

# ClearSpeech

## Nerves and Anxiety during Presentations

Nearly everyone experiences nervousness when they perform, whether giving a speech, taking a test, offering a presentation, or teaching a class. But some people manage their nervousness better than others. Why?

Some people simply understand that the negative effects of nervousness are self-perpetuating. Here is an alarming little equation:

### Signs of Nervousness can Grow Others

In other words, one sign of nervousness can cause other symptoms to pop up.

Just think back to a time when you were speaking in front of a group. If you noticed that your hands were shaking or your voice was cracking, you probably became distracted and unnerved by these signs. You became even more nervous, which made your heart beat faster. True?

There's good news: This formula also works in reverse. If you can prepare ahead of time to the causes for nervousness, you can avoid a chain reaction of symptoms.

### Types of Fears That Cause Anxiety

One important thing you can do is to over-prepare when you're facing an intimidating situation that makes you nervous. The number one cause for nerves is lack of preparation.

### Prepare to turn Nerves into Positive Energy

Prepare ahead and go way beyond the parameters of your specific topic. Find out all you can about the *how* and *why* of things, especially if you will be answering questions about your topic. Don't just focus on the material. What's the room like? Who is your audience? What do they want to know? The most important advance work you do for a presentation is the mental preparation that moves you from someone who hides nervousness to someone who is excited by the prospect of sharing their knowledge with others!

### Fear of Freezing Up

A key here is to remember what seems to be a big horrible silence for you is likely barely noticeable to others. Remind yourself of that as you take a nice deep breath and feel the frost melt away.

You can avoid the appearance of freezing up during your presentation, discussion, or speech by having props on hand. These can include a drink of water, a notepad, or a visual aid.

Anytime you feel like you might go blank, say "Excuse me for a moment," and take a drink. This will give you an extra moment to gather your thoughts.

Adapted from <https://www.thoughtco.com/battling-nerves-during-presentation-1857519?terms=public+speaking>