

SPEAK WITH NO FEAR

**Go From a Nervous, Nauseated, and Sweaty Speaker
to an Excited, Energized, and Passionate Presenter**

MIKE ACKER

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MAIN IDEA

Does the thought of speaking to a large group (or even a small group) cause you to break out in a sweat? If so, welcome to the human race. Everyone has a fear of public speaking at first. You're not alone.



However, you don't have to stay that way forever. There are 7 strategies you can use to overcome your fear and ultimately become a polished public speaker. It won't happen instantaneously, but if you keep working at it, you will get there.

"Whatever your situation currently is, I understand. I used to get sweaty, nervous, and nauseated even to small groups. Now, I have had the chance to speak to 3,000 people at civic engagements, lead leadership workshops, speak to several thousand people at a megachurch, engage audiences of kids and youth, speak at churches of many sizes, and many more events. I promise you that you can do this. You can speak with no fear. Where you are is not where you have to be. Don't wait any longer. One day turns into one week. One week turns into a month, into a year, into a decade, and into a lifetime. Don't let life pass you by while you wrestle with the same old enemy of fear. Do something about it. Take action today. Begin to read. Begin to learn these strategies. Start now."

– Mike Acker

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the mastery of it."

– Mark Twain



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Don't try and cover your public speaking fears with band-aids. It won't work. Instead, uncover and then clean your wound. Figure out why you're nervous and deal with it.

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Imagine that everything goes wrong in your upcoming speech and it's an utter disaster. Figure out how you will deal with your emotions in advance and control the situation.

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Enjoy any and all public speaking opportunities you get. Be in the moment rather than worrying about what went wrong in your buildup. Have fun and you'll ace it.



STRATEGY #1

UNCOVER & CLEAN THE WOUND

Don't try and cover your public speaking fears with band-aids. It won't work. Instead, uncover and then clean your wound. Figure out why you're nervous and deal with it.

You've probably had some bad experiences in the past which involved giving a public presentation which didn't go as well as you had planned. That's okay – it's not at all uncommon, and there are a wide variety of circumstances which can cause these fears to be there many years later. One approach would be to try and ignore those fears, but a much better idea is to take a piece of paper and document your answers to some specific questions:

- When, specifically, have I been embarrassed while doing public speaking?
- What was the setting for that? Was I put on the spot with no time to prepare?
- Do I have memories of people making fun of me after I had spoken?
- Did I simply fall short of my own expectations rather than have people comment on my performance?
- Why do I care what people think of my public speaking abilities?
- What is the most humiliating moment of my life?

Chances are when you get specific, you might realize your worst fears are vague and assumed, rather than the direct result of feedback you received. However, going through this exercise and uncovering the source or sources of your fears is good. It will position you to do

something about addressing these concerns rather than letting them fester in the background and paralyze your future performances.

Once you know specifically what old wounds have caused you to feel nervous now, you can then get busy cleaning those wounds. You can do this in at least three different ways:

Cleaning approach #1 – Repurpose your pain

The essence here is to look afresh at the bad and identify any good therein. Ask yourself:

- What was the outcome of my speaking wound?
- Did anything good ever result from what I consider to be my worst speaking experiences of the past?
- Does one negative experience from my past have to permanently define me as a person?
- Imagine I was in the audience. What would I have said to the past version of myself if I had been there?
- With the passage of time, does this memory hurt less? Is it time to let it go and look forward instead?

If you deliberately revisit your past experiences and accept them, make a deliberate effort to take out the bad, and find the good, you in effect clean out the wound so you can start afresh with no baggage to weigh you down.

Cleaning approach #2 – Go to a counselor

If you do find that your pains and fears are deeply rooted, it might be worth going to a counselor who can help, or joining a support group where you can discuss what happened and get assistance.

Admittedly it might take a while for this approach to work, and for you to fully unpack your story and work through the issues, but it might be worth it. Once you've done that, you will then have increased confidence, which is what you need.

Cleaning approach #3 – Turn your story into a speech

Another great way to clean your old wounds is to turn your story into a speech that you can deliver to some friends, or maybe even to a larger group. As you write a speech about how you've overcome a poor start, you'll find this exercise will clean those wounds, and allow you to move forward.

