Taming Adrenaline
Surefire Strategies for Overcoming Speaking Anxiety

Video Series

Part 1: Introduction
Part 2: On-the-Spot Remedies
Part 3: Avoiding the “Tells” of Nervousness
Part 4: Long-term Strategies

Brought to you by Cara Hale Alter, founder of SpeechSkills and author of The Credibility Code: How to Project Confidence and Competence When It Matters Most. For more tips, videos, training options, and free resources, visit speechskills.com/LeanIn
Key Takeaways

Speaking anxiety holds many people back from

• applying for jobs or promotions
• speaking up in classes or conferences
• sharing expertise in meetings
• taking on top-level assignments
• meeting new people and making connections
• seeking the spotlight

Learning how to tame adrenaline will allow you to take full advantage of opportunities to advance your career.

Why do we experience speaking anxiety?

When your limbic brain perceives a threat, it releases adrenaline to prepare your body to either fight or flee. (In the animal world, being singled out is dangerous!)

This causes a flood of physiological symptoms—racing heart, increased perspiration, quickened breathing, dry mouth, nausea, clouded thinking.

Many people find these symptoms to be threatening unto themselves, which creates a devastating vicious cycle. We don't fear the audience; we fear the lack of control we feel in our bodies.

How do you break the cycle of fear feeding fear?

You need . . .

• On-the-spot remedies to minimize physical symptoms in the moment
• Long-term strategies to proactively prepare for the future
Taming Adrenaline
Part 1: Introduction

Discussion Questions

• How often do you experience speaking anxiety and under what conditions?

• Can you think of a time when the threat of unwanted adrenaline stopped you from taking advantage of an opportunity to stand out, speak up, or show off your potential? If so, what was the cost?

• What physiological symptoms do you experience?

• Does understanding the predator/prey analogy help you put the adrenaline response into context?
Taming Adrenaline
Part 1: Introduction

ACTIVITY 1: 
Brainstorm Nerve-racking Situations

As a group, take five minutes to brainstorm the many situations that can cause speaking anxiety other than public speaking.

ACTIVITY 2: 
Explore Nervous Behaviors

As an experiment, exhibit the following behaviors for exactly 45 seconds: dip your chin toward your chest, tuck your arms in close to your body, dart your eyes about the room, and consistently adjust your position in your chair (i.e. “fidget”).

Next, take a personal inventory of how these behaviors made you feel both during and after the exercise. Share your experiences with the group.