

# Speech Delivery

In the context of public speaking, delivery refers to the presentation of the speech you have researched, organized, outlined, and practiced. Delivery is important, of course, because it is what is most immediate to the audience. Delivery relies on both verbal communication and nonverbal communication. While some rhetoricians separate style from delivery, we have found it useful to discuss the two together, as the style of the speech should be connected to its presentation.

## The Importance Of Speech Delivery

Once you have selected and researched your topic, and prepared and organized your presentation, you will need to work on your delivery. Without diligent work on the initial parts of the speech process, however, even the most impressive delivery has little meaning. On the other hand, combined with a well-prepared and practiced presentation, delivery can be a key to your success as a speaker. Delivery can communicate your confidence and preparedness to your audience. Effective delivery shows your audience that you have researched your topic and understand what you are speaking about. An effective delivery allows you to pull it all together—to showcase your work and to speak with confidence during your delivery.

## Communication Apprehension

If you feel nervous about speaking in public, you should know that it is normal to experience some communication apprehension, or “stage fright,” when you deliver a speech. Even people you wouldn’t expect to experience speech apprehension do.

Speakers may express apprehension in a variety of ways—as Mel Gibson experienced when his legs felt weak—but some of the most common symptoms include shaking hands and legs, voice fluctuations, and rapid speech. Moreover, almost all speakers worry that their nervousness is going to be obvious to the

audience. Fortunately, many signs of anxiety are not visible. As a speaker, your goal is not to eliminate feelings of apprehension, but to use them to invigorate your presentation. Having some apprehension can motivate you to prepare carefully; it can give you the energy and alertness that make your presentation lively and interesting. Public speaking instructors usually say that they worry more about students who aren't nervous, as it may reflect lack of concern and motivation, than about those who are. Although you may feel that your communication apprehension is too much to overcome, statistics are encouraging. Researchers have found that only "one out of 20 people suffers such serious fear of speaking that he or she is essentially unable to get through a public speech"

## Principles of Speech Delivery

Think of a speaker that one has heard and seen. State the reasons for liking this speaker? Is it his/her confidence, appearance, mastery of the language? All these answers are correct. A good speaker has to have a clear voice and uses words that are understandable. A good Speaker also uses the right facial expressions and appropriate gestures. Moreover, speakers are liked when they talk directly to the audience, maintaining eye contact with the listeners. These speakers also move on the stage with confidence, showing mastery of public communication.

A speaker's message has to be imparted to the listeners. This is the second half of speech communication: the delivery of the speech. How does one deliver a speech effectively? There are several principles to be followed. These are as follows:

### First Principle: Articulation

When the Speaker's words cannot be understood because of poor articulation, the Speech might as well not have been delivered at all. Word choice and grammatical correctness are necessary in writing the Speech, but it is articulateness in pronouncing the words and speaking with clear diction that effectively transmits the Message of the Speaker. It is highly important to know the correct way of saying a word, whether they are familiar or unfamiliar. Proper breathing

techniques together with the correct molding of sounds that make up words contribute to efficient articulation.

(Were the Speakers in the video/film articulate in their Speech? Were they understandable?)

## Second Principle: Modulation

There are pleasant-sounding voices, quite soothing to the ears, just as there are unpleasant voices that sound flat, are high pitched, or screeching. People like to listen to voices that are well-modulated, meaning the capability to adjust or manipulate the resonance and timbre of the vocal tone. A microphone requires even more modulation as the amplifiers will resonate voices further. But with or without a microphone, voices should not bombard our eardrums. If the Speaker's voice is modulated, Listeners will pay attention. The Speaker's words will be heard clearly and the Message of the Speech will be sent and received.

(Were the Speakers' voices modulated? Was it easy to listen to them?)

## Third Principle: Stage Presence

The ability to "own" the stage, of the Speaker being able to fill the space and project his/ her personality to the Audience—that is stage presence. The opposite of stage presence is stage fright, which is considered by many as the topmost fear in the world of public speaking! But instead of trying to get rid of stage fright (which cannot be done anyway), all that energy that is making one feel shaky and nervous should be used to make the Speaker become an interesting, enthusiastic speaker capable of being heard and able to move about on stage. No one is immune from stage fright. Other people just manage it better and create what we see as stage presence.

