

# 7 TIPS!

# FOR EVERYBODY WHO FEARS PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mabel Frumau

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Public speaking is one of the biggest fears and many people struggle with it. So, there is nothing to be ashamed of. But, it can be pretty miserable. From not finding the right words, to not being able to sleep days in advance. From having cramp in your stomach to hyperventilating. Not exactly a joyous experience.

At the same time, you would like to leave a good impression when you present. If only these nerves would leave you alone...

Good news! Because there is lot you can do to manage your nerves. In this E-book you'll find 7 tips.

# MY STORY

I remember it quite well, almost 15 years ago. I found myself in a very luxurious hotel room in Helsinki. My feet on soft carpet, 4 inches thick. An antique cabinet with crystal glasses, newspapers in 5 different languages all spread over the coffee-table. I should have been on top of the world, but I felt horrible. The next day, I had to give

a presentation for important clients and the big boss from the United States would be present!

And this man had a reputation. He was not easily satisfied. Far from it. In my mind I saw all the different scenario's of what could go wrong. Technique failed, I had a black-out and I heard myself stuttering. This went from bad to worse, until I was almost convinced I would be fired, right after doing the presentation.

So, I know all too well what nerves can do with you.....
The past years I've assembled all kind of tools and methods to deal with presentation fear. Hundreds of professionals have already profited from it. In this E-book you'll find 7 tips.

## What can this mean?

Learning how to deal with nerves and knowledge of how presentations work can mean that like PhD student Sarah, you develop yourself from being very shy and timid while presenting to earning an important grant with your presentation two weeks later.

Or that you win a presentation contest on television (RTL business channel), like stockbroker Karel.



Or that the Chinese market opens for you, after giving an excellent presentation during a Beijing conference, like consultant Jannita.

Or that you bring across your information in an almost effortless, easy manner, instead of hasty and tense, like manager Tilly.

Giving people the tools, so that they can successfully bring across their ideas, knowledge and passion to a large public is my mission and passion. I will be happy to help you with this.

## What is the reason we get so nervous?

When we present, we put ourselves opposite of the group. We feel all alone. It touches upon an old primal fear. Not being part of group or not being accepted by the group, meant in pre historical time the same as ... death.

## In short: it can feel as a "social" threat.

Will I be accepted? Am I doing well? Is what I say, not pure nonsense? And we react to such a threat by a "fight/freeze/flight" reaction. Just, as animals do when they feel threatened. All strategies to cope with this fear.

One person starts to "fight", by talking very fast and getting out of breath.

Another freezes up, their whole body becomes tense. And they start to talk on automatic pilot.

Or we want to flee. You can tell the speaker does not want to be there. By their posture, hiding behind their slides or notes or mumbling and speaking very softly. They do not want to be heard.

## What do you do?

This means that the knowledge that you have, the idea you want to suggest, the professional impression you would like to make, does not come across as you would like. Because your nerves hang as a stuffy blanket over the situation. You do not experience freedom to bring across what matters to you in a good way.

## This is really too bad and not necessary.

How would it be to experience freedom when you speak? To enjoy public speaking? To be able to share your story with more ease and calm?

## The Domino effect.

The 7 tips to tame your nerves, will help you on the way. The nice thing about it, is that the tips reinforce one another. So, if you apply one tip, it will often also have its effect on the rest, like a row of domino stones.

Before we actually start, it is important to realize that nerves in itself are not negative. They are in fact vital 1. It is a signal of your body telling you, that you are about to do something of consequence. Your nerves will prepare your body. How cool is that?

But, what we do not want to happen is that these nerves take us over. Because then we are not able any more to do the things in a way we want them to do. In short: you want to manage your nerves.

And now the 7 tips. Have fun reading – and practising!

Mabel

Mabel Frumau

Presentation coach and trainer.

1. Look at the following interesting Ted Talk and your view on nerves may change forever: Kelly Mcgonigal:

Make Stress your Friend

# 7 TIPS! TIPS, TOOLS AND INSPIRATION

# **ACCEPT YOUR NERVES!**

Accepting is letting go. And by being able to let go, your nerves will lose their grip on you. So that you are eventually more free and better equipped for the task.



What...., accept your nerves? Are nerves not something we need to fight, to combat, to make them go away? I understand that this might seem paradoxical and it is in a sense. However, if we want our nerves to lose their grip on us, this is the gateway we need to get through.

