



Butterflies and Sweaty Palms

25 SURE-FIRE WAYS
to SPEAK and PRESENT
with CONFIDENCE

I love the elegance, accessibility and clarity of this book and shall certainly be recommending it to clients and colleagues alike.

Kate Burton, coach and author of *Live Life, Love Work* and *For Dummies* guides to NLP, coaching and confidence

Judy Apps

The background of the cover is white and features a scattered pattern of grey silhouettes. There are several butterflies of various sizes and orientations, and several open hands, some with fingers spread, scattered across the page. The hands and butterflies are positioned around the central text, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others.

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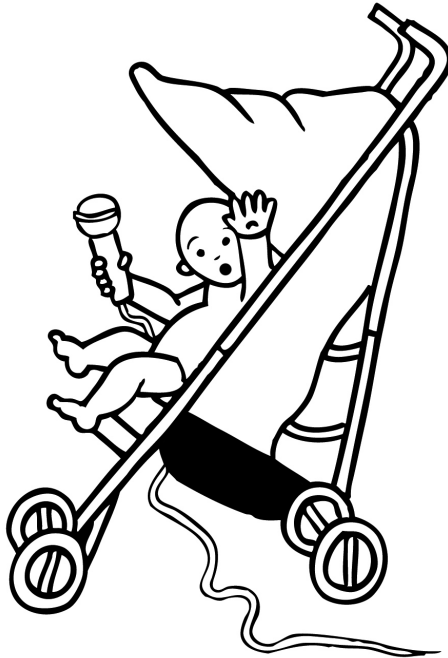
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Introduction

‘You’ve either got it or you haven’t,’ that’s what people say.

‘Either you’re a good public speaker or you’re not.’

‘Speakers are born and not made.’



That’s bad news if you don’t feel you are a born speaker. Speaking is an essential skill. It isn’t only those occasions on the podium or even the oft-dreaded wedding speech; the ability to communicate under pressure is required in countless different situations – for informal presentations, meetings, interviews, key leadership moments, tackling a difficult situation with a colleague or even asking someone out on a date.

If you don’t feel confident about your ability such moments can be a real challenge and create a lot of sweat, anxiety and sleepless nights. But they are hard to avoid completely.

BUTTERFLIES AND SWEATY PALMS

So, should you give up now?

No, not at all.

Just read a little bit further ...

O God of second chances and new beginnings, here I am.
Again.

Nancy Spiegelberg



PART I

Exploring the Territory



CHAPTER 1

Is It Really Possible – For Me?

Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a minute and think of it.

A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*

Lots of books have been written on public speaking and presenting; perhaps you've read some of them. Maybe up till now none of those books has made much difference. You might ask yourself if it's really possible to speak well in public – for you.

So straight away I want to tell you the answer is yes.

Yes, it's possible.

It's possible for you.

You really can learn how to perform well in public. You can learn what to do to overcome performance anxiety even if you think you have tried everything and have completely run out of ideas.

What gives me the confidence that it's possible for you? Well, because I have witnessed many people succeed. Over the years I have coached hundreds of people on public speaking and confidence, and many started with little hope. My Voice of Influence workshops have been attended by some who could scarcely get themselves inside the door but edged in holding on to the walls with fear. And those very same people by the end of the next day stood up and gave a speech – without notes – that connected powerfully with the audience.

I have worked with people one-to-one who have told me at the outset that their issue goes beyond fear: ‘This is not just fear, it’s a phobia,’ they say. Those same people learn in a few sessions how to perform with assurance. One person had actually fainted from anxiety the last time she’d had to give a presentation for her corporation. Very soon after we had worked together she went on to give a successful presentation to an audience of two hundred potential investors.

I am sure that you too would like to be able to perform with assurance and confidence. But the truth may be that you are worried and frightened. You tell yourself not to be but nothing ever changes. Maybe too you have heard promises from teachers and trainers that didn’t lead to any positive results for you.

So what will be different this time?

Firstly, it’s not just about learning what to do. You probably have a good idea *what* to do already. Even if you feel less than confident about your material, the finer points of running a PowerPoint presentation or the protocols of a formal speech, even if you worry about forgetting things or looking stupid or making mistakes, I’m convinced you have watched enough people speak either live or on screen to know broadly what to do. You are probably also sufficiently aware of the pitfalls to know what *not* to do.