(Did the Speakers show stage presence? Cite what contributed to that.)

## Fourth Principle: Facial Expressions, Gestures, and Movement

It is not just the choice of words and their proper pronunciation that make for an effective Speech delivery. The Message of any speech is reinforced, clarified, and complemented by Nonverbal Communication such as facial expressions, gestures, and movement. Without these nonverbal elements, the Speaker may be judged as boring, with flat delivery and an unemotional voice. Facial expressions should change with the content of the Speech. Gestures should emphasize only certain points. Movement should allow the Speaker to carry the Speech around, forward, and to the Audience, metaphorically speaking. It should also direct the Audience to follow the Speaker and keep them hanging on to his/her every word.

(Did the Speakers use Nonverbal Communication? Was it too much or too little?)

## Fifth Principle: Audience Rapport

It was pointed out previously that the most important aid in establishing a connection with the Listeners is an Audience Analysis. Using this data, one is able to write a Speech that would appeal to the Audience. Also because of the same data, one will know how to deliver the Message to the Audience and connect with them at a deeper level.

(How did the Speakers establish rapport with their Audience? Did it work?)

## Physical Principles of Speech Delivery

Many speakers are more nervous about physical delivery than vocal delivery. Putting our bodies on the line in front of an audience often makes us feel more vulnerable than putting our voice out there. Yet most audiences are not as fixated on our physical delivery as we think they are. Knowing this can help relieve some anxiety, but it doesn't give us a free pass when it comes to physical delivery. We should still practice for physical delivery that enhances our verbal message. Physical delivery of a speech involves nonverbal communication through the face and eyes, gestures, and body movements.

## Physical Delivery and the Face

We tend to look at a person's face when we are listening to them. Again, this often makes people feel uncomfortable and contributes to their overall speaking anxiety. Many speakers don't like the feeling of having "all eyes" on them, even though having a room full of people avoiding making eye contact with you would be much more awkward. Remember, it's a good thing for audience members to look at you, because it means they're paying attention and interested. Audiences look toward the face of the speaker for cues about the tone and content of the speech.

## Facial Expressions

Facial expressions can help bring a speech to life when used by a speaker to communicate emotions and demonstrate enthusiasm for the speech. As with vocal variety, we tend to use facial expressions naturally and without conscious effort when engaging in day-to-day conversations. Yet I see many speakers' expressive faces turn "deadpan" when they stand in front of an audience. Some people naturally have more expressive faces than others—think about the actor Jim Carey's ability to contort his face as an example. But we can also consciously control and improve on our facial expressions to be more effective speakers. As with other components of speech delivery, becoming a higher self-monitor and increasing your awareness of your typical delivery habits can help you understand, control, and improve your delivery. Although you shouldn't only practice your speech in front of a mirror, doing so can help you get an idea of how expressive or unexpressive your face is while delivering your speech. There is some more specific advice about assessing and improving your use of facial expressions in the "Getting Competent" box in this chapter.

## **Facial expressions are key for conveying emotions and enthusiasm in a speech.**

Facial expressions help set the emotional tone for a speech, and it is important that your facial expressions stay consistent with your message. In order to set a positive tone before you start speaking, briefly look at the audience and smile. A smile is a simple but powerful facial expression that can communicate friendliness, openness, and confidence. Facial expressions communicate a range of emotions and are also associated with various moods or personality traits. For example, combinations of facial expressions can communicate that a speaker is tired, excited, angry, confused, frustrated, sad, confident, smug, shy, or bored, among other things. Even if you aren't bored, for example, a slack face with little animation may lead an audience to think that you are bored with your own speech, which isn't likely to motivate them to be interested. So make sure your facial expressions are communicating an emotion, mood, or personality trait that you think your audience will view favorably. Also make sure your facial expressions match with the content of your speech. When delivering something lighthearted or humorous, a smile, bright eyes, and slightly raised eyebrows will nonverbally enhance your verbal message. When delivering something serious or somber, a furrowed brow, a tighter mouth, and even a slight head nod can enhance that message. If your facial expressions and speech content are not consistent, your audience could become confused by the conflicting messages, which could lead them to question your honesty and credibility.

