

## 15 Tips to Make Speaker Fear Disappear

by Brent Baer



### **Tip #1: Get a good night's sleep the night before.**

There's nothing worse than someone nodding off during your presentation—especially if that someone is you! Avoid a fuzzy mind and less than crisp presentation from lack of sleep –let alone dark circles under your eyes and yawns during your presentation. If you are tired, you increase your chances of putting your audience to sleep.

### **Tip #2: Tick. Tock. Compartmentalize your stage fright.**

Calm yourself before you present by saying to yourself “In 4 hours, 1 hour, ½ hour, etc.” it will be over.

### **Tip #3: Wear a favorite outfit.**

Wear something you have been complimented in. You'll feel professional, comfortable & special.

### **Tip #4: Know the flow of your talk.**

Basically know what you are going to say. Work from a bulleted outline. For notes, preferable use large, 18 point type font. No more than 6 bullets to a page, 6 words per bullet.

### **Tip #5: Have your one-minute opening down pat.**

**Know your close.** By preparing and rehearsing your opening and closing, you will 'bookend' your presentation for success. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression. Also, audiences typically remember the first part of a talk and the ending: the recency and latency effect.

### **Tip #6: Visualize your success.**

Picture the audience's positive reaction that you want. Shut your eyes and watch your successful 'video' in your mind. See the smiles. Hear the applause. Feel the rapt attention. Add your favorite colors and music to your mental video. If possible, visualize your success everyday from the day you knew you were going to speak until the day of your presentation.

### **Tip #7: Get there first!**

Come to the room before anyone else is in it. Arrive at least one hour before your talk. Get comfortable. Take ownership of the space. Practice speaking at different volume levels. Stand on the stage. Walk around the room. Sit in the chairs your participants will be sitting in.

### **Tip #8: Don't forget to B R E A T H E !**

Breathe before you present. Slow deep breathing will bring you to a more relaxed state to achieve the desired effect. Visualize breathing in golden healing air and breathing out silver vapor. Breathe from your diaphragm –When you inhale, your stomach should expand like a balloon. When you exhale, it should deflate. Don't forget to keep breathing during your talk!

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### **Tip #9: Practice BAerobics™ exercises before you present.**

In the bathroom. Do some shoulder shrugs. Do ½ head rolls to release tension. Slowly bring your chin down toward your chest. Hold it for three seconds. Bring chin back to normal position. Repeat. Bend over like a rag doll. Shake your arms to shake off the fear. In the room: Do the “Tense. Hold. Release.” exercise. Tense muscle groups beginning with your feet. Hold for 3 seconds, then release. Keep moving up your body—calves, thighs, bottom, stomach, chest, arms, neck and face. Within one minute, you will feel more physically relaxed. Guaranteed.

### **Tip #10: Greet people at the door before.**

Reference them by name later in the presentation. You will feel more comfortable. Your audience will respect that you took the effort to get to know them. It will shift the “me vs. them” mindset to “we” and you’ll feel more connected to your audience.

### **Tip #11: Have a glass of water near you.**

It’s a great excuse to take a few seconds and gather your thoughts. It will give your audience a moment to absorb what you’ve said. Room temperature water is best. It will lubricate your throat. You’ll avoid dry mouth.

### **Tip #12: Involve 100% of your audience.**

Ask polling questions early in your talk: Make sure every person has something to raise their hand about. 100% involvement is your goal. E.g. “How many of you like chocolate? How many don’t?”

### **Tip #13: Turn the volume down on your inner critique!**

You know...that little negative voice in your head. If your internal voice says a negative message to you while you are presenting, respond to it mentally and say “not helpful” or “thank you for sharing,” then continue to do what you are there for-- deliver an effective presentation.

### **Tip #14: Turn your talk into 1-on-1 conversations.**

How? Talk to one person at a time. You are pretty good at that! Hold your gaze on one person for one thought. Then take a quick diaphragmatic breath, find another pair of eyes and then speak your next thought. This technique can reduce your fears by 50%! Also, during your talk, look at friendly faces in crowd to get encouragement.

### **Tip #15: Remember two things.**

#1: You don’t have to be ‘perfect.’ #2: There is no such thing as ‘perfect.’ It’s about connection. Not perfection!