The problem is that even with this knowledge you can’t do it. You’ve already tried to do what you see good speakers do and it hasn’t worked for you. The reason it hasn’t worked I suspect is that you don’t believe it’s possible for you. It’s your self-belief that lets you down.

What you’ll learn

If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito.

Betty Reese

This time you’ll get to the root of it. This book will help you in easy steps to gain the self-belief to speak brilliantly.

Notes

People react differently to fear. Stella reported that as soon as she remembered a scary occasion she felt shaky all over. Stomach, knees, hands – everything trembled and her heart beat at a hundred times a minute. Then when she thought of something that excited her, the feeling was very similar; her stomach fluttered in anticipation, her heart beat fast and she felt quivery all over with an upward feeling as excitement rose in her chest. In fact the only appreciable difference between the two emotions was the upward feeling that caused her to take a breath. She laughed at the simplicity of it and realised that all she needed to do was call fear excitement in future and begin to enjoy the positive upwards sensation!

Martin on the other hand found that with fear everything went tight. There was a knot in the stomach and his throat closed up. He was unable to think clearly and felt blocked. He found it difficult to remember a feeling for excitement and therefore suspected that the strategy was not going to work for him. Staying with the thought of excitement he reflected that it made his heart beat faster and he remembered a vague feeling of looking forward to something. When he changed fear to excitement he was aware that the two feelings were different although he was unable to recall either of them very strongly. He sensed a greater sense of movement with excitement. He certainly reported that the feeling of excitement allowed him to take a better breath which felt positive. He thought that if he called fear excitement in future it would at least encourage him to breathe more fully.

Strategy 2 – Imagine what you want

Being a champion is not just a measure of your natural talent. It's a test of your ability to act and think like a champion. The more you act and think like a champion, the more of a champion you become.

Martin Perry, confidence coach and sports psychologist

Now you are ready to create your goal. The next strategy for overcoming performance anxiety is to imagine what you want.

Imagination might seem a rather flaky concept. Do not underestimate its power. The greatest successes of humans have happened because of someone's ability to *imagine*.

I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.

Albert Einstein

Imagination is powerful. Imagination is healing. All you need is the courage to visualise what should be, and then give yourself to its creation.

Gabrielle Roth

Imagination governs the world.

Napoleon Bonaparte

One supreme fact which I have discovered is that it is not will-power, but fantasy-imagination that creates. Imagination is the creative force. Imagination creates reality.

Richard Wagner

Many of the highest achievers in sport use imagination to plan for winning. Bobsledders at the 2010 Winter Olympics visualised the entire run before they set out at the top. The legendary golfer Jack Nicklaus visualised the exact parabola that each ball would carve in the air before taking a shot.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi tells the story of a pilot who was imprisoned in North Vietnam for many years and became weak and emaciated in a jungle camp. After his release he requested a game of golf with other officers. To their great astonishment in spite of his condition he played an outstanding game. In answer to their enquiries he explained that every day during his imprisonment he had imagined himself playing eighteen holes, including every detail from choice of club for each shot to

the systematic assessment of each hole in different conditions over different courses. His visualisations not only helped to preserve his sanity but had been as effective as physically practising each day.

This gives us a clue to how visualisation works. You see within your mind exactly what you want to take place. Your mind can activate success for the body or it can undermine it. Whatever you focus on in your mind creates neural pathways in your brain. So if you *want* success think about what that will look like, sound like and feel like. If you spend time thinking about failing you are conditioning your brain to look for difficulties – and it will find them.

It is important in using this strategy to go for what you want, not what you don't want. We are well conditioned through upbringing and schooling to be aware of what is not OK – for that is the gentle art of correction, the 'no' and 'don't' of parents and the red pen over pieces of school work. Maybe because of this conditioning many of us find it much easier to come up with what we *don't* want than what we *do* want:

‘I don't want to look an idiot.’

‘I don't want to show off.’

‘I don't want people to think badly of me.’

and so on.

If this is what comes up first that's fine but you need to make what you want stronger than what you don't want, so make that clear in the words you use. Ask yourself, ‘If I don't want to look an idiot, what do I want to look like?’ Maybe you want to look credible or sure of yourself. In that case, put those words in your intention: ‘I want to look credible and sure of myself’ and then you can focus on something you are moving towards rather than away from.

Sometimes we think that we are focusing on what we want when we're not. We say for instance, ‘I want to get through without messing up.’

