

HOW TO DEVELOP  
SELF-CONFIDENCE  
& INFLUENCE PEOPLE BY  
PUBLIC SPEAKING



# 《演讲与口才》

## 英文原版

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赠送

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## CHAPTER ONE

# Developing Courage and Self – Confidence

More than five hundred thousand men and women, since 1912, have been members of public speaking courses using my methods. Many of them have written statements telling why they enrolled for this training and what they hoped to obtain from it. Naturally, the phraseology varied; but the central desire in these letters, the basic want in the vast majority, remained surprisingly the same: “When I am called upon to stand up and speak, person after person wrote, ” I become so self – conscious, so frightened, that I can’t think clearly, can’t concentrate, can’t remember what I had intended to say. I want to gain selfconfidence, poise, and the ability to think on my feet. I want to get my thoughts together in logical order and I want to be able to say my say clearly and convincingly before a business or club group or audience. ” Thousands of their confessions sounded about like that.

To cite a concrete case: Years ago, a gentleman here called Mr. D. W. Ghent, joined my public speaking course in Philadelphia. Shortly after the opening session, he invited me to lunch with him in the Manufacturers’ Club. He was a man of middle age

and had always led an active life; was head of his own manufacturing establishment, a leader in church work and civic activities. While we were having lunch that day, he leaned across the table and said: "I have been asked many times to talk before various gatherings, but I have never been able to do so. I get so fussed, my mind becomes an utter blank; so I have sidestepped it all my life. But I am chairman now of a board of college trustees. I must preside at their meetings, I simply have to do some talking. . . ." Do you think it will be possible for me to learn to speak at this late date in my life?

"Do I think, Mr. Ghent?" I replied. "It is not a question of my thinking. I know you can, and I know you will if you will only practice and follow the directions and instructions. "

He wanted to believe that, but it seemed too rosy, too optimistic. "I am afraid you are just being kind," he answered, "that you are merely trying to encourage

After he had completed his training, we lost touch with each other for a while. Later, we met and lunched together again at the Manufacturers' Club. We sat in the same corner and occupied the same table that we had had on the first occasion. Reminding him of our former conversation, I asked him if I had been too sanguine then. He took a little red-backed notebook out of his pocket and showed me a list of talks and dates for which he was booked. "And the ability to make these, he confessed," the pleasure I get in doing it, the additional service I can render to the community - these are among the most gratifying things in my life. "

An important disarmament conference had been held in Washington shortly before that. When it was known that the British Prime Minister was planning to attend it, the Baptists of Philadelphia cabled, inviting him to speak at a great mass meeting to be held in their city. And Mr. Ghent informed me that he himself had been chosen, from among all the Baptists of that city, to introduce England's premier to the audience.

And this was the man who had sat at that same table less than three years before and solemnly asked me if I thought he would ever be able to talk in public!

Was the rapidity with which he forged ahead in his speaking ability unusual? Not at all, There have been hundreds of similar cases. For example - to quote one more specific instance - years ago, a Brooklyn physician, whom we will call Dr. Curtis, spent the winter in Florida near the training grounds of the Giants. Being an enthusiastic baseball

fan, he often went to see them practice. In time, he became quite friendly with the team, and was invited to attend a banquet given in their honor.

After the coffee and nuts were served, several prominent guests were called upon to “say a few words.” Suddenly, with the abruptness and unexpectedness of an explosion, he heard the toastmaster remark: “We have a physician with us tonight, and I am going to ask Dr. Curtis to talk on a Baseball Player’s Health.

Was he prepared? Of course. He had had the best preparation in the world: he had been studying hygiene and practicing medicine for almost a third of a century. He could have sat in his chair and talked about this subject all night to the man seated on his right or left. But to get up and say the same things to even a small audience – that was another matter. That was a paralyzing matter. His heart doubled its pace and skipped beats at the very contemplation of it. He had never made a public speech in his life, and every thought that he had had now took wings.

What was he to do? The audience was applauding. Everyone was looking at him. He shook his head. But that served only to heighten the applause, to increase the demand. The cries of “Dr. Curtis! Speech! Speech!” grew louder and more insistent.