### How so?

I will illustrate this by a story. Let's say you are invited to the wedding of your cousin. You are looking forward to it. But, all of a sudden you have to think of your aunt Ursula, the mother of your cousin. You happen to really hate her (nerves), and you can feel the resistance gaining momentum in your stomach.

You decide to go the wedding anyway. Having arrived you end up talking to several relatives, but all the time you



keep one eye on aunt Ursula. So that, you can avoid her in case she might come your way.

This may seem like a good strategy. But, the result of this is that instead of really enjoying the party, you are constantly busy with keeping an eye on aunt Ursula.

Your mind is not a 100% focussed on the conversations that you are having. You are not really listening. In fact you are not really there.

A better strategy, would be to immediately shake aunts Ursula's hand as soon as you arrive and be done with it (accepting your nerves). So that it enables you to really enjoy the party. Besides having a much better time it will also save you a lot of energy.

By fighting nerves, trying to push them away or denying them, we unconsciously put oil on the fire and we give our nerves a central role. By accepting we can "metaphorically speaking" put our nerves on the shelve and make ourselves free. We can then put energy and focus on the stuff that we want to occupy ourselves with.

This does not mean that you nerves will disappear. But, they will play a lesser role and it will surely prevent your nerves from taking a tumble. You will kind of neutralize them, so they cannot "take you over".

## But how to do this in practise?

There are many different ways to do this. One easy way, to do this is to ask you self the **SO, WHAT?** question. You do this as soon as your nerves pop up.

Ohh, I feel a nervous itch in my stomach. **SO, WHAT?** It is just an itch, a physical sensation, nothing more. By asking the question and answering it, you metaphorically put your nerves on the shelve and neutralize them. And you

can continue with what you were doing, with more focus.

Ohh, I feel I am blushing. **SO, WHAT?**Ohh, my hands tremble. **SO, WHAT?**Ohh, I have a high pitched voice. **SO, WHAT?** 

Millions are blushing, trembling and going up with their voice when they present. The question is, **SO, WHAT?** 

It is fighting against your nerves, trying to suppress them that will make it worse and will get you in your own way. Because, by doing so you remain occupied with it and you will keep feeding your nerves.

By accepting your nerves, shaking its hand, you can put them on the shelve and become free of them. With this tip you can go beyond your nerves.



# 'ACCEPTING MEANS, LETING GO'

# TIP 2. BE PREPARED!

Create a firm foundation for yourself. A foundation is asking yourself important questions and answering them before you actually start making your presentation. For instance: what is the goal of the presentation in one, concrete, concise sentence? What is the message I would like to convey with this knowledge for this specific public?



This might make sense, but how is all this going to help you tame your nerves?

If it is crystal clear what your goal and message is, who your public is and which building blocks of information are going to support this. You will, as a consequence, stand on a firm foundation. By having this firm foundation to stand on, you will be less nervous.

Speaking from experience, I often notice that people that have the what, why and how clear in their mind, experience less nerves and come across as pretty convincing.



What often happens with speakers that miss this foundation is that they immediately dive into the content, without asking themselves these important questions. As a consequence they get entangled into the content. If I tell them this, then I also need to tell them that. They lose overview and get lost into the presentation preparation swamp.

This way the preparation and doing the presentation takes up a lot of stress, because how on earth to push a large elephant (way too much content) into a small box (15 minute presentation)? It is a lot of hard work, takes up a lot of time, is no fun to do and above all not effective at all. The public feels totally overwhelmed by all this information and quickly tunes out.

On the other end of the scale we find speakers that do not prepare at all. Instead of a wrong and time-consuming preparation, they are the easy-going ones and take no effort. It will be all right, they think. But as soon as they stand in front of the audience, seeing the public look at them in anticipation, it is not so easy anymore. All of a sudden they become pretty nervous and start to aimlessly ramble.

In both instances you've failed to leave a professional impression. And it does nothing to tame your nerves, in fact it feeds it.

## So how to apply this tip?

Ask yourself the important questions that I did at the start of this tip, before diving into the content. Want to

apply it in a more thorough manner? Send me an e-mail and I will send you the short manual: a firm foundation for a convincing presentation.

E-mail: info@presentingwithimpact.nl



# 'IF YOU **CREATE A STRONG** FOUNDATION, YOU WILL STAND FIRMER, AND EXPERIENCE LESS NERVES'

# PRACTISE OUT LOUD!

If you practise out loud, your brain has already laid down the track, so to speak. What you are going to say, is less new, so less scary.



A big misconception is that many speakers think that when they see their slides or text on a piece of paper that they are done with the preparation work. They think the words will come out effortlessly when they present and they do not need to practise this.