### **BONUS TIPS**

### **Tip #16: Practice. Practice. Practice.**

It’s the answer to the famous question “How do you get to Carnegie Hall?” Remember to practice not just what you are going to say, but also how you will say it. Ideally, conduct a ‘dress rehearsal.’ Practice outloud, in the clothes you’ll wear and in the same room you will be speaking. Rehearse at the same time of the day. Energy differs. There are so many benefits to rehearsing. When you give your actual presentation, you will have that “déjà vu” feeling that “you’ve done this before”—which you have! It will help you with your timing. Delivery. Smooth transitions. Comfort.

### **Tip #17: Know your transition phrases.**

**Write them down.** This will help you have smooth segues between different sections of your talk. Each transition phrase/sentence will jog your memory for the next section in your presentation.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS TO MAKE SPEAKER FEAR DISAPPEAR:**

It’s OK to have fears. We all get the butterflies in our stomachs. I still get them. The trick is to make the butterflies “fly in formation.” When you use the above techniques, you will turn the ‘dis-stress’ into positive energy that can work to your advantage. Channeled properly, the fear can give you that extra spark of passion. Don’t let the anxiety freeze you – have it work for you!

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## Present with Impact: Get Results!



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Owner and President

**BAER ESSENTIALS**

*Zzzzzz.....*

We've all been there: the boring presentation. You can't leave the room. There are 40 minutes left and you are being held prisoner, experiencing slow death by PowerPoint.

Here are 7 of my favorite principles and techniques to turn your presentation from "Oy!" to "Wow!"

### **WII-FM**

To maximize your impact, know what "radio station" your audience is tuned into...**WII-FM: What's In It - For Me.** Put yourself in their shoes, understand what's important to them and craft your message accordingly.

### **CHOCOLATE CAKE LESSON**

I attended a seminar 20 years ago and the leader did something extremely odd. He came out with his shirt tail hanging out, chocolate stains on his cuffs, offering us chocolate cake, "Who wants some chocolate cake?" With his bare hand he grabbed a chunk of cake and shopped it onto a paper plate and shoved it at a participant.

The leader then excused himself, left the room and came back wearing a tuxedo jacket, bow tie and white gloves. With a silver cake server he cut a piece of cake, placed it onto a fine china dish and served it with a "Bon appetite!"

What's the point? **It's all in the presentation!**

Your content, like the ingredients of the chocolate cake, must be of high quality. However, without the proper presentation, you won't get the impact or results you seek.

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## ELEVATOR EYES / SUBWAY EYES

Let's talk about eyes, for a moment. Have you ever sat in a presentation, where the presenter is looking above your head, like someone standing in an elevator looking up at the floor numbers? Maybe the speaker is looking at his shoes, her watch or notes, avoiding all eye contact as if she is taking a subway ride. Or scanning the room like a windshield wiper?

### Mastering the dos and don'ts about eye contact is essential.

Look directly into someone's eyes-- Focus for a thought. Take a quick breath. Lock onto another person's eyes in another quadrant of the room for your next thought. Keep moving your eyes in a random pattern. It comes across more conversational. Engage. Connect. Increase your presence!

How long is a thought?// It's where you would naturally pause, // at the commas and semicolons in a sentence, // or the end of a sentence. //

## THE UM & UMS™

Um. Er. Uh. Ya know! Like... I call them the "Um & Ums™". Most of us have no clue how often we use them when we speak, whereas, as the listener, we are sometimes so distracted by word fillers we miss the message.

Effective eye contact and power pauses can not only eliminate the distraction, but emphasize the message.

My suggestion for the Um and Ums: STOP. LOOK. SPEAK.

- STOP what you're saying. Close your mouth and P-A-U-S-E. .
- LOOK to another person in the audience. This buys you thinking time **while you appear to maintain control**, and gives your audience time to absorb what you've said.
- SPEAK to that next person's eyes, picking up where you left off with **an apparently seamless transition**.

## THE PRISON JOKE

Vocal variety makes our presentation interesting and effective. Ever notice how two people can say the same thing and get a completely different reaction?