Is that focusing on what we want? It starts with 'I want' after all. No, the clearest image is of 'messing up' – that is, of what I don't want.

It's important to realise that the subconscious doesn't understand negatives. If you say to yourself, 'Watch out or you'll spill that coffee,' in spite of the clear direction 'watch out' the subconscious also hears the words 'spill that coffee' as a command and ensures that you do spill the coffee!

This concept applies to all of the following:

'I want to avoid stumbling over my words.'

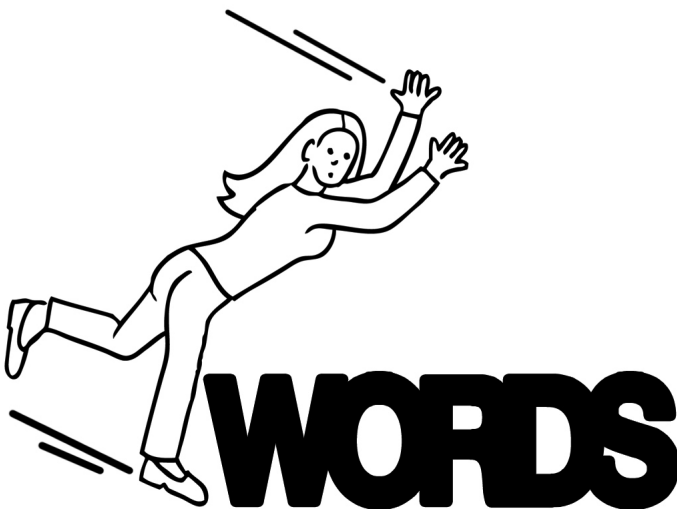
'Stumbling over my words' is what I don't want and what
I will actually get.

'I want to stop people feeling sorry for me.'

'People feeling sorry for me' is what I don't want and what
I will actually get.

'I want to feel less scared and worried.'

'Scared and worried' is what I don't want and what
I'll actually feel.



So express your wants entirely in terms of what you want to move towards:

‘I want my presentation to be received with acclamation.’

‘I want to be confident and enjoy connecting with Greg.’

Focus your attention entirely on *exactly* what you desire.

Energy flows where attention goes.

This statement can work for good or ill – you can visualise success or failure. A recent research finding in the *British Medical Journal* reported that old people who are anxious about falling and think about falling are statistically more likely to fall.¹ Fear makes the thing feared more likely to happen.

There is something about visualising success that can sound too good to be true to people. So they decide that it doesn’t work. Don’t believe them. That’s just *fear*: fear of failure *and* fear of success. They are wrong: it works brilliantly. But only if you actually *do* it, however resistant you are, however stupid you feel and however much you can’t believe it.

Just do it!

If you find that you don’t see clearly in your mind’s eye or you have difficulty in hearing sounds in your imagination, don’t worry. Many people don’t visualise clearly or hear remembered sounds distinctly – that doesn’t matter at all. You just *do* it in whatever way you can. It gets easier and increasingly vivid the more that you practise it. And then it works! Your imagination is a wonderful tool. If you have ever imagined things going wrong when you think about public speaking and then discovered

¹ Kim Delbaere, Jacqueline Close, Henry Brodaty, Perminder Sachdev, and Stephen Lord (2010). Determinants of disparities between perceived and physiological risk of falling among elderly people: cohort study. *British Medical Journal* 341: c4165. Available at <http://www.bmj.com/content/341/bmj.c4165.full.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2011).

that they *did* indeed go wrong, you will know how effective your imagination can be! It might as well work *for* you and not *against* you!

Have a vision not clouded by fear.

Cherokee proverb

Imagine success

Imagine what success is going to look like, sound like and feel like.

Step into an imaginary scenario in which you are giving your speech. Imagine walking on with confidence and acknowledging your audience with warm friendliness. Imagine standing tall and confident, moving with ease and responding to questions with energy and humour. See what you would see if you were there looking out of your own eyes.

Hear yourself speak with assurance and power. Hear the absolute hush when you say something that has the audience hanging on your word. Hear the applause or positive response.

Feel yourself relax as you see their interested faces. Feel the warmth of being with a group that is aware of a connection with you. Feel the energy stream through you as you know that things are going well.

Again and again run over the desired scenario in your mind. Make it exactly the way *you* want it to be.

