

Fearless Speaking Video #2 – Presence

Welcome to my second video in the Fearless Speaking video series. In these videos, I am sharing with you the secrets that I've learned along my own journey to overcome my stage fright. Yesterday, I shared with you the secret of Silence, and it involves learning how to find that still point inside of you where you are free of fear because you are calm centered and free of anxiety.

Today I'll be sharing with you the second secret, which is Presence. Similar to and building on learning to be silent and learning to be comfortable with yourself without any words, is Presence.

What I've noticed with people is that a lot of you have had negative experiences in the past. It could have been a teacher, a classroom situation where you were asked to deliver a report in front of the group or in front of the students and either you went blank, or you couldn't remember, or you failed and that memory is lodged in your brain. And so that when you think about standing in front of a group, you recreate that same kind of pressure that you felt then, the pressure to perform. And it is having not performed well that still lingers as a memory inside of you.

It could have been a work situation where you were called on to deliver a report, maybe even unanticipated, somebody said hey can you catch us up on your recent activity. But you felt on the spot and you couldn't deliver.

Another way besides the past that intrudes on the present is the future. This is thinking about how you're going to perform, how you're going to let yourself down or not remember. Somehow you're going to embarrass yourself, look weak, look stupid. Something is going to go wrong when you imagine yourself in the speaking situation.

Let's say you have to give a toast at a wedding and you are full of anxiety, mostly because when you think about it and you think about yourself in that situation, you're going to flub it up. So the secret I'm suggesting is learning how to be present, how to be here now in this moment without bringing in the past and without thinking about the future.

Well how do you do that? I think that meditators sit on cushions for many, many hours trying to bring themselves into the present. That's one way to develop a meditation practice. But another way is to simply look around and notice what's around you right here, right now, taking that breath. To have it be a practice all day long is to say "what's with me right here, right now in the present, in this now moment". The power of now they call it, right?

So with presence, you're developing the strength of your ability to be in the moment, being present. Rather than thinking about what it is that you want to say, but more that your presence is what is emanating, radiating, out from you when you're in front of a group. That will allow you to be more spontaneous.

Let's say that you know somebody dropped a glass in the room and spills something, then you can respond, you can leave whatever script you have and you could be in the moment responding in a more natural way with whatever is happening in the room at the time. So being present, being here, being now, allows you to be in relationship with your listeners in a more powerful way, in a more real way, in a way that has you be connected probably in a sense of human-to-human, person-to-person, rather than delivering a script.

So that's today's message. It is about learning how to be more present, right here and right now.

Tomorrow in my video number three I'm going to talk about eyes. Being available with your eyes, in a way that helps you be able to look at people, as well as let them look at you, in a more comfortable sort of way.