



How to minimise your nerves when presenting.

Fear of speaking in front of people and to new audiences is a real concern for those involved in presenting, pitching and making offers. It is natural to be nervous. Nervous energy is good. But it should not be debilitating, confidence sapping or leading to fear. Learn how to control your nervousness.

When your nervous condition affects your capacity to perform you need to put in place some tactical and strategic techniques to halt those negative effects on your performance.

Consider these techniques to minimise the effects of nervousness:

1. Control your breathing

Learn to breathe deeply before you begin your pitch or presentation. Slow down. Relax. This gives you more oxygen. It also means you can control any negativity before your speech begins.

2. Practise before you present

Before you even get to the venue or meeting rehearse and practice your presentation. Practice does build confidence. Confidence negates nervousness. Practice is just as important as preparing your presentation.

3. As you practice, imagine you are already in front of your audience

Imagine your audience is in front of you. Learn to be relaxed even before you get in front of your audience. This positive frame of mind can reduce nervousness. Take control of your mindset even before you appear in front of your audience. It is conducive to confidence and control.

4. Imagine your audience really likes you

Many presenters imagine their audience to be critical, hostile or judgemental. They will be, if you are nervous. So consider your audience to be friendly, interested and interesting. This will reduce the feeling of nervousness, because if you believe people like us, you are much more relaxed, aren't you?

5. Before you speak, hydrate.

Nervousness can induce dryness in the throat. So have some water or lollies that cause you to salivate and keep your mouth lubricated before and during your presentation.

6. Keep it simple and to the point

Make your words simple. Although you may be called on to give a sophisticated talk to a well educated audience, never underestimate the power of simplicity. Use the power of graphics, pictures, stories, case studies and relevant analogies. This means the audience will experience, see and hear what your message is about with a greater understanding.

7. Acknowledge your professionalism

Tell yourself that you are HELPING people and them. Consider that when your prospects or audience walk away from your presentation or pitch that they will be better off. This is a good feeling to carry with you. Tell them at the beginning of your presentation that they will actually be better off after listening to you. This has a positive effect on the audience and pacifying effect on you.

8. Look at your audience

Synch with your audience. Use eye contact. Isolate individuals if you can by direct eye contact. Talk directly to them. Don't talk to your notes, connect with the audience. Use body language techniques such as nodding, smiling and open hand and arm gestures. These are inclusive techniques that take away much of the confrontation and fear in presenting that will reduce your nervousness.

9. Have a “presentation plan”

Control the process of interaction. One of the best pieces of advice I have ever heard for people who are presenting is:

- a) Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em
- b) Tell 'em
- c) Tell 'em what you told 'em

It is very simple.

- a) “Today I am going to tell you how to (insert your benefit)”
- b) Give your presentation
- c) Thank you for listening to my ideas on (insert benefit). The three main points were (itemise them) for you to take out

Be quiet. Sit. Ask for questions. Offer a call to action

This will help to make your presentation memorable for your audience and more enjoyable for you.

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KnowledgeMaster[®] International
Excellence Club

KnowledgeMaster[®] International P/L. ACN 44 137 872 952
14 Wood St. Colac Vic Australia 3250 Mob 0408 520453
email jim@knowledgemaster.com.au