But, often this is not how it works (geniuses excluded or people that present regularly and are into their subject for years). You miss a very important link in the preparation chain. Namely: Practising out Loud.

Besides the above, practising out loud has more advantages. You enter an important process and along the way you connect yourself with the content, which will also improve the quality of your presentation.



You hear yourself talking and think, hé this piece can be told much sharper and to-the-point. Or hé, I forget to make a point after this piece of information. Or the bridge from one slide to the other is not that clear.

So in the process your story often becomes more concise and clear (or you add an important example). As if you are entering a funnel and arrive at the end of the smaller part. And this is good!

However, be aware. I am not saying you need to learn your presentation by heart. That is the other end of the extreme. I mean that you know the essence and you practised verbalizing that. You see a slide or term and you can talk about it freely.

You experience freedom. Because practising out loud and the foundation gives you the much needed birds eye view. You know your goal and the building blocks of information that support that. You see the slide and you can tell about it in your own words.

By connecting yourself with the content, practising out loud, you will experience less nerves. You will grow into your presentation.

It is truly fascinating to see that student that practised out loud tend to embody their story: "they own their story".

What I mean with this is that they showcase a wide range of subtle and precise non-verbal signals and use of voice that perfectly support their content. This comes across as very convincing and this happens completely

effortlessly. Simply because they are connected to their story. Practising out loud can make this happen for you.



# YOUR BRAIN FOR SUCCESS'

# VISUALIZE!

Let's say you have a firm foundation,
you have prepared your presentation
and you've practised out loud. And still you find yourself
pretty nervous. Maybe because it will be
an important presentation and the stakes are high.



You might need to give your layman talk as a Phd student after years of research or you might have to present your ideas to the board of directors of your company.

Pour yourself a nice cup of tea. Find a comfortable spot on the couch or chair, breath in and out a few times and close your eyes. Start a film in your mind using your imagination.

Start a film of how you want your presentation to go, in colour, crystal clear moving images. Take your time and try to put yourself in different perspectives: as yourself, as someone in the public seeing you, as an observer hanging in the air, both seeing you and the public in one frame. Hear your voice, feel yourself presenting, exactly



how you want it to go.

Try to do this with an open attitude. Do not try to go about it in a too rational way, by thinking, this cannot be possible, or this will certainly never happen. Simply enjoy the exercise and your imagination, nothing more.

What you are doing in that moment is "to prepare your brain for success".

We are extremely well in thinking about "what if" scenario's. What if I miss an important part, what if I get a black-out, what if they do not like the idea etcetera,

etcetera.

How about feeding the other side? What if we lay out the red carpet for the future, instead of stacking one gloomy scenario onto the other? That we project images of what we want to happen.

Besides enjoying the wonderful feeling, you will also act like a real top sporter, if you combine tip 2, 3 and 4.

Top sporters make sure they have a good strategy (foundation 2), what do I need to do to qualify for the Olympics? Then they practise, practise and practise (practising out loud 3). And finally they prepare their mind for success. They use visualization to make a film in their minds of how they want the contest to go. They lay out the red carpet for themselves. Thereby also energizing themselves, instead of draining lots of energy with gloomly scenario's.

In short: feed your confidence, not your fear! It will tame your nerves.



# 'FEED YOUR CONFIDENCE, NOT YOUR FEAR'

# USE A HELPFUL MINDSET!

Do you notice that you play a repetitive what if... scenario scene in your mind.

That you feel this itch in your stomach, every time you have to think about your future presentation?

Try altering the way you look at your presentation.

Reframe it. Why? Because putting a different program in your mind, will change your behaviour and feelings and will also have a different effect on your audience.

But, first and foremost because it may calm your nerves.



If you think of your presentation in terms of a performance that can either go good or bad. That is needs to be perfect, and these thoughts keeps bouncing on your door in a repetitive way. You know that the critical part of you is in charge, instead of the wiser, calm part. What will happen physically is that you will become tense and cramp your body, in short these thoughts will put you in a fight mood (fight/freeze/flight). Because it has to be very good and if you make one mistake, that will be the end of it.



What else will you get in behaviour? Fearful eyes and expression, frozen bodies, pulled-up shoulders, use of very distant, formal language, standing far from the audience, clinging to notes or slides. Unconsciously you do all sorts of things to create distance between you and your audience (Because if you make a mistake they will eat you alive). This is a complete energy drain and you lose all sense of joy. You can imagine what the effect will be on the audience...

