

The Art of Public Speaking

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You have now learned and hopefully practiced a lot of techniques that can help you become a better, more confident and efficient public speaker. Whatever you do, however, remember that your anxiety won't decrease on its own - you have to channel your willpower and efforts, to cope with it.

Don't forget you have a lot of allies in the process of coping with the fear of public speaking. You understand what makes you fear speaking in public and you are also familiar with the differences between fear and anxiety, as well as between "normal" and phobic fear of public speaking. Putting to practice all of the knowledge you have acquired, can help you better understand and approach your fear. You know how it looks and you are well aware of the fact that there are plenty of things you can do about it.



The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center, with the text "EXPLORABLE" in a large, bold, sans-serif font and "Quiz Time!" in a smaller, cursive font below it. Below the logo are three square thumbnails, each with a white border and a white caption. The first thumbnail shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the caption "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The second thumbnail shows a fan of colorful pencils, also with the caption "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The third thumbnail shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the caption "Quiz: Flags in Europe". To the right of the thumbnails is a red button with the text "See all quizzes =>" in white.

Focusing on Your Thoughts

First of all, you can start by getting a clear picture of what techniques you can use, ^[1] to cope with your public performance anxiety. Since your behavior is driven by thoughts ^[2], which produce specific emotions, it is important to identify your cognitive distortions and transform them into healthy, realistic thoughts ^[3]. Through the use of the techniques you've learned, such as imagery ^[4] exercises and mindfulness ^[5], you connect with the present moment and focus on doing, rather than worrying.

Focusing on Your Emotions

After you have become familiar with the approach that will help you deal with your thoughts, you can switch to strategies focused on emotions. You have learned how to use defusion and acceptance [6] to your advantage, as well as the ways in which to change the way you speak to yourself [7] so that you are happier and more capable of coping with fear. Understanding the innate mechanisms, through which all of your events, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected [8] will help you realize how fear is born, and what you can do about it. Furthermore, putting your goals into the context of values [9] that are deeply important, will uncover new horizons for you.

Practice What You Have Learned

Once you have learned how your inner world may be sabotaging you and how to turn things around for yourself, it is time to put your knowledge to practice, by engaging in exposure [10]. To make the exercises even more useful, it is a good idea to practice self-monitoring techniques [11], which provide structure and help you focus on your progress. Combining these with the PMR relaxation technique [12] would soothe you and help you properly prepare for the next step of the process.

Getting Ready to Speak

Now that you have become familiar with how to cope with your anxiety, by focusing on your mind, emotions, behavior and body, you can explore your most common fears [13] and the expectations [14] they might be creating, thus enabling your fear of public speaking. Once you have learned and practiced all the fundamentals, you are ready to prepare for a public speaking event [15]. We can't realistically expect to only experience positivity at all times, so a part of your preparation is learning to tolerate the negative feelings [16] that may accompany you on your journey to public speaking.

Support, Instead of Myths

Remember that you don't have to be perfect [17] and that even now, at the start of your exploit, you can improvise and experiment [18] to the certain extent. Besides, debunking some of the most common myths [19] about public speaking, which may be preventing you from reaching your full potential, will help you to contextualize your preparation and create more realistic expectations. Don't forget to seek support from others [20], but to be self-supportive as well, even if you haven't had much time to prepare.

Expecting the Unexpected

Even though you might feel most comfortable when your speech is well-rehearsed and prepared, have in mind that sometimes you may be faced with a spontaneous, unpredictable situation [21], where you have to speak in front of an audience. However, there is no room for frustration, because you are now well aware of how to prepare even for unforeseen events [22],

as well as how to handle challenging situations [23], and come out a winner. Although you might not be able to control as much as you wish you could, one of the most powerful tools you have is the knowledge of how to create an excellent presentation [24].

Finally, gaining a new perspective on yourself as an individual [25] will help you realize that fear cannot and does not define you. Once you have done that, your worst-case scenario [26], which now indeed seems a bit more unlikely than before, is not going to turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy, because you have a more realistic outlook on public speaking.

If you ever feel dispirited, keep in mind Nelson Mandela' words:

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

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