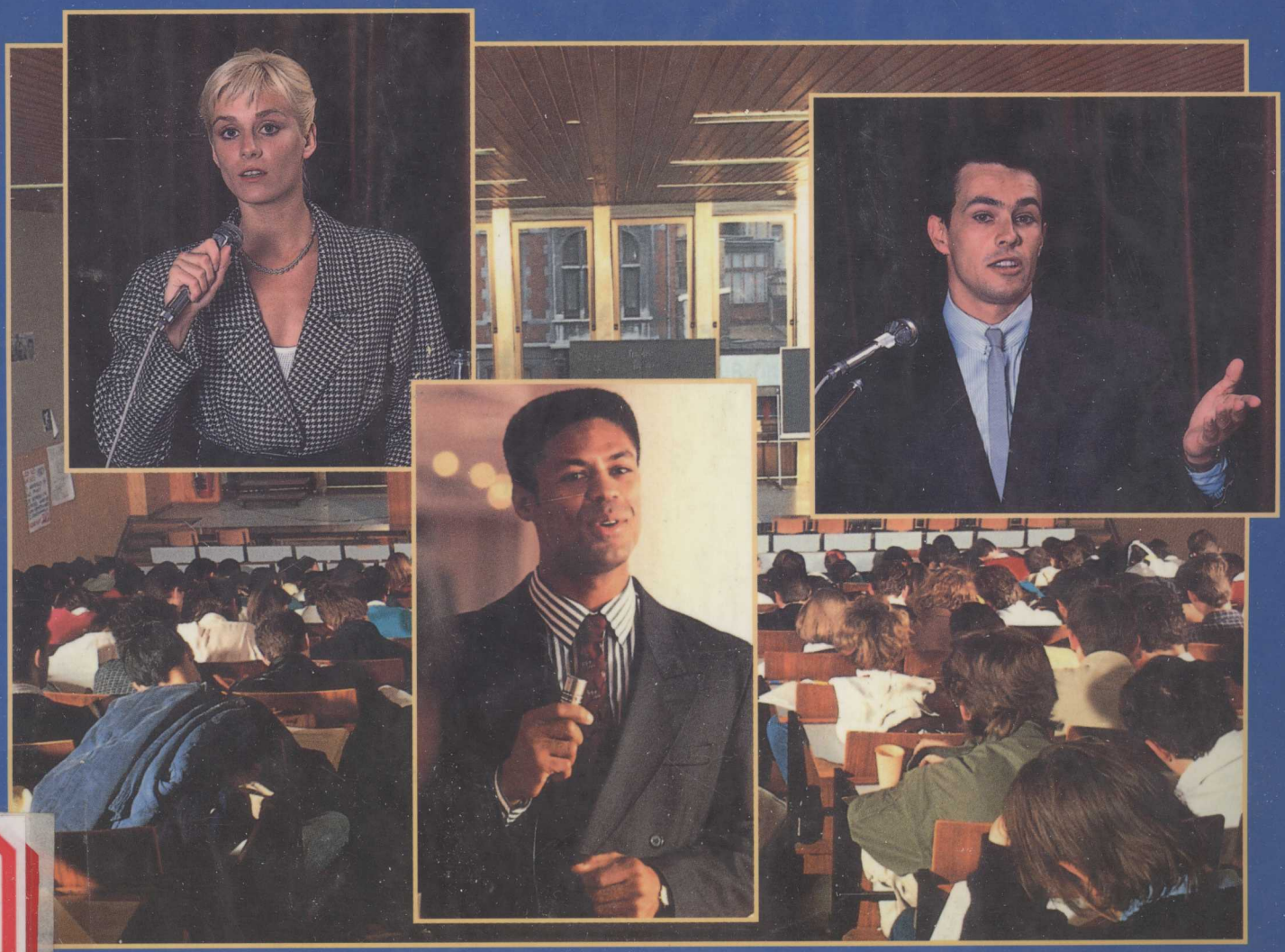
How to Design & Deliver a Speech

LEON FLETCHER



FIFTH EDITION

HOW TO **DESIGN & DELIVER** *A SPEECH*

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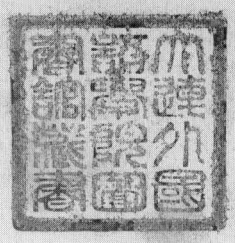
LEON FLETCHER

Emeritus Professor of Speech, Monterey Peninsula College



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To my wife, Vivian

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PREFACE

If You Have Used this Book Before:

There are two notable changes in this edition to which you should be alerted.

