

***SPEAK WITH
PASSION
SPEAK WITH
POWER!***

**Transform Inexperience and
the Fear of Public Speaking into
Energy, Know-How and Results!**

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Part One

Take Charge of Your Fear



Hooked by the fear of public speaking.

Dismantle Your Fear

*“When Demosthenes speaks,
The people say, ‘How well he speaks;’
But when Pericles speaks,
The people say, ‘Let us march!’ ”*
— Anonymous

We all have an inner Pericles—passionate and powerful, able to inspire people to action. But tapping into this inner Pericles may be easier said than done. Fear of public speaking can get in the way—of taking the spotlight and having people see our flaws—of making a mistake and being criticized.

You may be familiar with the research that states Americans are more afraid of public speaking than of dying. In fact, fear of public speaking tied for first place along with the fear of falling from a great height, while fear of dying was seventh on the list!

The question is, “How do we overcome this fear? What’s the key?”

The secret to tapping into our inner Pericles is in making the shift from “fear having you hooked” to “you having fear mastered.”

The fear may never disappear completely, but you can take charge of it and control how it affects you. Even megastars like Barbra Streisand and Bette Midler have experienced extreme stage fright before walking into the spot lights of big shows! How can we take charge of our fear the way these celebrities have handled theirs?

Take the Grip Out of Fear

When we’re experiencing the fear of public speaking, we move into what’s called the “flight or fight mode,” which is a state of being driven either to run away from the source of our fear or to attack it. In public speaking, we run away from our discomfort and—to

avoid feeling the panic in the stomach or hearing the scream inside the head—we tighten our bellies, breathe rapidly and talk as fast as we can.

Has this ever happened to you? Then when you sat down, you didn't remember what you said or who you saw? It was all a blur! The good news is that all those sensations and inner screams you were running away from are exactly what you want to focus on in order to conquer the fear.

Fear lives in us as body sensations, emotions, thoughts and mental pictures.

By observing each of these manifestations of fear, you will begin detaching yourself from the fear and it will lose its grip on you.

Case Study:

Anne Tackles Her Fear of Speaking

It's powerful to face your fear. About fifteen years ago, I was substituting for another instructor in a course called "Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking." It was the final session. One of the students was a tall, slender British woman named Anne Reeves, with huge blue eyes and a smile that beamed like the sun. During her final presentation, Anne enchanted us with her warmth, intelligence and animation. She seemed completely natural and was loaded with magnetism!



How Anne felt inside and how she came across!

Imagine how puzzled I was to learn that Anne had no idea how effectively she presented. She was only aware of her anxiety, which had prompted her to take a speaking course in the first place. Since Anne was Director of Marketing for Shimokochi-Reeves, a strategic visual branding company in Los Angeles, she had to give lots of sales presentations, but she vehemently rejected my invitation to take my more advanced course.

Exercise A: Feel the Tension and Release It to Gravity.

- Sit with your arms and legs uncrossed. Let your eyes close. Notice the body sensations in your feet. Notice how your feet are released to gravity.
- Tense your feet. Feel the tension. Now release the feet to gravity. Notice the sensation of release.
- Now do this with your calves. Tense, then release, and notice the sensations of both states.
- Do the same with the thighs—tense, then release, and notice the sensations.
- Then the buttocks—tense, then release, and notice the sensations.
- Move your awareness into your belly. Tense, and notice how hard it is to breathe; then release, and allow yourself to release a big sigh of pleasurable relief.



Feel the tension and release it to gravity.

- Notice the sensations in your chest. Now tense your chest. Notice how shut down you feel. Now release your chest, along with a big sigh of pleasurable relief.
- Bring your awareness into your shoulders, feel them being released to gravity. Now tense them up to your ears. Feel the tension. Then as you release your shoulders to gravity, allow your breath to release as well, with a big sigh of pleasurable relief.
- Move your awareness into your arms. Tense your upper arms. Release. Now tense your lower arms. Release. Tense your hands into fists. Release. Tense your whole arms and hands into fists. Hold. Feel the tension throughout your arms and hands. Now release and feel the release throughout your arms and hands. Feel the release to gravity.
- Now go through these steps of tensing—feeling the tension, then releasing—feeling the release to gravity with your neck, throat, tongue, jaw, eyes, eyebrows and forehead.

