

## Overcoming Stage Fright

By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC

Admit it; even **you** experience a healthy (or possibly unhealthy) rush of adrenalin as you approach a stage or podium.

Symptoms of stage fright that may sound familiar to you are breathlessness, sweating, and increased heart rate, resulting in louder or more rapid dialogue.

You're not alone. Singer Stevie Nicks claims her key to 'that magical performance' is because of fear. Actress Helen Mirren credits the depth of her performances to artfully using this adrenalin.

Excelling in all forms of public speaking is necessary to your success in the business and corporate worlds. Stage fright can undermine confidence, well being, peace of mind and livelihood.

Stage fright often appears in your least-suspicious although common situations. For example, have you observed someone who is otherwise confident appear nervous when making an important point at a staff meeting or in a public setting as Rotary, City Club, or Chamber functions?

If your goal is to succeed in your current professional endeavor, overcoming stage fright is a must. Here are my **Top '7' Tips** to help you out.

1. **Practice, practice, practice.** Look in the mirror. Watch your expressions. Do they communicate what you desire? Listen to your voice so it's not a surprise later. Use a timer and know your actual presentation will take longer than rehearsed. A prepared speaker exudes confidence, polish and trustworthiness.
2. **Be authentic.** Focus on your strengths. If you are naturally concise, intelligent, humorous or motivational, then use these gifts. If not, stay away or you'll quickly lose credibility. Knowing who you are as a speaker will increase your - and thus your audience's - confidence in you.
3. **Identify your specific message.** Out of nervousness, many speakers dilute their message with too many examples or stories. Your audience will be lost and confused. Begin and end with your specific message, interjecting the 'why should I (the audience) care' pointedly.
4. **Understand your audience.** Your job is to make your presentation intriguing to this specific audience. For example, a financial presenter may assume his audience won't 'get' his message. Thus, he'll speak too rapidly hoping to end his own misery in presenting. This is not a win for anyone. There's always a way to intrigue your audience.
5. **Focus upon the results you want to produce.** Are you speaking to entertain, sell a product, get a contract signed, educate, build relationships, gain credibility or get hired? The more you focus upon your specific purpose, the less nervous you'll be.
6. **Be passionate.** Whatever your message, why deliver it unless you are passionate about it? Don't confuse your passion with the kind exuded by Tony Robbins. Don't confuse passion with anger. Passion is a driver unique to you. Own it, share it.

7. **Ask for feedback.** One way nervous speakers become great speakers is to ask for feedback from trusted sources. Most people will simply say “you did great.” Gaining one single insight on what you can improve upon in your next presentation builds your confidence. Of course, you want to hear that you excelled at as well.

Bottom line: if you are in business, your communication with others is a primary key to your success. Whether in office meetings or before a conference of 3,000 peers, your end result will depend upon your ability to communicate confidently and effectively. Managing stage fright is a vital first and continuous step.

If you have mastered your own stage fright, I have three requests of you.

1. Ask for feedback as you may have something to learn.
2. Share your techniques as nearly all of my clients are challenged with this in some form and
3. Pass this article to someone who can use it.

CBN & I want everyone to succeed to their highest level imaginable!

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