

SPEAK UP
★ LIKE A DIVA

31 Terrific Public Speaking Tips

FOR QUIET GIRLS WHO WANT TO BE HEARD



Unleash your **inner diva** and be heard!

Are you afraid of speaking up in public?

I wrote these tips to help you start your public speaking journey. Many of us are familiar with the statistic that most people fear public speaking more than they fear death.

But, lovely quiet girls, fear not. I want you to know that deep down inside you – or maybe not even that deep down – there's a competent public speaker just waiting to emerge and be heard!

Most of these tips are simple quick hits you can apply before a one-minute networking introduction or before a longer presentation. They'll help you structure your speech, deal with your nerves and get to grips with what, for many, is a truly terrifying experience.

The tips are easy to implement. You may not need all of them, but keep them at the ready for the next time you're called upon to give a talk or a presentation.

Do the prep, show up and shine!

Shola x

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1

Practise out loud

- 1) After you've written the first draft of your speech, read it out loud several times and tweak it for readability and punchiness. A speech is a living thing and can get better over time so don't be too attached to your first version. Keep your words conversational, and use short sentences that people can easily absorb. This will keep your audience more engaged. If there are words you frequently trip over during rehearsal, change them to ones that are easier to say out loud.
- 2) If you're worried about how to structure your speech, try to divide your content into three main points. For longer speeches, break the three points into three further points. For some reason, people find threes easier to absorb.
- 3) When you only have a short time on stage, focus on making one main point that people can understand and learn from. It's better to explain one point well than to take on too much and overload your audience.
- 4) Give yourself plenty of time to practise your speech. If you're a nervous type, try to have your speech written at a few weeks before you deliver it. Practise it 2-3 times a day. The more time you allow yourself, the more relaxed you can be.

2 Record your talk

- 5) Strengthen your voice by singing out loud to your favourite songs whenever you get the chance (no one else needs to hear it if you're self-conscious!). Try to sing as loud as you can, but without straining yourself. Enjoy the freedom, the vibe and the rhythm of the song. Then try to recreate the same enjoyment while you're giving your speech. You'll be more relaxed, and your audience will sense it.
- 6) Record your talk on your phone and play it back to yourself when you have a spare moment, or daily before your speech. You'll be surprised at how much of the speech you will absorb without having to concentrate too hard.
- 7) Remember: your message is the most important thing. Your job is to convey it in the clearest possible way. Shift your focus onto clear delivery of the content rather than on what the audience thinks of you.
- 8) Identify the natural strengths and weaknesses in your speaking. Accentuate the positives, and minimise the negatives. If you're funny, then add a little humour. If you're serious, then go for more depth. It will feel natural to you and improve the quality of your speech.

3

Visualise success

- 9) This exercise should put a BIG smile on your face. A few days before your presentation, spend a few minutes a day visualising your success. As you lie in bed or take a break during the day, imagine yourself during a shining moment in your past. What were you doing? What were you wearing? Who was around you, and how did they react to your big moment? Replay the moment in slow motion and imagine yourself bigger and bolder. Let the colours be brighter and more intense, and the sounds louder. You're the hero! Picture the scene. Bask in your success. Then, at the height of your big moment, pinch your thumb and forefinger together to create an anchor. Do the same every day for a week before your talk. On the day of your speech, pinch your thumb and forefinger together again to bring those great feelings flooding back. Carry the feelings with you to the stage as you give your speech or presentation.
- 10) To help inject expression into your voice, practice reading your favourite poems out loud with as much feeling as you can. Vary your pace, your pitch and your tone. Then rehearse your speech in the same way, with the appropriate feeling.
- 11) To warm up on the day, do a few relaxing breathing exercises before you start your speech. Meditate for a few minutes, and rehearse some tongue twisters.
- 12) Arrive early and scope out the room beforehand. Stand at the speaking area. Position yourself behind the lectern and, if there is one, test the microphone. If you have slides, play them through and make sure they work on the venue's equipment. Figure out where to stand, a place that will allow everyone to see both you and your visual aids. Then you can relax in the knowledge that you're fully prepared.

4

Start with a question

- 13) Beforehand, chat with a few audience members. When it's time to give your talk, it'll help you see the audience as a collection of pleasant individuals rather than an aggressive group of enemies waiting for you to screw up!
- 14) When you stand up to give your talk, plant your feet firmly, at least half a shoulder's width apart. It will give you a secure base and make you look more confident. You'll also be less likely to shift or fidget as you speak.
- 15) Think of nervousness as your friend. Your jitters are there to remind you that an exciting opportunity is waiting for you. You can get rid of them by leaving the room a few minutes before you speak. Just pop into the loo or an empty room. Jump up and down a few times to get rid of excess energy. Some performers and speakers do some star jumps or even press-ups before going on stage. If that's a bit over-energetic for you or if you can't leave the room, don't worry. Under the table, or in your seat, shake out your legs for a few moments, as though you're warming up before a run or have the shivers. It works like magic.
- 16) Open your speech with a question to engage the audience. Get them to put their hands up in response, or ask them a rhetorical question instead. That way you instantly get them involved and also deflect the attention away from yourself and your performance. This gives you a bit of breathing space on stage.