The process of writing your speech will let you articulate what you have learned. Use a simple story structure:

- **INTRODUCTION**
Set the stage for the 3 incidents which lie at the heart of your fears of public speaking.
- **3 POINTS**
Give 3 stories which happened to you, how you felt at the time, and then how you feel about these experiences now.
- **CONCLUSION**
Describe how you are going to move on and not let the past define your future.

Turning your story into a speech can be highly therapeutic. It allows you to directly bring to light the unspoken fears that may be lurking, and then describe how you have overcome them and plan to move forward.

"Regularly, I hear of high school presentations going the wrong way, or kids getting put on the spot by parents, or a sales pitch gone awry, or peers giving their friend a hard time. It's amazing how certain bad experiences will etch their way into our minds and stay there on a subconscious level. Return to my wound analogy. No matter how much you cover an infected wound with bandages, clothes, or makeup, the wound will still be there. To effectively move past a wound, you need to clean it first."

– Mike Acker

"Don't ruin future successes by ignoring past pain. When your past pain no longer defines you, then your present fear begins to be eased."

– Mike Acker



STRATEGY #2

IMAGINE THE WORST

Imagine that everything goes wrong in your upcoming speech and it's an utter disaster. Figure out how you will deal with your emotions in advance and control the situation.

Mike Acker's own list of his worst moments as a public speaker is long and impressive:

- He once accidentally referred to a woman in the audience as being "old but desirable" – despite the fact she was not even 50 years old, plus the fact her husband was also sitting in the audience with a stoic expression on his face.
- He once gave an entire 90-minute presentation totally oblivious to the fact his entire audience were bored out of their minds.
- He gave a symposium which managed to put a significant proportion of the audience to sleep.
- He once started a presentation with a group of high school students by saying "Today we're going to be looking at pornography," when in fact he meant to say: "Today we're going to be discussing the effects of pornography".
- During one Easter sermon he was giving as a new pastor, he accidentally cursed.
- When invited to give a presentation at a school in India, he managed to give his speech in extremely fast English (because he was nervous) which was unintelligible for the entire audience.
- Despite the fact he was an accomplished debater, he once became so frustrated that he started yelling at his opponents at the top of his voice.
- He memorably started a relationship workshop by telling the audience that a prostitute didn't have anything to teach him. (The point he was actually trying to make has been lost in the sands of time).

If you sit down and think about it, you've probably got your own roll of honor for moments where you have gone off subject, offended people, used inappropriate words by mistake, left out the context for the points you're trying to make, and more. If you're lucky, you might even have instances where you have forgotten your place in your notes, fallen off the stage, or fouled up in any of hundreds of other ways.

As counterintuitive as it may sound, remembering those past disasters will actually make you feel calmer about the assignment that lies ahead of you now. How? Revisiting those disasters will help you learn to control your emotions, and will help you gain proper perspective. Try these exercises:

Gain control exercise #1 – Get stressed first

Imagine your upcoming speech and ask yourself:

- Who will be there and where will they be seated? How full will the room look?
- Where will I stand? How will I be dressed? Will I have a microphone and a podium?
- How long will my speech last? What is the outcome I am hoping for?
- What precedes my speech? What mood will the people be in when I get introduced? What happens at the event before I start?
- What is scheduled to happen after my presentation? What will the audience be looking forward to while they are listening to me?

As you work your way through answering those questions, visualize yourself in the moment. Make it vivid by adding as much detail as possible. Picture the faces of the people you will be speaking to.

Gain control exercise #2 – The pros and cons

Take a blank piece of paper, and draw a line down the middle. Write PROS at the top of one column and CONS at the top of the other column.

First, be highly optimistic about what will happen if you do well, and list all the positives you can think of in the PROS column. Visualize them happening, and think about the positive emotions you would experiences.

Next, be similarly thorough about listing your worst nightmares and what could go wrong. List your fears in the CONS column with as much detail and as many emotions as you possibly can.

