

Ah yes! Who ever gets over the "nose—too long; hair—too stringy; behind—too big; arms—too thin" litany that sang to us every time we studied that mirror, mirror on the wall? How unacceptable we felt then haunts us forever, at least in echo, and standing up to expose *that* creature to public scrutiny still fills us with dread and anxiety.

It particularly wins the battle for your attention and your response as you prepare to speak in public.

What to do?

The Cure

- *Accept it*

The best antidote is first to admit your stage fright and stop blaming yourself for "being such an idiot." It's such a universal malady, you can take comfort in the fact that most everyone's got it. So—accept it, for now. "It's there. I feel terrible and scared. Right. That's okay."

- *No "10"*

Next, start to recognize and then continually remind yourself that *there is no perfect "10"!* There can't be! In order for there to be *one* perfect way to do this, it would have to be duplicatable the same way every time. But you, or anyone, would still do it differently the next and every other time.

You'd have to. The day, weather, time, news would be different; what you ate would be different; the audience and their needs would be different; what conflict you just had at home or at work would make you be different; etc., etc. Also—you could give a "10" performance and someone *else* could also give another, very different type of "10" performance, and *both* would be very good and very effective. Who's to say which is the "perfect" one?

So—you can't fail. You can only be more or less effective; more or less comfortable with your material; more or less able to achieve your goal.

- *Focus on your job*

Think about your audience and what you're trying to do for *them!* What you want them to know and why. *You* don't matter as much as your message. Get off the self and into the story!

Be open, honest, enthusiastic, committed to your task—and let them see that. *That's* all your audience wants from you in terms of style. When they see *you* comfortable, *they* get comfortable. Your tension broadcasts itself to them and gets in the way of their hearing your message. Let go