**Anxiety At Work Meetings**

One of the most common times people feel anxious at work (after getting called in to see the boss) is at meetings where you are expected to speak up in front of many others.

Let me give you a few quick tips on how best to approach those meetings:

Generally these type of work meetings involve a group of people sitting around taking it in turns to speak. Most people anxious about speaking in public dread their turn and hope some divine intervention will save them from having to speak at all.

To get around this try the opposite approach. Pretend to yourself and the group that you are actually dying to speak. Before you enter the room, say to yourself:

“I’m going to speak at any reasonable opportunity that presents itself”

-Be positively itching to speak!

-Before the meeting kicks off, talk to everyone around you. Don’t sit there in silence.

-If you have a short presentation to make and you don’t like the idea of having to do it in one go, break it up by asking those present questions during your talk. This puts the focus back on the group and can help you feel less under pressure.

-If everyone has to speak, it can really take the pressure off to be first up but if you can’t be first then start asking questions of the other speakers when they are finished if that is appropriate.

Come across as really interested and engaged. Give the impression to the room that you want to speak and to be heard. Speaking up works because the anxiety only gets worse if you sit there in total silence waiting to be called upon. Don’t wait for them to call you -speak out.

If you take the above advice on board and it does come to your turn to speak, you won’t feel the same level of pressure because everyone in the room is already used to your voice and you don’t feel the pressure of hearing your voice for the first time in the room.

Everyone is used to you and you are used to speaking to them. Great speakers love an opportunity to talk and present. Believe it or not but you can train yourself to be like that and it starts by pretending to yourself that you really want that opportunity to be in the lime light. Be hungry for it.

Instead of holding back and resisting the opportunity to speak in public, you chase after it! You might think:

“fine but how can I try this out before my next meeting?”

The best way I know of is to join a Toastmaster group in your area (google it) and get started there right away.

If there is no toastmaster group locally find a public meeting or volunteer for something like a research group where you all discuss a topic together.

There are lots of places to practice.

Dive in, speak up.

To learn more visit: [PanicAway.com](http://www.panicaway.com/)

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