

# Don't Freak Out: Managing Emotions While Public Speaking

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# Overview

- Baseline Exercise
- What is happening to me?
  - Reactions to public speaking
- Why is this happening to me? & Why can't I control this?
  - Reasons behind the reactions
- What can I do about it?
  - How to gain control over your reactions
- Practice

# Public Speaking or Dying



# Baseline Exercise

- Complete fear list ratings
- Once completed, follow instructions for group activity
- Group discussion of activity

# What is happening to me?

## Reactions to public speaking

- Glossophobia, social anxiety, generalized anxiety
- Anticipatory anxiety
  - Physical (Fight-or-Flight), mental, emotional
- Avoidance
- Performance anxiety
  - Physical, verbal, non-verbal, and psychological

Why is this happening? &  
Why can't I control this?

Reasons behind the reactions

# The Scared Gazelle



# Why is this happening? & Why can't I control this?

## Reasons behind the reactions

- Fear
  - of being judged negatively
  - of not knowing your material/content
  - of what will happen/how you will feel
- A learned response
  - Previous negative experiences or vicariously
- Fight-or-Flight response



# What can I do about it?

How to gain control over your reactions

# What can I do about it?

## How to gain control over your reactions

1. Know that it is normal – 3 out of every 4 people
  - People fear public speaking more than dying
2. Realize the source of your fear
3. Counter your physical reactions – relax!
  - Controlled, rhythmic breathing
4. Tune up and Slow down
5. Alter your perception
  - Of the audience (e.g., “Picture them naked”)
  - Of yourself (e.g., Become a character or a persona)
6. Practice
  - Think Gladwell’s 10,000 hours + strategic practice
  - Organizations (e.g., Toastmasters) and self-help books
7. Medications
  - Beta-blockers control fight-or-flight (e.g., musicians)
8. What has worked for you?

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## Get Excited: The Best Way to Conquer a Fear of Public Speaking

Article

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By [LAUREN WEBER](#) [CONNECT](#)

If one of your resolutions for 2014 is to conquer your fear of public speaking, forget deep breathing, meditation, visualizing the lapping waves of an ocean and other soothing rituals.

A better strategy is to take the heart-thumping symptoms of anxiety and re-frame them as signs of excitement, according to a new research paper from Alison Brooks, a professor at Harvard Business School.

That simple shift helps individuals see an anxiety-inducing event as an opportunity rather than a threat, writes Brooks in a recent paper in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. Speakers who translated anxiety to excitement had better performance and more positive feelings about the task, she found.

"These are very subtle interventions that are really easy to use," she said, adding that she was surprised by the magnitude of the impact they had.

Brooks, whose research focuses on the effects of emotions in the workplace, studied people preparing to perform in three contexts—speaking in public, taking a math test and singing a karaoke version of Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'"—and found that people who said "I am excited" aloud before a stressful event did better than those who uttered statements like "I am anxious," "I am calm" or nothing at all.

# Be the Cheetah!



# Practice Exercise

- Part 1 of this exercise is a creative task that requires you to use your imagination
- Individually, describe a utopia. Include the following aspects:
  - Location
  - Climate & Terrain
  - People/relationships
  - System (or structure) of government
  - Name of this utopia
  - Other qualities
- Part 2

# Resources

- Web sites
  - <http://www.glossophobia.com/>
  - Mayo Clinic
    - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fear-of-public-speaking/AN01979>
  - Psychology Today
    - <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/communication-success/201305/5-tips-reducing-public-speaking-nervousness>
- Books
  - *10 simple solutions to shyness: How to overcome shyness, social anxiety, and fear of public speaking* (Anthony, 2004)
  - *Confessions of a public speaker* (Berkun, 2011)
  - *In the spotlight: Overcome your fear of public speaking and performing* (Esposito, 2000)