

8 Ways to Eliminate Stress in Public Speaking

1. **Love your subject:** Talk about what you believe in and are passionate about, otherwise it can be a painful experience. If you inherited a topic that you don't care about, search for some kernel of interest or approach the topic from a perspective that gives it meaning to you.
2. **Be excited to share it:** If you are excited to share it you will find creative ways to make sure your audience absorbs it. If you know what you want to say is there ever a need to search for words?
3. **Rehearse:** Actors talk a script out loud all the time. If you see someone walking down the street talking to themselves they are either actors rehearsing lines... or they are crazy.... Or both. When you engage the muscular movement of the lips, tongue and jaw, you aid memory, build sense, connect to your emotions, and teach your body to be clear. Most speakers I know spend time organizing PowerPoint, making the handouts and collecting the content. Rehearsal? Oops, haven't got time. Speak the speech out loud to your plants, pets, and passers-by. Give yourself a practice audience where you can get feedback. Join a Toastmaster's group.
4. **Make it about them:** The drama happens in the minds of the audience, not in your sweat glands. Stimulate their imaginations with stories, inspire them with possibilities, and challenge them with opportunities. Get them to talk about their needs.
5. **Train your voice:** What? I'm not a singer! Doesn't matter. Actors train their voices so that night after night they can reach the back of the theatre with every human emotion. They need to be heard without shouting and keep their voices throughout a long run of a show. A relaxed, powerful, resonant voice creates comfort in the listeners. They are more willing to believe that you are an authority.
6. **Train your body:** A self aware body carries itself with ease and uses itself to direct the attention of the audience, rather than tremble and shake. A body that is in front of a crowd takes the heat and experiences the impulses of fight or flight. Training tames those impulses and re-directs the energy to make an impact on your audience.
7. **Decide that you are a performer.** That's right! Give yourself permission to be a great communicator and a dynamic presence. Take it on with no apology. You will notice an instant change from your listeners who will respond with positive feedback and appreciation.
8. **Give 100% of yourself.** Hold nothing back and make it life and death. When you have the privilege of speaking to people make it matter. This day is not like any other day because you are in front of the group. Make it a memorable experience for everyone, not simply an information download.