
Public Speaking And Homeschooling

Here's the situation: most people don't like public speaking. It's a fact that has bothered me since I joined the co-op and was first required to do a presentation. Thank you, Miss Justine and Miss Darla for making me do that. It has changed my life. I still dislike public speaking, have for a long time. I can see how it is good for me. I can see the benefits and how it boosts my self-confidence. I can see that I need it to grow as Man of God. I can see that some people have no problems with talking in front of others and, to put it frankly, I'm jealous. I'm jealous of the ease with which they stand up and deliver their speech or presentations, with no obvious nervousness or anxiety. I'm jealous of how they seem so deeply involved in their speech that convincing the audience is all that they care about. I wish I was that way. How many of you wish you were that way? By a show of hands, tell me how many of you in this room dislike or hate public speaking? Now those who enjoy or tolerate public speaking, raise their hands. OK, as you can see here, there is a majority in the disliking of public speaking. In fact, in the U.S., 74% of people dislike or are fearful of anything to do with standing up to talk in front of others. Why do you think this is? First-person with their hand in the air, you, what do you think? Keep it brief please, we are on the clock (student gives 10-20 sec. Answer... I give reply) I think it goes back to our childhood. Have you ever noticed when a little kid does something funny and nobody is watching, and you ask them to do it again with people watching, most of the time they get all nervous and shy and hide behind your legs or run away? And when you insist on it they have a nervous breakdown or throw a hissy fit? It is a part of us at a very young age. Now I think that fear of speaking in front of people was built into us when we were created by God. He made us have this challenge, to have this hurdle, that is facing it and overcoming it we might learn and grow into the people he made us be. Now I've seen that some parents can completely ignore the public speaking aspect of homeschooling, and just hope the kid gets by. The kid doesn't learn and hopes that they never have to speak in front of people and when they are forced to speak they do a crummy job. I've seen that parents can push their kids to public speaking and in the process, the kids either nurture an abiding hatred of public speaking for the rest of their life, because they were forced to do it as a child, or they embrace it and become delightful people, easy to talk to and not embarrassed to speak their minds. In public and private schools, public speaking is a part of life. In high school, you have to give a speech or presentation every month or so and you eventually get used to it. It's a way of life. Some kids embrace it, some kids just get it over with, but it's there, and if they want a good grade they will get it done. They have to do it, and in being forced to do it they learn what works and what doesn't. This is a sorely missed part of homeschooling. By not teaching the kids to speak in front of others, they are not being taught how to get by, how to communicate effectively in the workplace. That is what school is, isn't it? Preparation for growing up, a place to learn why things work the way they do, what works, when, and how. Did you know that fear of public speaking can cut your future job salary by 10%? It can also prohibit promotion by 15%. As you can see, fear of public speaking can prevent advancement in the workplace, and keep young adults from advancing in life as a whole. Some kids don't really care if they are good at presenting. They just want the class over with. Some kids love it and want as much time as possible to convey their opinion and why it matters to the audience. I find myself in between. I want to convey my thoughts and opinions, but I fear what people will say back, and the result is what you see before you: a terrible speech.

Here are some common problems people have with public speaking:

- We're not used to it

Think about it. Most modern conversations are one-on-one and are done on our phones where we don't see the person we are speaking to. This interaction doesn't let us see or hear the other person. For most of us, standing and speaking in front of people takes us out of our comfort zone, the best place possible for us to be. Pushing out at our comfort zone boundaries will make them expand and eventually disappear.

- We don't know the topic

I personally don't recommend speaking to an audience unless you have extensive knowledge of your subject. You'll never know everything, but you should at least be confident enough to speak on it. Review the content over and over again. Think about it constantly. This way you'll never have to bluff your way through a presentation.

- We don't know how to structure a presentation

How many times have you sat through a presentation where you just couldn't follow the speaker? (Me) They might have rambled, repeated themselves, and talked about stuff that wasn't relevant to the subject. (Me again) That's not a great experience, is it? The structure for a presentation is like a recipe for great food. There are specific ingredients, added at specific times, in specific amounts, with specific things being done to them. The result is a wonderful masterpiece everybody gets to enjoy

- Not Practicing

Practicing is not optional. Think about great athletes, musicians, and actors. Many devote years of practicing towards their goals. Steve Jobs, considered to be one of the best-of-the-best at presenting, would practice for weeks before delivering a ninety-minute keynote announcing a new Apple product or service. How comfortable do you think he was when he first started? And yet look at how effective he became because of practice!

- The Fear of Failure.

Most people agree we learn more from failure than from things that go right the first time. Some failings, especially those done in isolation, are easy - only you know how bad it went. Public speaking is tough, really tough because it is public - everyone knows!

What If

What If the audience doesn't like me? What If I'm not perfect and make a mistake? What If the person who spoke before me was really good and the audience is comparing me to them? The biggest What If is often, "What do I have to speak about that anyone would have any interest in?" Everyone has knowledge and experience people will benefit from hearing! Your knowledge base is so wide and deep, you don't know what you know! The goal is to not completely get rid of fear but to channel that fear into energy for your presentation.

The Anatomy of Good Presentation or Speech:

I can't say I'm well credited to give you advice on how to give a good presentation. If the speech I'm in the middle of now is anything to go by, I am terrible at presenting to anyone, anywhere. But for those of you who wish to improve your public speaking here's some advice/research I've collected:

The most effective presentations are 38% your voice, 55% non-verbal communication, and only 7% content matter. This means that what do with your posture and body language and tone of voice determines more than anything that your audience reception will be.

You should never plan to use all of your allotted time for your presentation. Always save 10-20% of it for safety so you won't struggle to pack all material in a shorter time than you planned.

Avoid the mistake of avoiding mistakes. Your response to a mistake defines the audience's response. Take those problems lightly and the audience generally will do the same.

Transitions between main points are very important. You should prepare your talk in the way that what you say at each point introduces the next one. Then your speech will be fluent and consistent. (Unlike mine)

Involve the audience: ask questions about the experience in the topic you will be talking about, let them raise your hands, give them a problem to solve.

Practice makes perfect, so PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Adding facts and figures to the presentation can increase audience perception by 20%. (Is this working??)

Of the top 5 phobias, a public speaking phobia is first and foremost.

Public Speaking or Stage Fright -19%

Death and End of Life – 16%

Spiders and other Arachnids Creatures – 13%

Darkness and Twilight – 12%

Heights, Altitudes, and Elevations – 11%

This means that people fear talking publicly to others more than they fear dying. Doesn't this seem at least a little bit lopsided to you? Why do you think this is? (student gives 10-20 second response.... I reply). What can you do to fix this problem in your life? What will you do to fix this problem in your life? That'll do it for me folks.