If it is ok for you to make a mistake and you realize that presenting is a learning process and it gives you an opportunity to learn something new each time, it becomes another game all together. Or you think I am well prepared and this is the best I can do for this moment. You will create space for yourself. Maybe, you even can see it as an opportunity to talk about something that is important to you and you connect with your passion for the subject. And instead of making it torture, you can make it more pleasurable. Just by choosing a different angle to look at it or reframing it.

With this helpful attitude in the back of your mind, you will get different behaviour. A face with expression, a body that takes part. More resonance and melody in voice, different use of language. Speakers that stand closer to their audience and make connection to their audience. This can already be very subtle, but can make all the difference.

### How to do this?

In short: what is your basic attitude, the underlying thought that keep popping up if you think of your presentation? Do your muscles freeze up? Good!

Now, see how you can change the angle, reframe the way you look at it. Maybe, you say to yourself, I am well prepared and this is the best I can do for now. Or, I will do my best and it is ok to make a mistake. See, if your body relaxes, then you know you are on the right track.

Enclosed at the end of this E-book you will find an exercise that will reframe your mind step by step in a more thorough way. So, that you will experience less nerves while presenting. Do the exercise if you think you need it!



TRANSLATES ITSELF TO YOUR FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR. CHANGE YOUR MINDSET AND DIFFERENT FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR WILL FOLLOW'

# USE YOUR BODY!

Your body can be a powerful instrument to manage your nerves. Many speakers put themselves unconsciously in a straightjacket as soon as they enter the stage. This is the so-called freeze modus (fight, freeze, flight). The state of your body often translates itself to your state of mind. Keeping yourself in this mode too long, may put you in a groove that will be difficult to pull yourself out of. It can put you in a tunnel vision mode, or you start talking on automatic pilot. You become too fixed and you lose flexibility.



This may for instance become clear in the Q and A part. It seems that the questions that are being raised by the public, seem to fly past the speaker.

## How to apply this tip?

How strange it may feel, have the guts to literally step out of your straightjacket. In the Q and A session for instance you can already answer the question by moving or walking a bit on stage. This frees you out of the groove and you make space by moving. Also repeating



the questions before answering it, gives you space. It buys you time and you can catch the question instead of letting it fly by.

"I had the inclination to isolate myself, when I presented.

This felt safe, but by doing this I lost the public. It is quite scary to leave this, safe, isolated space. But in the end I was able to do this and it gave me lots of space, freedom and pleasure." - Connie, Akzo-Nobel

You can use your body, to put you in an alert (in the moment) state, but remain relaxed at the same time.

Metaphorically, you can use your body to change from an icecube in running water. And movement can get you there.

Have a look a the TedCom presentation by Amy Cuddy. "Your non-verbals determine who you are". This talk is about how your body (non-verbals) not only have an effect on the public but also on your own mindset!



'2 MINUTES OF POWERPOSING,
CAN CONFIGURE YOUR BRAIN
TO BE BASICALLY EITHER ASSERTIVE,
CONFIDENT AND COMFORTABLE,
OR REALLY STRESS-REACTIVE,
AND FEELING SORT OF SHUT DOWN'.

Amy Cuddy

# APPLY PRESENTATION ZEN!

Presentation Zen is a nice way to tame your nerves.

Students that apply this often become more relaxed when they speak. They let pausing play an important role when they present and they tend to speak more conscious.



Presentation Zen does not mean that you are so occupied with your nerves and emotions all the time that you lose your public and eventually yourself, by experiencing an "out-of-body" experience. You talk, but it feels as if someone else does the talking from a distance. You completely speak on automatic pilot. It seems a if a cloud is floating above your head, where all the energy and focus resides, when you speak.

It also does not mean that you are so occupied with the content, that you are no longer conscious about **how** you tell the story or conscious about **your public**. In this instance there is also a cloud floating above your head. It feels scattered, as if you are not "together". You do not feel powerful and your presentation does not come across as powerful.



Presentation Zen is about remaining available (although it is scary to be). Available for yourself and for your public. It is about being able to be with your nerves, without them taking you over and flying away from the scene as if being a balloon. It is about remaining in the here and now.

Notice the word **present** in the word presentation.

It is about being able to be with the silence; about being able to be ok with the fact that you cannot find a word.

Would you like to know how to apply Presentation Zen?

So that you can speak in an effortless manner? Or how to put the other tips into practise?

I would love to help you.

# PRACTISE

All tips have been discussed and now it is all about practise, practise, practise.