When you finish your two lists, ponder for a moment which of those will stay with you for the years ahead. If you're honest about this exercise, you'll probably be able to agree the positives you've listed have a much longer shelf life than the negatives. That suggest the advantages of getting better at public speaking always outweigh the negatives. Move forward with confidence and enthusiasm.

"Public speaking can advance your finances, career, relationships, and life. That is a lot of good! Imagine the worst so you can prepare to combat the emotions with proper perspective. But also visualize the best! This could be the break you have been anticipating! This could be the highlight of the evening. This could be the moment where you get through to somebody! You can do it, and you are going to be more than okay! You are not going to lose control. You are going to be in control of your emotions and use them to energize your speech, so you can influence your audience!"

– Mike Acker

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

– Oscar Wilde

"Yes, you need to practice giving the speech, but you also need to practice the emotional challenge of the speech. You need to embrace this strategy. Mental, along with physical preparation will help you. Before you get up in front of people, imagine their faces. Imagine how you will feel. Imagine that you forget your notes. Imagine you say, like I did, that a woman in the audience is old. Imagine discovering your zipper is down, or your skirt is tucked into your underwear. Imagine the worst. Your past embarrassment doesn't define your current activities. Have a good laugh at yourself. Then, imagine the worst that could come of your public speaking. Gain the proper perspective. Honestly, everything is going to work out well."

– Mike Acker

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

– Socrates



STRATEGY #3

YOU BE YOU, GROW INTO YOU

Accept that you're going to deliver your speech in a way which aligns with your personality and get comfortable with that. Use that trait as an integral part of your speech.

To excel as a public speaker, you've got to be comfortable in your own skin. Great communicators project their personalities, warts and all, and you'll need to be doing something similar. People want to know what you believe, and you've got to use your personality to get your message across.

To see this in action, go to YouTube and watch some clips of stand-up comedians in action. Look closely and you'll notice:

- Robin Williams had the ability to mimic celebrities impressively well. He also made no attempt to hide his ability to talk fast but instead made that a trademark of his particular performance style.
- Tina Fey felt awkward when she was growing up, and she uses that in her performances now. She invites her audience to experience her awkwardness.
- Chris Rock speaks loudly and is highly animated during his performances. He is a master of cadence and uses his bright smile to disarm audiences in the middle of his most graphic jokes.
- George Carlin is very stoic and excels at deadpan comedy.
- Drew Lynch developed a stutter in high school thanks to a baseball injury. He openly uses that stutter as part of his act.
- Jim Carrey is a master of physical comedy.
- Ellen DeGeneres uses lots of her own personal experiences.

Now admittedly you're probably trying to do business presentations rather than stand-up comedy, but the underlying principle is comedians make use of their quirks, character flaws and personal preferences to get

their points across. You can and should do the same in a business setting.

"Too many speakers, presenters, toast makers, preachers, politicians, interviewees, and other communicators try to be someone they are not. Standing in front of people and communicating a message is hard. Standing in front of people and performing as a character in a play is also difficult. In public speaking, people often combine the two. They stand up in front of people and try to communicate their message as if they are someone else. This is a recipe for fear."

– Mike Acker

Having great content to share will help you project your own personality, but there are three actions you can and should take to improve your self-confidence:

1. *Discover yourself* – by taking some online personality tests. Doing this will help you identify your strengths, clarify your natural propensities, and suggest how you should seek personal development in the future. Some good places to try include:
 - Gallup's strengths finder website at Gallupstrengthscenter.com
 - The Myers-Briggs test at Humanmetrics.com
 - The free DISC test offered by Tony Robbins at TonyRobbins.com/disc
2. *Watch yourself make a presentation* – either the old fashioned way by giving a speech to the mirror or record your presentation and view that. Or you may be able to get a recording of a presentation you gave to a real live audience in the past.

As you watch, take note if you inadvertently try and become someone else when you're presenting. Look for shifts in the way you naturally do things and say things. Just be prepared because watching yourself present is brutal. You'll be shocked at how you actually come across, as opposed to how you assumed you were doing. Very few presenters enjoy watching themselves in action.

