

Summary:

The chapter "Acquiring Confidence Before an Audience" from "The Art of Public Speaking" by Dale Carnegie and J. Berg Esenwein addresses the issue of self-consciousness and stage fright when speaking in public. The authors argue that self-consciousness is due to excessive focus on oneself, rather than the message being conveyed. To overcome this, they suggest several strategies:

1. ****Practice****: Face an audience as frequently as possible to become comfortable and confident.
2. ****Concentration****: Focus on the subject matter, and distract oneself from self-conscious thoughts.
3. ****Preparation****: Know the topic well, and have the first few sentences worked out to avoid initial nervousness.
4. ****Confidence****: Assume mastery over the audience, and believe in the importance of the message.
5. ****Positive attitude****: Cultivate a positive and confident mental attitude, and avoid negative self-talk.

The authors emphasize that true humility is not about being self-effacing, but about being focused on the message and the audience, rather than oneself. They also stress the importance of assuming leadership and taking control of the situation, rather than letting fear or self-doubt take over.

The chapter concludes with several key takeaways, including:

- * Do not apologize or show weakness before an audience.
- * Take a deep breath, relax, and begin speaking in a calm, conversational tone.
- * Focus on the message, and let go of self-conscious thoughts.

- * Believe in oneself and the importance of the message.
- * Practice and preparation are key to building confidence and overcoming stage fright.

The chapter ends with a series of questions and exercises to help readers reflect on their own experiences and develop their public speaking skills.