

THE PRESENTATION

Preparation can help get butterflies to fly in formation

Every public speaker gets nervous, even the pros.

Longtime NBC newsman Edwin Newman once said: “The only difference between the pros and the novices is that the pros have trained their butterflies to fly in formation.”

You can put your performance anxiety to work for you. Nervous energy can actually bring passion to your remarks. Here are several tips:

► **Prepare.** Set time aside to research and write your presentation well in advance. Anticipate likely questions and write down answers. You’ll feel more confident about your material, which helps avoid last-minute jitters.

► **Rehearse.** Practice your presentation out loud in front of a mirror at least twice. This enables you to see yourself as others



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see you, especially your gestures and body language. If you repeatedly stumble on a difficult word or get stuck on an anecdote, eliminate or change it.

► **Visualize yourself doing well.** Before making a putt, a professional golfer will line up with the hole and visualize the ball dropping in. You can use this same technique. Imagine the room. Visualize yourself at the podium, standing tall, smiling and looking confident. Control emotions by thinking

positively.

► **Arrive early.** Get to the room before others arrive so you can stand at the podium and test the microphone. Look out into the room and visualize yourself doing well. Use the rest of your time to greet people. The people you meet will be your allies in the audience.

► **Start strong.** Approach the podium with a confident stride. Shake hands with the person who introduced you.

Lift your chin up and look at the audience. Pause. Take a breath. Smile. Begin speaking with a strong voice.

Put these tips into practice and your butterflies will fly in formation.

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