The benefit of doing that, however, is you'll be able to start coaching yourself and improving. You'll start polishing your presentation skills and eliminating unhelpful elements. This is all highly useful.

3. *Start analyzing what master communicators do* – and pick up on their smarts. If you want to be a great presenter, every week you should be viewing YouTube clips of comedians and news anchors, preachers and TED talk presenters, and even some politicians. Exceptionally good presenters you should see in action include Simon Sinek, Barack Obama, Ronald Reagan, Andy Stanley and Ellen DeGeneres. Analyze what they do, and try and add those skills to your personal competencies.

Just be careful as you do this that you spread your net far rather than gravitating to just the one or two public speakers you really like. If you listen to just one or two, you'll inadvertently clone them – which is not what you're trying to achieve. You'll also start getting confused because your attention will bounce back and forwards between what they did and what you do. Listen to lots of accomplished speakers so you can add skills to your own presentation style.

"Listen to one, and become a clone. Listen to two, and become confused. Listen to three or more, and gain confidence by getting better. Learn from them. Just don't be them. Be yourself."

– Mike Acker

"Be a real version of yourself, not a poor imitation of someone else. You will never be comfortable trying to be someone else."

– Mike Acker

"Don't take yourself so seriously. I love when people prepare, plan, and perfect their speech. I love that go-getter mentality. Just make sure your perfection does not become robotic. The speech manuscript or outline is not the speech. You are the speech. The manuscript or outline is the map, but you are the guide for the listeners. I work with clients to get to know their content so they can be themselves. When you loosen the grip on your notes and learn to be at ease, then your humorous side will come out."

– Mike Acker

"When you become an avatar of your real self, you take out the power of you. That is a recipe for fear."

– Mike Acker



STRATEGY #4

SPEAK TO THE ONE

Remind yourself that a crowd is really just a large number of individuals. If possible, meet some of them and then when you go on stage, talk to those few you know.

"Every time I speak in front of an audience, I remind myself that I am speaking to a person, not to a crowd. Crowds are scary. People are friends. Think of it this way. Throughout history, crowds have rioted, killed, revolted, trampled, and mocked. In crowds, people lose their individual flair and take on a 'crowd mentality'. Some crowds have 10,000 people, others have 100. The size is not what makes a crowd. It is how they react. Google defines a crowd as "a large number of people gathered together in a disorganized or unruly way". However, unless you are the president or a revolutionary, then you will never speak to a crowd. No. You are not speaking to a crowd; you are speaking to a person.

– Mike Acker

Ideally, whenever you have a speaking engagement, you should try and arrive early and mingle with the crowd a bit. Talk with some of the people who will be there for your presentation and get to know them. Learn a bit of their stories. Then, when you start presenting, talk to those individuals you know rather than the crowd. If you do that, you'll be more relaxed and ultimately more persuasive.

The interesting dynamic when it comes to public speaking is perception affects reception. Specifically, your feelings towards your audience will impact how they will feel about you as a speaker. If you dislike your audience, that attitude will color the way you present, and affect their reception of your speech. If you feel positive and inspired by your audience, that will come across as well. The best way to feel good about your audience is to get to know some of them as individuals.

Perception

Reception

Every time you're asked to speak to a larger group, make it your aim to get to know at least three of the people who will be in that audience. Become familiar with their back stories and their personalities. Know what they love and tailor your message to appeal to the people you have personal connections to. That will ease your nerves and allow you to present more effectively.

"You can communicate with anything, but that doesn't mean you can connect with anything. You don't connect with a crowd; you connect with a person. So, go out of your way to make the big room small by speaking to all as if you were speaking to one."

