



THE FEAR FACTOR

How to **SPEAK UP** in Public Without **FREAKING OUT**

BY BRENDA WILT / ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Township officials are often called upon to address the public at meetings, community events, or other gatherings, yet most are not trained speakers and are prone to that nearly universal fear of speaking in front of a crowd. The News has asked experts and township officials to share their tips and tricks for learning to manage the anxiety and become a more polished public speaker.

The moment you've been dreading has arrived: your first public meeting as chairman of the board of supervisors. All eyes turn to you and you feel like a fish in a fishbowl. Come to think of it, you really *do* feel like a fish in a fishbowl: Every part of you is drenched — your palms, your brow, your neck — from head to toe.

Every part, that is, except your mouth, which feels like all the moisture has been sucked out of it with a Shop Vac. You could swear your tongue has been dried with a terry cloth towel and wrapped in cotton flannel.

Oh, and let's not even talk about your brain, from which every rational thought has fled like high school seniors emptying their classroom on the last day of finals. You look at the residents looking back at you — is that condemnation in their eyes? — and you think, I'm toast!

If this has happened to you in varying degrees, you're not alone. In fact, public speaking has consistently been ranked as people's No. 1 fear — higher even than death, which comes in at No. 2. That led comedian Jerry Seinfeld to famously quip, "This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy."

All kidding aside, while speaking in public seems to be an almost universal fear, it can be overcome. By managing anxiety, gaining experience, and learning techniques for effective delivery, township officials can become more confident, competent speakers.

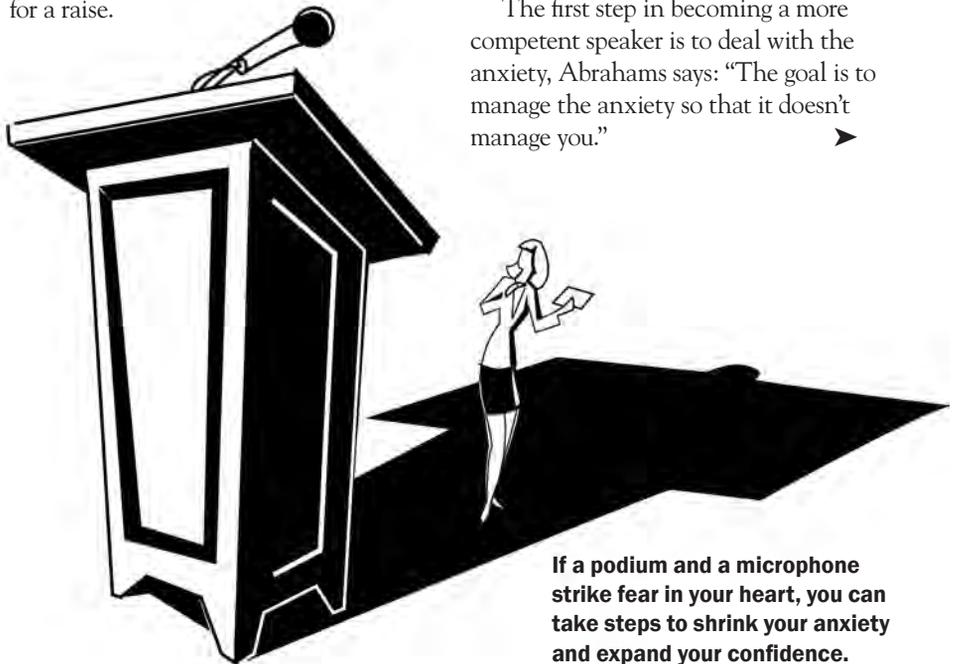
Why do we fear?

Talk to just about anyone who has done any public speaking and they will tell you that nervousness is natural. Matt Abrahams, a professor of strategic communication at Stanford University, in his book *Speaking Up Without Freaking Out: 35 Techniques for Confident, Calm, and Competent Presenting*, lists four types of fear that may come into play:

1) **Trait-based anxiety** is fear that comes from a personal character trait, such as introversion or shyness.

2) **Situation-based anxiety** is fear that comes from speaking in certain contexts, such as a large room full of people.

