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Last Updated on July 20, 2021 You're standing behind the curtain, just about to make your way on stage to face the many faces half-shrouded in darkness in front of you. As you move towards the spotlight, your body starts to feel heavier with each step. A familiar thump echoes throughout your body - your heartbeat has gone off the charts.Don't worry, you're not the only one with glossophobia(also known as speech anxiety or the fear of speaking to large crowds). Sometimes, the anxiety happens long before you even stand on stage.Your body's defence mechanism responds by causing a part of your brain to release adrenaline into your blood - the same chemical that gets released as if you were being chased by a lion.Here's a step-by-step guide to help you overcome your fear of public speaking:1. Prepare yourself mentally and physicallyAccording to experts, we're built to display anxiety and to recognize it in others. If your body and mind are anxious, your audience will notice. Hence, it's important to prepare yourself before the big show so that you arrive on stage confident, collected and ready."Your outside world is a reflection of your inside world. What goes on in the inside, shows on the outside." - Bob ProctorExercising lightly before a presentation helps get your blood circulating and sends oxygen to the brain. Mental exercises, on the other hand, can help calm the mind and nerves. Here are some useful ways to calm your racing heart when you start to feel the butterflies in your stomach.Warming upIf you're nervous, chances are your body will feel the same way. Your body gets tense, your muscles feel tight or you're breaking in cold sweat. The audience will notice you are nervous.If you observe that this is exactly what is happening to you minutes before a speech, do a couple of stretches to loosen and relax your body. It's better to warm up before every speech as it helps to increase the functional potential of the body as a whole. Not only that, it increases muscle efficiency, improves reaction time and your movements.Here are some exercises to loosen up your body before show time: Neck and shoulder rolls - This helps relieve upper body muscle tension and pressure as the rolls focus on rotating the head and shoulders, loosening the muscle. Stress and anxiety can make us rigid within this area which can make you feel agitated, especially when standing. Arm stretches - We often use this part of our muscles during a speech or presentation through our hand gestures and movements. Stretching these muscles can reduce arm fatigue, loosen you up and improve your body language range. Waist twists - Place your hands on your hips and rotate your waist in a circular motion. This exercise focuses on loosening the abdominal and lower back regions which is essential as it can cause discomfort and pain, further amplifying any anxieties you may experience. Stay hydratedEver felt parched seconds before speaking? And then coming up on stage sounding raspy and scratchy in front of the audience? This happens because the adrenaline from stage fright causes your mouth to feel dried out.To prevent all that, it's essential we stay adequately hydrated before a speech. A sip of water will do the trick. However, do drink in moderation so that you won't need to go to the bathroom constantly.Try to avoid sugary beverages and caffeine, since it's a diuretic - meaning you'll feel thirstier. It will also amplify your anxiety which prevents you from speaking smoothly.MeditateMeditation is well-known as a powerful tool to calm the mind. ABC's Dan Harris, co-anchor of Nightline and Good Morning America weekend and author of the book titled10% Happier , recommends that meditation can help individuals to feel significantly calmer, faster.Meditation is like a workout for your mind. It gives you the strength and focus to filter out the negativity and distractions with words of encouragement, confidence and strength.Mindfulness meditation, in particular, is a popular method to calm yourself before going up on the big stage. The practice involves sitting comfortably, focusing on your breathing and then bringing your mind's attention to the present without drifting into concerns about the past or future - which likely includes floundering on stage.Here's a nice example of guided meditation before public speaking:2. Focus on your goalOne thing people with a fear of public speaking have in common is focusing too much on themselves and the possibility of failure.Do I look funny? What if I can't remember what to say? Do I look stupid? Will people listen to me? Does anyone care about what I'm talking about?Instead of thinking this way, shift your attention to your one true purpose - contributing something of value to your audience. Decide on the progress you'd like your audience to make after your presentation. Notice their movements and expressions to adapt your speech to ensure that they are having a good time to leave the room as better people.If your own focus isn't beneficial and what it should be when you're speaking, then shift it to what does. This is also key to establishing trust during your presentation as the audience can clearly see that you have their interests at heart.3. Convert negativity to positivityThere are two sides constantly battling inside of us - one is filled with strength and courage while the other is doubt and insecurities. Which one will you feed?What if I mess up this speech? What if I'm not funny enough? What if I forget what to say?It's no wonder why many of us are uncomfortable giving a presentation. All we do is bring ourselves down before we got a chance to prove ourselves. This is also known as a self-fulfilling prophecy - a belief that comes true because we are acting as if it already is. If you think you're incompetent, then it will eventually become true.Motivational coaches tout that positive mantras and affirmations tend to boost your confidants for the moments that matter most. Say to yourself: "I'll ace this speech and I can do it!" Take advantage of your adrenaline rush to encourage positive outcome rather than thinking of the negative "what ifs".Here's a video of Psychologist Kelly McGonigal who encourages her audience to turn stress into something positive as well as provide methods on how to cope with it.4. Understand your contentKnowing your content at your