He was in positive misery. He knew that if he got up he would fail, that he would be unable to utter half a dozen sentences. So he arose, and, without saying a word, turned his back on his friends and walked silently out of the room, a deeply embarrassed and humiliated man.

Small wonder that one of the first things he did after getting back to Brooklyn was to enroll in my course in Public Speaking. He didn’t propose to be put to the blush and be stricken dumb a second time.

He was the kind of student that delights an instructor; he was in dead earnest. He wanted to be able to talk, and there was no halfheartedness about his desire. He prepared his talks thoroughly, he practiced them with a will. and he never missed a single session of the course.

He did precisely what such a student always does: he progressed at a rate that surprised him, that surpassed his fondest hopes. After the first few sessions his nervousness subsided, his confidence mounted higher and higher, In two months he had become the star speaker of the group. He was soon accepting invitations to speak elsewhere; he now

loved the feel and exhilaration of it, the distinction and the additional friends it brought him.

A member of the New York City Republican Campaign Committee, hearing one of his public addresses, invited Dr. Curtis to stump the city for his party. How surprised that politician would have been had he realized that only a year before, the speaker had gotten up and left a public banquet hall in shame and confusion because he was tongue—tied with audience—fear!

The gaining of self—confidence and courage, and the ability to think calmly and clearly while talking to a group is not one—tenth as difficult as most people imagine. It is not a gift bestowed by Providence on only a few rarely endowed individuals. It is like the ability to play golf. Anyone can develop his own latent capacity if he has sufficient desire to do so.

Is there the faintest shadow of a reason why you should not be able to think as well in a perpendicular position before an audience as you can when sitting down? Surely, you know there is not. In fact, you ought to think better when facing a group. Their presence ought to stir you and lift you. A great many speakers will tell you that the presence of an audience is a stimulus, an inspiration, that drives their brains to function more clearly, more keenly. At such times, thoughts, facts, ideas that they did not know they possessed, “drift smoking by,” as Henry Ward Beecher said; and they have but to reach out and lay their hands hot upon them. That ought to be your experience, It probably will be if you practice and persevere.

Of this much, however, you may be absolutely sure; training and practice will wear away your audience—fright and give you self—confidence and an abiding courage.

Do not imagine that your case is unusually difficult. Even those who afterward became the most eloquent representatives of their generation were, at the outset of their careers, afflicted by this blinding fear and self—consciousness.

William Jennings Bryan, battle—marked veteran that he was, admitted that in his first attempts, his knees fairly smote together.

Mark Twain, the first time he stood up to lecture, felt as if his mouth were filled with cotton and his pulse were speeding for some prize cup.

Grant took Vicksburg and led to victory one of the greatest armies the world had ev-

er seen up to that time ; yet, when he attempted to speak in public, he admitted he had something very like locomotive taxi.

The late Jean Jaures, the most powerful political speaker that France produced during his generation, sat, for a year, tongue—tied in the Chamber of Deputies before he could summon up the courage to make his initial speech.

“The first time I attempted to make a public talk,” confessed Lloyd George, “ I tell you I was in a state of misery. It is no figure of speech, but literally true, that my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth; and, at first, I could hardly get out a word.”

John Bright, the illustrious Englishman who, during the civil war, defended in England the cause of union and emancipation, made his maiden speech before a group of country folk gathered in a school building. He was so frightened on the way to the place, so fearful that he would fail, that he implored his companion to start applause to bolster him up whenever he showed signs of giving way to his nervousness.

Charles Stewart Parnell, the great Irish leader, at the outset of his speaking career, was so nervous, according to the testimony of his brother, that he frequently clenched his fists until his nails sank into his flesh and his palms bled.

Disraeli admitted that he would rather have led a cavalry charge than to have faced the House of Commons for the first time. His opening speech there was a ghastly failure. So was Sheridan's.

In fact, so many of the famous speakers of England have made poor showings at first that there is now a feeling in Parliament that it is rather an insuspicious omen for a young man's initial talk to be a decided success. So take heart.