3) **Audience-based anxiety** is fear that comes from speaking to certain people, such as your boss when asking for a raise.



If a podium and a microphone strike fear in your heart, you can take steps to shrink your anxiety and expand your confidence.

4) **Goal-based anxiety** is fear that comes from wanting to accomplish something specific, such as getting that raise.

Regardless of what is causing the anxiety, not managing it well can have real consequences for township officials, Abrahams says. Failing to take steps to become a more confident speaker can lead to:

- writing and giving poor presentations, which will fail to get your point across;
- looking deceptive, which will reflect poorly on the board of supervisors and the township;
- reducing your ability to think clearly, make effective decisions, and respond to other people during a meeting or other public event;
- panicking (*having your mind go blank*) or choking (*thinking too much so that your thoughts become jumbled and you become even more self-conscious*);
- forgetting what you want to say; and
- losing the ability to judge your own performance accurately or receive feedback objectively.

However, by learning techniques to manage your anxiety, act with confidence, and polish your delivery, you can gain credibility, become a more effective communicator, and project a positive image of your township.

Managing the anxiety

The first step in becoming a more competent speaker is to deal with the anxiety, Abrahams says: "The goal is to manage the anxiety so that it doesn't manage you." ➤

PUBLIC SPEAKING

The author explains five theories about why people get nervous at the thought of speaking in public and practical steps they can take to overcome each kind of fear. The box at right lists the five theories and a sampling of the techniques that can be used to work through them.

Complicating the issue is that many people not only have a fear of presenting but also a fear of feeling anxious. In fact, Abrahams says, the stress of being fearful is often worse than the actual threat. That's why it is important to find techniques that work for you to not only become a more confident speaker but also to manage the fear response.

One very basic technique is simply to breathe slowly and deeply, which slows your heart rate and relaxes you. When we get nervous, we tend to breathe quickly and shallowly, he says. Deep breathing, known as "belly breathing" because it expands the abdomen, rather than the chest, is the opposite of this. It sends a message to the body that all is well.

Another technique is to acknowledge your nervousness and distance yourself from it. Abrahams calls this mindfulness, which you practice by saying to yourself, "This is me feeling nervous, which is a normal reaction to speaking in public." This allows you to put the fear into perspective and replace the negative emotion with a positive one.

"Feel the fear and do it anyway," advises Carla Showell-Lee, a broadcast journalist who is currently the chief information officer for Upper Merion Township in Montgomery County. "Recognize that nerves are a part of it and take steps to address whatever happens when you're nervous."

For example, if your hands shake when you're speaking in front of a crowd, clasp them loosely in front of you — no white-knuckled death grip. If your mouth gets dry, make sure to have water available.

WHY DO WE FREAK OUT?

Various theories explain the origin of anxiety about public speaking

Matt Abrahams, author of *Speaking Up Without Freaking Out: 35 Techniques for Confident, Calm, and Competent Presenting*, says that research has identified five major theories to explain why we get nervous. Each theory offers various therapies or ways of managing the anxiety. Here are the five theories and a small sampling of the suggested management techniques:

Theory 1: Behavioral

Anxiety comes from lacking the skills to speak well.

- Take classes, read books, or join a public speaking organization, such as Toastmasters International.
- Collaborate with others who have similar fears.
- Take a class in improvisation.

Theory 2: Learning

Fear arises because we are conditioned to think that public speaking is a negative thing.

- Practice visualization by focusing on the entire experience of a presentation, not just the content.
- Think of past experiences that had a positive outcome and identify the factors that contributed to your success.

Theory 3: Biological

Nervousness comes from an onslaught of neurotransmitters and hormones that create and heighten an anxiety reaction and an excessive activation of the fear response.

- Spend time before a presentation with someone who can provide social support or shake hands with audience members. This releases oxytocin, a natural stress reliever.
- Do something courageous before the presentation, such as volunteering to speak first or introduce the speaker before you.
- Breathe deeply.
- Tense and relax groups of muscles, starting with your toes and working upward to your forehead.

Theory 4: Cognitive

Fear is the result of thinking about a presentation in the wrong way.

- Reframe the presentation as a conversation with the audience, rather than a performance.
- Overcome negative self-talk by replacing it with positive affirmations.
- Distance yourself from fear by recognizing the irrationality of your anxiety response.

Theory 5: Evolutionary

Fear arises because we're worried about the consequences if we fail.

- Focus on the present and don't think about the consequences, which are unlikely to be as bad as you think.

“Not knowing your audience is like **using a shot gun** and hoping you **hit something.**”

“People get nervous because they think they’re no good at speaking,” Hank Baylor, a supervisor for East Buffalo Township in Union County, says. “It’s good to remember that no one in the audience wants to do what you are doing either.”

We’ll consider more techniques for presenting with confidence a little later. Before you get to that point, however, there are steps you can take while preparing a presentation to minimize the anxiety, too.

Understand your audience

Thorough preparation is crucial to being seen as a competent speaker. PSATS Second Vice President Bill Hawk, who spent more than three decades teaching public speaking as an instructor for Dale Carnegie leadership training, says that if you’re prepared and know where you want your talk to go, you’ll overcome your nervousness. The Carnegie program even has a catch phrase for it: Proper preparation prevents poor performance.

The first step is to know the audience. Before you begin thinking about what you’re going to say, take time to identify who you are going to say it to, Abrahams says. Figure out what the audience needs to hear, rather than what you want to tell it.

“Not knowing your audience is like using a shot gun and hoping you hit something,” he says. “If you understand what your audience needs, you can target your message.”

A speaker can minimize fear by focusing on the audience and what it needs to hear, rather than what the speaker wants to tell them.

PSATS Executive Board member Marvin Meteer agrees. A supervisor for Wyalusing Township in Bradford County, Meteer is a retired English teacher and a certified lay speaker for his church.

“Determine, if you can, who you will be talking to,” he says. “About how many people will be in the group and what will be the makeup? Will they be mostly working people, retirees, township supervisors, mixed ages, men or women, or both? This will help you plan how you should present your message, which should be appropriate for the audience.”

Susan Cain, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, says that a good technique for introverts who are uncomfortable with

public speaking — and not all of them are — is to remember that public speaking is not about the speaker, it is about the audience.

“Your job is to take care of the audience, not to be judged by it or even to entertain it,” Cain says. “Remind yourself that you are not seeking approval or love. You are a teacher, a giver, an enlightener.”

Abrahams says much the same thing. “Good, effective speaking is about the audience and what it needs to hear,” he says. “By taking an audience-focused perspective, you move the spotlight off yourself and onto the audience.”

Tammie McClintick, who chairs the Huston Township Board of Supervisors in Clearfield County, says that she overcame her nervousness at public meetings by remembering that the audience is made up of her friends and neighbors.

“Some meetings do get a little stressful when emotions are running high about a certain issue, but I always try to put myself in the public’s shoes and try to see it from their point of view,” she says. “I’ve learned a lot by really listening to what people have to say. When you listen to them, it makes it a whole lot easier to get them to listen to you, and it sure makes talking in front of people much easier, too.” ➤



PUBLIC SPEAKING

“Have a good opening, a strong close, and keep the two close together.”

Define the structure

The second step of preparation is deciding what to say. Abrahams suggests that a good way to relieve some of the stress is to have a clearly defined structure for the presentation.

“Many people just begin speaking and hope to find their point along the way,” he says. “If you can relieve some of the cognitive burden of how to structure what you’re going to say, you just have to worry about the words.”

He recommends two simple structures that would work for most presentations by township officials:

- **Problem-benefit-solution** — In this structure, the speaker presents the issue at hand, how addressing it will benefit the audience, and the possible solutions for fixing the problem.

- **What, so what, and now what?** — In this structure, the speaker identifies the problem or issue and explains why the audience should care about it and what the next step should be.

Many township officials also rely on the tried-and-true structure of telling the audience what you’re going to say, saying it, and then telling them what you just said.

PSATS Second Vice President Bill Hawk offers another tip for structuring a presentation: “Have a good opening, a strong close, and keep the two close together.”

