

SIGGRAPH 2004 Speaker Support
Panic-Free Public Speaking

Change your mind

Many people suffer with speech anxiety because they equate being up on a stage with giving a performance. If you feel this way, altering your perception of public speaking may help. By simply *changing your mind* and viewing the purpose in delivering your talk in a different light, you may easily reduce your anxiety. Changing your mind from a *performance* orientation to a *communication* orientation may help.

Your goals

- *share your ideas, state your point of view*
- make your information easily understood

Communicating

- *like a conversation, low stress*
- your ideas are the most important element
- your audience wants to hear what you have to say
- you're not being judged on your performance

- *speak naturally, use notes*
- unlike giving a performance where you're required to memorize all your lines, it's best not to memorize
- no need to worry about forgetting lines

- *take little breaks*
- performing is unnatural, you can't take breaks
- during your talk, pausing to breath, and to drink water is a good idea!

- *dress; comfortably, to feel comfortable*
- no sets or embarrassing costumes are required, yet!

Be PASSIONATE

Remember the passion you had in developing your ideas. Let your passion speak past your fear. Communicate your great ideas enthusiastically in a conversation with the audience.

Think of your talk as a chance to communicate instead of as a performance. There's no need to perform.

Change your mind and communicate instead.

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Panic control tips

Before

- *visit the room, stand on the stage.*
- *choreograph a comfortable physical presentation,*
- *divide talk into bite size pieces*
- *create breaks with physical signposts (shift, sit, stand) and use as transitions to pause and breath, take a drink, or a mental stretch*
- *you can even walk, if you arrange to have a wireless mic and familiarize yourself with it's use*
- *you may find it less confining and less intimidating than the mic that is generally set up on the rostrum*
- *find comfortable positions, easy on your body, especially your back (foot on stool)*
- *play with your hands and arms and decide what to do with them (pockets, gestures, holding props)*

Nite before

- *rituals, find a comfort prop, eat well, relax*

Day of

- *exercise, yoga*
physical activity will increase your oxygen intake and release endorphins, good for body and mind
- *dress comfortably, cozy supportive shoes*
- *REMEMBER notes and props*
- *arrive early, do a balancing technique – Paradox Tapping Technique (PTT, see page 4)*

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During

- *settle in*, BREATH
- *think*, “communication of my excellent ideas”
- *movement*
- important for clear thinking
- use it to provide space and time to rejuvenate your thoughts
- movement is more interesting to look at than a static talking head
- *eye contact*
- engage with a few people in awe
- talk to them and feel connected

Fear

Fear is often “of the unknown” – the things we can't control, the actions of others. Who will show up? How many will come and go during our talk?

Though we can't control these things, there are many other factors within our control. We have the power of self control.

Control

- *water control*, drink!
- *oxygen control*, breath, exercise (jog before your talk, not during)
- *comfort control*, feel good in your favorite shirt, skirt, birks (with socks)
- *motion control*, stand, sit walk or dance at will
- *bladder control*, be prepared, use the facilities in advance, use PTT to reduce the urge!
- *passion control*, no control necessary

Be human, and have fun.

Paradox Tapping Technique (PTT)

Emotions are the physical translation of our thoughts to our bodies. *The anxiety response* is thoughts eliciting emotions, generating body responses, (pounding heart, shaking hands, quivering voice, blanking mind).

Our brains

- a primitive brain stem, the left and right hemispheres with the corpus callosum between
- *the left brain* controls language, linear, logical and analytical thought
- *the right brain* controls music, visual/spacial perception, emotional and experiential thought
- *the left brain* thinks and *the right brain* feels!
- optimum functioning = optimum co-operation

Our nervous system

- *parasympathetic* = calm
- *sympathetic* = panic, freeze, fight or flight
- *the anxiety response* = sympathetic overdrive
- reduced blood to the brain, can't think

PTT

The Paradox Tapping Technique (PTT) balances the brain and balances the nervous system, bringing panic under control.

PTT kick starts the parasympathetic response with:

- *a spoken paradox* to shift the brain away from the transient fear state towards a more balanced self assured state
- *the tapping of eastern energy flow meridian points* while counting (engaging the left brain)
- *eye movements, humming, and counting*
- providing a brain tune up and balancing