

# Presenting Yourself Professionally by Speaking with Confidence

By Sylvia Plester-Silk

As a business owner, public speaking skills are beneficial to build credibility. Being able to quickly and concisely share what needs your business serves helps individuals know whether your business is a potential solution for them or someone they know.

Many people fear speaking in public. The reptilian part of our brain perceives standing in front of a group as a potential threat to our safety. So there is a good biological reason for your discomfort. Rest assured that you are not alone in this anxiety. The good news is that you can overcome the dread and become a better speaker.

There are techniques that can help you become more comfortable in front of the room. Even if you never desire to be talking in front of thousands of people, this information can benefit your business.

1. Standup Straight. While this may trigger memories of choir or piano lessons, it's very important to have a straight spine to enable you to breathe easier, as it opens the airways.
2. Take deep breaths. This will assist you to slow down the pace of your words which are often accelerated when tense or nervous. It makes it easier for you as you are bringing more oxygen to your brain and body – which increases your ability to think in the moment.
3. Take the Stage by planting your feet. Many people pace when nervous and this is distracting for listeners. By standing on solid feet, you will be more grounded so that listeners will focus on your words, not your pacing.
4. Find a friendly face in the audience and begin by talking to that person for the first 10 seconds or so, then find the next friendly face and so on. Try to ensure that you scan the room connecting with individuals throughout the room.
5. Plan your words. Take the time to get clear on what your message is. Make notes – some of the most famous speakers in the world use notes. If it works for them, why not you too?
6. Remember that others want you to succeed. They really want you to do well and are there to support you in your message.
7. If you make a mistake or forget something you planned to say, it's okay because you are the only one who knows that you forgot it.
8. Smile – it makes you appear more likeable and will put the audience at ease.

Learning to overcome the fear and panic of being in front of the room will serve you well. If you want to build on your current level of speaking, give me a call. I offer coaching services for speakers to help you get more comfortable and get your message across more effectively.

Sylvia Plester-Silk is a Professional Speaker, Facilitator, Coach and Author of the upcoming book *Unleashing Team Potential: Lessons for Managers from My Canine Friends*. She is a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers, the past Chair of Pro-Track Speaker Academy, Toronto. She has been speaking to audiences since she was only 4 years old. It did help that she had 13 siblings, so always had an audience. You can reach her at 519.822.3776 or [sylvia@onpurposeconsulting.ca](mailto:sylvia@onpurposeconsulting.ca).