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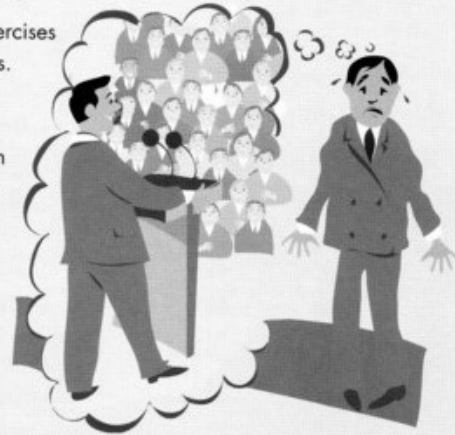
Read this article from a website on business communication and discuss the questions which follow.

Dealing with nervousness

The American author Mark Twain once put it like this: 'There are two types of people: those that are nervous and those that are liars.' So, once you accept that (almost) everybody who gives a presentation – whether formal or informal, long or short, to strangers or colleagues – is nervous, then you just need to find ways to deal with nervousness and even learn how to use it to your advantage.

Let's first look at ways to deal with and reduce nervousness.

- 1 **Prepare well.** 'Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.' Preparation is the key to a successful presentation. Nothing will relax you more than knowing exactly what you want to say and having practised saying it. Make sure you practise your talk until you feel at home with it – then you can concentrate on other things.
- 2 **Learn to relax.** Doing stretching or breathing exercises before your talk can help you to reduce nervousness. One example: before your presentation, sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for about five seconds, then slowly exhale. You can relax your facial muscles by opening your eyes and mouth wide, then closing them tightly.
- 3 **Check out the room.** Make yourself familiar with the place where you will be speaking. Arrive early, walk around the room, and make sure everything you need for your talk is there. Practise using any equipment (e.g. microphone, video projector, OHP) you plan to work with.
- 4 **Know your audience.** If possible, greet your audience as they arrive and chat with them. It will be easier to speak to people who are not complete strangers.
- 5 **Concentrate on the message.** Try to focus on the message and your audience – not on your own fears.
- 6 **Visualize success.** Imagine yourself speaking to your audience in a loud and clear voice. Then visualize the audience applauding loudly at the end of your talk as you smile.



Use the steps above to reduce nervousness, but also remember that being nervous isn't all bad. Many experienced presenters say that you can also use your nervousness to give you that extra energy that you need to give a good performance.

OVER TO YOU

- What other tips can you think of for dealing with nervousness?
How do you deal with nervousness before or during a presentation?
How do you prepare your presentations?