fingertips helps reduce your anxiety because there is one less thing to worry about. One way to get there is to practice numerous times before your actual speech. However, memorizing your script word-for-word is not encouraged. You can end up freezing should you forget something. You'll also risk sounding unnatural and less approachable."No amount of reading or memorizing will make you successful in life. It is the understanding and the application of wise thought that counts." - Bob ProctorMany people unconsciously make the mistake of reading from their slides or memorizing their script word-for-word without understanding their content - a definite way to stress themselves out.Understanding your speech flow and content makes it easier for you to convert ideas and concepts into your own words which you can then clearly explain to others in a conversational manner. Designing your slides to include text prompts is also an easy hack to ensure you get to quickly recall your flow when your mind goes blank.One way to understand is to memorize the over-arching concepts or ideas in your pitch. It helps you speak more naturally and let your personality shine through. It's almost like taking your audience on a journey with a few key milestones.5. Practice makes perfectLike most people, many of us are not naturally attuned to public speaking. Rarely do individuals walk up to a large audience and present flawlessly without any research and preparation.In fact, some of the top presenters make it look easy during showtime because they have spent countless hours behind-the-scenes in deep practice. Even great speakers like the late John F. Kennedy would spend months preparing his speech beforehand.Public speaking, like any other skill, requires practice - whether it be practicing your speech countless of times in front of a mirror or making notes. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect!6. Be authenticThere's nothing wrong with feeling stressed before going up to speak in front of an audience.Many people fear public speaking because they fear others will judge them for showing their true, vulnerable self. However, vulnerability can sometimes help you come across as more authentic and relatable as a speaker. Drop the pretence of trying to act or speak like someone else and you'll find that it's worth the risk. You become more genuine, flexible and spontaneous, which makes it easier to handle unpredictable situations - whether it's getting tough questions from the crowd or experiencing an unexpected technical difficulty.To find out your authentic style of speaking is easy. Just pick a topic or issue you are passionate about and discuss this like you normally would with a close family or friend. It is like having a conversation with someone in a personal one-to-one setting. A great way to do this on stage is to select a random audience member(with a hopefully calming face) and speak to a single person at a time during your speech. You'll find that it's easier trying to connect to one person at a time than a whole room.With that said, being comfortable enough to be yourself in front of others may take a little time and some experience, depending how comfortable you are with being yourself in front of others. But once you embrace it, stage fright will not be as intimidating as you initially thought.Presenters like Barack Obama are a prime example of a genuine and passionate speaker.7. Post speech evaluationLast but not the least, if you've done public speaking and have been scarred from a bad experience, try seeing it as a lesson learned to improve yourself as a speaker.Don't beat yourself up after a presentationWe are the hardest on ourselves and it's good to be. But when you finish delivering your speech or presentation, give yourself some recognition and a pat on the back.You managed to finish whatever you had to do and did not give up. You did not let your fears and insecurities get to you. Take a little more pride in your work and believe in yourself.Improve your next speechAs mentioned before, practice does make perfect.If you want to improve your public speaking skills, try asking someone to film you during a speech or presentation. Afterwards, watch and observe what you can do to improve yourself next time.Here are some questions you can ask yourself after every speech: How did I do? Are there any areas for improvement? Did I sound or look stressed? Did I stumble on my words? Why? Was I saying "um" too often? How was the flow of the speech? Write everything you observed down and keep practicing and improving. In time, you'll be able to better manage your fears of public speaking and appear more confident when it counts.If you want even more tips about public speaking or delivering a great presentation, check out these articles too: 1 Mythology 101: A Basic History of Zeus the Greek God 2 Quite the Cost: Expensive Mistakes Made Throughout History, Ranked 3 Dried vs. Fresh: How Much Dill Should You Use? 4 What Is X Squared Plus X Squared? 5 Deep-Freeze Dinosaurs: Why Oklahoma's "Alligator Popsicles" Practice Snorkeling for Survival In a report or research paper, documentation is the evidence provided for information and ideas borrowed from others. That evidence includes both primary sources and secondary sources. There are numerous documentation styles and formats, including MLA style (used for research in the humanities), APA style (psychology, sociology, education), Chicago style (history), and ACS style (chemistry). Adrienne Escoe"Documentation has many meanings, from the broad—anything written in any medium—to the narrow—policies and procedures manuals or perhaps records."(The Practical Guide to People-Friendly Documentation, 2nd. ed. ASQ Quality Press, 2001) Kristin R. Woolever"An issue more important than documentation form is knowing when to document. In brief, anything that is copied needs to be documented..."Perhaps the best tip for knowing when to document is to use common sense. If writers are careful to give credit where it is due and to provide the reader with easy access to all the source material, the text is probably documented appropriately."(About Writing: A Rhetoric for Advanced Writers. Wadsworth, 1991) Linda Smoak Schwartz"The most important thing to remember when you take notes from your sources is that you must clearly distinguish between quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material that must be documented in your paper and ideas that do not require documentation because they are considered general knowledge about that subject."(The Wadsworth Guide to MLA Documentation, 2nd ed. Wadsworth, 2011) Susan K. Miller-Cochran and Rochelle L. Rodrigo"When you are reviewing and analyzing your resources, keep in mind that the library/Internet distinction is not quite as simple as it might seem at first. The Internet is where students often turn when they are having difficulty getting started. Many instructors warn students against using Internet resources because they are easily alterable and because anyone can construct and publish a Web site. These points are important to remember, but it is essential to use clear evaluative criteria when you are looking at any resource. Print resources can be self-published as well. Analyzing how easily a resource is changed, how often it is changed, who changed it, who reviews it, and who is responsible for the content will help you choose resources that are reliable and credible, wherever you might find them."(The Wadsworth Guide to Research, Documentation, rev. ed. Wadsworth, 2011) Joseph F. Trimmer"You may decide to vary the pattern of documentation by presenting the information from a source and placing the author's name and page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. This method is particularly useful if you have already established the identity of your source in a previous sentence and now want to develop the author's idea in some detail without having to clutter your sentences with constant references to his or her name."(A Guide to MLA Documentation, 9th ed. Wadsworth, 2012) A footnote is a reference, explanation, or comment1 placed below the main text on a printed page. Footnotes are identified in the text by a numeral or a symbol. In research papers and reports, footnotes commonly acknowledge the sources of facts and quotations that appear in the text. "Footnotes are the mark of a scholar," says Bryan A. Garner. "Overabundant, overflowing footnotes are the mark of an insecure scholar — often one who gets lost in the byways of analysis and who wants to show off" (Garner's Modern American Usage, 2009). "Footnotes: vices. In a work containing many long footnotes, it may be difficult to fit them onto the pages they pertain to, especially in an illustrated work." "Content footnotes supplement or simplify substantive information in the text; they should not include complicated, irrelevant, or nonessential information..." "Copyright permission footnotes acknowledge the source of lengthy quotations, scale and test items, and figures and tables that have been reprinted or adapted." Content Footnotes"What, after all, is a content footnote but material that one is either too lazy to integrate into the text or too reverent to discard? Reading a piece of prose that constantly dissolves into extended footnotes is profoundly disheartening. Hence my rule of thumb for footnotes is exactly the same as that for parentheses. One should regard them as symbols of failure. I hardly need to add that in this vale of tears failure is sometimes unavoidable." Footnote FormsAll notes have the same general form:1. Adrian Johns. The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 623.If you cite the same text again, you can shorten subsequent notes:5. Johns. Nature of the Book. 384-85. The Disadvantages of Footnotes"More than one recent critic has pointed out that footnotes interrupt a narrative. References detract from the illusion of veracity and immediacy. . . . (Noel Coward made the same point more memorably when he remarked that having to read a footnote resembles having to go downstairs to answer the door while in the midst of making love.)" Belloc on Footnotes"[L]et a man put his foot-notes in very small print indeed at the end of a volume, and, if necessary, let him give specimens rather than a complete list. For instance, let a man who writes history as it should be written — with all the physical details in evidence, the weather, the dress, colors, everything — write on for the pleasure of his reader and not for his critic. But let him take sections here and there, and in an appendix show the critic how it is being done. Let him keep his notes and challenge criticism. I think he will be secure. He will not be secure from the anger of those who cannot write clearly, let alone vividly, and who have never in their lives been able to resurrect the past, but he will be secure from their destructive effect." The Lighter Side of Footnotes"A footnote is like running downstairs to answer the doorbell on your wedding night." 1 "The footnote has figured prominently in the fictions of such leading contemporary novelists as Nicholson Baker2, David Foster Wallace3, and Dave Eggers. These writers have largely revived the digressive function of the footnote."(L. Douglas and A. George, Sense and Nonsenseibility: Lampons of Learning and Literature. Simon and Schuster, 2004) 2 "[T]he great scholarly or anecdotal footnotes of Lecky, Gibbon, or Boswell, written by the author of the book himself to supplement, or even correct over several later editions, what he says in the primary text, are reassurances that the pursuit of truth doesn't have clear outer boundaries: it doesn't end with the book, restatement and self-disagreement and the enveloping sea of referenced authorities all continue. Footnotes are the finer-suckered surfaces that allow tentacular paragraphs to hold fast to the wider reality of the library."(Nicholson Baker, The Mezzanine, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988) 3 "One of the odd pleasures in reading the work of the late David Foster Wallace is the opportunity to escape from the main text to explore epic footnotes, always rendered at the bottoms of pages in thickets of tiny type."(Roy Peter Clark, The Glamour of Grammar, Little, Brown, 2010) Hilaire Belloc, On, 1923 Chicago Manual of Style, University of Chicago Press, 2003 Anthony Grafton, The Footnote: A Curious History. Harvard University Press, 1999. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed., 2010. Paul Robinson, "The Philosophy of Punctuation." Opera, Sex, and Other Vital Matters. University of Chicago Press, 2002. Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th ed. University of Chicago Press, 2007.

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