

TOP TEN TIPS FOR OVERCOMING NERVES

Nerves are natural. They don't go away completely but you can use these tips and techniques to help you. The Adrenalin produced by nervous energy often adds to the emotional impact of your speech.

Try some of the following tips to help you get the "butterflies flying in formation".

- 1. UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS YOU TO SUCCEED.**
They are on your side. They can't feel the butterflies, the sweaty palms or your shaking knees. They are only listening to what you say.
- 2. PRACTISE.**
In front of a mirror, at home, in a car or to your friends and colleagues. Hear yourself speak. You could also consider recording your speech.
- 3. REMEMBER TO BREATHE.**
Take some deep breaths before you speak. This will both ease any tension you have and help project your voice. Breathe and stretch!
- 4. KEEP YOUR OPENING AND CONCLUSION SHORT AND SIMPLE AND MEMORISE THEM.**
This makes you appear confident and authoritative and you then have eye contact with your audience which ensures they listen to you.
- 5. KNOW YOUR MATERIAL AND BE PREPARED.**
Be ready with facts, figures and examples.
- 6. IMAGINE YOURSELF SPEAKING TO A LARGE AUDIENCE.**
Picture the room, see the people, and hear the applause. Visualise yourself being successful.
- 7. PLAN.**
Proper planning prevents a poor performance.
- 8. RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO APOLOGISE.**
The audience will never know if you leave out some of your speech or take things in a different order. Simply use the power of the pause and continue.

9. REMEMBER THE FEEDBACK YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

Think of things like maintaining eye contact, letting go of clasped hands. Speak loudly and slowly – this can make a huge difference as to how you come across.

10. TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.

Public speaking is a skill that can be learnt, like learning a sport, or learning to play an instrument. Once you have mastered the basics you can continue to develop your skills