

Twenty Ways to Make Your Butterflies Fly in Formation

- Tips for Controlling Nervousness -

1. **Know your subject.** Speak about something you are knowledgeable, and preferably passionate, about. Know more about it than you include in your speech. Use personal stories and conversational language – that way you won't easily forget what to say.
2. **Have a well-organized speech.** If your presentation has a logical flow to it, you won't get lost or flustered – nor will your audience!
3. **Practice. Practice. Practice!** Rehearse out loud using any equipment you will need for the presentation. If you consistently stumble over a word or phrase, change it to one you are comfortable with. Practice using a timer, giving yourself time to pause and breathe.
4. **Know the room.** Arrive early and familiarize yourself with the speaking area. Set up and practice using any equipment.
5. **Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Stand on the stage or speaking area and imagine yourself giving your presentation, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the audience clapping. The more clearly you see your success, the fewer nerves you will experience.
6. **Deal with physical needs.** If your mouth gets dry, drink before you present and have water available to you during your presentation. Take a bathroom break before you begin.
7. **Use relaxation techniques.** Do whatever it takes – listening to music, breathing deeply, shrugging your shoulders – to relieve nervous tension. When you begin your presentation, pause, smile and count out three seconds before saying anything. ("One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. Breathe. Begin.")
8. **Know your audience.** Greet some of the audience members as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers. Also, your audience wants to meet you. People are more likely to be engaged if they have a connection with the presenter.
9. **Believe that people want you to succeed.** If you are uncomfortable, so is your audience. They want you to be interesting, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you.
10. **Your body can fool your mind.** If you ACT confident, your mind will believe it to some extent. Drop your shoulders. Walk proudly. Shake hands firmly. SMILE!!

Butterflies in Formation

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11. **Concentrate on your message – not on your speaking.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and what your audience will gain from it.
12. **Don't procrastinate!** The more time you put into a presentation, the more comfortable you will be with it, and the fewer things you will have to worry about.
13. **Know your equipment needs.** If you are using a projector, microphone or any other technical equipment, test it on-site to ensure that it all works and that there are plug-ins where needed, etc. Also make sure that you have extra batteries, light bulbs, cords, etc. Finally, prepare a non-technical backup in case of power failures or other unforeseen problems.
14. **Wear comfortable but professional-looking clothes.** If your body is comfortable you won't be fidgeting, and if you are dressed appropriately to the occasion, you won't feel out of place.
15. **Don't tell the audience about your nervousness.** Chances are that they won't know unless you tell them.
16. **Move!** Gestures and body movements can help you harness your nervous energy and make it work for you.
17. **Assume the burden of other people's comfort.** If you are thinking about your audience's needs, you are less likely to be worried about yourself.
18. **Stick with your strengths until you are more comfortable.** For example, if you don't consider yourself a funny person, telling jokes during your presentation will only add to your stress. Your anxiety about how they will go over will make it harder for you to focus on your message.
19. **Recognize that speaking is an acquired skill.** Effective presenters have to learn how to present the same as they learn to use other tools to operate their businesses.
20. **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Use every opportunity you can find to speak in front of a group. A Toastmasters club can provide that type of experience in a safe and friendly environment.

Are They Hearing What You Are Saying?

- Tips for Increasing Clarity and Focus -

Know your message. This may seem obvious, but few people do it well. What EXACT message do you want your audience to receive? Distil it down to its simplest form, right down to a single sentence: "You can learn to give effective presentations with confidence." The clearer the message is in your mind, the more effective it will be. You will also be clearer, and more likely to keep your audience's attention, by focusing the speech on a message rather than a series of facts.

Choose your speaking points. List all the facts, details, stories, etc, that apply to the presentation topic, then choose a strictly limited number of factual points that directly support your message.

Know your audience. Use their "language" and choose facts and stories that are relevant to them. If you are speaking to bankers, for example, use financial terms (so long as you understand them!) and relate banking experiences.

