

# Academic Advisement Center

## Stage-Fright Skills

### You know the signs.

*Heart pounding. Hands trembling. Knees knocking.* You don't quite trust your voice to sound familiar. You would love to avoid shaking hands, 'cause the sweat is sliding over your palms and you're not wearing your sweats and can't rub the excess off on the brand new suit you just bought. You wish you had tried that new deodorant.

"Try to think of stage fright in a positive way. Fear is your friend. It makes your reflexes sharper. It heightens your energy, adds a sparkle to your eye, and color to your cheeks. When you are nervous about speaking you are more conscious of your posture and breathing. With all those good side effects you will actually look healthier and more physically attractive.

**Be prepared.** If all your physical material is ready, you can concentrate on how you are going to defuse yourself in your potential frozen moment. Think you might forget your briefcase? Pack it the night before, prop it in front of the front door, and know you would have to trip over it in the morning to miss it

**Be there first.** Set the stage. YOUR Stage. Go in the day before and rehearse.

- Arrange the furniture to your preference.
- Plug in, load and test any AV aids for function, clarity and distance. Mark the floor with tape if you are afraid someone might move them before class.
- Have your handouts piled and compiled with a plan as to how you are going to distribute them.
- Posters, flip charts, markers, chalk, and all the other extras you deem necessary for your class: have them ready in a container and at hand. (Or foot, if you need to clear some space to work)
- Take a break. Take a stroll. Have a snack. Have a comfortable pair of shoes waiting to change into. Smile.

If you think your knees might give out, one of the following strategies may work for you.

- Stay sitting. Hide behind the desk until you have yourself under control.
- Walk and talk. Pace back and forth across your 'stage' addressing your audience. They'll never notice. They will be too busy following your eyes and voice and that gorgeous suit you're wearing. Or the shine of your polished shoes.
- Use the podium to your advantage. Yes, you are bodily hiding behind it. Yes, you are holding on to the sides for dear life. Your notes are close and there's no rush to leave the security it offers. When you're ready, advance.

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