

# 10 Tips for Public Speaking

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and even beneficial, but too much nervousness can be detrimental.

Here are some proven tips on how to control your butterflies and give better presentations:

- 1. Know your material.** Pick a topic you are interested in. Know more about it than you include in your speech. Use humor, personal stories and conversational language – that way you won't easily forget what to say.
- 2. Practice. Practice. Practice!** Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Revise as necessary. Work to control filler words; Practice, pause and breathe. Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected.
- 3. Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience members as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.
- 4. Know the room.** Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
- 5. Relax.** Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything. ("One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. Pause. Begin.) Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.
- 6. Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the audience clapping – it will boost your confidence.
- 7. Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you.
- 8. Don't apologize** for any nervousness or problem – the audience probably never noticed it.
- 9. Concentrate on the message – not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.
- 10. Gain experience.** Mainly, your speech should represent *you* — as an authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need in a safe and friendly environment.