

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

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## EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

### I. INTRODUCTION

Gift or not, born or made, skilled or unskilled; public speaking is a craft that can be developed. No need to panic with persistence, diligence, hard work and careful planning. You can hone your craft with some patience and lots of practice. With work, work, and more work; time, energy, and much effort, you can have good success as well. Whether you stir up the gift or you were born or made for this. Perhaps you are simply sharpening your skills or even called to public speaking. Success is inevitable if you invest in yourself. (Fralick, M. 2014)

### II. SPEECH PHOBIA

#### A. Phobia

Most of the population has a fear of public speaking 75% to 99% of the population are uncomfortable or afraid of speaking publicly. (Zeoli, R. 2008) For me public speaking was never easy. In fact, that is an understatement. I was literally petrified; out of my mind. When God called me to ministry. I screamed and hollered to no end; No! As if a Mack truck was about to run over my child. To no avail, God would have his way!

As a little girl, I recall playing a part in a play at school as an angel, with only a few words to say. “behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy”. As a teenager, I played Lazarus in a play, I didn’t have anything to say but rise from the dead. Which was quite alright with me. Public speaking has always been very challenging and quite daunting for me. As a teenager, I was a junior deaconess and we used to have Saturday bible study with the senior deaconess who would assign lessons to us periodically. Whenever, my turn would come around, I recall that was the perfect time for me to stay home. I had a phobia, fear, or anxiety of some sort of public speaking.

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So much so that I would just check out, no call no show, MIA! That was me. Which did not help me but impaired me substantially.

I don't recall any other school events where I had to speak publicly. Therefore, I believe it wasn't until I would return to the Lord and He would gradually reveal His will for me. One Sunday after singing in the choir the Holy Spirit would lead me to Sunday school. On this day the leaders would solicit teachers for Sunday school and I felt lead by the Holy Spirit to volunteer. Therefore, this was quite challenging and daunting as well, but I knew it was the will of God for me.

I put forth the energy and effort to prepare for the Sunday school lessons and teachers meetings weekly. As a teacher we would rotate teaching the lessons in our meetings every few weeks. Which was not good for me at all, I would sometimes just freeze up! I remember once the Holy Spirit telling me, if I look in their faces, He would confound me and make me look stupid in front of everyone. I just had to learn to do it afraid, petrified in all.

Many years later, public speaking is still an issue for me. However, now the Holy Spirit just throws me out there. I don't have much of a choice. It's either do it or die; me and my children. Wherefore, I suggest one should just jump right on in and just get both feet wet much like jumping in a pool which was never and still isn't easy for me either. Just do it! ( Nike slogan) Do it afraid: Obeying God in the face of fear. (Meyer, Joyce 1996) You can learn to do it afraid. Go ahead put one foot in front of the other. Sink or swim, you can learn to do well. Practice makes you better prepared! And preparation leads to greatness! Dictionary.com defines phobia as a

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persistent, irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that leads to a compelling desire to avoid it. Glossophobia is the fear of public speaking.

### B. Fear

Fear is a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc. whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid. An acronym for fear is false evidence appearing real. Whether you think you can or think you can't you're right. (Ford, Henry) Fear is inevitable, I have to accept that, but I cannot allow it to paralyze me. (Allende, Isabel)

### C. Anxiety

Anxiety is the distress or uneasiness of mind caused by fear of danger or misfortune. Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength. (Spurgeon, Charles) Therefore, the emotions you experience whether a phobia, fear, or anxiety. Do not allow them to imprison you. Breakdown the walls, break forth out of your shell, and break into your destiny; your calling, your purpose, your future.

## III. SPEECH PREPARATION

### A. Positivity

The negative feelings and emotions that one may experience during a presentation can be catapulted into positivity. That's right totally transform negative energy, into energy that is quite positive. Never give up! Despite these uncomfortable emotions press, push, and persevere. The craft of speaking publicly can be cultivated with the right mind set. Alleviating your fears and embracing your possibilities. A pastor once told me "my future was on the other side of my fear".