Just try, experiment and allow yourself to mess up.

That is part of the process and part of learning.



Time after time my students tell me that doing the exercises, getting feedback, reflecting on it and trying again makes all the difference. You may understand the information on a rational level, but really doing the exercises, experiencing it and reflecting on it is a whole other game.

By going beyond understanding and really doing it, you really get the aha experience. And all the pieces seem to fall together. This way real development and learning takes place.

Would you like help with this? I will be happy to help.

Take a look on my website for the possibilities. https://presentingwithimpact.nl/coaching-training-presentation-skills/

# **PRACTISE**

Rather want to have an informal conversation about what would suit you? Send an e-mail to: info@presentingwithimpact.nl

I am happy to discuss the options with you.

# WHO IS MABEL FRUMAU?



For years I worked as an IT consultant, giving presentations and trainings throughout Europe for an American software company. I learned by trial and error how to effectively bring across my message to an international audience. Here my fascination for presenting started to ignite.

During my study, I spent one year studying in the United States at the Wittenberg University, where giving presentation is much more an integral part of education than it is in the Netherlands. In the Netherland I studied and graduated in European Studies at the University of Amsterdam. My bachelor and main subject being English.

These experiences coupled with a thorough one year train—the-trainer education (School voor Training) gives me the ability to educate my students in a clear, step-by-step manner that makes them really grow and develop.

I help highly educated professionals, who work in an international environment, to give presentation with impact and confidence.

My hobby improvisation theatre also contributes to my profession. Improvisation Theatre teaches you how to keep the attention of your audience and how to remain in the "here and now", where nerves loosen their grip.

Although I live in the middle of the city centre of Amsterdam, I am in fact an outdoor person. Often you may find me running in the Kennemer dunes, swimming in the sea or supping on the Amsterdam canals.

Hope to meet you someday,

Mabel

Ps Do you have questions? Do not hesitate and contact me. info@presentingwithimpact.nl

www.presentingwithimpact.nl

# ABOUT PRESENTING WITH IMPACT



getting the message across

Presenting with Impact
Presentation Coaching and Training

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PS. Do you know people, for whom this E-book might be helpful?
Please send it to them or refer them to www.presentingwithimpact.nl.



# **ENCLOSURE**

# REFRAMING YOUR THOUGHTS

What: an exercise to reframe your thoughts.

**Why:** your thoughts and convictions determine your feelings and behaviour. Sometimes these thoughts hinder you to do your work properly. Reframing your thoughts gives you more insight into your fears and may release tension.

**How:** preferably with two persons. Take a notebook and a pen and reserve 20 minutes of undisturbed time. Follow the steps one by one.

## STEP 1

when are you not working in flow? What pops up in your mind, before or during presenting, when you are not in flow? Note down and tell the other person, all the different kinds of thoughts that pop up in your mind.

Do not be satisfied too easily. Only when you break the ceiling (when you try to continue, after you think this is really all there is) the most interesting and deep thoughts will pop up.

The other person notes down everything. At the end you underline (together) the most typical thoughts.

### STEP 2

Choose one typical thought and formulate the underlying obstructing conviction that builds these thoughts. For instance: "everybody has to like my presentation" or "I do not have anything interesting to tell," of "I am not good enough" or .....

Take another look at this conviction: is this really true? Do you really believe this?

Again, are you a 100% sure that this is true?

## STEP 3

Formulate a more stimulating conviction, for instance "it is ok if someone thinks I am a preenter". Or, "I have something interesting to tell", or "It is ok if they do not agree", or "it is ok if I make mistakes".

# STEP 4

Now a dialogue between you two starts. The person that guided you and noted down your thoughts will continuously repeat the stimulating thought, accompanied

with your name.

For instance: Suzanne, it is ok, you do not have to be perfect to be worthwhile.

Suzanne is going to protest as much as possible to this new thought: all thought and feelings of resistance to this thought will be uttered.

For instance: "Yes, but if I do not do this perfect than etcerera, etcetera....."

The other continues, after each objection, to repeat the stimulating thought, until there are really no more objections you can think of.

Suzanne, it is ok, you do not have to be perfect to be worthwhile.

Again, try to go further than you think is possible with the objections. This will really make you break through barriers and make it more insightful.

When finally being done with uttering all the objections to this new thought. The other person will stand behind the person that uttered the objections and will repeat the new stimulating thought 5 times, while massaging the back of the person in the chair.

PS: do not read, but really experience it. For me, it had an enormous effect and I did not expect that at all.