Not realistic? Keep your trust. Do it and do it again. Get to feel what it's like so that your body learns it. Then when you get to your live performance the pattern is set. Whatever your conscious mind gets up to your subconscious mind feels a familiarity with what it has practised and knows what to do.

Troubleshooting

I can't form pictures in my head or if I try they won't stay in one place.

Then start with whichever sense is strongest. Maybe for you it is easier to *feel* what it will be like to perform well. Get a sense of the physiology. How will you be standing? How will you hold your head? What feeling inside you represents confident energy? Some people find it easier to hear sounds than to form pictures. Hear the enthusiastic comments that people are making about your speech. Hear the excitement in the room as you speak. Hear your voice coming out strongly. Then you can add the visuals at the end. Don't worry if your image is not clear. Look for details in the picture to exercise your visual sense.

I try to see what I desire but keep finding that I'm drawn back to my current feelings and then the image disappears.

When you are practising the visual part of the exercise, instead of imagining that you are looking out of your own eyes you may prefer to imagine that you are looking at *yourself* on a film screen at quite a distance from yourself. Notice what difference that makes.

It's all very well but I can't do it because I just don't believe it.

Relax. You really don't have to believe it. Think of it as an exercise like warming up in the gym. It's the doing that matters at this stage, not whether it seems possible or not.

Strategy 3 – Play with the vision

I have been visualizing myself every night for the past four years standing on the podium having the gold placed around my neck.

Megan Jendrick, Olympic gold medallist in swimming



You can make your imagining more compelling by adjusting the qualities of the pictures and sounds you create until they are just as you would like them. Like a filmmaker you are completely in charge of the finished movie, so make it just as you would like it.

Adjust your TV set

You can do this exercise by yourself but it is particularly fun and effective to do with a friend. They can give you the instructions about changing the image and sounds leaving you free to concentrate on your inner world.

Imagine what you want as if you are looking at yourself on a cinema or television screen. Take your time to create the scene in your mind to make it as vivid as you can. You are going to make changes to the film, adjusting one aspect and then another in turn, to discover which changes make the film the most convincing and attractive.

If the picture is in black and white at first change it in your imagination to colour. Notice what difference that makes to how you

respond to the image. Adjust the colours to make them more vivid. Then change them to pastel tones. Which do you prefer? Adjust the colours by making them lighter, darker, richer or more delicate until the picture looks really attractive. Give the picture sharp edges; now make them softer. Bring the image closer so that it is larger; now try it further away. Move the picture to your left, then to your right. What differences do the adjustments make? Take your time with each adjustment and notice the difference it makes to your feeling about it. Fine-tune the movie until it is really compelling and just as you would like it to be.

We have mentioned various different visual qualities you can adjust. Here are some other suggestions:

- Moving picture or still
- Bright, sparkling, faded or dim
- Opaque, translucent or transparent
- Three-dimensional or two-dimensional
- Action at normal speed, speeded up or slowed down
- Framed like a picture or a panoramic view

Now adjust the sounds of the film. Are they in stereo or mono or do they surround you? Are they coming from a particular direction? Alter these characteristics and see what difference they make. Is the sound coming from near or far? Adjust the volume, louder then softer. Make the sounds higher or lower in pitch and speed them up or slow them down. Give them an echo or muffle them. Make them as clear as a bell. Adjust the sounds until the event is utterly compelling and draws you into it.

Finally, step into your film as if you are there taking part in the scene looking out of your own eyes rather than looking at yourself in the picture. Experience what it is like to be acting in your own persuasive future. What are you feeling? You can also adjust those feelings. Give yourself more warmth or make the air fresher and cooler. If you are moving in your scene move with more energy and now move slower. Which do you prefer? Give your body lightness; now feel heavier and more grounded. Which gives you the better sensation? If you

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Thanks to the friends with whom I have walked and talked; and to my parents who showed how to pluck up courage in their different ways.

Thanks to those people who challenged me and gave me life practice. I didn't always enjoy it at the time but it was I realise treasure.

Once again a big thank you to all at Crown House Publishing for their help and support.

Finally, a huge thanks to John who is patient and insightful; and to my special supporters Chris and Rosie,

Thank you!

Praise for *Butterflies and Sweaty Palms*

I remember those butterflies and yes, those sweaty palms as well. My brother seemed to just do it naturally, but I couldn't, and many failures proved to me that I couldn't. Over the years, that has changed, so I know that a change is possible. What is remarkable about Judy's approach is that it would have saved me so much agony and so many failures along the way had I had her tools and advice with me through those many years.