## **Eye Contact**

Eye contact is an important element of nonverbal communication in all communication settings. Chapter 4 "Nonverbal Communication" explains the power of eye contact to make people feel welcome/unwelcome, comfortable/uncomfortable, listened to / ignored, and so on. As a speaker, eye contact can also be used to establish credibility and hold your audience's attention. We often interpret a lack of eye contact to mean that someone is not credible or not competent, and as a public speaker, you don't want your audience thinking either of those things. Eye contact holds attention because an audience

member who knows the speaker is making regular eye contact will want to reciprocate that eye contact to show that they are paying attention. This will also help your audience remember the content of your speech better, because acting like we're paying attention actually leads us to pay attention and better retain information.

Eye contact is an aspect of delivery that beginning speakers can attend to and make noticeable progress on early in their speech training. By the final speech in my classes, I suggest that my students make eye contact with their audience for at least 75 percent of their speech. Most speakers cannot do this when they first begin practicing with extemporaneous delivery, but continued practice and effort make this an achievable goal for most.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4 “Nonverbal Communication”, norms for eye contact vary among cultures. Therefore it may be difficult for speakers from countries that have higher power distances or are more collectivistic to get used to the idea of making direct and sustained eye contact during a speech. In these cases, it is important for the speaker to challenge himself or herself to integrate some of the host culture's expectations and for the audience to be accommodating and understanding of the cultural differences.

### **Tips for Having Effective Eye Contact**

Once in front of the audience, establish eye contact before you speak.

Make slow and deliberate eye contact, sweeping through the whole audience from left to right.

Despite what high school speech teachers or others might have told you, do not look over the audience's heads, at the back wall, or the clock. Unless you are in a huge auditorium, it will just look to the audience like you are looking over their heads.

Do not just make eye contact with one or a few people that you know or that look friendly. Also, do not just make eye contact with your instructor or boss. Even if it's comforting for you as the speaker, it is usually awkward for the audience member.

Try to memorize your opening and closing lines so you can make full eye contact with the audience. This will strengthen the opening and closing of your speech and help you make a connection with the audience.

## Physical Delivery and the Body

Have you ever gotten dizzy as an audience member because the speaker paced back and forth? I know I have. Anxiety can lead us to do some strange things with our bodies, like pacing, that we don't normally do, so it's important to consider the important role that your body plays during your speech. Extra movements caused by anxiety are called nonverbal adaptors, and most of them manifest as distracting movements or gestures. These nonverbal adaptors, like tapping a foot, wringing hands, playing with a paper clip, twirling hair, jingling change in a pocket, scratching, and many more, can definitely detract from a speaker's message and credibility. Conversely, a confident posture and purposeful gestures and movement can enhance both.

## Posture

Posture is the position we assume with our bodies, either intentionally or out of habit. Although people, especially young women, used to be trained in posture, often by having them walk around with books stacked on their heads, you should use a posture that is appropriate for the occasion while still positioning yourself in a way that feels natural. In a formal speaking situation, it's important to have an erect posture that communicates professionalism and credibility. However, a military posture of standing at attention may feel and look unnatural in a typical school or business speech. In informal settings, it may be appropriate to lean on a table or lectern, or even sit among your audience members. Head position is also part of posture. In most speaking situations, it is best to keep your head up, facing your audience. A droopy head doesn't communicate confidence. Consider the occasion important, as an inappropriate posture can hurt your credibility.



## Gestures

Gestures include arm and hand movements. We all go through a process of internalizing our native culture from childhood. An obvious part of this process is becoming fluent in a language. Perhaps less obvious is the fact that we also become fluent in nonverbal communication, gestures in particular. We all use hand gestures while we speak, but we didn't ever take a class in matching verbal communication with the appropriate gestures; we just internalized these norms over time based on observation and put them into practice. By this point in your life, you have a whole vocabulary of hand movements and gestures that spontaneously come out while you're speaking. Some of these gestures are emphatic and some are descriptive (Koch, 2007).