After watching the careers and aiding somewhat in the development of so many speakers, the author is always glad when a student has, at the outset, a certain amount of flutter and nervous agitation.

There is a certain responsibility in making a talk, even if it is to only two dozen men or women in a business meeting—a certain strain, a certain shock, a certain excitement. The speaker ought to be keyed up like a thoroughbred straining at the bit. The immortal Cicero said, two thousand years ago, that all public speaking of real merit was characterized by nervousness.

Speakers often experience this same feeling even when they are talking over the ra-

dio. "Microphone fright," it is called. When Charlie Chaplin went on the air, he had his speech all written out. Surely he was used to audiences. He toured this country back in 1912 with a vaudeville sketch entitled "A Night in a Music Hall." Before that he was on the legitimate stage in England. Yet, when he went into the padded room and faced the microphone, he had a feeling in the stomach not unlike the sensation one gets when he crosses the Atlantic during a stormy February.

James Kirkwood, a famous motion picture actor and director, had a similar experience. He used to be a star on the speaking stage; but, when he came out of the sending room after addressing the invisible audience, "he was mopping perspiration from his brow." An opening night on Broadway, he confessed, "is nothing in comparison to that."

Some people, no matter how often they speak, always experience this self-consciousness just before they commence but, in a few seconds after they have gotten on their feet, it disappears.

Even Lincoln felt shy for the few opening moments. "At first he was very awkward," relates his law partner, Herndon, "and it seemed a real labor to adjust himself to his surroundings. He struggled for a time under a feeling of apparent diffidence and sensitiveness, and these only added to his awkwardness. I have often seen and sympathized with Mr. Lincoln during these moments. When he began speaking, his voice was shrill, piping, and unpleasant. His manner, his attitude, his dark, yellow face, wrinkled and dry, his oddity of pose, his diffident movements—everything seemed to be against him, but only for a short time. In a few moments he gained composure and warmth and earnestness, and his real speech began.

Your experience may be similar to his.

In order to get the most out of your efforts to become a good speaker in public, and to get it with rapidity and dispatch, four things are essential:

### **First: Start with a Strong and Persistent Desire**

This is of far more importance than you probably realize. If an instructor could look into your mind and heart now and ascertain the depth of your desires, he could foretell,



almost with certainty, the swiftness of the progress you will make. If your desire is pale and flabby, your achievements will also take on that hue and consistency. But, if you go after your subject with persistence, and with the energy of a bulldog after a cat, nothing underneath the Milky Way will defeat you.

Therefore, arouse your enthusiasm for this self—study. Enumerate its benefits. Think of what additional self—confidence and the ability to talk more convincingly in public will mean to you. Think of what it may mean and what it ought to mean, in dollars and cents. Think of what it may mean to you socially; of the friends it will bring, of the increase of your personal influence, of the leadership it will give you. And it will give you leadership more rapidly than almost any other activity you can think of or imagine.

“ There is no other accomplishment,” stated Chauncey M. Depew, “ which any man can have that will so quickly make for him a career and secure recognition as the ability to speak acceptably. ”

Philip D. Armour, after he had amassed millions, said: “ I would rather have been a great speaker than a great capitalist. ”

It is an attainment that almost every person of education longs for. After Andrew Carnegie’s death there was found, among his papers, a plan for his life drawn up when he was thirty—three years of age. He then felt that in two more years he could so arrange his business as to have an annual income of fifty thousand; so he proposed to retire at thirty—five, go to Oxford and get a thorough education, and “ pay special attention to speaking in public.

Think of the glow of satisfaction and pleasure that will accrue from the exercise of this new power. The author has traveled around over no small part of the world; and has had many and varied experiences; but for downright and lasting inward satisfaction, he knows of few things that will compare to standing before an audience and making men think your thoughts after you. It will give you a sense of strength, a feeling of power. It will appeal to your pride of personal accomplishment. It will set you off from and raise you above your fellow men. There is magic in it and a never – to – be – forgotten thrill. “Two minutes before I begin, a speaker confessed,” I would rather be whipped than start; but two minutes before I finish, I would rather be shot than stop. ”

In every effort, some men grow faint – hearted and fall by the wayside; so you should keep thinking of what this skill will mean to you until your desire is white hot. You should start this program with an enthusiasm that will carry you through triumphant to the end. Set aside one certain night of the week for the reading of these chapters. In short, make it as easy as possible to go ahead. Make it as difficult as possible to retreat.