- **Nervousness** is now the very first topic presented in this book. That's in contrast to earlier editions, which gave a brief introduction to stage fright after a few pages previewing public speaking, then presented detailed guides later, in the third chapter in the book.

Reason for this change: As you well know, apprehension about speaking is clearly the foremost concern of virtually everyone who speaks in public—from first-time speakers to experienced professionals. So it seems most appropriate to help the anxious student speaker by getting into the topic immediately.

- **Propaganda,** as a unit of study, has been eliminated from this edition.

Reason for this change: Today's theory and research have moved well beyond the eight types (bandwagon, name-calling, and so on) that were presented in earlier editions.

Today's propaganda specialists say propaganda is far more complex than previously thought; it is therefore impractical to present sufficient specifics to be useful in the abridged form needed in a speech textbook such as this.

New in this edition are nine additional *Check-Off Tip Sheets,* for a total of 17, providing handy as well as useful reviews of every learning unit in the text.

If You're a First-time User of this Book:

This book is truly distinctive—probably unique.

Foremost is the purpose of this textbook: to actually ***teach***—rather than merely present—the skills of how to design and deliver speeches.

The purpose of this textbook is *fulfilled*—not just promised—through its innovative combination of three well-established, widely accepted teaching techniques:

Measurable Objectives

Interact

Independent Study

Those techniques are effective because they utilize a variety of potent instructional tools, including:

Diagnosis Folder

Programmed Learning

Self-Evaluations

Self-Tests

Immediate Follow-up

Check-Off Tip Sheets

Speech Evaluation Forms

Platform-tested, real-world specifics about speaking—techniques, tips, examples, and assignments

Those tools, through step-by-step instructions, guide students to present effective speeches. What makes speeches effective is detailed precisely in this book through 68 specific criteria.

(*Continued:* **If You Have Used this Book Before**)

Other changes in this edition have been made in response to dozens of recommendations submitted by reviewers from various universities and colleges that have been using the text. Their suggestions range from such significant additions as a new, alternate skeleton outline as a guide to designing a speech in Lesson 2, Designing Speeches (see page 39), to relatively minor revisions of wordings.

Finally, of course, this edition includes the usual—the expected—updating, including quotes and examples from currently prominent speakers.

Beyond those innovations, the three successful teaching techniques that make this book distinctive and perhaps unique have been maintained:

Measurable Objectives
Interact
Independent Study

And all those learning tools that you have used in this book before—tools that are so productive in increasing learning—are all still here:

Diagnosis Folder
Programmed Learning
Self-Tests
Immediate Follow-up
Step-by-Step Instructions
Check-Off Tip Sheets
Speech Evaluation Forms
and more

So once again, by using this textbook, you can continue to fulfill that plea which still persistently comes from so many levels of today's society—the appeal for *accountability in education.*

(*Continued:* **If You're a First-time User of this Book**)

Those criteria cover every essential of the three elements of productive speeches:

Content
Organization
Delivery

Because this book actually teaches, the instructor is released from routine presentation of material. He or she can then concentrate on the much more productive and challenging role of evaluating students' speeches, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of those speeches, and then prescribing ways the student speakers can further improve their skills. Thus the instructor has the time to teach students individually.

Such personalized teaching is made possible by another feature of this book: *flexibility,* for both students and instructors. Although the total instructional design is highly structured, individual lessons or even parts of lessons can be studied separately—and profitably.

Before national publication of the first edition of this book, its teaching effectiveness was documented through extensive testing. More than 1500 student comments were incorporated.