A clearly defined structure will also help the audience understand and remember what you say, Abrahams says. Nearly everyone has had the experience of listening to a long, rambling speech.

At the end, you have no idea what the speaker was trying to get across.

Practice, practice, practice

Once you determine the structure and put your material together, it is crucial that you become so familiar with it that you could present it in your sleep.

You should write the main points on index cards, which you will refer to during the presentation. The cardinal rule of public speaking is to never read your presentation word for word. Think of public speaking as a conversation, not a lecture, Abrahams says. You want to speak *to* the audience, not *at* them.

“Nothing to me is more frustrating than a speaker with his head down just reading the information to you,” says Sam Cressler, a supervisor for Southampton Township in Franklin County.

“Never stand before a group and read a speech,” Wyalusing Township’s Marvin Meter agrees. “Your speech should sound like you are telling a story; it should sound like you are talking about something that you really know about. This is how you add to your confidence.”

You can also boost your confidence by going over those note cards until you know them six ways to Sunday.

“Always know your material so you don’t get lost or start rambling,” East Buffalo Township’s Hank Baylor says. “If people get really scared, it’s because they don’t know their material.”

The best way to do this is to practice, practice, practice, Abrahams says. “There is no sport where practice is a bad thing,” he says. “You should not just practice your presentation but also answers to questions you may be asked.”

Abrahams advocates learning the material in chunks, rather than the whole thing at once, and practicing a different section each time. Practicing in the environment where you will give the presentation, or one that is very similar, may help you remember the content, as well. ➤

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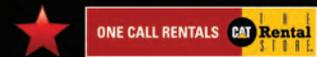
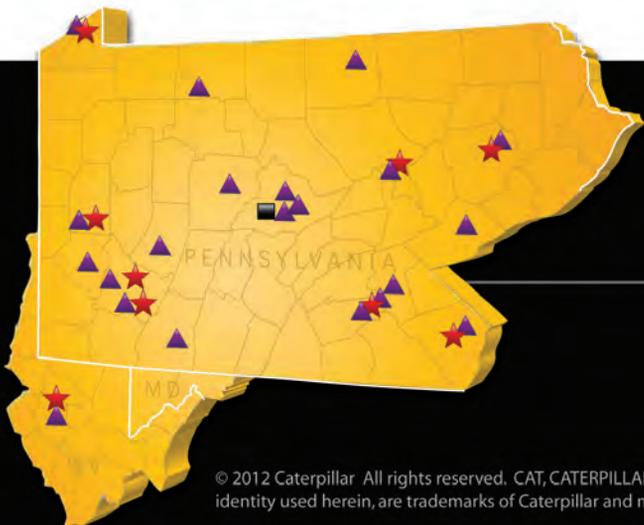


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PUBLIC SPEAKING

Township officials have found practice to be an important part of learning to speak well.

"If you must make a speech, practice several times in front of a mirror or your family," says Bob Egolf, a supervisor for Forks Township in Northampton County. "Dogs don't count."

Bill Kirkpatrick, a supervisor for Birmingham Township in Chester County, suggests videotaping yourself giving the presentation. "This is generally a wake-up call and helps you eliminate a lot of 'tics,'" he says. He also suggests writing the presentation and reading it aloud to find corrections that need to be made.

North Cornwall Township in Lebanon County has come up with a unique way to help its police officers improve their speaking skills for press conferences. "We will randomly pull them into a

meeting room that is preset with any employees we can round up," manager Robin Getz says. "We actually go through the process of putting a lapel microphone on them, setting up their space, giving them a brief overview of the 'incident' they will be questioned on, and setting up a video camera on a tripod.

"Someone will pretend to be a reporter, firing off questions with a makeshift mike in their face. The 'crowd' is vocal, just as if it were a major event, asking questions and demanding details to make it as realistic as we can under the circumstances."

After the exercise, the police chief reviews the interview with the officer, pointing out strengths and identifying areas that can be improved.

"It is working well," Getz says, "as it takes away that element of the unknown. Everyone has agreed that these practice sessions are beneficial and keep the officers prepared for when a real event occurs."

