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tips for public speaking

Public speaking is a common fear; It may be an after dinner speech, a short talk at a wedding or even a simple business presentation or seminar, but speaking in front of others seems to instill an irrational fear in many people. Here are a few tips that will help:

Analyze your anxiety:

To overcome this fear; it often helps to pinpoint exactly what it is about public speaking that worries you. These are some of the things clients tell us they fear most:

- ▶ Forgetting what they are talking about – their mind going blank.
- ▶ Having someone in the audience who knows more than they do.
- ▶ People noticing that they are nervous.
- ▶ Being asked questions that they have no ready answer to.

Once identified, specific fears and anxieties can be analysed in a rational way. For example, it is unlikely that other know more about your subject than you or they would have been asked to make the presentation. If you are concerned and anxious about forgetting your lines, practice until your confidence grows.

Practice:

The more prepared you are, the less likely it is that you will forget what you want to say or be unprepared for questions. The more you practice, the greater your confidence will be. The more confident you are internally, the less nervous you will feel and appear.

Use creative visualisation:

Creative visualization as used in the Speak Out hypnotherapy program will help you mentally rehearse the process of delivering your presentation or speech. When you get up to speak, you will already have successfully done many times in your mind and your subconscious mind reproduce the memory of that success.

Creative visualisation is a powerful tool used by professional athletes and speakers to practice their public performance.

Here are a few practical ideas:

- ▶ Speak at a steady pace - don't rush. When you speak naturally and normally, you give yourself opportunity to breathe. Pacing yourself also gives you the opportunity to gauge the response of your audience.
- ▶ Don't be afraid of silence: a pause gives both you time to gather your thoughts and your audience time to assimilate information.
- ▶ Practice your skills: public speaking is a learnt art. There are very few "born" public speakers, most started like you and learnt their skills.
- ▶ Use your eyes as well as your voice: look around the room and acknowledge people with your eyes. This will also help you to keep your head up rather than fixed on a page or a slide.

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