Now, experience using this book shows that 90 percent of students qualified to study college-level English learn 80 percent or more of all assignments the first time they study them. Indeed, when I teach with this book I give my students—in the first few minutes of the first meeting of the course—a written "Guarantee" that they'll become effective speakers. Details—easy, brief—on how to do that are presented in the *Instructor's Manual* for this book.

The result: Here is a textbook that truly fulfills that plea from so many in our society who are seeking *accountability in education.*

LEON FLETCHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leon Fletcher began his career in speech while still in high school, when he appeared as an actor in children's network radio dramas. Today he is Emeritus Professor of Speech at Monterey Peninsula College in California and a full-time writer.

Speech, travel, and amateur radio are the topics he writes about most frequently. He uses a word processor and has more than 500 publication credits, including articles in ***TV Guide, Education Digest, Writer's Digest, Toastmaster, Sail, 73 Amateur Radio,*** and many others.

This is his fourteenth book; others include the college text ***Speaking to Succeed,*** also published by HarperCollins, and the mass market paperback, ***How to Speak Like a Pro,*** published by Ballantine Books.

When not writing, Fletcher's activities include talking to people around the world, via his amateur radio station, using his call AA6ZG.

CONTENTS

LESSON 1

CONTROLLING NERVOUSNESS

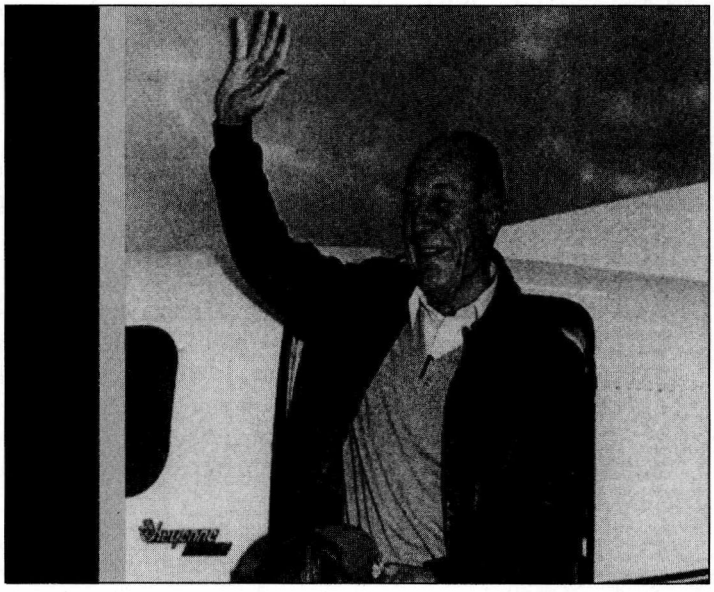
OBJECTIVES:

After completing this lesson, you will:

1. Be able to name the 11 techniques for controlling nervousness.
2. Use all of those techniques to control your nervousness to the extent that fewer than 10 percent of the students in your speech class will be able to name any significant indications that you are nervous while giving a speech.
3. Feel more comfortable about speaking in public.
4. Have prepared the **Diagnosis Folder** in which you'll keep track of your progress in this course.
5. Have a specific basis—your completed **Precourse Self-Evaluation**—on which to improve your speaking skills.

Nervousness: Described as "the greatest test pilot of them all—the first man to fly faster than the speed of sound," *Chuck Yeager* might be expected to be fearless in any situation. But in his autobiography, ***Yeager,*** he wrote: "Give speeches! Me! I hated English worse than any other subject because I had to stand in front of the class and give a book report. I thought, 'No way I'm going to do that.'"

But after he flew faster than sound, the Air Force ordered him to "go out and give speeches." His reaction: "I'd rather fight a flame-out on the deck than battle a talk in front of a strange audience.... Man, I was terrified.... It took about six or seven speeches before I began to loosen up, but the experience wasn't near



Relevance:

Nervousness. Stage fright. Jitters.

Some speech specialists call it "communication apprehension," "speech reticence," "speech anxiety," "performance anxiety," or other esoteric terms.

Actors call it "flop sweat." Psychologists call it "topophobia."

"Don't soften it with those gentle words!" one student told me. "Panic! That's what it is—PANIC!"