When Julius Caesar sailed over the channel from Gaul and landed with his legions on what is now England, what did he do to insure the success of his arms? A very clever thing: he halted his soldiers on the chalk cliffs of Dover, and, looking down over the waves two hundred feet below, they saw red tongues of fire consume every ship in which they had crossed. In the enemy’s country, with the last link with the Continent gone, the last means of retreating burned, there was but one thing left for them to do: to advance, to conquer. That is precisely what they did.

Such was the spirit of the immortal Caesar. Why not make it yours, too, in this war to exterminate any foolish fear of audiences?

## Second: Know Thoroughly What You Are Going to Talk About

Unless a person has thought out and planned his talk and knows what he is going to say, he can’t feel very comfortable when he faces his auditors. He is like the blind leading the blind. Under such circumstances, your speaker ought to be self – conscious, ought to feel repentant, ought to be ashamed of his negligence.

“I was elected to the Legislature in the fall of 1881,” Teddy Roosevelt wrote in his Autobiography, “and found myself the youngest man in that body. Like all young men and inexperienced members, I had considerable difficulty in teaching myself to speak. I profited much by the advice of a hard – headed old countryman—who was unconsciously paraphrasing the Duke of Wellington, who was himself doubtless paraphrasing somebody else. The advice ran: ‘don’t speak until you are sure you have something to say, and know just what it is; then say it, and sit down.’”

This “hard – headed old countryman” ought to have told Roosevelt of another aid in overcoming nervousness. He ought to have added: “It will help you to throw off embarrassment if you can find something to do before an audience—if you can exhibit some-

thing, write a word on the blackboard, or point out a spot on the map, or move a table, or throw open a window, or shift some books and papers—any physical action with a purpose behind it may help you to feel more at home. ”

True, it is not always easy to find an excuse for doing such things; but there is the suggestion. Use it if you can; but use it the first few times only. A baby does not cling to chairs after it once learns to walk.

### Third: Act Confident

One of the most famous psychologists that America has produced, Professor William James, wrote as follows:

*Action seems to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together; and by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling which is not.*

*Thus the sovereign voluntary path to cheerfulness, if our spontaneous cheerfulness be lost, is to sit up cheerfully and to act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there. If such conduct does not make you feel cheerful, nothing else on that occasion can.*

*So, to feel brave, act as if we were brave, use all of our will to that end, and a courage fit will very likely replace the fit of fear.*

Apply Professor James' advice. To develop courage when you are facing an audience, act as if you already had it. Of course, unless you are prepared, all the acting in the world will avail but little. But granted that you know what you are going to talk about, step out briskly and take a deep breath. In fact, breathe deeply for thirty seconds before you ever face your audience. The increased supply of oxygen will buoy you up and give you courage. The great tenor, Jean de Reszke, used to say that when you had your breath so you "could sit on it" nervousness vanished.

In every age, in every clime, men have always admired courage; so, no matter how your heart may be pounding inside, stride forth bravely, stop, stand still and act as if you loved it.

Draw yourself up to your full height, look your audience straight in the eyes, and begin to talk as confidently as if every one of them owed you money. Imagine that they

do. Imagine that they have assembled there to beg you for an extension of credit. The psychological effect on you will be beneficial

Do not nervously button and unbutton your coat, play with your beads, or fumble with your hands. If you must make nervous movements, place your hands behind your back and twist your fingers there where no one can see the performance—or wiggle your toes.

As a general rule, it is bad for a speaker to hide behind furniture ; but it may give you a little courage the first few times to stand behind a table or chair and to grip them tightly—or hold a coin firmly in the palm of your hand.