Now I am able to comfortably speak in front of big groups and get results, so I know what had to change in me in order to become a confident speaker. And for every change I had to make the hard way, Judy gives you a practical, and more importantly an easy to understand toolkit that will get you up and confident in front of a group in a much quicker time than you ever thought possible.

The people who get things done, the people that make a difference, the people who others look to for leadership are great communicators. They can share their passion and ideas with any group, large or small. So if you want to be a leader rather than a listener, get good at communicating with groups of people. I can't think of a better place to start than Judy's book.

Paul Matthews, Managing Director, People Alchemy Ltd

This brilliant little book provides super strategies for overcoming everyone's number one fear: public speaking! Let Judy Apps guide you with ease through great examples, stories and exercises to become a confident communicator.

Arielle Essex, author of *Compassionate Coaching*

This is a 'must buy' book for all of us with presentation nerves which, let's face it, is most of us. Judy has an uncanny knack of putting herself in the reader's shoes and I felt she was reading my mind! It's an easy and engaging read packed with true stories about how famous people deal with nerves. Amidst the real-life examples and rich variety of practical, down to earth tips, readers will find that Judy understands their thoughts and has some real gems to dispel concerns, nerves and abject fear. No matter

how bad things may seem this invaluable little book will give you all the tools you need to become a confident and engaging speaker.

Carol Newland, NLP Coach and Trainer

Judy Apps' aptly-named new book *Butterflies and Sweaty Palms* hits exactly the right note for anyone who has ever experienced that sick feeling in the stomach when faced with a presentation to give. At the same time, she has a wealth of knowledge that would make the most confident presenter consider how to connect more authentically with their audience and bring even the driest after-lunch conference slot alive.

From the outset she inspires confidence and builds on her own strong track record of working with hundreds of clients to develop their ability to speak in public. No-one need ever feel alone again with this daunting task once armed with the book. It's particularly re-assuring to see the evidence that so many of the best-trained professional performers experience fear and to hear that nerves bear little relation to talent.

So too, I particularly like her suggestions that 'perfection is a curse'. Trying to get it 'right' is a sure way to fail, and being happy with imperfection offers the freedom to structure and deliver an excellent talk. She says: 'For great performers there is no such thing as the perfect performance ... each one is the way it is.' That really takes the pressure off us all.

This theme of trust and acceptance of oneself is a central theme that I embrace. In the book, Judy outlines 25 practical strategies of which my favourite is the final one 'Trust'. When we step into trusting ourselves we share our essential humanness and that's what it's about. I also loved the concept of 'galumphing' or playing about with the presentation to entertain and connect with the audience through simply having fun.

Judy has admirably achieved what she set out to do by inspiring courage, hope and practical help with heaps of easy to read ideas, real-life examples and fun illustrations. I love the elegance, accessibility and clarity of this book and shall certainly be recommending it to clients and colleagues alike.

Kate Burton, coach and author of *Live Life. Love Work* and 'For Dummies' guides to NLP, coaching and confidence.

A well structured and practical guide for presenting with confidence.

Karen Moxom, Managing Director of the Association for NLP

If you've ever faced the fear of public speaking, this brilliant book is essential reading!

Judy Apps provides super strategies for becoming a confident communicator.

Her easy-to-learn and thorough approach tackles every aspect of speaking with great examples, stories and exercises.

Arielle Essex, author of *Compassionate Coaching*



25 SURE-FIRE WAYS to SPEAK and PRESENT with CONFIDENCE

Do you carry a lucky talisman in your pocket to give yourself courage before a big event because you suffer intolerably from performance nerves? Following the exercises in this book will enable you to perform with passion and determination to wow your audience. How many times have you picked up a self-help book and thought, 'It's all very well but it won't work for me'?

This time the book meets you where you are and helps you to succeed by approaching the problem on many different levels.



No matter how bad things may seem this invaluable book will give you all the tools you need to become a confident and engaging speaker.

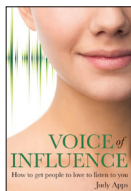
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Paul Matthews, Managing Director, People Alchemy Ltd



Judy Apps has spent many years unravelling the secrets of how great leaders inspire others, and now runs open creative programmes and coaches leaders in major corporations in voice and communication.



Voice of Influence

How to get people to love to listen to you

Judy Apps

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