Whatever you call it, nervousness is certainly the biggest, most frequent, most persistent concern of almost all speakers—from highly acclaimed professionals to first-time speakers. Many speech instructors will confirm that in public speaking classes, more questions are usually asked about stage fright than about any other topic.

Because of such widespread concern, nervousness is the very first topic in this textbook.

How to Control Nervousness:

Very few of us ever shake off all our nervousness about public speaking, but most people can learn to control it, reduce it, accept it, live with it. Here are 11 practical, platform-tested techniques that will help you reduce your suffering from stage fright.

ALERT!

Study the following techniques carefully. Later in this lesson you'll be asked to take a written self-test to check that you remember them.

1. Nearly Everyone Suffers Nervousness About Giving a Speech

In a special high-tech booth overlooking the San Francisco Giant's baseball field in Candlestick Park, legal secretary Sherry Davis settled into her chair before a microphone to become the first female public-address baseball announcer in the major leagues. "I was nervous," she said. "I just have to get the jitters out."

A few days earlier Bill Walsh, the perfect model of cool as he coached the San Francisco 49ers football team to three Super Bowl titles, was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame; before the ceremonies he said, "I've been haunted for the last month, losing sleep as to how I'm going to be able to get up and receive this award."

He was not alone in his stage fright.

Eddie DeBartolo, Jr., super-millionaire owner of the 49ers, was so nervous during his speech presenting the award to Walsh that he accidently skipped over a full page of his prepared talk.

Or consider these statements by stars of television and films:

- Barbra Streisand: "I suffer from terrible stage fright."
- James Taylor, long-time rock singer: "Me nervous? Sure—before every time I go out there."
- Dustin Hoffman told *Tonight Show* host Jay Leno, "I did this thing for Governor Clinton…and all the actors in Los Angeles came.... We each knew what we had to say, and they put it on teleprompters, so there was really nothing to get nervous about.... And I see Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Mike Nichols, and Elaine May—and we were all so nervous."
- Katie Couric, cohost of television's *Today* show, said, after years of TV appearances, "I still get nervous."
- Joe Montana, considered by many to be the greatest quarterback of all time, talking about his feelings just before he was to speak in his first television commercial, said, "It was a nervous time for me."

And dozens of other well-known, greatly experienced speakers have said they get nervous about speaking in public—Don Adams, Jeff Bridges, Ruth Buzzi, Johnny Carson, Geraldine Ferraro, Erica Jong, Paul Newman, Conan O'Brien, Christopher Reeve, Red Skelton, Maureen Stapleton, Jimmy Stewart, Orson Welles, and many others.

You may have noticed that almost none of the new stars of today have been named—very few of the contemporary comedians, new wave musicians, current video stars, newcomers to films or TV, or such. Of course, they, too, suffer from stage fright. But few of them speak in public about such concerns: it takes considerable self-confidence, acceptance of one's self and of others, plus maturity and openness to talk candidly—especially to the media—about one's own apparent shortcomings such as nervousness when in the spotlight. Search, as I have, the popular and the professional magazines, newspapers, TV news and talk shows, and other resources, and you'll very rarely find younger performers talking about their stage fright. But you can be sure that virtually all of them, too, are suffering from this dreaded feeling.

Indeed, in all my teaching of speech classes—mostly community college classes but also classes ranging from seminars for upper-level executives to instruction for junior high school youngsters—I have had only one student who claimed to be "completely free of stage fright." That student was a young woman blessed with an outstandingly beautiful singing voice. She had been singing in public since she was 6 years old. When I met her, she was a student in a college speech course, and her years of singing for audiences had apparently led her to believe that butterflies in her stomach, sweaty palms, and trembling knees were such routine feelings that she did not consider them unusual.

On the other hand, probably the most nervous speaker I've ever worked with was a highly honored fighter pilot. A navy commander with extensive combat experience, he'd been decorated repeatedly for his bravery during duel-to-the-death dogfights high in the skies over enemy territories. I met him when he tried to give just a 6-minute speech before only four fellow officers. His speech was to determine if he should enroll in a speech seminar so that he'd be better prepared for advancement to higher commands, in which he would be giving speeches to other officers, presentations to congressional committees, and briefings to influential business leaders. But he simply could not bring himself to give that short diagnostic speech. He started, stalled, started again, and then strode out of the room.

