

SOLID GOLD PRESENTATIONS
SHINE & PROSPER



A Fistful of Nuggets...

**15 Instant Fear-Busters
while on-stage or on-camera**

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You have prepared and rehearsed your presentation, and you are now ready to address your audience. As the last few seconds tick away before 'showtime', a mild rush of



adrenaline flows through your body. Your pulse and breathing quicken, and you feel highly alert. This reaction is normal and beneficial. However, you do not want your mild anxiety tipping into high anxiety or fear. It's no fun when the adrenaline flood gates open, causing you to hyperventilate, drying your mouth, shaking your body, muddling your thoughts, and making your heart pound like a jackhammer. Such stress can threaten your presentation and potentially impact your image and career!

Fortunately, the tips below will help you regain control immediately before or during your presentation. Many of these helpful nuggets will also reduce fear when speaking to a camera or screen audience.



1. EMBRACE YOUR ANXIETY. Your rising anxiety is a natural 'fight or flight response' originally designed to help you deal with threats, such as lions. You can reduce your anxiety by doing the opposite; instead of running from the lion, embrace it! While we don't recommend hugging a wild lion, we do encourage you to embrace your stage jitters. How? By reminding yourself that your mild anxiety is a 'friend' who is boosting your energy and alertness so that you can present in top form. In fact, many of the best presenters are thankful that they still get nervous. They say it fuels their performance – and it will do the same for you!



2. DON'T FIGHT THE FEAR! If your anxiety continues to rise and then transforms into a demon that hovers over your shoulder, avoid the temptation to fight it. You can't voluntarily 'will' your fear to go away. This will only cause frustration and stress. You must summon your courage and continue with your presentation *despite* the fear. It is also helpful to remember that on your other shoulder is an angel who represents your confidence, ability and positive self-talk. Trust that angel and listen to it. Do not be distracted by the demon of fear.



3. STAND & COMMAND! You may have noticed that when smaller animals face larger ones, they often try to look intimidating by standing tall and commanding their ground. The dog in the photo may not be standing, but it's certainly commanding the bear! Many predators, when faced with such aggressive posturing, will back down and seek less prickly prey. You can use the same tactic when facing your fears on stage. Stand tall with your head up and shoulders back, step away from the lectern if possible, do not read verbatim from a script, fill your voice with power, maintain a comfortable pace, gesture with confidence, and make appropriate eye contact. Note that you are not *fighting* your fear - you are *standing up to it*. This assertive behavior boosts your confidence and pushes your fear backwards.



4. KNOW THAT FEAR IS USUALLY UNSEEN. When we start feeling anxious on stage, it is natural to assume that the audience sees our fear. This assumption then makes us even more nervous. Fortunately, anxiety and fear are a lot like the crocodile in this picture. YOU know it's there, but most people won't notice! That's why you should never say to the audience "*I am nervous making this presentation*". That's like saying "*Look at the crocodile in this picture*". You will have revealed something that otherwise would have remained hidden. From that point onwards, the audience will interpret your every pause and stutter as a sign of anxiety. Therefore, keep your fear to yourself and know it is hidden. This will allow you to stop worrying about the audience's judgments and focus fully on your presentation.

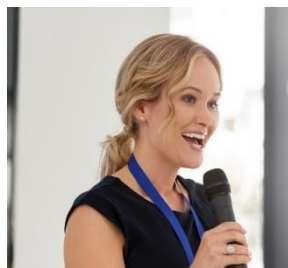


5. KNOW THAT YOUR AUDIENCE SUPPORTS YOU. In the unlikely event the audience does notice your anxiety, remind yourself that they will probably see themselves reflected in you. This means they will WANT you to overcome your fear and to have a successful presentation – just like they would wish for themselves! Their support may not be as wild as in this photo, but rest assured they want you to succeed. Your stress will decrease when you recognize the audience as sympathetic supporters rather than harsh critics.



6. BREATHE SLOWLY AND DEEPLY. Fear triggers shallow breathing which can make us feel dizzy. To prevent this issue, breathe slowly and deeply so that you activate your nervous system's '*relaxation response*' and allow more oxygen to energize your body. Another benefit of deep breathing is that it will signal to your brain that the '*threat*' of the presentation is being managed.

When you breathe in, concentrate on pulling your breath into your belly area, rather than sucking the air into your chest. Imagine the inhaled air filling up a balloon just above your belly button. You are doing this correctly if you feel your belly expand and rise. This simple breathing technique can quickly calm your nerves.



7. FORCE YOURSELF TO SMILE. When engulfed in fear, you won't feel like smiling, but do it anyway! In addition to triggering the release of brain 'feel-good' chemicals, smiling helps convince your brain that the presentation is not a threat. Your smile also sends your audience a signal that you are confident. They are then likely to smile back at you, which will further boost your confidence.



8. GLANCE AT FAMILIAR OR FRIENDLY FACES. Try to invite friends to your presentation. Make brief eye contact with them at the start of your talk. If you don't know anyone in the audience, make eye contact with the friendliest, most supportive faces. You will probably receive return smiles - and that will help you relax.



9. KNOW THAT FEAR IS TEMPORARY. In most cases, there is only one wave of high anxiety or fear and it usually engulfs us at the start of our talk. For most people, this wave WILL pass quickly, clearing the way for smoother water. When you know this single wave of fear is temporary, it becomes easier to swim through.



10. KNOW THAT CLEAR THINKING WILL RETURN QUICKLY. Unlike mild anxiety, fear shuts down the thinking brain, causing confusion and jumbled thoughts. Don't panic! Know that the mental fog will quickly lift as the wave of fear subsides. Also, keep in mind that your jumbled thoughts do not always lead to jumbled words. There is a good chance that you will still be making sense to your audience. If anything, they may interpret your temporary, clouded thinking as an attempt to search for the exact words and ideas that you wish to convey.