"You have to *want* to be a better speaker. Practice makes perfect. Don't wing it!"

Getz has also used her experience of overcoming a childhood stutter to help the supervisors in her township who lack confidence in their speaking ability.

"When we speak one-on-one, I am always amazed at the wealth of information they share and the compassion they show for the community," she says. "I remind them that they were elected because of those attributes and then begin working with them before each meeting and follow up with them afterward. It's amazing how much that effort pays off, and so far, they have been very appreciative of my willingness to build their confidence."

Being willing to put in the time to improve is half the battle, Upper Merion Township's Carla Showell-Lee says. "You have to *want* to be a better speaker," she says. "Practice makes perfect. Don't wing it!"

She cites the example of the township police chief, Tom Nolan, who has made a concerted effort to improve his public speaking skills.

"He is always open to help from outside sources because he believes in the trickle-down effect," she says. "He is really passionate about improving interpersonal skills and looks for that same desire in his officers."

Showell-Lee says that Nolan has worked on such details as modifying his facial expressions to reflect the subject he is speaking about and making sure his speech patterns are effective, in part by clearly enunciating words and pausing between thoughts.

Practice sessions in front of colleagues or family members will help you become familiar with your material and get used to speaking in front of others. Round up some folks who will give you honest feedback and help you become a better speaker.





When speaking to a crowd, use gestures to emphasize points. Movements should be natural and begin at the shoulder, extending away from the body.

confident, but it also makes it difficult to sway or lean on the podium, if there is one.

Second, use natural gestures to emphasize points, reaching away from your body and toward the audience. Gestures should begin from the shoulder, not the elbow. The importance of gesturing cannot be stressed enough, he says. How many people talk with their arms pinned at their sides? It is also important to make eye contact with the audience.

Don't be afraid to use your hands to "draw" pictures or emphasize points, Bill Hawk says.

Toastmasters International, which teaches public speaking in an encouraging, nonthreatening environment, says that a speaker's effectiveness is directly related to his ability to invoke emotion and interest through nonverbal communication.

"Your listeners judge you and your message based on what they see as well as what they hear," the organization's website advises. "In public speaking, your body can be an effective tool for adding emphasis and clarity to your

words. It's also your most powerful instrument for convincing an audience of your sincerity, earnestness, and enthusiasm."

When using eye contact, for example, don't just pass your gaze throughout the room. Focus on individual listeners and look them directly in the eye for five to 10 seconds. Abrahams says that if that makes you uncomfortable, fake it by looking at a spot directly between their eyebrows. They'll never know you're not looking into their eyes.

Bill Taylor, a supervisor for Richmond Township in Crawford County, says he picks out someone he knows in the crowd and looks at them a lot. "I scan the audience but always come back to that person," he says.

Identifying two to four friendly-looking people in the audience and talking to them works as well, supervisor Chuck Delone of East Caln Township in Chester County says. "As long as they are properly dispersed in the audience, the rest of the people will never know that you were having a conversation with four friendly folks, instead of speaking to everyone," he says.

Another important body language tool is a smile. Smiling not only makes you appear friendly and sincere but also helps you relax and feel more confident, experts say.

"Smile at your audience as they enter the room and smile at them when you begin speaking," introversion guru Susan Cain says. "This will make you feel relaxed, confident, and connected."

Speakers must also take into con-

She believes that for township officials, becoming confident, competent speakers can have far-reaching effects. "The township's image comes from the top," she says. "It's not just about making sure the roads are fixed. You are 'selling' the township, and you need to make sure you're doing it in a way that people can understand."

Tips for effective delivery

Now that the presentation is prepared, you've practiced until you are very familiar with the material, and you've worked on your speaking skills, you still have to face that crowd. What next?

"Now, you think about how to say what you want to say," Abrahams says. "One way to bolster confidence is to act confident. We tend to believe what we see more than what we hear."

Easier said than done, you think. There are some ways to "fake it 'til you make it," the author says. First, take a balanced stance when facing the audience, feet shoulder width apart, with one foot about an inch ahead of the other, as if you're moving toward the audience. This not only makes you appear

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PUBLIC SPEAKING

sideration their pacing, experts say. Nervousness tends to make people talk faster than they usually do, so make a conscious effort to talk more slowly than you would in a conversation.