– Mike Acker

Some suggestions for how to achieve this:

1. *Always aim to arrive at least one hour before you're due on stage* – and arrive prepped and ready to roll. That way you won't feel rushed and you'll have time to meet some individuals. Make sure you have all your tech well sorted out and practiced the day before so you don't have to fret over that either.
2. *Never drink coffee while you're waiting to go on stage* – it will increase your energy level and make you feel even more nervous, especially if you have sugar with your coffee. Instead, you should be hydrating with water alone or maybe tea or something similar.
3. *When you get to the venue, don't stand apart from the audience to gather your thoughts* – get in there and meet a few people and chat. Trust that the prep work you've done will not be enhanced by fanatical last-minute cramming. Embrace the meet-and-greet.
4. *Don't forget to smile* – it not only enhances your likability but it always boosts confidence levels. Science has shown smiling is a natural antidepressant, that it reduces your blood pressure, and that smiling enhances your immune system. Smiling also helps you connect, and relax.

5. *Take some deep breaths just before you go on stage* – to increase the supply of oxygen to your brain. There's no need to be too obvious about this, but remind yourself to inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth for maximum effect. You might also link deep breathing with praying or meditating if you have those personal beliefs.
6. *Remember your mission to connect with 3 - 5 people beforehand* – talk with them, listen to what they're saying and get to know them. Just a quick chat will do, and you can then move on by saying: "Well, it's been great talking with you Sam. Thanks for sharing your story about what brought you here today. Please excuse me as I'd like to meet a few more people before we begin. And thanks for being here!"

"When it's time for you to get up in front of 10 people or 100 people or 1000 people. Forget about the number. Find your new friends and do your presentation to them. And don't forget to smile."

– Mike Acker

"Never be so busy as not to think of others."

– Mother Teresa

"Forget for a moment that you are going to communicate to people and work to connect with people. When you start speaking, speak to people, not to the crowd."

– Mike Acker

"Always print two copies of your notes. Even if one is electronic, print another. Trust me, it will make you sleep better."

– Mike Acker

"Your speech will be miserable if your audience tunes you out. Don't just get through your speech to a crowd. Don't do that. Instead, connect with someone and talk to that person. Give your toast to a guest you met at the wedding. Give your presentation at work as if you are talking to your lunch buddy. When you stand in front of a room to honor an employee, imagine your spouse is in the room and that you are speaking to them about your employee."

– Mike Acker



STRATEGY #5

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

The people in the crowd are less concerned about you than you may realize. Even when you're speaking, they're not thinking about you so relax. Serve them without being worried.

Pretty well every newly minted public speaker goes through an inner monologue that sounds kind of like this: *"What will they think of me? Will they listen to me? Will they like me? Do they trust me? Do I know what I'm saying? Do I look okay? Is my fly down? No, my fly is not down. Glad I checked for the 7th time. Do I have lipstick on my teeth? I bet I have lipstick on my teeth. Oh wait, I don't wear lipstick. Do I have lettuce in my teeth? Everyone is going to be looking at me! Oh shoot, what if I smell bad? What if I forget my notes? What if someone gets up and walks out on me? I'm going to be terrible. They're going to see right through me! I hate speaking in front of people!"*

If it's any help, the reality is most people will not really be thinking about you. They will be more worried about their own problems and challenges, and some of them will even be worried about what you're thinking of them.

For example, when you woke up this morning, what was your first thought?

- For most people, it tends to be: "I don't want to get up. Just five more minutes of sleep".
- For early risers, their first thought might be: "Yay. It's finally morning. Let's get this show on the road."
- For almost everyone else, their first thought is: "I need to use the bathroom now!"

In other words, waking up is all about you. Your first thought is not about who is taking care of the refugees in West Africa or global climate change. Instead you'll have a natural and healthy focus on yourself when you wake up and that self-interest will continue through most if not all the day.

"This will free you up. When you realize that the people in front of you care less about your content than they do about their own hair, clothes, hunger, and sleep, then it allows the pressure of the moment to fade. Take a deep breathe. Serve your audience by entertaining, educating, or presenting your product. They will be far less concerned with how you do and much more preoccupied with their own thoughts."

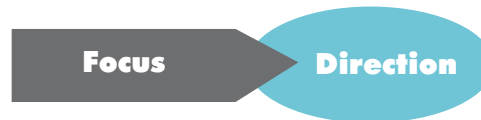
– Mike Acker

That's not to say that people aren't hoping to get something of value from your presentation. They are. They want to be entertained, educated, and moved to action. They want to be inspired, and for their lives to become richer and more vibrant. They want something which will be good for them.

