

Scared and you do.

Whenever I'm presenting to an audience about leadership presence I always ask the question – who gets nervous before they have to speak in public? Typically a few hands are reluctantly raised – and I thank them for their honesty. And then I tell them - the rest of the audience is a bunch of liars.

Yup. Studies have shown that public speaking is actually a fear greater than death.

Which reminds me of my favorite Seinfeld joke: “Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.”

Would it surprise you to know that I get nervous before I speak, perform, facilitate? My husband always knows when I've got something coming up – he hits his hand on his forehead and says, “Ooooh that's why you are acting so weird.”

So why, if I get so nervous do I put myself willingly in face with my greatest fear: because I love it. I'm a big believer in what a great acting teacher once said to me: There's scared and you do and scared and you don't – you are going to be scared anyway, so you might as well do.

Which is what I say to my clients who are afraid of public speaking, *and* they don't love it - they might as well figure out how to overcome that fear because they have to do it anyway.

So what gets me out of the anxiety phase and into the flow:

Focusing not on me but on my audience before I go on. What do I want them to think, feel or understand? If you think about it when you are nervous, who are you thinking about – YOU. But when you focus on others, that's when you can stop thinking about your own nerves and anxiety.

Good old deep breathing. Not the kind where you hyperventilate – the kind where you breathe into your toes and then into your belly and then into your chest and...you get the picture. Three deep breaths eyes closed can change you from anxious to ready in a moment.



Going to the EDGE on Sydney Bridge

Movement. Before getting on stage each night to play Erma Bombeck I'd work out, or go for a brisk walk, and yes, paced backstage before each show once I had my wig on. That movement helped to focus my energy and get me ready to step into the spotlight and claim the stage every time.

Anxiety when presenting is normal – the key is having that anxiety and repositioning it as energy each and every time you take the stage to share who you are with your audience.

It's exactly what I did to deal with my fear of heights: I closed my eyes, stepped out on the edge – and pushed myself to do it anyway – and the possibilities felt endless. Refocus your anxiety to become energy of a different kind - that's when possibilities are created – you'll push yourself to the best kind of edge: EDGE: Explore, Dream, Grow & Excite®.

Outlaw Leadership® is all about pushing yourself out of your comfort zone.