

the night before. I asked him to remember as clearly as he could exactly what he had thought about the five minutes just before he gave his talk.

"Well, I guess all I thought about was how scared I was. I knew I was going to make a fool of myself. I knew I was going to be a flop. I kept thinking, 'Who am I to be talking about being a leader?' I tried to remember what I was going to say, but all I could think about was failing."

"Right there," I injected, "is the answer to your problem. Before you got up to talk you gave yourself a terrible mental beating. You convinced yourself that you would fail. Is it any wonder your talk didn't come off well? Instead of developing courage, you developed fear.

"Now, this evening's session," I continued, "starts in just four minutes. Here's what I'd like you to do. Give yourself a pep talk for the next few minutes. Go in that vacant room across the hall and tell yourself, 'I'm going to give a great talk. I've got something those people need to hear and I want to say.' Keep repeating those sentences forcefully, with complete conviction. Then come into the conference room and give your talk again."

I wish you could have been there to hear the difference. That brief, self-administered, hard-hitting pep talk helped him to make a splendid speech.

The moral: Practice uplifting self-praise. Don't practice belittling self-punishment.

You are what you think you are. Think more of yourself and there is more of you.

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