5 Smile!

- 17) If it's appropriate, smile here and there during your talk. It can work wonders. It helps your audience relax and lets them know you're at ease.
- 18) Make eye contact as you give your talk. The best kind of eye contact is lingering: try to lock eyes for 2 or 3 seconds before you move on to the next person. Make contact with people everywhere in the room – at the back and in front – so the entire audience feels included in your talk.
- 19) If your hands are shaking badly and you're scared that any trembling will be a dead giveaway of your nerves, feel free to have hang them loosely at your sides. Otherwise, limit hand movements to those that take place between the hip and the waist.
- 20) If you fluff your words at any point, don't worry about it. Your audience wants you to be human. They want you to succeed, and don't expect you to be perfect. If you make a mistake, just ignore it and move on. If you can turn it into a little joke for the audience that's brilliant. Just try not to apologise. It might be your first instinct to blurt out 'I'm sorry', but you'll just draw attention to a blooper that most of your listeners probably won't have noticed!

6

Share your story

- 21) Never end your speech with a Q&A session. Wrap things up by summarising your speech AFTER the Q&A is done. That way YOU take control of proceedings and set the tone for the ending. Remember, the beginning and the end of your talk are most memorable to people – so make sure the end is orchestrated by you and not a random audience member!
- 22) If you have to give a one-minute networking pitch to a group and feel embarrassed about singing your own praises and big-upping yourself, tell a client success story instead. It will give you more credibility and make you feel less self-conscious. It will also pique your audience's interest. It will make them think, *"If she can do that for her clients, what can she do for us?"*
- 23) When you're at a networking event and in conversation with new people, it's important to share a bit about yourself, especially if there's something you have in common with the person you're speaking to. This will help build rapport. People like people who are like them.
- 24) Make sure your conversation is a balance of questions AND information about you and your business. Naturally quiet ladies often find it easier to ask questions than to keep the focus on them by having to share or provide answers. Sometimes this can work and people will think you're charming. Other times they'll think you're dull and will want to escape as quickly as possible! So remember to share and let the spotlight shine on you for a few moments.

7

Don't speak too fast

- 25) Quiet people often spend more time observing their surroundings than do their more extroverted counterparts. Put this to your advantage by sharing some of what you've noticed. You'll surprise and delight the people you're talking to – especially if you share useful information you've spotted about them or insights that most others wouldn't have picked up on.
- 26) At networking meetings, don't feel you have to work the whole room, especially if you find it draining to meet new people. Before you head off, set a target and be happy when you meet it. For example, you might decide to have proper conversations with two people and leave the event when you're done. Once you've achieved your objective, head home without guilt or go for bonus points by chatting with an additional one or two attendees.
- 27) If you can, research the list of networking attendees ahead of time and figure out who you'd most like to talk to. When you arrive, you can focus on seeking out your two or three target people. As you search for them, you can enjoy the conversations along the way in the knowledge that your chit-chat is helping you achieve your objective. And you never know who you might meet in the process!
- 28) When you speak too quickly because of nerves, slow yourself down by using this easy trick. Rehearse your speech, and each time you feel you should pause or go slower, count to 1, 2 or 3 silently in your head. Use 1 for a comma, 2 for a full stop, and 3 for a pause between paragraphs or points. If you practice your speech and incorporate these silent numbers, you'll soon include the pauses without thinking and will slow down naturally.



Don't panic

- 28) Is your voice very quiet? Do you struggle to get the back of the room to hear you? Practice breathing from your diaphragm. It will give your voice more depth and volume. To test whether you're breathing from the right place, put one hand on your chest and the other on your tummy and take a deep breath in. The tummy hand should move out more than the chest hand, as diaphragmatic breathing begins from deep in the body.
- 29) If you have to answer an impromptu question you have no ready answer for, don't panic or rush. Take a couple of deep breaths before you answer. Give yourself time to compose your thoughts and decide on your response. It will make you look thoughtful and considered. If you can, structure your answer into two or three points rather than blurting out the first thing that comes into your head.
- 30) Identify the natural strengths and weaknesses in your speaking. Accentuate the positives, and minimise the negatives. If you're funny, then add a little humour. If you're serious, then go for more depth. It will feel natural to you and improve the quality of your speech.
- 31) When you're done and the audience starts clapping, stand there and receive the applause for a few moments. Smile, relax and breathe deeply. You're done! Enjoy the feelings of being finished. Don't immediately turn tail and sprint back to your seat as this gives the audience the impression that you hated every minute of it. Even if you did, don't let them sense it!

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Enjoy these tips...

And put them into practice pronto!

For quiet girls, public speaking has a few advantages over everyday conversation. For example:

1. You get to rehearse what you want to say ahead of time
2. You can include all the fabulous observations that quiet people and introverts routinely make, which will impress your audience
3. No one will interrupt you while you speak - or if they do, they're very rude!

So enjoy the fabulous opportunity that is public speaking. And be heard!

Coming soon will be a fun and divatastic blend of public speaker coaching, confidence training and voice-building singing exercises delivered as online coaching programs, monthly meetings and 1-to-1 sessions so check out www.speakuplikeadiva.com soon!

Here's to your success!

Shola x

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