

Controlling Your Fear

The Better Speaker Series



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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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The Better Speaker Series

Toastmasters International's **The Better Speaker Series** is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and tips that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

The presentations in **The Better Speaker Series** may be presented by any club member and take between 10 to 15 minutes to present.

Conducting the Program

"Controlling Your Fear" helps participants identify the fears that trigger their anxiety and offers ways to managing it. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ A PowerPoint presentation for a visual aid



In your own words

The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The presenter's outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.

Here are tips on using this program to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ **Study the outline in this manual carefully.** Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ **Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words.** Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively. If you are using this outline as a digital PDF, record your thoughts with the built-in notetaking functions.
- ▶ **When delivering your speech, be expressive.** Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster, including vocal variety and gestures.

Using Visual Aids Effectively

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance. In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered.

◆ V1. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint presentation is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
 - ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
 - ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
 - ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in an online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.
- ▶ For more information on presenting in an online or hybrid format, refer to the Manage Online Meetings elective in Level 3 of your path."

Benefits and Opportunities

The Better Speaker Series has valuable guidance for you and your club. The content will help you master core skills for speech writing and delivery through effective and easy-to-follow tips. This will benefit Toastmasters members at any level of experience or skill.

Presenting from the Better Speaker Series is required in Level 4 of all six standard paths: Dynamic Leadership, Engaging Humor, Motivational Strategies, Persuasive Influence, Presentation Mastery, and Visionary Communication. This is both a great way to support your club members and an excellent chance to practice speaking and presenting.

Controlling Your Fear

Introducing the Presenter

Tips For The Presenter: Write Your Introduction

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of **The Better Speakers Series**.
- ▶ Explain why “Controlling Your Fear” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Provide some background information about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You are the Introducer* in **A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats** for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

Tips For The Introducer

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

Outline

Introduction

It is common for both experienced and beginning speakers to be nervous about giving a speech. The difference is that the experienced speaker knows how to not only control this nervousness, but use it to enhance their speech. By understanding the causes and symptoms of the fear, a speaker can harness that seemingly negative energy and channel it toward a positive outcome. An experienced speaker also knows how to appear confident in front of an audience. To have a confident appearance, a seasoned orator uses proper methods and techniques to relax and calm their nerves.

◆ V1

Anxiety Triggers

- ▶ **New and unknown situations:** New experiences are stressful. Not knowing what to expect from unfamiliar settings can cause high levels of anxiety.
- ▶ **Risk of failure:** From childhood to adulthood, we dream of success, victory, and achievement. To not finish well or achieve what we set out to do can often increase nervousness.
- ▶ **Potential for appearing foolish:** Beyond achieving goals, we all want to be careful in the way we accomplish our goals. The possibility of embarrassment can cause great fear and panic.
- ▶ **Possibility of boring the audience:** A speaker's hope is to engage and enamor the audience. The fear of not connecting with the audience, of being considered boring, brings about insecurity, apprehension, and worry.

◆ V2

Anxiety Symptoms

When confronted with a situation that causes anxiety, your body responds by increasing the flow of adrenaline. This causes your heart to beat faster. Extra blood and oxygen will rush to your muscles and brain. This natural rush provides extra energy that enables quick responses, but it also can have some less desirable effects:

- ▶ Increased heart rate
- ▶ A tingly or fluttering feeling in your stomach
- ▶ Uncontrollable shakes
- ▶ Lightheadedness
- ▶ Dizziness

◆ V3

Managing Anxiety

Anxiety is common for any speaker who is concerned about their performance. This nervous energy is valuable if used properly. The key is learning to manage it. There are three major methods for handling anxiety:

- ▶ **Experience:** Studies show that one of the best methods for reducing anxiety is practice. Repeatedly giving speeches reduces fear and helps to build confidence. Even speaking in front of a group a few times can help put your anxiety into perspective. Try these techniques to gain experience: and boost your confidence:
 - Practice in front of a mirror or record yourself.
 - Rehearse in front of family and friends.
 - Deliver a speech in your Toastmasters club.
 - Give presentations before other groups, anywhere you can.

◆ V4

- ▶ **Visualization:** Research shows that vividly imagined events are recorded in our brains as memories. To the brain and central nervous system, these memories are indistinguishable from actual experiences. The way you think can cause physiological changes that affect your performance. Rehearsing something in your mind uses thought processes that help achieve positive results. Close your eyes as you mentally walk yourself through the following scenario, vividly imagining each action:
 1. You are introduced to an audience.
 2. You walk up to the lectern confidently, smiling to people as you pass.
 3. You breathe deeply several times before beginning to speak. (As you imagine this, take deep breaths.)
 4. You speak clearly and confidently remembering all of the points you wanted to make.
(Rehearse your speech in your mind as you do this.)
 5. You captivate your audience with your words, gestures, and vocal variety.
 6. When you finish, the audience applauds in appreciation.

Repeat this mental rehearsal until your confidence has increased and your anxiety has decreased.

◆ V5

- ▶ **Relaxation:** Because your mind and body are connected, emotions often have a physical effect on your body. As anxiety builds, so does physical stress. Relaxation and breathing techniques alleviate physical tension and calm your mind. Isometric exercises, which involve holding one position without moving, reduce stress by increasing circulation and the flow of oxygen to your brain. Practice these techniques to reduce tension:
 - Focus on areas of concentrated tension, such as your shoulders. Tighten your muscles there for a few seconds and then release. Systematically do the same for each major muscle group, starting with your feet and working up to your facial muscles.
 - Stand, inhale, and stretch your arms toward the ceiling. Then exhale as you bend to touch your toes, keeping your knees straight. (Only bend as far as you comfortably can.) Repeat this several times.

- Hold your arms out to the sides, parallel to the floor, and rotate them in small circles, First, do this forward 10 times, then backward 10 times.
- Drop your head to your chest, rolling it to the right, to the back, to the left, then forward again. Repeat this several times. Then reverse, rolling your head first to the left.
- Breathe from your diaphragm. This reduces shortness of breath and supports your voice for better projection and resonance. To learn to breathe correctly, lie on your back with a book on your stomach. Take a deep breath. The book will rise as your diaphragm expands. As you exhale, the book should go back down.



Presenter:

You may want to demonstrate the relaxation techniques and have your audience do them, too. Be sure to warn your listeners to stop if they feel pain or discomfort.

◆ V6

Conclusion

Even after practicing and mentally rehearsing your speech, it's normal to feel somewhat nervous before your presentation. You want some adrenaline flowing to help you speak energetically.

Keep in mind that your audience likely won't notice your nervousness. Audiences are often unaware of the signs the speaker thinks are embarrassingly obvious. If you walk and speak confidently, the audience will not know that your palms are sweaty and your heart is pounding.

The next time you are about to give a speech, as your heart pounds, you feel like you have butterflies in your stomach, and your knees quiver, turn your anxiety into positive energy using the methods discussed here. Your audience will be impressed with your confidence and listen to every word you say.

Evaluation Guide

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Speech Length 10–15 minutes

Speech Title _____

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this speech is to deliver a presentation from the Toastmasters Education Series to learn and educate club members about ways to improve speaking and leadership skills and contribute to the club experience. The speaker will follow the outline while adding their own knowledge, examples, and style.

Notes for the Evaluator

The speaker will be delivering a presentation from one of the three Education Series: the Better Speaker Series, the Leadership Excellence Series, or the Successful Club Series.

About this speech:

- ▶ The speaker will present a well-organized presentation based on the topic's outline.
- ▶ The speech may be in any style the member chooses, as long as it supports the presentation topic. The speaker must successfully share the information and advice with their club.
- ▶ This presentation should not be a direct reading of the presentation outline.
- ▶ Use of visual aids should support and not distract from the presentation topic.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Well Supported: Speech content is well-supported and sources are available if requested

Developing	Emerging	Accomplished	Excels	Exemplary	Not Applicable
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Comments:

Evaluation Criteria

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

Clarity

- Developing** – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood
- Emerging** – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- Accomplished** – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- Excels** – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- Exemplary** – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood

Vocal Variety

- Developing** – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume
- Emerging** – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- Accomplished** – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- Excels** – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- Exemplary** – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection

Eye Contact

- Developing** – Makes little or no eye contact with audience
- Emerging** – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- Accomplished** – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- Excels** – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- Exemplary** – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response

Gestures

- Developing** – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures
- Emerging** – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- Accomplished** – Uses physical gestures effectively
- Excels** – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- Exemplary** – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech

Audience Awareness

- Developing** – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs
- Emerging** – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- Accomplished** – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- Excels** – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- Exemplary** – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs

Comfort Level

- Developing** – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience
- Emerging** – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- Accomplished** – Appears comfortable with the audience
- Excels** – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- Exemplary** – Appears completely self-assured with the audience

Interest

- Developing** – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed
- Emerging** – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- Accomplished** – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- Excels** – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- Exemplary** – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content

Well Supported

- Developing** – Speech content is unrelated to the topic of the speech
- Emerging** – Speech contains content that supports the topic though some content may seem disconnected
- Accomplished** – Speech topic is well-supported by content of speech
- Excels** – Speech is excellent with a topic that is well-supported by content of the speech
- Exemplary** – Delivers exemplary speech with a topic that is well-supported by content of the speech

Notes



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