Furthermore, the vast majority of your audience want you to succeed as a presenter. They want you to do well and will be subconsciously rooting for you. That's why we all love to applaud heartily when a great speaker finishes on a high and lingering idea. We want to be able to brag we were there when a speaker inspired and captivated our attention.

"People want you to succeed. Your success is their success. If you make it about them, then they will like you all the more."

– Mike Acker



Giving a speech is a little bit like learning how to drive a car. Where you look, where you focus, is where the car will go. Similarly, if you stand on stage and worry about what the audience thinks of you, you will probably feel stressed and end up shooting yourself in the foot.

If you remind yourself that the majority of the audience are thinking about themselves, you can change your focus to finding ways to help them, and serve them. As you look to add something of value with what you say, you can then figure out how to elevate and lift them. What you focus on will set the direction for your speech.

"Rarely is the goal of public speaking, 'I want everyone to see how amazing I am.' If that is the goal, then most likely it will be a short-lived career. Think of some of these engagements where people get in front of others to speak. What is their goal? Ask yourself: how can I help, serve, entertain, inform, educate, or inspire them? I want to serve them. The irony is that when you focus on them, they begin to like you."

– Mike Acker

The dynamic at work here is that the more you value your audience, the more they will value you and the less worried you will become about what they think of you. In fact, you could go the extra mile by:

1. *Plan to do more* – along the lines of Oprah Winfrey who often gives away gifts to her studio audiences. Figure out some item which aligns with the theme of your talk and see whether you can hand that out at the end. Or maybe some free advice or a picture of everyone who was there? Find something that will add value.
2. *Learn to listen* – because the best leaders are great listeners. Public speaking is a form of leadership so listen deliberately to those you are trying to influence. Observe the mood and what's happening with your audience so you can be more relevant and more interesting.
3. *Try to understand others* – walk in the shoes of your audience members and get insight into their fears, hopes, and aspirations. Know how you can add value.

"I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening."

– Larry King, award-winning television host

"Where focus goes, energy flows".

– Tony Robbins

"Listening creates empathy for those you work with. When you understand people, you know how to speak to them. If you take time to listen, you will understand the concerns, fears, and worries they feel. Listening shifts the focus from YOU to them. If you want to ease your fear of public speaking, learn to listen. After all, it's not about you."

– Mike Acker



STRATEGY #6

CHANNEL THE POWER

Don't try and get rid of all nervousness when you speak. Instead, channel your stress and nervousness into obsessing over creating a positive outcome. That's a worthwhile aim.

Even accomplished speakers still get nervous. That's perfectly fine because you don't really want to eliminate your nervousness altogether. Instead, you want to learn how to channel it so that nervous energy gives you an edge you can take advantage of as a speaker.

Lots of people do this:

- Wise generals in the military study the negative outcomes of past battles and then strategize how to use those past mistakes to generate the victories of the future.
- Professional athletes work hard – with the help and guidance of their coaches – to turn losses and poor performances into wins and strengths.
- The natural world works by the same principle. Rivers can have their strengths channeled and directed by the construction of hydroelectric dams, to create energy for power grids while also containing the flow of the river.

"When you are down, pick something up."
 – John Maxwell, leadership guru

In other words, your real aim should be to channel your fear into energy that you can tap into to make your speech great. Don't try and erase your fear but ease your fear, and use that raw energy boost to energize and electrify your communication.

"If you erase your fear, then you will eliminate the energy that makes you interesting. One reason why you are worried, scared, nervous, and terrified to speak is because you care. You care about doing well. You care about getting your message across. You care about what people think. Instead of completely erasing your

fear of speaking, turn your nervous care into focused energy."