11. ANTICIPATE BEING SUPERCHARGED. It also helps to know that after surviving the initial wave of fear, many people experience subsequent waves of positive anxiety – the type of 'high' one gets after surviving a perceived danger such as bungee jumping. Anticipate that this positive stress will boost your performance!



12. LEVERAGE ANY SPIRITUAL BELIEFS. For those of you with a spiritual perspective, engage your specific beliefs to reduce your fear. For example, some people might imagine being immersed in a tube of bright, supportive light that washes away fear and pours in confidence and energy. They might even imagine breathing in this light and being filled with peace and confidence.



13. PAUSE ONLY IF YOU MUST. When faced with rising fear, you may be tempted to pause to compose yourself. However, a pause can just as readily open the door for a *greater* onrush of fear. In view of this risk, we suggest you continue with your presentation so that you don't lose your positive momentum! **HOWEVER**, there may be situations when you feel that you *must* pause in order to compose yourself. If this happens, the following tips may help:

13.1 Make your pause look intentional. When you pause, put on a 'thinking' expression. Glance at your notes. Smile and look confident. Your audience may think that you are searching for what to say next. While no one *wants* to look like they have lost their train of thought, it may still be preferable to looking scared. Use these few seconds to calm yourself and then get back on track with your presentation.



13.2 Realize your pause is not excessive. When you pause during a presentation, you may feel pressured to begin speaking as soon as possible. However, what seems like an eternity to you is only a few seconds for your audience! Knowing this will relieve some of the pressure.



13.3 Buy more time by asking a question. During your pause, ask the audience a general question. For example: *"Before we continue, who here has been directly affected by the topic we are discussing? Can you briefly share your experience?"* Posing the question puts the onus on the audience to think and speak, thereby allowing time for the wave of fear to pass through you. When you begin to feel more composed, you can say *"Thank you for sharing your experiences. Your stories reflect the importance of this topic. Let's dig into the specifics..."*. Then continue with your presentation.



13.4 Take a drink during your pause. Drinking some water has a natural calming effect. Therefore, we suggest you have a bottle of water close by. When taking a drink, partially turn your back to the audience (the only time you turn your back!) This will hide any shaking in your hands caused by the adrenaline flowing through your body. Taking a drink will also buy you additional time to compose yourself. As a bonus, the water will wet the fear-induced dryness in your mouth.



Although high anxiety and fear are unpleasant, you WILL survive – and you will most likely do much better than you thought! Once you successfully pull through your first episode of fear, you will have had first-hand evidence of your resilience. Then, before your next presentation, remind yourself of that proven resilience. This will help reduce future episodes of fear.

And that brings us to our **TWO MOST IMPORTANT TIPS...**



14. PREPARE & REHEARSE. So far, we have looked at ways to reduce the stress that might arise immediately before and during your presentation. But why wait until then? Your best strategy to keep anxiety and fear from hijacking your performance is to control it before your presentation date. You can do that by taking sufficient time to PREPARE and REHEARSE. As you organize and practice your presentation, your confidence will strengthen, leaving less opportunity for fear to spread its tentacles. Our *Guide* and *Accelerator* Kit offer a goldmine of tips to get you in top form for your presentation, including additional fear-busting strategies that you can apply from day-one.



15. SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT. Delivering a few presentations will begin reducing some of your fear. Congratulations for mustering the courage for these first talks! However, if you want *mastery* over your fear so that you can present at your full potential, there is only one proven path:

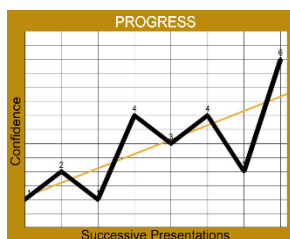
You must VOLUNTARILY and REGULARLY expose yourself to PROGRESSIVELY CHALLENGING public speaking opportunities!

It is only by actively seeking progressive presentations that you will master your full confidence, skills and persuasiveness.



Start by jumping into small puddles. Seek presentations that do not over-challenge you. Look for smaller audiences in an informal setting where there is minor pressure with less at stake. Also, choose presentation topics that reflect your existing knowledge and passion. Toastmasters International provides an ideal atmosphere to speak in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

After you raise your confidence and reduce your stress, begin jumping into bigger water from greater heights. Look for progressively more challenging opportunities involving larger audiences, more difficult topics, new knowledge, critical audience members, tougher questions, more formality, and increased stakes.



As you progress, keep in mind that your improvement may not be linear. Instead of each presentation being better than the last, your confidence and delivery may occasionally slip. Your fear may even return. *THIS IS NORMAL!* Progress rarely moves in a straight line. However, rest assured you are improving! For every step back, there will be three steps forward. To achieve this longer-term gain, you must continually seek new opportunities to present. Over time, you will be presenting with your full presence, capability, persuasiveness and impact! To accelerate your progress, we recommend a presentation coach. We offer a practical **coaching service**: just send us your recorded presentation or rehearsal, and we will return your video with our professional comments. It's that easy!

For additional information, contact us at:

info@solidgoldpresentations.com

Visit our website for a full goldmine of tips and strategies:

www.solidgoldpresentations.com

PLEASE NOTE: The downloadable documents on our website contain *so many* nuggets that we had to format the materials in textbook style to limit the length. Those materials do not contain the same varied mix of images as in this summary. We may be publishing more condensed, interactive versions in the future to send to our past customers.

To achieve great dreams,
You must give them a voice!

Speak boldly to the world
and Life rushes to your aid.

ALLIES APPEAR.
OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.
FORTUNES BLOSSOM.

Why delay?

EMPOWER YOUR VOICE AND
SEIZE YOUR FUTURE NOW!



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