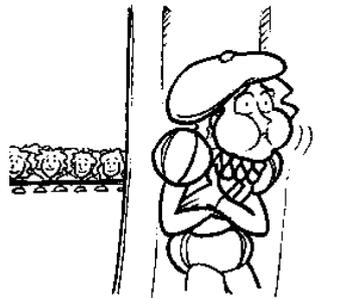


What is Stage Fright?

You have been sitting nervously trying to memorize all the words you are supposed to say. Your hands are sweating and your heart is pounding. You can hear a ringing in your ear.

Someone calls your name. It is your turn to make a speech. You want to run out of the room. You want it to all to just be over. You want to hide somewhere. No chance! No choice! You have to walk in front of all those people and speak.



You are now there...in front of all those faces...and they are all looking at YOU. Your knees begin to tremble. You feel like you are going to lose your lunch. You can feel that drops of sweat start to form on you forehead.

You look down at the floor so you don't see the faces of the audience. You imagine that they are all about to laugh at you, but you can't just run away. You have to speak. They are waiting. You feel them waiting for you to say something. But your mouth is dry. You cough to clear your throat. Ready now? Maybe? You got to speak.

You mumble a few words and then raise your eyes look at the audience. Suddenly you feel dizzy. The muffled words that come out of your mouth sound like someone else's voice in your ears. Everyone just stares at you. You make a joke, but nobody laughs. More sweat rolls down your face.

Then there is silence. You forgot the words you were supposed to say. The room grows tense in the silence. What were you supposed to say? Why can't you remember? The audience breaks the silence with fidgeting and whispers. Your heart only beats faster. You want to escape. WHAT can you do? What can YOU do? What can you DO?

This is a common case of "stage fright." Everyone gets it to some degree before performing in front of an audience.

Why do we get stage fright?

Basically, stage fright is a type of performance anxiety that triggers our instinctive “fight or flight” reaction. That is why some speakers feel like running away when they have to speak in front of an audience that is going to judge them. The greater the fear of being judged is, the greater the anxiety is.

However, the real question isn't “Why do we get stage fright?” Rather, the question should be, “How can we use that anxiety in our favor?”