Communication apprehension is experienced by people of all ages. Concern about it has even reached into popular fiction for children. A highly regarded novel for 8- to 12-year-olds, written by Ann M. Martin, tells the story of 9-year-old Sara, who hates her mother's frequent urging to assert herself. The climax comes when Sara is required by a teacher to take a part in the class play. The name of the book: *Stage Fright.*

But the extent of nervousness is documented not only by personal stories and quotes by the famous. Look at some statistics.

About 3000 Americans were asked, "What are you most afraid of?" Their most frequent reply: "Speaking before a group." More people said they were afraid of speaking in public than said they feared snakes, heights, illness, or even death.

One researcher found that "about 85 percent of us feel uncomfortably anxious speaking in public."

Another report said about 50 percent of a cross-section of Americans feel at least an occasional bit of stage fright before a speech; some 25 percent of us struggle with nervousness that's annoying but not damaging; and the final 25 percent "will be so fearful [they'll] avoid meetings, drop classes, refuse promotions, or change jobs to escape confronting an audience."

Clearly you are not alone in your nervousness about giving speeches. But you won't suffer the same stage fright about every speech you give, because . . .

2. Experience Reduces Nervousness

After you've given even just one speech, you'll realize that your greatest fear—your fear of fear!—is not really as serious as you'd thought. You'll feel better for your first speech than you probably thought you would. And, usually, much better for your following speeches.

"But what if my mind goes blank?" beginning speakers often ask. "Suppose I fumble a word and it comes out funny? Or insulting? Or dirty? Or. . . " "Suppose I open my mouth and nothing comes out?"

The fact is, such problems are rare—very rare. Have you ever heard a speaker who had such problems? Not likely. And don't point to such goofs on TV shows; often those errors have been written into the script, planted just to make the programs seem spontaneous.

What about all those horrible fumbles on the blooper TV shows and the blooper records? Some of those are real, but not all; again, many are scripted.

Still, worried speakers ask, "Wasn't there a famous announcer who fumbled the name of the President of the United States?" There was—but he made that goof more than fifty years ago! He was Harry Von Zell; he was introducing President Herbert Hoover; he said, "President Hoobert Hever."

In spite of that apparent "disaster," both the announcer and the President continued their successful careers.

Think of all the speakers you've heard over the years—TV newscasters, politicians, religious leaders, teachers, salespersons, lecturers, and such. You'll be hard-pressed to remember a single example of a serious, significant goof that you've heard yourself. Sure, such errors happen. But they are rare, hard to catch, and most important, very seldom are they serious.

But on the slight chance you do fumble a word or two, you may be able to easily switch it to your advantage by delivering one of the many old cover-up gags that continue to get laughs:

"Now I'll try that in English."

"Guess I need to untie my tongue."

"They told me not to buy teeth at a flea market."

After you've given just one or a few speeches, you'll feel much more confident. You'll discover that you can live with your nervousness—and survive! You'll find that your mind won't really go blank. Words and ideas will come out of you. You can indeed be an effective speaker!

3. Realize You Appear More Confident Than You Feel

There are two readily available ways for you to check that out.

First, you can ask a few of your friends in this speech class if you look nervous when you give a speech. Class discussions after student speeches verify that signs of nervousness do not show nearly as much as speakers think they do.

Second, you can find out for yourself just how nervous you appear to your listeners by having a videotape recording made of yourself as you give a speech—a practice speech or an actual one, in class or out, privately or before an audience.

The videotaping of speeches sounds quite threatening to many people. But if you look with even a bit of objectivity at a recording of yourself giving a speech, you're almost certain to agree that you look much more confident than you may feel. Try to identify on the tape any specific indications that you were nervous; chances are you'll be hard-pressed to find any. While you may not appear ready to replace Barbara Walters or Peter Jennings, your poise and polish are probably not really very different from theirs.

