

THERE are many books, videos, seminars and workshops which can help you improve your public-speaking techniques and skills. But if you have already tried these and are still afraid of speaking to an audience, perhaps the real problem lies in applying what you have learned and how to conquer and overcome the fear.

The way we think affects our actions. Changing your mindset is the key to beating your fear of speaking in public. Here are some simple suggestions on how to build up your confidence.

1. Know your purpose

Know why you want to be able to speak well in public. It may be because you need to improve your business, or your new job requires you to conduct training or make presentations. Knowing your purpose is like having a compass. It will point to the direction that you should go.

2. Self-motivation

You may know why public speaking is necessary for you and still not be able to achieve your goal. You need to fuel your purpose with motivation to drive you to do what you want to do. Motivation can be developed by how you communicate to yourself and the language that you use.

If you try to persuade yourself by using "have to's", "ought to's" and "should's", you will sub-consciously prevent yourself from achieving your goal. Rather than say, "I should speak out for such-and-such a reason", try instead: "I want to express my thoughts more confidently to an audience..." or "I must speak convincingly otherwise I will

You speak better in public once you are convinced of your own message and purpose. A toastmaster shows how to improve your chances of getting your message clearly

Say it well



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miss the opportunity....". Using an imperative like "must" is simply more motivating than a hesitant "should".

3. Be persistent

Persistence comes from your desire to beat the fear within you — an essential factor in achieving your goal of conquering the fear of public speaking. Only those who persist will succeed. Remember, desire and a

belief in yourself are the fuel that will push you forward on your journey to becoming a confident public speaker.

Take small steps. Try doing a presentation for a small group of people (your close colleagues, for example) first, so you are less nervous and intimidated.

Then progress to larger groups, until you have several successful presentations or speeches to your credit. To fur-

ther improve your experience, invest in public-speaking workshops and training courses that meet your specific needs. The decision is yours to walk the talk.

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