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Conquering fear is not something that we do in one day. It is something that we conquer one day at a time with God's help. Breakthrough and breakout!

Therefore, if you can just get passed those emotional disturbances. And rid yourself of the extra baggage, weight, heavy load of emotions that weighs you down. The sense of the impending doom and rechanneled that energy. I believe when this message is articulated to the brain and with proper planning and preparation. You are well on your way.

### B. Quality Time

However, quality time must be invested because if you don't plan to succeed you are planning to fail. I can truly attest to never feeling totally prepared or comfortable; out of my element. Surely with a new level of preparation you can get on the right track. Allow yourself more than enough time. Don't underestimate the amount of time it takes to properly prepare.

### C. Relax

Relax to avoid being overly anxious, use deep breathing exercises to help relieve the negative energy, motivate yourself with positive encouragement. (Fralick, M. 2014)  
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13) We are more than conquerors... (Romans 8:37) Greater is He that is in me... (John 4:4) Acquire the assurance with the proper empowerment and encouragement. Apply patience, persistence and practice, practice, practice. Over, over, and over again. Repeat as many times as necessary.

### D. Organization

Improper planning leads to poor performances. Success requires preparation. Write your speech, rewrite it, organize, and memorize. Research your audience, visit the place of the

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event prior to your event if possible, add aids or support to enhance your presentation to increase your effectiveness such as: (Fralick, M. 2014 pg. 297)

- Props
  - Pictures
  - Music
  - Video Clips
  - Flip charts
  - Poster Boards
  - Whiteboards
  - Interactive Whiteboards
  - PowerPoint Slides
- (Milan, S & Jacobs, R., Public Speaking, 2014, pg.4)

Check all equipment to be certain it is functioning properly. Utilize age appropriate additions to keep it interesting, capture, and hold your audience attention. If you apply these basic principles repeatedly with time. You will overcome your stress and your struggles.

### IV. SPEECH PRESENTATION

#### A. Appearance

Capture and captivate your audience attention, woo them, blow them away. Be remarkable and memorable. Presentation is everything, your audience will see you before they hear you. Therefore, they are judging you before you ever mount the platform. Make sure that your attire is appropriate and not offensive; suitable and fitting for your audience, whether they are laymen or professionals. Make sure that your selection of hairstyle, hair color, jewelry and shoes are a right choice for your audience. (Zeoli, R. 2008)

#### B. Eye Contact

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Make a connection with your audience by looking into their eyes momentarily. Smile when appropriate to show friendliness when appropriate. Engagement with your audience is important to show connection with members of your audience. Shift your eyes to various people in your audience to display connectivity. (Zeoli, R. 2008)

### C. Confidence

Demonstrate confidence and comfort. Know your material. Memorize at least your opening and closing statements to display knowledge of your material. Use index cards or an outline as a reminder to guide you through your presentation. You may use key words, pictures even mental images to help direct you. (Fralick, M. 2014)

## V. CONCLUSION

Perhaps if public speaking was offered in middle and/or high school the percentile of the fear of public speaking would greatly be reduced. Maybe if this course was offered earlier in our educational system we would become more accustomed and acclimated with this daunting comfortable experience for so many people. For so many of us fear is embedded in our hearts much earlier in life. So why not address it much earlier on in our lives? This would provide the much needed skills for success and life.

Unquestionably, there are challenges in life. I firmly believe every challenge is an opportunity for us to think more creatively, hone our skills and improve our destiny. Once, we embrace challenge as a necessary part of life, we realize our potential to overcome challenges and reach greater success. (Zeoli, R., 2008, pg.8)

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Although this task is quite overcoming for many. Refute the fear don't succumb to the emotional hype that our body alarms us with. Let us empower ourselves with courage, comfort, and confidence. Strengthen ourselves, arm ourselves, with the intelligence, knowledge and power to excel, achieve, and believe. If God has called us to this task He has already equipped us for the challenge. Great is His faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:23)

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