Or, rather than looking at yourself to verify that speakers appear much more confident than they may appear, take a careful look at the speeches given by the presidents of our nation. Certainly most of us would agree that they appear about as confident as anyone can. But look a little closer:

- President Clinton, when asked a question, sometimes reveals his nervousness, some observers claim, by pursing his upper lip. Others note that TV shots from behind him, when he's speaking at a lectern, sometimes reveal his crossing his legs—an indication of nervousness, according to some researchers of body language.
- Former President Bush, to cite just one report, "Stood nervous and uneasy with a controlled smile trying to assert calmness" just before a debate with his opponent Michael Dukakis.

- Reagan, while serving as President, said, "I still get puckered up just before I go in to give a speech."
- Carter, while giving a speech, usually clasped his hands together, fingers intertwined so tightly his knuckles turned white.
- Ford twisted his lips, gestured gracelessly, fumbled one-syllable words.
- Nixon, starting with his early speeches as a college debater and continuing throughout his career, suffered such stage fright that sweat poured down his face in rivers of misery.
- Johnson repeatedly said "ah," struggled for words, sprinkled his speeches with long pauses.
- Kennedy clawed the air with his index finger, nervously searching for a word or idea.
- Eisenhower's nervousness produced sentences so complex many English teachers could neither diagram nor understand them.
- Truman showed his anxiety while speaking by repeating one gesture almost continually—moving both hands up and down in unison.

In sum, every one of our last ten presidents has shown signs of stage fright—and their service as leaders of our nation add up to well over fifty years of experience in public speaking.

You, like them, very probably look much more confident than you may feel.

4. Visualize Yourself Succeeding

Look upon yourself as a poor speaker—an ineffective speaker—and you'll greatly increase your chances of being less effective than you can be.

On the other hand, visualize yourself as succeeding in your speaking, and you'll raise your speaking effectiveness considerably. There's considerable evidence and logic to support that.

Back in the 1950s, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale began popularizing "positive thinking"—a process of telling yourself that you can indeed attain a desired goal.

The goal could be virtually any reasonable quality or achievement—earning higher grades, becoming more knowledgeable, developing more effective leadership, obtaining a better job, winning more games, and so on.

To apply positive thinking to improving your success in public speaking, you should tell yourself the *truth*—that:

- You *will* be effective in expressing your ideas.
- Many of your listeners *will* receive, understand, learn from, be convinced of, and enjoy much of what you say.
- Your nervousness *will NOT* interfere with your speaking.

Such mental self-enhancement has helped the careers of many speakers, actors, actresses, and other performers. When television actor David Hasselhoff was filming *Knight Rider,* he said, "At first they were going to let me go from the show because of my nerves. But I turned myself around through positive thinking."

But as effective as positive thinking is, about thirty years after Dr. Peale originated it, he took it a step further. In 1982 he developed what he calls *imaging.* He wrote:

> Imaging consists of picturing vividly in your conscious mind a desired goal or objective and holding that image until it sinks into your unconscious mind, where it releases great untapped energies.... When the imaging concept is applied steadily and systematically, it solves problems, strengthens personalities, improves health and greatly enhances the chances for success in any kind of endeavor."

Does it work to "convince yourself that you'll be successful?" According to Dr. Peale, imaging is now "recognized by scientists and medical authorities."

For example, in an article in the magazine *Psychology Today,* psychologists Scot Morris and Nicholas Charney wrote: "Anticipate the best, not the worst. Banish the notion that you are embarking on a disaster and see yourself as finishing a good speech. Imagine success. Hear the applause."

Visualizing yourself succeeding, positive thinking, imaging, whatever comparable technique you call it or you use, will indeed work—*if you utilize them for* ***realistic*** *goals.*

If you're a shy, quiet person about to give your first speech, you can't simply picture yourself as a dramatic, golden-voiced spellbinder and suddenly, magically be turned into a crowd-moving orator. But you certainly can convince yourself that you will not be as shy as you have been, that you will speak up with greater assurance, that you will be able to express your ideas with greater fluency. And once you convince yourself that you can achieve such goals, your chances are indeed much greater that you will.