Effective pauses are also important. In “Power to the Pause,” posted on Decker Communications’ website, www.decker.com, Keith Bailey says that pausing is a vital skill for audience engagement.

“In fact, punctuation is to readers as pausing is to your listeners,” he writes. “When there should be a comma, pause for one second. When you see a period, pause for two seconds. When you see a new paragraph, pause for three seconds.”

Pauses allow the audience to take in and make sense of what you are saying, Bailey says. He offers the following tips for integrating pauses without counting after every punctuation point:

1) Enunciate each word carefully. Think of it as pumping the brakes, instead of coming to a complete stop.

2) Take a deep breath at the end of each paragraph.

HELP FOR SPEAKERS

There is a lot of help online for township officials who want to improve their public speaking skills. Check out these resources:

- Art of Public Speaking – <http://artofpublicspeaking.net>
- Fear of Public Speaking – www.fear-of-publicspeaking.net
- Manner of Speaking – <http://mannerofspeaking.org>
- No Freaking Speaking (*Author Matt Abrahams’s site*) – www.nofreakingspeaking.com
- Toastmasters International – www.toastmasters.org

3) Remember that a pause is not as long as you think it is.

Southampton Township’s Sam Cressler uses a trick of putting a symbol of some kind in his notes after every couple of paragraphs. “When I reach that point, I stop, look around, then continue,” he says. “I like to place the stopping points at a spot where I want them to consider that thought for a moment.”

Pausing to collect your thoughts can also eliminate those dreaded “word whiskers,” as Bill Hawk calls them — the “ums” and “uhs” that populate the presentation of many an untrained speaker. People think they must fill in every empty space, Hawk says, but a pause is much better than an extraneous word.

Upper Merion Township’s Carla Showell-Lee refers to this pacing as making sure every word has a home. “Take your time and allow the audience to absorb what you’re saying,” she advises.

Be authentic

One of the most important attributes of an effective speaker is authenticity, experts say. Township officials readily agree, saying that as public servants, they need to be themselves and be honest when addressing the public.

“Don’t try to make yourself look good by saying something that sounds good,” East Buffalo Township’s Hank Baylor says. “Never make comments that are not true. It’s OK to say you don’t know something or will get the answer.”

“It’s important to be honest, straightforward, and well-prepared, and remember, if you do make a mistake, admit it as soon as possible,” says Donna Wright, who chairs the Lower Milford Township Board of Supervisors in Lehigh County. “People will forgive a mistake but not a cover-up.”

Township officials who are not experienced speakers can appeal to the audience’s compassion, supervisor Bob Heffelfinger of Richland Township in Cambria County says. “Don’t be afraid to get them on your side by saying it’s not something you do on a regular basis,” he says.

Bill Kirkpatrick of Birmingham

One of the most important lessons for speakers to learn is to always be authentic. Don’t try to copy someone else’s speaking style; be yourself.



DO'S & DONT'S

of public speaking

Toastmasters International trains people from all walks of life to be confident, accomplished speakers. The organization offers the following list of *do's* to help control the butterflies and give an effective presentation:

- **Know your material** — Know more about the subject than you include in your speech and use personal stories to illustrate your points. That way, you won't easily forget what you want to say.
- **Practice, practice, practice** — Rehearse out loud and include any equipment you plan to use. Work to control filler words, such as "um" and "uh." Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected.
- **Visualize yourself giving your speech** — Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and confident. Visualize the audience clapping; it will boost your confidence.
- **Know the audience** — Greet some of the audience members as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.
- **Know the room** — Arrive early, walk around the speaking area, and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
- **Relax** — Begin by addressing the audience; it buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile, and count to three before saying anything. Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.
- **Realize that people want you to succeed** — Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They're rooting for you.
- **Don't apologize for any nervousness or problem** — The audience probably never noticed it.
- **Concentrate on the message, not the medium** — Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.
- **Gain experience** — Your speech should represent you, as an authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Look for opportunities to speak to increase your comfort level.