How did Teddy Roosevelt develop his characteristic courage and self—reliance? Was he endowed by nature with a venturesome and daring spirit? Not at all. “Having been a rather sickly and awkward boy, ” he confesses in his Autobiography, “I was, as a young man, at first both nervous and distrustful of my own prowess. I had to train myself painfully and laboriously not merely as regards my body but as regards my soul and spirit. ”

Fortunately, he has told us how he achieved the transformation: “ When a boy, ” he writes, “I read a passage in one of Marryat’s books which always impressed me. In this passage the captain of some small British man – of – war is explaining to the hero how to acquire the quality of fearlessness. He says that at the outset almost every man is frightened when he goes into action, but that the course to follow is for the man to keep such a grip on himself that he can act just as if he were not frightened. After this is kept up long enough, it changes from pretense to reality, and the man does in very fact become fearless by sheer dint of practicing fearlessness when he does not feel it. (I am using my own language, not Marryat’s. )

“ This was the theory upon which I went. There were all kinds of things of which I was afraid at first, ranging from grizzly bears to ‘ mean ’ horses and gun – fighters; but by acting as if I was not afraid I gradually ceased to be afraid. Most men can have the same experience if they choose. ”

You can have that very experience, too, if you wish. “ In war, ” said Marshal Foch, “ the best defensive is an offensive. ” So take the offensive against your fears. Go out to meet them, battle them, conquer them by sheer boldness at every opportunity.

Have a message, and then think of yourself as a Western Union boy instructed to deliver it. We pay slight attention to the boy. It is the telegram that we want. The message—that is the thing. Keep your mind on it. Keep your heart in it. Know it like the back of your hand. Believe it feelingly. Then talk as if you were determined to say it. Do that, and the chances are ten to one that you will soon be master of the occasion and master of yourself.

#### Fourth: Practice! Practice! Practice!

The last point we have to make here is emphatically the most important. Even though you forget everything you have read so far, do remember this: the first way, the last way, the never – failing way to develop self – confidence in speaking is – to speak. Really the whole matter finally simmers down to but one essential; practice, practice, practice. That is the sine qua non of it all, “ the without which not. ”

“Any beginner, ” warned Roosevelt, “is apt to have ’buck fever. ” Buck fever’ means a state of intense nervous excitement which may be entirely divorced from timidity. It may affect a man the first time he has to speak to a large audience just as it may affect him the first time he sees a buck or goes into battle. What such a man needs is not courage, but nerve control, coolheadedness. *This he can get only by actual practice. He must, by custom and repeated exercise of self mastery, get his nerves thoroughly under control. This is largely a matter of habit; in the sense of repeated effort and repeated exercise of will power. If the man has the right stuff in him, he will grow stronger and stronger with each exercise of it. ”*

You want to get rid of your audience fear? Let us see what causes it.

“Fear is begotten of ignorance and uncertainty, ” says Professor Robinson in *The Mind in the Making*. put it another way: it is the result of a lack confidence.

And what causes that? It is the result of not knowing what you can really do. And not knowing what you can do is caused by a lack of experience. When you get a record of successful experience behind you, your fears will vanish; they will melt like night mists under the glare of a July sun.

One thing is certain: the accepted way to learn to swim is to plunge into the water.

You have been reading this book long enough. Why not toss it aside now, and get busy with the real work in hand.

Choose your subject, preferably one on which you have some knowledge, and construct a three – minute talk. Practice the talk by yourself a number of times. Then give it, if possible, to the group for whom it is intended, or before a group of friends, putting into the effort all your force and power.

## Summary

1. A few thousand students have written the author stating why they wanted training in public speaking and what they hoped to obtain from it. The prime reason that almost all of them gave was this: they wanted to conquer their nervousness, to be able to think on their feet, and to speak with self – confidence and ease before a group of any size.

2. The ability to do this is not difficult to acquire. It is not a gift bestowed by Providence on only a few rarely endowed individuals. It is like the ability to play golf; any man or woman – every person – can develop his own latent capacity if he has sufficient desire to do so.

3. Many experienced speakers can think better and talk better when facing a group than they can in conversation with an individual. The presence of the larger number proves to be a stimulus, an inspiration. If you faithfully follow the suggestions in this book, the time may come when that will be your experience, too; and you will look forward with positive pleasure to making an address.