Emphatic gestures are the most common hand gestures we use, and they function to emphasize our verbal communication and often relate to the emotions we verbally communicate. Pointing with one finger or all the fingers straight out is an emphatic gesture. We can even bounce that gesture up and down to provide more emphasis. Moving the hand in a circular motion in front of our chest with the fingers spread apart is a common emphatic gesture that shows excitement and often accompanies an increased rate of verbal speaking. We make this gesture more emphatic by using both hands. Descriptive gestures function to illustrate or refer to objects rather than emotions. We use descriptive gestures to indicate the number of something by counting with our fingers or the size, shape, or speed of something. Our hands and arms are often the most reliable and easy-to-use visual aids a speaker can have.

While it can be beneficial to plan a key gesture or two in advance, it is generally best to gesture spontaneously in a speech, just as you would during a regular conversation. For some reason, students are insecure about or uncomfortable with gesturing during a speech. Even after watching their speech videos, many students say they think they "gestured too much" or nit-pick over a particular gesture. Out of thousands of speeches I've seen, I can't recall a student who gestured too much to the point that it was distracting. Don't try to overdo your gestures though. You don't want to look like one of those crazy-arm inflatable dancing men that companies set up on the side of the road to attract customers.

But more important, don't try to hold back. Even holding back a little usually ends up nearly eliminating gestures. While the best beginning strategy is to gesture naturally, you also want to remain a high self-monitor and take note of your typical patterns of gesturing. If you notice that you naturally gravitate toward one particular gesture, make an effort to vary your gestures more. You also want your gestures to be purposeful, not limp or lifeless. I caution my students against having what I call "spaghetti noodle arms," where they raise their hand to gesture and then let it flop back down to their side.

## Movement

Sometimes movement of the whole body, instead of just gesturing with hands, is appropriate in a speech. I recommend that beginning speakers hold off trying to incorporate body movement from the waist down until they've gotten at least one speech done. This allows you to concentrate on managing anxiety and focus on more important aspects of delivery like vocal variety, avoiding fluency hiccups and verbal fillers, and improving eye contact. When students are given the freedom to move around, it often ends up becoming floating or pacing, which are both movements that comfort a speaker by expending nervous energy but only serve to distract the audience. Floating refers to speakers who wander aimlessly around, and pacing refers to speakers who walk back and forth in the same path. To prevent floating or pacing, make sure that your movements are purposeful. Many speakers employ the triangle method of body movement where they start in the middle, take a couple steps forward and to the right, then take a couple steps to the left, then return back to the center. Obviously you don't need to do this multiple times in a five- to ten-minute speech, as doing so, just like floating or pacing, tends to make an audience dizzy. To make your movements appear more natural, time them to coincide with a key point you want to emphasize or a transition between key points. Minimize other movements from the waist down when you are not purposefully moving for emphasis. Speakers sometimes tap or shuffle their feet, rock, or shift their weight back and forth from one leg to the other. Keeping both feet flat on the floor, and still, will help avoid these distracting movements.

## Credibility and Physical Delivery

Audience members primarily take in information through visual and auditory channels. Just as the information you present verbally in your speech can add to or subtract from your credibility, nonverbal communication that accompanies your verbal messages affects your credibility.

## Personal Appearance

Looking like a credible and prepared public speaker will make you feel more like one and will make your audience more likely to perceive you as such. This applies to all speaking contexts: academic, professional, and personal. Although the standards for appropriate personal appearance vary between contexts, meeting them is key. You may have experienced a time when your vocal and physical delivery suffered because you were not “dressed the part.” The first time I ever presented at a conference, I had a terrible cold and in my hazy packing forgot to bring a belt. While presenting later that day, all I could think about was how everyone was probably noticing that, despite my nice dress shirt tucked into my slacks, I didn’t have a belt on. Dressing the part makes you feel more confident, which will come through in your delivery. Ideally, you should also be comfortable in the clothes you’re wearing. If the clothes are dressy, professional, and nice but ill fitting, then the effect isn’t the same. Avoid clothes that are too tight or too loose. Looking the part is just as important as dressing the part, so make sure you are cleaned and groomed in a way that’s appropriate for the occasion. The “Getting Real” box in this chapter goes into more detail about professional dress in a variety of contexts.

