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Wellness Wednesday

How To Calm Your Nerves Before Public Speaking At Work

No other everyday office opportunity can strike terror in employees quite like public speaking. Giving a presentation can be a chance to get your voice heard, but 1 in 4 Americans fear it. It scares more of us than snakes, hell, walking alone at night and insects, according to a 2018 survey by Chapman University.

But research shows there are ways to calm your jitters and not feel overwhelmed. Here are some that tips psychologists and experts have for the nervous public speaker:

1. Reframe those nerves as excitement.

Don't listen to the advice of those "Keep calm and carry on" posters if you're anxious about public speaking. Instead, try embracing your sweaty palms and racing heartbeat as signs of excitement. This reappraisal of anxiety can actually help stop nerves from overwhelming you, a 2014 Harvard Business School study found. How you think about your anxiety can change how you perform under it.

In the study, business professor Alison Wood Brooks recruited participants to sing the Journey song "Don't Stop Believin'" in front of a group. Before they belted their hearts out, they were told to say, "I am anxious," "I am excited," or nothing. A video game measured how well they performed. The group that declared their excitement improved their singing performance more than the "anxious" and say-nothing groups.

Similarly, in a separate experiment, participants were asked to give a short public speech after being told to say "I am calm" or "I am excited." The "excited" group gave better speeches, independent raters judged. Brooks suggested that this works because encouraging excitement can prime you to see the task as an opportunity, whereas trying to calm down can make you see the challenge as a threat.

2) Make it about the ideas you want to share; don't make it all about you.

Yes, being asked to speak in front of your peers can be an honor. But don't make the opportunity about more than it is if you're worried about your boss' approval or what the audience will think. Amanda Hennessey, founder of Boston Public Speaking, has coached people for more than a decade. She advises taking the focus off of yourself and putting it instead onto the valuable information you are going to deliver. That way, the speech



becomes “an exchange of ideas rather than a referendum of our self-worth,” she said. Hennessey said public speakers in the office can focus on why the public speaking matters for their team or client and “what’s at stake for the people.”

“That brings us to that place of passion and purpose, where our bodies feel very alive,” Hennessey said. If your mind starts to narrate a horror story about how your talk will go, Hennessey suggests a physically grounding technique to help you stay continually present. “Feel your feet on the earth and start to notice things around you, look at something on your desk that makes you happy and really look at it,” Hennessey said. “We want to get back to the present, instead of projecting about the future.”

3) Don't obsess over each word.

If you have done the necessary preparation, don't monitor what you are about to say right before the public speaking opportunity, advises Sian Beilock, a psychologist who authored “Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To.” Looking at famous examples of people “choking” under pressure, she found that high-achieving people can underperform when they are struck by “paralysis analysis” and try to control every part of their performance by paying too much attention to step-by-step details.

“Oftentimes, the reason that we mess up, especially something that’s well-learned or practiced, is that we start paying too much attention to the details,” Beilock said. “When you’re focusing on every step of what you’re going to say right before you go in, that can be problematic.” Beilock says a public speaker can distract themselves with an activity that takes their mind off what they are about to do.

“One way that research has found to get rid of that monitoring is to focus on something at a higher level,” Beilock said. “In golf, they talk about one swing thought, or a mantra that encapsulates the entire putting stroke. When you’re speaking and you’re trying to get the point across, think about the three points you want to get across. What are the three goals?”

With those in mind, when you do open your mouth, you can focus on the outcome of what you’re trying to say rather than “every word coming out of your mouth,” Beilock said. Hennessey suggests carrying positive self-affirmations that speak to you, such as “I got this,” “I release the need to prove my worth,” “I am excited to share what I care about,” or “I am enough.” She said speakers can keep a copy of the words on a piece of paper in their wallet to read over before a talk. “Different ones appeal to different people,” Hennessey said. “If it sparks joy, it’s going to keep doing that and it’s going to be able to cut through the noise of our mind.”

4) Exercise.

There is a large body of research that shows aerobic exercise can reduce the body’s biological stress response. If this fits into your lifestyle and routine, go ahead and do it as part of your preparation for public speaking. But don't make the exercise a need you have to fulfill in order for a talk to go well. “Have it be OK if you suddenly you can't [exercise],” Hennessey said. “You want to be careful about having rituals, but not getting so attached to them.” Article source: <http://bit.ly/30tE97o>



This Week's Exercise

RESISTED PUSHUPS



HOW TO DO IT:

LOOP THE BAND AROUND YOUR BACK AND SHOULDERS, THEN PLACE THE HANDLES UNDER YOUR PALMS AS YOU ASSUME PLANK POSITION.

(LOOP THE BAND AROUND YOUR HANDS TO CREATE MORE RESISTANCE)

(A). LOWER INTO A PUSHUP

(B). AS YOU RETURN TO PLANK, YOU SHOULD FEEL RESISTANCE.

Source: <http://bit.ly/2UtZ8V9>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

BASIL OIL



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup packed fresh basil leaves, stemmed and washed
- 1/4 cup DeLallo extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

Directions

1. Place the basil, water, garlic, salt and red pepper flakes in a mini-food processor and pulse a few times. Add the olive oil and blend until you have smooth sauce.
2. Use immediately or refrigerate. Flavors are even more intense the next day. Refrigerate for up to 2 to 3 days.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1Tbsp
Calories: 82kcal
Carbohydrates: 0.5g
Protein: 0.5g
Fat: 9g
Saturated Fat: 1g
Sodium: 93.5mg
Fiber: 0.5g
Freestyle Points:3
Points +:2

Recipe source:

<http://bit.ly/30tKeRg>