

Are You Afraid of Public Speaking?

Key Vocabulary Words

1. To be petrified
2. Turning point
3. To have the spotlight on you
4. Concrete
5. Genuine
6. To speak from the heart

Lindsay: Hey, guys, how's it going tonight?

Speaker 1: Good.

Speaker 2: Hi, good.

Speaker 3: Great.

Lindsay: Good. Thanks for coming.

Speaker 1: You're welcome.

Lindsay: Great. So public speaking, let's talk about public speaking. I heard that public speaking is the number one fear in the US, above death even.

Speaker 1: That seems weird to me. I don't know. I have never really been afraid of public speaking but

(um), I was required to, (um), do speeches in my English class in Middle School. So, I may have just had it trained out of me very early on.

Lindsay: Okay, so, you're not afraid of it?

Speaker 1: I'm really not. I don't -- I, I, it's never -- I also did theater when I was in high school, so I think, (um), I've always, I (kind of) always have performed. I used to dance when I was little. So, being in front of people has never scared me that much. I don't know.

Lindsay: Excellent, that's great. You're lucky. How 'bout (about) you guys?

Speaker 3: Well I had to do a lot of public speaking and I have to say that it doesn't make me that nervous. Maybe because I just love to talk. I did have a student one time who, it -- he was **petrified** to speak in public. And when it came time for graduation, he was actually the class valedictorian and he chose not to speak because he was so nervous. And so, (um), I can see how some people are really nervous about speaking in public.

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Speaker 2: At my high school graduation, I had to give a speech as well and I didn't even consider not doing it, I guess. And I think that was the **turning point** for me, because after giving a speech in front of 2,000, 3,000 people, (um), ever since then I think I've been fine. But before that, giving a presentation in class, (um), I was a little nervous and especially what you said too, that it's the number one fear in the US and that (kind of) gets ingrained into you. So, I feel like it is a cycle, because then, people are afraid because everyone's afraid. And then, then it just makes it even worse, but it's really not that bad.

Lindsay: That's a great point. So, we have some public speaking experts here, good.

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Speaker 1: Well, I will say, I have never given a speech in front of 2,000 people before. Probably maxed out about 50, so, maybe if I got up in front of 2,000 people I would be scared. I don't know.

Speaker 2: It's really, it's really not that bad because you don't have a choice. **Once the spot light is on you**, you have to keep going. So, you're going to do a good job, or not. So, might as well just do a good job.

Lindsay: Just follow through with whatever's happening, right. Okay.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Lindsay: So, what about giving a speech in the US. So, you guys have traveled a little bit. I know Keriann, you've been to Japan?

Speaker 1: Spain.

Lindsay: To Spain, okay. Have you guys traveled abroad a little bit?

Speaker 3: Yes, I've...

Speaker 2: A little bit.

Speaker 3: ...a little. Yeah, I've traveled quite a bit.

Lindsay: Okay perfect. So, what do you see as something different in the US that makes a speech, a good speech, compared with other countries?

Speaker 3: Well, speeches in the United States, (um), I've always heard that they should follow a (s-), a format, and that format is tell them what

you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you've told them.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's a great one, I've heard that too. A lot of structure then.

Speaker 3: A lot of structure, yes, a lot of structure in a speech. (Um), and also a lot of concrete examples,

Lindsay: (Mm).

Speaker 3: Give examples. We just had (um), I just, I recently attended a graduation and the principal gave a

graduation speak and it was (terri-) – it was really boring. Because he just gave a lot of advice, but no specific examples to go (wi-) – to -- specific examples to go with it.

Lindsay: Okay, that's a good example. Yeah, I like that. So, we need **concrete** examples, we need to see how the ideas are being used. What else? What do you think Emily?

Speaker 1: (Um), I always relate the most to speeches where it really feels **genuine** coming from the person speaking. (Um), thinking about, (you know), politicians speeches, a lot of famous speeches have been given by politicians over the years in this country. (You know), we (kind of), (uh), harp on public speaking by politicians. And the ones that have always really spoken to me are the ones where I really feel (like) the person believes what they're saying. (Um), (you know), a lot of politicians have their speeches written for them by other people,

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(um), but (um), the people who really (se-), it seemed **to be speaking from the heart**, that's what really makes a good speech to me.

Lindsay: So, authenticity.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Speaker 2: So, when I was in Spain, I didn't really have any experience listening to speeches per se, but, (um), one thing I noticed 'cause (because) I was in high school there was that students don't do any public speaking there in, in the classroom setting at least, (um), which is

where, (you know), we spend most of our time. So, they had no experience and no, (um) -- basically just no experience doing that. So, in my idea that might be an American concept that, (um), students need to give presentations and be in front of the class and getting that familiarity and comfort. Whereas in Spain, (um), in my experience that didn't happen at all.

Lindsay: Ah, interesting. So, yeah, maybe this is something that's more -- less common in Western Europe for example, potentially.

Speaker 2: Maybe.

Lindsay: Yeah. And also may be getting students involved, (right), the experiential aspect is common here.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Lindsay: And maybe that's not as common. Any other ideas guys?

Speaker 3: Well I think an American education that's -- American students are quite comfortable with giving class presentations.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Speaker 1: Whereas you said in, in other countries, and in other, (uh) -- students don't necessarily do that in the classroom. They don't

necessarily, (um), give presentations to the class; that's left up to the teacher. But I think one of the things in American culture that makes, (um), a speech a very successful speech is that when the speaker is connected to the audience.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Speaker 3: And it's as if the speaker is having a conversation with the audience and speaking directly to the audience.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Speaker 3: Not just reading something from a piece of paper. That could be done with no one there. But actually connecting and, and speaking with the people who are in the room.

Lindsay: Yeah, I like that. I think that also goes along with the authenticity idea too.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, it's actually, (um) - I've done a lot of, (um), trainings through work, (um), in past jobs I've had and the best trainers that I've had have always been people who, (um), (you know), (kind of) gave their presentations as a conversation, (um), where they really (kind of) drew on the experiences and opinions of their specific audience, like who's literally in the room with you today, right now. And (kind of) tailor what they say to that audience so that it's most relevant and most useful to them.

Lindsay: I like that. Can you guys give an example of a great speech

that you've given? Maybe just one person?

Speaker 3: I had to give a speech once to (um), 4,000 people at a conference.

Speaker: Oh, my god.

Lindsay: Wow!

Speaker 3: And I -- but I wasn't nervous at all and I think part of, part of the -- what makes a speech a good speech, I think, is that the audience needs to believe that the person is an expert. And for the audience to believe that a person is an expert, I think that person needs to be confident.

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Speaker 1: And so, the speech that I had to give it was from, for, (uh) 4,000 people from all throughout the United States and parts of Canada and it was "How to Speak With a Boston Accent."

Lindsay: Oh, that's interesting.

Speaker 3: And I felt very confident doing that because I was from Boston. And so I think that that -- I felt confident more than anyone in the room because no one else was from Boston. And so I think that confidence help make the speech successful because people believed that I was an expert.

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Lindsay: Absolutely. So, it's good to be presenting on something you know intimately.

Speaker 3: Exactly.

Lindsay: Excellent. Thanks guys.

Speaker 2: No problem.

Speaker 1: Sure.

Speaker 3: You're welcome.