## Improve Vocalization of Speech Delivery

Though we speak frequently during the course of a day, a formal speech requires extra attention to detail in preparation of a more formal speech presentation. What can one do in advance to prepare for a speech? The challenge is partly determined by the speaker’s experience, background and sometimes cultural influence and existing habits of speaking. Articulation, Pronunciation, Dialect,

Tone, Pitch, and Projection each depends on long-term practice for success. These aspects are like signatures, and should be developed and used by each speaker according to his own persona.

Voice, or vocal sound, is made when controlled air being exhaled from the lungs, passes over the vocal cords causing a controlled vibration. The vibrating air resonates in the body, chest cavity, mouth, and nasal passages. The vibrating air causes a chain reaction with the air in the room. The room's air, set in motion by the voice, is captured by the listener's ear. The vibration of the air against the eardrum is transferred to electrical impulses that are interpreted by the listener's brain. Thus, the sounds we can make are predicated on the breaths that we take.

## Articulation

We are often judged by how well we speak in general. A measure of perceived intellect or education is how well we articulate. That is: how well and correctly we form our vowels and consonants using our lips, jaw, tongue, and palate to form the sounds that are identified as speech. Diction and enunciation are other terms that refer to the same idea. For instance, saying "going to" instead of "gonna" or "did not" instead of "dint" are examples of good versus poor articulation. Consonant and vowels are spoken with standard accepted precision, and serious students and speakers will strive to practice the clarity of their sounds. Proper diction is as integral to the English language as proper spelling, but it takes practice.

## Pronunciation

Proper articulation applied to a given word is that word's pronunciation. The pronunciation includes how the vowels and consonants are produced as well as which syllable is emphasized. For generations, speakers depended on "markings (such as the International Phonetics Alphabet or similar Dictionary Symbols) to discover or decide how words were officially pronounced. With online dictionaries now readily available, one needs only to "look up" a word and select "play" to hear an audible recording of the official and precise way a word should be pronounced. Now there is no excuse for mispronouncing a word in a speech. A

mispronounced word will obliterate a speaker's credibility, and the audience's attention will be focused on the fault rather than the message.

## Accent, Dialect, and Regionalisms

Subtleties in the way we pronounce words and phrase our speech within a given language are evident in accents, regionalisms, and dialects. An accent refers to the degree of prominence of the way syllables are spoken in words, as when someone from Australia says "undah" whereas we say "under." A regionalism is a type of expression, as when someone says "The dog wants walked," instead of "the dog wants to go for a walk." Dialect is a variety of language where one is distinguished from others by grammar and vocabulary. In Pennsylvania you might hear people say that they are going to "red up the room," which means "to clean the room."

Those who depend on speaking for a career (broadcasters, politicians, and entertainers) will often strive for unaccented General or Standard English. Listen to most major network newscasters for examples of regionalism-free speech. A given audience may be prejudiced towards or against a speaker with an identifiable accent or dialect. Though we would wish prejudice were not the case, the way we speak implies so much about our education, cultural background, and economic status, that prejudice is inevitable. Any speaker should be aware of how accent, dialect, and regionalisms can be perceived by a given audience. If you speak in a way that the audience might find difficult to understand, make an extra effort to pay attention to the accent and phrasing of your speech. Ask a sympathetic and objective listener to help you when you practice.

## Vocal Quality

The quality of the voice, its timbre (distinctive sound) and texture, affects audibility and can affect the articulation. Our voices are unique to each of us. It is a result of our physical vocal instrument, including diaphragm, vocal cords, lungs and body mass. Some examples of vocal quality include warm, clear, soft, scratchy, mellow and breathy. Each speaker should practice at maximizing the vocal effect of his instrument, which can be developed with vocal exercises. There

are numerous books, recordings and trainers available to develop one's vocal quality when needed. The quality of one's voice is related to its range of pitch.