In an article for *Toastmaster* magazine, attorney and public speaker Rob Sherman of Columbus, Ohio, shared his thoughts on mistakes people make when speaking in public. He said the following are definite *don'ts* for public speakers:

Don't...

- **Start with a whimper** — Start with a bang! Give the audience a startling statistic, an interesting quote, a news headline, or some other powerful image that will get their attention immediately.
- **Try to imitate other speakers** — Be yourself to project authenticity.
- **Fail to "work" the room** — Take time to mingle before the presentation to help establish credibility with your audience.
- **Fail to use relaxation techniques** — Do whatever it takes, such as listening to music, breathing deeply, or shrugging your shoulders, to relieve nervous tension.
- **Read a speech word for word** — This is sure to put the audience to sleep. Use a key word outline to prompt your thoughts. Make eye contact with the audience.
- **Use someone else's stories** — Use brief quotes from other sources, if necessary, but use your own life experiences to illustrate your main points.
- **Speak without passion** — The more passionate you are about your subject, the more likely your audience will be moved to action.
- **End a speech with questions and answers** — Take questions before summarizing your key points and closing with a story, quote, or call to action.
- **Fail to prepare** — Rehearse enough to ensure that you make a good impression and boost your reputation.
- **Fail to recognize that speaking is an acquired skill** — Approach public speaking the same way you learned to do the work of a township supervisor, by studying with experts and taking advice from experienced colleagues.

Source: Lists adapted from www.toastmasters.org

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Township agrees. “Reveal a little bit of yourself to the audience,” he suggests. “Nine times out of 10, they’ll be rooting for you to succeed.”

Being yourself can also extend to how you dress for the presentation. Abrahams says you should be comfortable but also dress appropriately for the situation.

“Your mode of dress means something to the audience and should mean something to you,” Richland Township’s Bob Heffelfinger agrees. “Dress at least as well as the people you’re speaking to. Not every occasion calls for a suit and tie, but very few call for jeans and a T-shirt. You want to be respected and taken seriously.”

If you’re not comfortable with your appearance, consult someone who can help you with that, Showell-Lee advises. “Your message can get lost if your appearance is problematic,” she says.

Practice makes perfect

The truth about public speaking that many people don’t want to face is that the only way to become good at it is by doing it over and over again.

“The more you do it, the better you’ll get,” Bill Hawk says.

While there are many books and online resources available, the best way to learn about public speaking is to take a class or join an organization, such as Toastmasters International, that helps people become better speakers. (See the sidebar on Page 30 for a list of resources.)

“The more you can learn about how to speak, the better you will do,” Hank Baylor says. “It’s a very foreign thing to 90 percent of township officials. I recommend going to Toastmasters and getting serious about it.”

Consider asking someone who you know to be a confident speaker to work with you, as manager Robin Getz does with the supervisors in North Cornwall Township. Perhaps your township can set up practice sessions, like her town-

ship does for its police officers.

Getz also advocates looking for opportunities to speak in public to hone your skills. “Start with something small, such as volunteering to speak or read Scripture at your church,” she says. “You can also volunteer to give a talk at a senior citizen center or speak to Boy and Girl Scouts who are working on their government patches. If you are truly dedicated to working through this fear, there are many venues in which you can participate. In the end, it can only be a win-win for everyone involved.”

David Duerr, a supervisor for Hanover Township in Washington County, suggests starting small, such as with a short speech at the family dinner

table. “Work your way up on the size and diversity of your audience, such as at a club or organization you belong to and are comfortable with,” he says. “It’s all practice and confidence; they go hand in hand.”

The important thing to remember is that effective public speaking involves a set of skills that most people can master.

“Almost none of us is a born orator, but we can always become better,” Bill Kirkpatrick says. “None of us can walk when we are babies, and when we first start, we fall frequently. If we all quit after the first several falls, the human race would still be crawling. The fact that we aren’t proves that we can all learn.” ♦



The only way to become a good public speaker is to actually speak in public, experts say. Look for opportunities to hone your speaking skills, join a group like Toastmasters, and practice, practice, practice. These are the keys to becoming a confident, competent speaker.