

Summary:

The first chapter of "The Art of Public Speaking" by Dale Carnegie and J. Berg Esenfein discusses the importance of acquiring confidence before an audience. The authors suggest that self-consciousness and fear of public speaking can be overcome by practice and facing one's audience as frequently as possible. They provide several key points to help individuals build confidence:

1. ****Face your fears****: The only way to overcome fear is to face it. The more you practice speaking in front of an audience, the more confident you will become.
2. ****Be absorbed by your subject****: Focus on your message and the importance of what you are saying, rather than on yourself.
3. ****Concentration is key****: Concentrate on your subject and drive out fears and self-consciousness.
4. ****Prepare yourself****: Know your subject well and have a clear idea of what you want to say.
5. ****Assume mastery****: Believe in yourself and your ability to instruct or lead your audience.
6. ****Be courageous****: Take a deep breath, relax, and begin speaking in a quiet, conversational tone.
7. ****Don't apologize****: Start speaking without apologizing or making excuses.
8. ****Don't make haste****: Take your time and begin speaking calmly.

The authors also emphasize the importance of having a positive mental attitude and overcoming self-consciousness through practice and confidence. They note that many great speakers, including Daniel Webster and Gladstone, suffered from stage fright but were able to overcome it.

The chapter concludes with a series of questions and exercises to help readers apply the principles

discussed in the chapter, including writing a speech on confidence and cowardice, and reflecting on their own experiences with public speaking. Overall, the chapter provides practical advice and encouragement for individuals looking to build their confidence and become more effective public speakers.