## Pitch and Inflection

Identical to musical parlance, the pitch is the “highness” or “lowness” of the voice. Each of us has a range of tone. Vocal sounds are actually vibrations sent out from the vocal cords resonating through chambers in the body. The vibrations can literally be measured in terms of audio frequency in the same way music is measured. When the pitch is altered to convey a meaning (like raising the pitch at the end of a sentence that is a question), it is the inflection. Inflections are variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve the meaning.

In his writing “Poetics,” Aristotle lists “Music” as an element of the Drama. Some scholars interpret that to include the musicalization of the spoken word with dramatic inflection. The meaning and effectiveness of a spoken line is greatly dependent on the “melody” of its inflection.

Though archaic, the study of elocution formalizes the conventions of inflection. In some contemporary cultures, inflection has been minimized because it sounds too “melodramatic” for the taste of the demographic group. It would be sensible to be aware of and avoid both extremes. With good animated inflection, a speaker is more interesting, and the inflection conveys energy and “aliveness” that compels the audience to listen.

## Rate of Speaking

Table 12.1: Finding the Right Pace for Your Speech

**If you speak too quickly...**

the audience might get the impression you have nothing important to say.

**If you speak too slowly...**

the audience might think you are too tired to be presenting.

the audience has a difficult time catching up and comprehending what you are saying. They need time to digest the information. So plan on periodic pauses.

the audience can forget the first part of your sentence by the time you get to the last! (It happens!) And they lose interest.

the audience might think you really do not want to be there.

the audience might think you are wasting their time by taking longer than necessary to relay your message.

As a speaker, you cannot race with the audience, nor drag their attention down. Like Goldilocks, look for the pace that is “just right.”

In order to retain clarity of the speech with articulation and inflection, the speaker must be aware that there is a range of appropriate tempo for speaking. If the tempo is too slow, the speech might resemble a monotonous peal. If it is too fast, the articulation could suffer if consonants or vowels are dropped or rushed to keep up the speed. An audience could become frustrated with either extreme. The tempo needs to be appropriate to the speaker’s style, but neither paced like a Gilbertian Lyric (as in “Gilbert and Sullivan”) patter nor a funereal dirge. A comfortable and clear pace is the best. An ideal speaking rate will allow you to comfortably increase your pace to create a sense of excitement, or slow down to emphasize the seriousness of a topic.

## Pauses Versus Vocalized Pauses

A text that is read has punctuation that the reader can see...miniature landmarks to define the text. When spoken, similar punctuation is needed for comprehension, and the speaker’s responsibility is to offer the text with pauses. Space between phrases, properly planted, gives the audience the opportunity to understand the structure of the speaker’s sentences and paragraphs. It also gives time for the audience to “digest” crucial phrases.

Generally, spoken sentences and paragraphs need to be simpler and shorter than what can be comprehended by reading. Pauses can help increase comprehension.

However, pauses that are filled with “uh’s, “um’s,” etc., are called vocalized pauses, or fillers, and should be avoided. They can be distracting and annoying, and give the impression of a lack of preparation if used excessively. Even worse is the use of vernacular phrases like, “y’know” (a contraction of “Do You Know”) which gives the impression of lack of education or lack of concern for the audience. The use of vocalized pauses may be the result of a habit that deserves an effort to be overcome. Avoid using phrases such as “Uh,” “OK?,” “y’know”, “like..., I mean,” “right?”

## Vocal Projection

The volume produced by the vocal instrument is projection. Supporting the voice volume with good breathing and energy can be practiced, and helping a speaker develop the correct volume is a main task of a vocal trainer, teacher or coach. Good vocal support with good posture, breathing, and energy should be practiced regularly, long before a speech is delivered. There are numerous exercises devoted to developing projection capabilities.

While there is no need to shout, a speaker should project to be easily heard from the furthest part of the audience. Even if the speech is amplified with a microphone/sound system, one must speak with projection and energy. As with your rate of speech, you should speak at a volume that comfortably allows you to increase the volume of your voice without seeming to shout or decrease the volume of your voice and still be heard by all audience members.

Do not expect to walk up to the podium and have a full voice. Actors spend about a half-hour doing vocal warm-ups, and singers warm up much more. You might not have an opportunity to warm up immediately before your speech, but when you can, warm up with humming, yawning (loudly) or singing scales: all while breathing deeply and efficiently. It will loosen your voice, prevent irritation, and fire up your vocal energy.



# Camera Fright

Camera shyness is the desire to avoid being photographed or filmed. It is common for individuals who are camera-shy to fear public speaking, performing in front of an audience, and having one's picture taken by any type of camera or by video camera.[1]:41 It can be a consequence of shyness itself, which can be related to low self-esteem, anxiety and fear. Shyness can be a result of social anxiety, public self-consciousness, low assertiveness, and introversion.[2] An individual who experiences camera shyness is often in fear of the unexpected or the unknown in social situations, causing them to avoid the camera.[1][page needed] In a social situation that is anxiety-inducing, people tend to have behavioral responses that prevent the situation from getting worse. According to Crozier, anxiety can be separated into three elements: cognitions, physiological responses and behavior.[1][page needed] An individual walking away or hiding their face is a behavioral response from camera shyness. A physiological response to camera shyness can be shaking or an increase in heart rate. A cognitive response can be how a person remembers a terrible experience with cameras, which results in fear of being photographed or filmed.

## Overcoming Camera Fright

The primary reason behind camera panic is the same reason that drives stage fear – the fear of being seen and judged by people. As humans, we are always a little self-conscious about how we are perceived. Things are usually fine until we are put in a place where we know we are going to be looked at and most likely, be judged as well. But, the good news is that there are ways to deal with this kind of fear.

There are several reasons why a person might have camera panic. This is usually because the camera adds to the idea of being seen, just like a stage does. Not all people like that. Some of us prefer to go unnoticed and not be under the spotlight.

However, in the world we live in, it's necessary for one to be confident and have the ability to present himself/herself in front of an audience. So, the right thing to do in this situation is to help your teammate get over that fear.

## **Why Do People Get Camera Panic?**

The primary reason behind camera panic is the same reason that drives stage fear – the fear of being seen and judged by people. As humans, we are always a little self-conscious about how we are perceived.

Things are usually fine until we are put in a place where we know we are going to be looked at and most likely, be judged as well.

## **Getting Rid of Stage Fright**

The steps to eliminating camera panic are the same as the steps to deal with stage fear.

1. The first thing you need to teach your teammate to do is to learn to relax her/his body. Releasing the tension present in the body can help one steady his/her voice and calm the mind down. One way to relax the body is by making a humming noise. Similarly, eating a fruit before facing the camera can help. This is to alleviate the nauseous feeling that often comes with anxiety and camera panic. However, make sure your teammate does not eat a heavy meal. Stretching is another way to ease the body into a relaxed state. So, ask your teammate to stretch their legs, arms, and shoulders. You can join in too.
2. Apart from relaxing the body, one also needs to relax the mind to help with camera panic. One of the best ways to do this is by meditating. Ideally, this is best done in the mornings or at least, an hour before the performance. One doesn't even need to spend too much time with it. Just 15 to 20 minutes a day should be good enough. Meditation involves sitting on the floor with folded legs and closing one's eyes. While doing this, the hands must be rested on the lap and the breathing must be relaxed. The objective is to reach a mental state where no thoughts are present. This, in turn, allows the body to enter a relaxed state.

3. Another important thing to do is avoid anything that functions as a stimulant. For example, coffee or sugary foods can boost energy, which can also lead to increased anxiety. So, to be on the safe side, make sure your team indulging in such treats before the performance.
4. The mind plays a key role in all of this fear and anxiety stuff. Therefore, learning to control the mind can be very helpful. So, start convincing your mind that you don't experience anxiety. This can seem farfetched, but it does work, if done with enough conviction. In fact, you and your team can set a time where your mind automatically stops being anxious. Keep doing it on a regular basis and you will have conditioned your mind to obey your requests.
5. Exercise is another way to avoid panic and anxiety. Plenty of studies have proven this to be true. What happens when we exercise is that our bodies begin to produce more endorphins. Endorphins are mood-improving hormones and they can help us reach a positive state of mind. Needless to say, a school has enough opportunities for exercise. For example, a quick game of basketball an hour before the performance should do some good for the whole team.
6. Laughter is another excellent way to alleviate tension and nervousness. So, yeah, make your team laughs before going on camera. There is plenty of funny and safe material on the Internet. So, you can start with that. You can also start with laughter exercises. A quick Google search on the topic will give you everything you need to know.
7. One of the causes for camera panic is the sense of being unprepared. So, make sure your team has everything set and that everybody has practiced his or her lines. Also, make sure everybody is early for the performance. Delays will only cause more stress. Being prepared in advance can bring down a fair bit of stress.
8. This strategy might sound a little odd, but it's known to work. To prevent camera panic or stage fear, people are often advised to imagine a loved one as every person in the audience. This tends to have a relaxing effect on the speaker or performer. Maybe you can try this with your own team and see how it goes. Also, since it is in front of a camera, the strategy might be relatively easier to apply.

# Microphone Fright

Mic fright is a general term for anxiety leading to freezing, choking or hesitating when speaking into a microphone (mic). The physiological response of worrying about saying the right thing to an audience large or small is very natural and expected.

## Point 1: Having stage fright is OK!

In the past year or so, I have gone up on stage to speak in front of people close to a dozen times. Some in front of small, 50 people audience at a small company event, others with over 500 at a formal gala dinner. I cannot call myself a seasoned speaker yet, but I have had a lot more microphone time than most people. And although with each presentation I have accumulated experience and built my confidence, I am still afflicted with the same nerves each new time as I am about to go up onstage.

Before I went up on stage in front of a couple hundred people at my last pitch event, my co-workers gave me the thumbs up and said “Rui, you got this.” I immediately replied to them, “I am actually really nervous. It’s like my first time doing public speaking all over again!” My heart was racing, and my palms were sweaty. But here’s the thing: being nervous can be a good thing. How? Well, I was nervous not because I thought the audience was going to glare at me and eat me alive or other irrational fears, but because I held my presentation as an important mission, and wanted to make sure I could get my message across. As soon as I dragged my butterfly-filled gut onto stage, and greeted my audience “good evening,” I was ready to go.

## Point 2: Put more efforts into preparation off-stage!

Now let us go back in time a little bit. The first step in giving a great presentation is of course preparation. As a general rule, take one hour of preparation for each minute of presentation time. As is with writing a paper, start with an outline of your points. Make sure to include all the information that you will need to pass

down to your audience. When organized into your script or slideshow, it should flow and transition effortlessly.

When speaking to an audience, you should never rely too heavily on written notes, but nor should you try to simply wing it. Both will end in disaster. Have a stack of postcards in your pocket – one for every five minutes you will be speaking – and shape your speech, highlighting the big emotional moments and your favourite jokes. If you're using a laptop to show a slideshow presentation on screen, you can have virtual postcards on your laptop screen as an alternative, so you don't need to fuss over cards. No audience wants you to do badly. They all want to learn something new, they all want to be moved, and they all want to be entertained.

Now that you have all your speech prepped, practice actually speaking it! You will be most likely be on a timer, and you cannot be sure about the timing of your presentation until you actually try dictating it with a stopwatch. If you have the chance, have a colleague or friend listen to you as you speak. Keep in mind that most people talk faster when nervous on stage, so plan accordingly.

### Point 3: 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, and this makes it much easier to engage with your audience, especially if you need to improvise part of your presentation.

### Point 4: Relax

Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything. "One Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi." Deep breath. Pause. Begin. Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.

## Point 5: Pay attention to body language

Stand up straight, take deep breaths, look people in the eye, and smile. Prevent leaning on one leg by walking around and using gestures to engage the audience. This movement and energy will also come through in your voice, making it more active and passionate.

## Point 6: Watch recordings of yourself

Whenever possible, record your presentations and speeches. You can improve your speaking skills dramatically by watching yourself later, and then working on improving in areas that didn't go well. You will be surprised by the things you can pick up by simply watching yourself!

## Point 7: Gain experience

Mainly, your speech should represent you — as an authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Seek more opportunities to get onstage, and push yourself to get better and better.