It's like that old prison joke. The prisoners have been there so long and the jokes have been retold so many times that at mealtimes they just call them out by number and everyone laughs. When the new guy tries it and calls out a number, there is dead silence - nobody laughs. Obviously, *he* can't tell a joke. **It's not just what you say, but how you say it.**

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So make sure to **modulate** your voice. **Emphasize key** words. Increase drama with . . . pregnant pauses. Use techniques such as alliteration and repetition of important phrases. **Voice quality and delivery are the most important traits of great speakers.**

### LOCKER ROOM SOCK PRINCIPLE

Coach John Wooden, one of the great basketball coaches, was known for his motivational sock talk.

I imagine the scene on the first day of practice: With his new squad huddled around him in the locker room, he says, "Fellas, I'm going to show you how to put your socks on." The players wince, sneer and rumble "this is ridiculous." Coach Wooden then goes on to explain, "Wrinkles, folds and creases can cause blisters. Blisters interfere with performance during practice and games. The seemingly trivial matters...build into something very big; namely, your success.<sup>1</sup>"

Similarly, **great presentation success comes from mastering the details** of delivery and crafting your content.

### PAINT THE PICTURE

Just as with the chocolate cake story and the Coach Wooden sock parable – make sure you use stories, analogies, anecdotes and word pictures to make your points memorable. **It's not just what you say, it's what they remember.**

Instead of the chocolate cake story, I could have just said, "It's all in the delivery." With the Coach Wooden parable, I could have just emphasized that "great success comes from mastering the details." While both are true, the lessons wouldn't be as memorable and wouldn't stay in your mind, as the chocolate cake story has stayed in my mind for the last 20 years.

### IN SUMMATION:

Tune into WII-FM, make sure your socks are pulled up, present your chocolate cake with style, eliminate elevator/ subway eyes, let the um & ums™ melt in your mouth, learn from the prison joke, and paint the picture to present with impact and get results.

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<sup>1</sup> "Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court" by John Wooden.

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## Presentation Delivery Dos and Don'ts

	Do	Don't
<b>Eyes</b>		
▪ With People	<b>Finish the Thought!</b>	Scan/ Roam Elevator Eyes Subway Eyes
▪ With Notes	<b>D.U.O.</b> (Down.Up.Out.)	Read your Notes
▪ With PowerPoint	<b>R.S.T.</b> (Read. Silently turn. Talk to individuals)	Talk to "Mr. Slide"
<b>Voice</b>		
	<b>Vocal Variety</b> Project with Energy	Monotone, Too loud / soft
	Breathe, Vary Speed	Too fast / slow
	Emphasize Key Words	Flat delivery
	"The Pause"	No pausing
	"Low-High-Low" vocal pitch technique	Up-ticks at end of sentence
	<b>Stop. Look. Speak.</b>	Um & Ums™
<b>Hand Gestures</b>		
	<b>Use 'em or Lose 'em</b>	Fish Flippers, T-Rex
	▪	Toy Soldier
	▪	Fig Leaf / Reverse Fig Leaf
	▪	Banker (hands in pockets)
	▪	Mortician (clasped)
	▪	Jeweler
	▪	Spider on a mirror
	▪	Fidgeting Tailor
<b>Posture / Stance</b>		
	<b>Straight Skis</b>	Sway/ Rock
	▪	Do the "Cha-Cha" Shift
	Move with a Purpose	Random Movement
	Walk in an Arc	Walk left to right

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## Speaking Checklist

Speaker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Area	Effective	Ineffective	Observations
Eye Communication:			
Voice:			
<i>Volume</i>			
<i>Animation</i>			
<i>Speed</i>			
<i>Emphasize Key Words</i>			
<i>Silence</i>			
<i>Um &amp; Um's™</i>			
<i>Tone</i>			
Hand Gestures:			
Posture/Stance:			
Content:			
<i>Opening</i>			
<i>Middle</i>			
<i>Close</i>			
<i>Organized, Clear Points</i>			
Dress & Image			
Overall Impression			

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## My Action Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Specific Actions I will take to improve my Presentation Skills &amp; Communications:</b>	<b>Timing:</b> Start Date How long? Completion date	<b>Who can I involve to support me in reaching my objectives?</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			