By getting familiar with the sensations of “Tense-Release,” you’re preparing yourself for success if you experience tension—at the podium, in the classroom or during an interview. Simply feel it and release it to gravity!

Exercise B: Observe Body Sensations, Emotions, Thoughts and Mental Pictures

We can break our fear down into body sensations, emotions, thoughts and mental pictures. When we are able to focus on these, we can then release them. Train yourself to notice them and to distance yourself from them when they’re not serving your higher goals. How do you do that? Begin when you’re relaxed and sitting—perhaps after you’ve completed Exercise 1. Then read through this next exercise. Again, you can leave your eyes open to read the sequence aloud or you can tape it or have a friend read it to you.

- Close your eyes and release your whole body to gravity.
- Release three big sighs of pleasurable relief, allowing each sigh to bring you into a state of deeper relaxation.
- Now observe your body sensations, beginning with the bottoms of your feet and working slowly up. Perhaps you have some tingling in your right big toe. Or an empty feeling in your stomach. Or some sharp sensation in your left shoulder blade.
- Whatever sensations you feel in your body, observe them and allow them. You are the Observer. You are not your body sensations. You have them. They do not have you. Notice this. Take your time and distinguish your body sensations without resisting them or trying to change them. They are what they are and you are not hooked by them.
- Good. Now sigh your body sensations away with a deep sigh of pleasurable relief.
- Now shift your awareness to your emotions. Observe any emotion that you may be experiencing. Perhaps you feel bored or impatient or peaceful. Perhaps you’re experiencing mixed emotions. Whatever emotion you’re observing, just notice it, allow it, don’t try to change it. You are the Observer. You are not your emotions. You have your emotions. They do not have you. Notice this. Take your time and distinguish your emotions without resisting them or trying to change them. They are what they are and you are not hooked by them.
- Wonderful. Now sigh your emotions away with a deep sigh of pleasurable relief.

- Shift your awareness to your thoughts. Observe any thought as if you were observing a cloud drifting across the sky. You are the Observer. You are not your thoughts. You have thoughts. Your thoughts do not have you. Notice this. Take your time and distinguish your thoughts without resisting them or trying to change them. They are what they are and you are not hooked by them.
- As each thought drifts across your mind, whisper it softly to yourself. You can hear the words of the thought, but you are not the thought. You have the thoughts. They do not have you. The thoughts do not require you to take an action. They are not you. Notice this.
- Now sigh your thoughts away with a deep sigh of pleasurable relief.
- This time, visualize a pleasant memory from your life. See it in your mind's eye as a mental picture. Observe that you have the memory; it doesn't have you. You are the Observer. You are not your memory. Now let it go with a deep sigh of pleasurable relief.
- Now visualize a favorite daydream. Think of something that you would like to happen, but it hasn't actually happened yet. See it in your mind's eye as a mental picture. Observe that you have the daydream; it doesn't have you. You are the Observer. You are not your daydream. Let it go with a deep sigh of pleasurable relief.



Observe without getting hooked.

- With your eyes still closed, take a moment to review what you have just accomplished. You have distinguished yourself as the Observer. You have observed your body sensations, emotions, thoughts and mental pictures in the form of memories and daydreams. You have them and you're not hooked by them.
- Now release all this with three big sighs of deep and pleasurable relief.

As you become more aware of your body sensations, emotions, thoughts and mental picture (memories and daydreams), they lose their hold. A medical student recently shared with me that he now notices when he's feeling stressed and not only releases

Summary

The more you practice releasing tension and dismantling your fear, the more freedom you'll have when you're speaking. Instead of being hooked by any fearful body sensations, emotions, thoughts and mental pictures that might occur, you'll recognize them for what they are and take charge of them.

Notes:

