage, freeze, forget a sentence, fumble a line, stammer, or shake. None of these is fatal.

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The worst that could happen probably won't. Yet if it does, you will live through it!

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