

WOMEN AT WORK

Even fearful can master the art of public speaking

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There is nothing to fear in the art of public speaking but fear itself.

Public speaking is a dynamic transaction "between one and many" — between the one who is speaking and the many who are listening.

Public speaking is an art, a science and a skill that can be learned, improved and polished. Public speakers in the workplace can touch lives by training new employees, demonstrating and selling a useful product/service or advocating a worthwhile cause.

Then why do so many individuals fear public speaking?

Entertainer Jerry Seinfeld says that "according to most studies, the number one fear individuals have is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does this sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy."

Four good reasons individuals

ple in an audience. Speaker feels the audience is "attacking" with unrelenting stares, while the speaker is obliged to stand alone, exposed and vulnerable.

Fear of failure. New public speakers are afraid of looking stupid. Their inner voice keeps saying "What if I make a fool of myself?"



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Fear of rejection. What if the speaker delivers a polished speech, but the audience still does not like it. It can be an assault to one's ego.

Fear of the unknown. Throughout one's life a person will have apprehensions about doing new things. One cannot put her finger on exactly what she is afraid of because fear may be vague and diffused. Speakers may be assailed by this same fear of the unknown because they cannot predict the

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energize. It makes speakers think more rapidly while it helps with vitality and enthusiasm. Fear can cause a burst of adrenaline that infuses energy and turns into positive nervousness. This is a stimulating, passionate, lively feeling with a slight edge to it.

A public speaker should never speak on a subject which she knows little about. Choose only topics about which you are well informed. This will give you enormous self-confidence.

To decrease anxiety even further, prepare, prepare, prepare and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. Don't just look over notes — stand up and rehearse your talk in whatever way that suits you. Don't rehearse just once. Speeches should be given

before a live audience will be smoother and more self-assured. Never read from a manuscript. Instead, give a speech in a conversational style.

Devote extra practice to the introduction because a speaker will most likely suffer the greatest anxiety at the beginning of the speech. After the first minute or two, nervousness moves to the background, after which the rest of the event is relatively easy.

In the business world, public speaking is essential. Rather than shying away from speaking opportunities, seek them out. An old saying is true: Experience is the best teacher."

There are two very important personal reasons for mastering the art, skill and science of public speaking in the workplace: speakers will become empowered and speakers will empower others. □

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