Or consider another aspect of visualizing yourself succeeding. When you go to hear a speaker—a lecturer at your college, a preacher at your church, a politician at a community meeting, whomever—do you think, "I sure hope this speaker does a poor job!"

Of course not. As you go to hear a speaker, you carry the hope that the speaker will be stimulating, informative, motivating, and all those other good characteristics you expect from an effective speaker.

Extend that hopeful attitude to the audience you are to speak to—they, too, are anticipating your speech with a positive attitude.

Further, many speakers feel that audiences somehow do seem to send out some kind of "vibrations" which make a speaker feel welcome. Your audiences, too, will be listening to you with empathy. Psychoanalyst Donald M. Kaplan says that empathy is the surest relief from stage fright.

5. Occupy Your Mind With What You Want to Say

One of the traps that many speakers, especially beginners, fall into is thinking about concerns other than those they should focus on—the content of their speeches.

Many speakers detract from their effectiveness by thinking about such things as:

What are my listeners thinking about me?

Can they hear me O.K.?

Does my hair look all right?

Is my blouse or shirt tucked in properly?

Does my voice sound squeaky?

Was that the right word I just used?

Should I be gesturing more?

Instead of thinking about such details, concentrate your thoughts on the *content* of your speech. Think, *More than anything else at this moment, I want these people to get what I have to say to them.*

Indeed, some speakers make concentration replace their nervousness. Broadway musical comedy star Carol Channing said, "I don't call it nervousness—I prefer to call it concentration."

6. Understand that Nervousness Can be Controlled

You have two options: You can convince yourself that you can't control your nervousness, or you can persuade yourself that you are indeed master of your own feelings.

Select that first option—that you can't overcome your nervousness—and your apprehension will likely increase still more. Dr. Jeff Sorg, who operates a clinic in Los Angeles to help professionals control their anxieties, said:

If you make a negative statement to yourself often enough, you can come to believe it: "I'm going to embarrass myself (or fall, hiccup, vomit)." The fact is, even if these things do happen, they needn't be catastrophic. So what if you stumble. You won't die from hiccups. And even vomiting isn't so bad; it's a release. You can conquer all of these miseries. For performers and nonperformers, the show *can* go on.

So turn to your second option—telling yourself that you are master of your feelings. First, admit to yourself that you are—or will be—nervous. But also remind yourself of this fact: *You can indeed live with your nervousness.*

You may become uncomfortable, but you won't let yourself be overcome by that uncomfortableness. You may perspire, but you won't drown. You may gasp for air, but you certainly won't suffocate. You may tremble, but few, perhaps no one, in the audience will notice; if they do, so what? Your listeners are there to hear what you have to say; that didn't come to see if your hands are shaking.

The important point here is to remember that you can certainly control your nervousness, although very few of us eliminate nervousness entirely. Carroll O'Conner, one of TV's long-time actors, star of *Heat of the Night, All in the Family, Archie's Place,* and other shows, said, "A professional actor has a kind of tension. The amateur is thrown by it, but the professional needs it."

7. Settle Into a Routine for Relaxing

Sammy Davis, Jr. used to ease his severe stage fright before a show by methodically selecting the jewelry he'd wear. Some speakers pace. Others stretch, do push-ups or other exercises. I catnap.

The point is to shift your attention before you speak to some easy routine you can repeat with little or no thought. That will help clear your mind so you can concentrate on the task you are about to undertake—your speech.

In his book *The Body Language of Sex, Power & Aggression,* Julius Fast wrote: "Many people use elaborate routines with pencils, notebooks, and eyeglasses—little rituals of movement—to absorb their nervousness."

Author Stephen Phillip Policoff, in an article entitled "Coping with Stage Fright," published in *Cosmopolitan,* recommended that you "get someone to massage your shoulders, or [you massage] someone else's. Releasing tension in others often eases our own anxiety."