Tell a story, make a point. Stories are the most effective way of connecting with and informing people. Use them to illustrate the main points that support your message. Personal stories are best, as they help put people in your shoes so that they can relate to your difficulties and share in your successes.

Edit ruthlessly. From the details and stories you listed above, choose one or at most two to illustrate each of your speaking points. Get rid of the rest, no matter how interesting. The more extraneous detail that you add the more you will confuse your audience, and they may stop listening.

Organize your speech in a logical sequence. This helps you and your audience proceed at the same pace through the presentation, and it also helps them to remember your points and your message. Keeping related points together and having "transition" sentences between points also helps people follow along.

Be succinct. Cover your message, the key points and those details and stories REQUIRED to explain and support them. Nothing else. The actual number of words is irrelevant. So long as you cut out irrelevancies you will be succinct. Words beyond the minimum tend to damage clarity.

Write the way you speak. When we speak, we generally use simpler vocabulary and sentence structures than when we write, allowing our audience to more easily follow our points.

Are They Hearing You?

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Keep sentences short. Long sentences add interest and flow to writing. When speaking, however, they tend to lose people. When someone is reading, if they miss something, they can go back and read it again. When they are listening to a speaker, if they don't get it the first time, it's gone.

Choose your words carefully. If a long word is necessary for clarity, then use it. Usually, though, simpler is better. For instance, "dog" is preferable to "canine", although "canine" should be used when referring to all dog-like species as a group. If you have a choice between two words or phrases, use the one that most of your audience are likely to recognize. "Two weeks" is more commonly used in North America than "fortnight". Finally, use descriptive words. The more that people "experience" your subject, the more likely it is that they will understand and remember it.

Start with a bang. Your opening should give the audience a startling statistic or fact, an interesting quote, a news headline – something powerful that will get their attention immediately.

Practice with a buddy. When we know our topic thoroughly and we write the speech ourselves, everything in it seems obvious. It isn't always. Whenever possible, have someone listen while you practice. Ask them to point out anything wasn't immediately clear to them.

Be yourself. If you are trying to base your speaking style on someone else you won't have as much credibility, causing your message to get lost in your "acting".

Speak with passion. The more passionate you are about your topic, the more likely your audience will be carried along with you and act on your suggestions.

Speak clearly and audibly. A surprising number of messages are lost because of presenters that speak too quietly, or who slur or mumble their words. If you have a naturally soft voice, try using a microphone when speaking to a large audience or in a noisy environment. Enunciate.

Pause frequently. Especially after giving an important point, give the audience time to absorb what you say. If you continue on to your next point right away, the impact is lost.

Have your final conclusion after the Q&A. If there is a question and answer portion to your presentation, leave enough time after the last question you take to reiterate your message and leave the audience with a memorable quote or a call to action. Offer to answer extra questions after the meeting or function.

TOASTMASTER CLUBS IN GREATER VICTORIA

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
	7:00 Aurora (was Camosun)		6:50 Communicators 7:00 Rise & Shine	6:50 Norvic	9:00 Master Motivators
	Noon Gateway Elocutionists Noon Genojabbers Noon Saanich Lunch Bunch Noon Royal Roads	Noon Advocates Noon Phonetic Fanatics Noon Revenue Ramblers Noon Swan Lake Trumpeters Noon Trestle Noon Uptown Rollers 12:05 Belmont Babblers	Noon Birdcage Noon Can. Revenue Raconteurs Noon Money Mart Noon Power Toasters		
7:00 Goldstream 7:00 Thunderbird	5:15 First Canadian 7:00 Chosin Chatters 7:30 Oak Bay 7:30 Saanich Peninsula	6:00 Beavers 7:00 Sooke Harbour TM 7:30 V I Entrepreneurs	4:30 Sierra Systems 5:30 James Bay 6:45 Speakers Cornered 7:45 Nite Shifters	8:00 Night Hawks	

* For locations and contact information, visit the Toastmaster International web site at www.toastmasters.org.