



Hello beautiful community!

Some surveys show that public speaking ranks among the greatest fears for most people, sometimes coming even before the fear of death. I am no exception to the studies. In fact, one of the reasons I embarked on my coaching journey was to transform the butterflies of nervousness I felt in group settings into butterflies of excitement.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, in essence, the meaning we attach to an event tends to dictate our experience of it. Some people will perceive going on stage as an exciting opportunity to share their knowledge with a wider audience. Others will consider it a dreadful experience, seeing it in the worst-case scenario as an opportunity for failure in front of a group of hostile strangers. As a matter of fact, depending on what we associate public speaking with, the butterflies in our stomachs will prove to be either butterflies of excitement that will undoubtedly support us in being the best of ourselves, or butterflies of nervousness (sometimes even panic) that will more than likely deprive us of the most basic resources to think on our two feet. So how could we replace an association that does not serve us by one that supports us?

Becoming more competent is obviously the best way to gain confidence in our skills and hence change our relationship to public speaking. Continued learning, especially experiential learning, is at the core of an increasing competence. Experiential learning stands in contrast to mere intellectual understanding – the difference between both can be likened to the difference between “knowledge” and “knowing”. While having a knowledge of all the tips and tricks about public speaking certainly helps, it is not until you actually address an audience that you develop an internal knowing of what it is all about. This is why joining public speaking organizations like Toastmasters and as such being exposed week after week to audiences can be so effective in helping us improve our performance and get rid of the most nerve-wracking butterflies.

Another aspect too often overlooked and yet known to significantly speed up the process is to develop a mental visualization routine of ourselves as world-class speakers. Such a routine will eventually override any limiting ideas we might have about ourselves. The reason is that whatever our minds can see, our bodies can do. In other words, if we can see ourselves in our minds' eyes as powerful confident speakers inspiring crowds of people, we already are half way to becoming fertile ground for a new breed of butterflies. The best way to keep expanding that ground is to make sure we not only prepare the content and delivery of our speeches, but also are in a peak emotional state when we rehearse. This will allow us to develop a strong and resourceful image of ourselves when thinking of upcoming public speaking events. By doing this consistently, we will progressively reprogram our association with public speaking, until the day we can genuinely start looking forward to sharing ourselves with a group of strangers.



***Tips to develop a mental image of yourself
as a world-class public speaker***

- 1- Imagine you have a screen in front of you and are now seeing a movie of yourself as a world-class speaker*. Notice the quality of your voice up there, how you move, the type of interaction you are having with the audience, etc.
- 2- Once you are fully satisfied with the movie you are seeing, imagine you could literally step into the movie and feel everything you are feeling as you are addressing the audience. Notice all the details, including the quality of your breathing, what you are focusing on as you speak to the audience, what you are telling yourself (or not), etc.
- 3- Now step out of the movie and look at it back on the screen. If you do that exercise daily, you will quickly start noticing significant differences in your performance.

* If for any reason you are not able to see yourself performing well in front of an audience, imagine you are seeing a public speaker you admire instead. Once you have a clear picture of that person engaged in public speaking, see your head replacing their head, your shoulders replacing theirs, etc., until your whole body replaces theirs. Then move to the following steps.

If you find you have been keeping yourself small in public settings, feel free to book an introductory session via email at sophie@essencialcoaching.com or phone 604 985 4499.



"We know what we are, but know not what we may be." (William Shakespeare)

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