

# **OVERCOMING NERVES**

## **Confident speaking without really trying!**

Nerves are natural. They do not go away completely but you can use tips and techniques to help you. Nerves help you perform your best when you are speaking. Try some of the following tips to help you get the 'butterflies flying in formation:'

- 1. KNOW YOUR MATERIAL AND BE PREPARED.** Have short notes/words on either a sheet of paper or small pieces of card.
- 2. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE.** In front of a mirror at home. In a car. To your friends. Hear yourself speak – you can always tape yourself. Confidence and certainty come from practice.
- 3. REMEMBER TO BREATHE.** Take some deep breaths before you speak. This will both ease any tension you have and help you project your voice. Breathe and stretch!
- 4. KEEP YOUR OPENING AND CONCLUSION SHORT AND SIMPLE AND MEMORISE THEM.** This makes you appear confident and authoritative and you then have eye contact with your audience, which gets them to listen to you.
- 5. UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS YOU TO SUCCEED.** They are on your side! They can't feel the butterflies, the sweaty palms or your shaking knees. They are only listening to what you have to say!
- 6. IMAGINE YOURSELF SPEAKING TO A LARGE AUDIENCE.** Picture the room, see the people, hear the applause. Visualise yourself being successful.
- 7. PLAN.** Remember that proper planning creates a good performance.
- 8. NEVER APOLOGISE.** The audience will never know if you leave out half your talk or take things in a different order. Simply use the power of the pause and continue.
- 9. REMEMBER THE FEEDBACK YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN.** Think of things like maintaining eye contact, letting go of clasped hands. Speak loudly and slowly - this can make a huge difference as to how you come across.
- 10. TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.** Remember that public speaking is a skill, like learning to drive a car. Practice and experience work best.

- and **SMILE!**

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