– Mike Acker

Think of preparing for a speech kind of like building a dam over a powerful river. You want to take your nervous energy and build up a reservoir of usable power you can use during your speech. In just the same way as dams have multiple spillways that enable them to release some of the power before it can destroy the dam, you should use some professional speaker "insider tips" to dissipate some of that nervous energy when you speak. Specifically:

1. *Build deliberate pauses into your presentation* – so you get the audience leaning into what you're saying and looking forward to hearing more. Pauses allow you to take a deep breath, and they also let you control the torrent of words coming out of your mouth. A few purposeful pauses will also help calm your nerves.
2. *Show purpose in what you're presenting* – don't pace around the stage aimlessly but match your movements with your message. For a three-point speech, move to three areas in the form of a triangle. Plan where you will stand when you want to make your strongest points and map out how movement will bring your message to life. That's what great presenters do.
3. *Let your passion light your speech* – along the lines of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" or JFK's "Do not ask your country what it can do for you, but what you can do for your country". All of the legendary speakers – including Billy Graham, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, John Maxwell, Bill and Melinda Gates – are passionate about what they say, and this grabs your attention. You can do the same if you care about the people you're speaking to. Make what you say come to life through your passions.

"Take that nervousness. Take your care. Take all your preparation, and let it burn through you. You can do this. You will be amazing. People will want to hear you because you obviously care. They will be drawn to your passion for them and for the words you say."

– Mike Acker

To get better at channeling your energy in positive ways:

1. *Prepare thoroughly* – channel all your energy into being the best prepared speaker your audience has ever seen. Write out your speech. Turn it into prompt cards. Practice in front of a mirror. Let a coach critique you. Rewrite your speech until it is you. Make it your habit that the first time you give a speech is always to yourself, and never in front of your intended audience.
 - Join Toastmasters or the Dale Carnegie Institute.
 - Hire a coach to give you feedback.
 - Join your local Chamber of Commerce.
 - Attend networking events and speak.
2. *Exercise regularly* – hit the gym, go for a vigorous walk, or do whatever gets your blood flowing. You'll speak better if you have energy flowing and exercise will do that. If you've got a big speech coming up, a realistic exercise regime is:
 - 4 days before – Exercise normally.
 - 3 days before – Light workout, eat healthy.
 - 2 days before – Go big and exhaust yourself.
 - 1 day before – Rest and eat healthy.
 - Day of your presentation – light workout focusing on stretching and then eat lightly but healthy.
3. *Again, remind yourself to breathe* – which will calm you from your core. The reality is most people fail to breathe enough. That's why there are books and blogs dedicated to this subject. Breathe deeply and fill your mind with oxygen before, during, and after your speech. This will turn your panic into peace.





STRATEGY #7

BE IN THE MOMENT

Enjoy any and all public speaking opportunities you get. Be in the moment rather than worrying about what went wrong in your buildup. Have fun and you'll ace it.

.....
 There are three stages to learning from every speech you will ever deliver:

STAGE #1	PREPARATION
STAGE #2	PRESENTATION
STAGE #3	REFLECTION

1. When you're preparing for a big speech, you can't wait for it to be over. That's okay but take the time to enjoy the moment. Have fun while you develop new ideas and find all the content you want to use. Be present in the moment as you gain the knowledge and thoughts you need to shine.
2. In the presentation stage you hone your people skills and align with your audience. You start putting aside your own interests and get to know what the audience wants and needs. Again, stay in the moment. Notice what resonates with people. Watch what makes them nod. Channel your nervous energy into energizing your listeners. Be there with your audience and make it about them.
3. Once you've given your presentation, take a moment to reflect. Write down your insights about what you did well, what you should cut, and what you'd change in the future. All professionals change, tweak, and look to improve. Take the time to reflect.

All in all, make sure you enjoy the moments. Don't try and compare to anyone else but do the work, savor the experience, and work at improving for the future. A great checklist for the day of your speech should look like this:

- ✓ Relax. Am I ready? At this point, it doesn't matter. Let's go.
- ✓ Do I know my speech well enough? I have notes. I've practiced. It's enough. Smile.
- ✓ Could other people do a better job of presenting this speech? Probably. Forget about it. You be you.
- ✓ Are people going to enjoy my presentation? Hopefully, but that's partly up to them. I've done my best. Enjoy.
- ✓ Can I add value for this audience? I believe I can. Speak to the individuals I know and focus on helping them.
- ✓ Should I have changed my speech? Maybe. Shoulda, woulda, coulda. Drop it and enjoy the moment.
- ✓ The future is still to be determined. This is the moment called the present. Receive it like the gift that it is. Breathe and deliver.