Other routines to relax before speaking that are used by speakers I know include:

- Taking a hot bath.
- Swimming.
- Before the audience arrives, wandering around the room in which the speaker is to talk.
- Reading a book about a complex subject—a scientific report, for example.
- Reading a book about a very light topic—a summer romance novel, for instance.
- Doing crossword puzzles.
- Sitting in your car, parked near the speaking location, admiring the scenery.
- Listening to music.

You can, of course, select one of those routines to use as your own method for relaxing, or you can find some other outlet on your own. Either way, the important point is that you do develop a routine.

8. Nervousness Needs an Outlet

There's no valid reason to try to hold back your nervousness. Why bother to try to avoid stage fright? As we've established, for almost all of us, it's going to be there, whatever we do. So let it have whatever outlet feels best for you.

"If your body trembles, let it tremble. Don't feel obliged to try to stop it. Don't even strive for relaxation. Don't be too concerned because you are tense and cannot relax." Those are the recommendations of a leading medical expert on nerves, Dr. Claire Weekes, writing in *Reader's Digest.*

Johnny Carson used to toss pencils—in the air, into jars, at guests, at cameras. If it helps you to wiggle your fingers, wiggle away. If breathing deeply helps you, breathe away.

9. Enjoy Speaking

"The first duty of man is to speak; that is his chief business in this world."

That was the view of Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson. Even if he was but partly right, it seems that since we all do so much talking, we might as well enjoy it.

But the point is more critical than that. If you don't enjoy speaking, many of your listeners will quickly, somehow, sense your lack of concern.

"But I can fake my interest!" some students reply.

That can be true in some situations—if you're skilled, if your audience is not alert, if the situation is sufficiently casual.

But you're taking chances. If the speech is important, any reluctance you may have in wanting to communicate may well jeopardize your success.

Others who doubt the importance of enjoying speaking point to professional radio or television announcers who can be selling dog food one minute, a vacation in Hawaii the next, and sell them both with apparently equal sincerity, conviction, persuasiveness, and success.

But many listeners can spot—sometimes simply "feel"—at least a bit of insincerity in the voices of those announcers. Still, announcers are professionals, trained to project conviction. That's a difficult skill to develop, to project to audiences; that's a major reason key announcers are so highly paid.

In your public speaking, you'll be less nervous—and more effective—if you'll just let yourself enjoy speaking.

10. Stop Fighting Your Nervousness

Just let your nervousness be. Don't try to fight it. Look on nervousness as "nature's way" of helping you to be ready to do your best.

Stage fright before a speech is a lot like the pregame tension most athletes experience. Many football players, even professionals with years in the major leagues, will tell you that they're extremely nervous before a game. After one especially dramatic game, San Francisco 49er cornerback Troy Nixon said:

> Was I scared? That's the understatement of the year. It's funny though—I wasn't really as nervous as I thought I might be. I kept telling myself, "It's just like practice, it's just like practice. Just relax, challenge them, and you have nothing to lose."

Such self-encouragement can also help speakers reduce their nervousness. Think of your actual speech as "just like practice." Besides, you, too, "have nothing to lose," but you can gain experience, assurance, polish.

Athletes also point out that once they make their first contact with an opposing player, they feel far more at ease, far more confident. Similarly, once you as a speaker make your first contact with your audience—give them that first direct, straight-in-the-eye look—you, too, will feel more assured.

11. Simple Key: Prepare!

Preparation is—by far!—the most effective step toward controlling nervousness about giving a speech. And how to prepare speeches—effectively, efficiently—is, of course, the purpose of this book, the purpose of this course.

But now it's time to remember that "Alert" presented back on page 2—the alert that said you'd be tested on your remembering those 11 techniques for controlling nervousness. Well, here comes that test.

To be sure you're ready for the test, take a moment right now to look over the list again—***and note in particular the first letter of each of the techniques.***

You've noticed, of course, that the first letters of those techniques spell—what? You're right!

N-E-R-V-O-U-S-N-E-S-S!

That mnemonic certainly makes it easier for you to remember those techniques. So now is the time to take your self-test.

ASSIGNMENT 1: CONTROLLING NERVOUSNESS: SELF-TEST

ACTION:

Write, below, a list of the techniques for controlling nervousness.