

THE TRUTH ABOUT PUBLIC SPEAKING

There are several definitions available, countless self-help books on the subject, information overload on the internet. But at its most basic, public speaking is the ability to say what you want to say, when you want to say it and exactly how you intended to say it, with the sole intent to get a desired response from the listener.

There is a misconception that public speaking only involves making rehearsed and prepared speeches to a large group of people. However, the reality is that every time you speak to your spouse or child, a colleague or a friend, at the factory or at the farm, with the intention of influencing the other person, you are public speaking! So by inference, you are a public speaker every minute of the day! Makes you wonder what the aura and mystery that surrounds good speakers really is!

To most people, it is a monster to be feared. It is a great leveler, in that; irrespective of a person's vocation or age, the reactions for most people yet to acquire this skill are the same. The most common reaction upon learning that it's one's turn to speak is burning ears, racing heartbeat and a blank mind. Studies have repeatedly shown that for over 95% of the population, death is preferable to speaking in public! Why is it that only a small minority raises their hand to speak while others tremble in fear and try to become invisible? The answer lies in the fact that it is a skill that is wrongly attributed to only the most gifted. The reality couldn't be further from the truth.

Public speaking is actually the easiest skill in the world to acquire. Unlike learning a new language which can take years, learning to play an instrument which can take months or learning a sport which can take weeks, it is a skill that can take just one day, in fact one magical moment to master! Once a person stands in front of a group and is able to speak by design and not just by accident, that person has mastered the skill. All the self-doubt and the negativity surrounding one's own ability to perform and deliver disappears, once the speaker gets underway and receives the desired response. That's all it takes...The realization that one has conquered one's demons and delivered a successful talk right up to its conclusion, results in a feeling similar to a 'runner's high'. The endorphins so released by the system by a successful speech create a feel-good feeling and many people have even reported getting 'hooked'.

There are all kinds of techniques available to get better at this all-important skill. In this information age, speaking skills have acquired the top-most position amongst all soft skills. It is then advisable to take professional training which can help in alleviating most wrong notions that one harbours. However, nothing can substitute the three most important ways in which one can become a champion public speaker: Practice! Practice! Practice!