

# How to overcome the nervousness!

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Your heart pounds, your palms are sweaty, you feel a flood under your armpits. What's happening? Relax, your presentation is well prepared, why be nervous? No matter how well we know our subject matter, public speaking brings on undesirable reactions within our bodies. Can we eliminate these? What is the best way to prepare for public speaking?

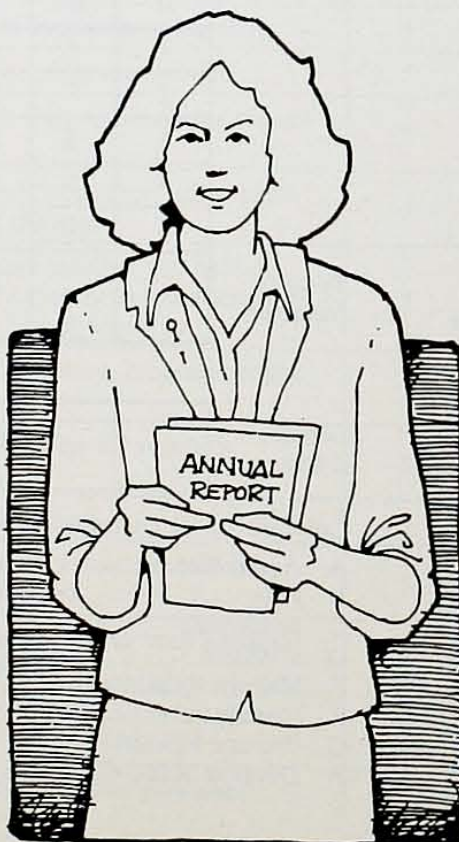
Public speaking involves YOU SPEAKING to the PUBLIC. Let's concentrate on those three important words: YOU, SPEAKING and PUBLIC. Ask yourself "What does the audience want to hear from me?" Put yourself in your public's shoes. A good way to plan a speech is by the Question Method: Ask yourself at least 20 questions that tell you something about your audience. "How much do they already know about this subject?"; "Are they men or women?"; "How old are they?"; "How many will be there?"; "What kinds of questions will they ask me?"; "Will I be met with opposition?". Get comfortable with what's ahead for your presentation. Imagine having to speak for 20 minutes on infant nutrition to a group of 80 year-old senior citizens.

Not knowing ahead of time that these people were 80 years and older could be a shock upon your keen arrival. Be prepared, become familiar with your crowd - consider them as a friend once you know who they are and what they expect. All are good

people at heart and wish you no harm.

SPEAKING is another important word. It's deceiving though because people listening to you only hear seven per cent of the words you say. They do pay attention and hear 38 per cent of your tone of voice.

Most important is YOU. Fifty-five per cent of your gestures are seen. Your non-verbal messages are just as important as your verbal messages.



Have you ever watched someone tell you how good you were but you knew they didn't mean it by their tone of voice and body language? Get your act together. Be sure your words, your body and your tone of voice are all delivering the same enthusiastic message. Be sincere, respect and admire your audience and they will believe in you.

Sincerity means that you can look someone square in the eye. Eye contact is a must for public speaking. Only cowards do not face eye to eye contact. Practice looking into your audience's eyes. Visually roam the room and include as many people as possible. Every person whom you reach with eye to eye contact will identify with you better. If he cares enough to look me in the eye, "I'd better listen to what he's going to say." You only need to look at each person for five to ten seconds. Be sincere, respect and love your audience. They will do the same for you.

Eye contact, voice tone and gestures; all three combined present your personality to the audience. We can all remember watching public speakers who did not know what to do with their hands or shifted their feet back and forth in a trance-like motion, rocking you to sleep. Some types like to play with keys and coins in their pockets, scratch their nose incessantly or play with their glasses. Are you aware of your body gestures? Most gestures listed are very annoying to a public watching you make a presentation.

What do you do with your hands? Pockets are great inventions for