4. Do not imagine that your case is unusual. Many men who afterward became famous speakers were, at the outset of their careers, beset with self – consciousness and almost paralyzed with audience fright. This was the experience of Bryan, Jean Jaures, Lloyd George, Charles Stewart Parnell, John Bright, Disraeli, Sheridan and a host of others.

5. No matter how often you speak, you may always experience this self – consciousness just before you begin; but, in a few seconds after you have gotten on your feet, it will vanish completely.

6. In order to get the most out of this book and to get it with rapidity and dispatch,

do these four things :

a. Start with a strong and persistent desire. Enumerate the benefits this effort to train yourself will bring you. Arouse your enthusiasm for it. Think what it can mean to you financially, socially and in terms of increased influence and leadership. Remember that upon the depth of your desire will depend the swiftness of your progress.

b. Prepare. You can't feel confident unless you know what you are going to say.

c. Act confident. "To feel brave," advises Professor William James, "act as if we were brave, use all of our will to that end, and a courage fit will very likely replace the fit of fear. Teddy Roosevelt confessed that he conquered his fear of grizzly bears, mean horses, and gunfighters by that method. You can conquer your fear of audiences by taking advantage of this psychological fact.

d. Practice. This is the most important point of all. Fear is the result of a lack of confidence; and a lack of confidence is the result of not knowing what you can do; and that is caused by a lack of experience. So get a record of successful experience behind you, and your fears will vanish.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Self – Confidence Through Preparation

It has been the author's professional duty as well as his pleasure to listen to and criticize approximately six thousand speeches a year each season since 1912. These were made, not by college students, but by mature business and professional men. If that experience has engraved on his mind any one thing more deeply than another, surely it is this; the urgent necessity of preparing a talk before one starts to make it and of having something clear and definite to say, something that has impressed one, something that won't stay unsaid. Aren't you unconsciously drawn to the speaker who, you feel, has a real message in his head and heart that he zealously desires to communicate to your head and heart? That is half the secret of speaking.

When a speaker is in that kind of mental and emotional state he will discover a significant fact; namely, that his talk will almost make itself, Its yoke will be easy, its burden will be light. A well – prepared speech is already nine – tenths delivered.

The primary reason why most people want this training, as was recorded in Chapter I, is to acquire confidence and courage and self – reliance. And the one fatal mistake



many make is neglecting to prepare their talks. How can they even hope to subdue the cohorts of fear, the cavalry of nervousness, when they go into the battle with wet powder and blank shells, or with no ammunition at all? Under the circumstances, small wonder that they are not exactly at home before an audience. "I believe," said Lincoln in the White House, "that I shall never be old enough to speak without embarrassment when I have nothing to say."

If you want confidence, why not do the things necessary to bring it about? "Perfect love," wrote the Apostle John, "casteth out fear." So does perfect preparation. Webster said he would as soon think of appearing before an audience half-clothed as half-prepared.

Why don't we prepare our talks more carefully? Why? Some don't clearly understand what preparation is nor how to go about it wisely; others plead a lack of time. So we shall discuss these problems rather fully in this chapter.

## The Right Way to Prepare

What is preparation? Reading a book? That is one kind, but not the best. Reading may help; but if one attempts to lift a lot of "canned" thoughts out of a book and to give them out immediately as his own, the whole performance will be lacking in something. The audience may not know precisely what is lacking, but they will not warm to the speaker.

To illustrate: some time ago, the writer conducted a course in public speaking for the senior officers of New York City banks. Naturally, the members of such a group, having many demands upon their time, frequently found it difficult to prepare adequately, or to do what they conceived of as preparing. All their lives they had been thinking their own individual thoughts, nurturing their own personal convictions, seeing things from their own distinctive angles, living their own original experiences. So, in that fashion, they had spent forty years storing up material for speeches. But it was hard for some of them to realize that. They could not see the forest for "the murmuring pines and the hemlocks."

This group met Friday evenings from five to seven. One Friday, a certain gentleman