"Enjoy the moment when you are getting ready for the speech. Enjoy overcoming the stress. Enjoy your practice. Live it. Embrace it. Be there. When you give the speech: Channel the energy. Speak to one, not all. Breathe. Smile. Be you. Do your best. Be there. Keep your head up. Be proud that you faced your fear. You are a rockstar! Now, it doesn't matter how awesome you did. It doesn't matter if you think you did poorly. All that matters is how you can get even better.

– Mike Acker

The reality with public presentations is the more you put in, the more you will end up getting out of the experience. To get better at public speaking:

1 - 2 - 3 - R

1. *Believe* – in yourself and in your ability to get better at public speaking as you learn how to implement these strategies.
 2. *Put this on your calendar* – map out a specific time you will get to work on one of the strategies. Once you've scheduled this, show up and work on that strategy. Then schedule when you'll do some more. To improve, you've got to keep working at it.
 3. *Work on one strategy at a time* – starting with whichever resonated the most with you. Focus on getting better at your selected strategy before trying to do anything else. Change your perspective, invest in preparation and then take the time to practice. Once you get one strategy mastered, only then move on to the next.
- R. *Repeat* – until you become a complete speaker.

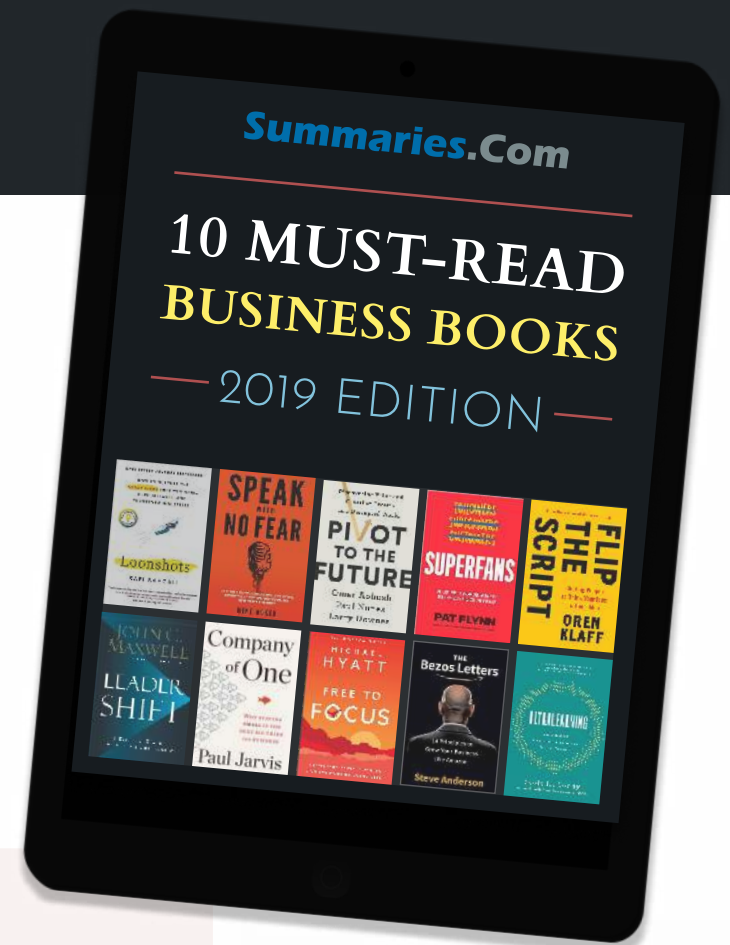
"You can do this. I did this. I was able to overcome my fear. Others have done this. I've worked with people just like you. Fear no longer controls them. Simply start doing what you need to do to get where you want to be. Maybe you won't erase your fear in one day or one week or one month, but you will ease your fear. You will learn to channel that nervousness into an engaging presence. You will do great. You really will."

– Mike Acker



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