I would have to say that from the list of common causes for communication apprehension my biggest would be audience based apprehension. Where I am at doesn’t really matter. I was never socialized to fear anything; in fact my dad made it a point of teaching me to face any fears I had head on. He was also really good at boosting my confidence and pointing out how easy it was afterwards, which makes for less anxiety the next time. I tend to only get anxious when I am talking to people I don’t know and who’s education level is unknown to me. I don’t like it when I talk over people’s heads and they find me boring, or I am not smart enough for them and they find me boring. If there is someone there I know and can focus on occasionally the situation is much easier to handle. I think this is in part because I can easily read the person I know, this lets me see how well I am doing. With strangers I don’t know if the guy checking his cell phone is bored with me or getting an emergency text from his kids at home. Reading the reactions of people I know helps me to identify on the fly what I am doing wrong, like not talking loud enough or rambling on about a tangent that doesn’t fit with the original speech, this way I can make the needed changes on the spot.

Through the reading I realized I already do all three forms of apprehension management, and most were taught to me as a child. I use desensitization all the time with stuff, especially the breathing exercises. As a kid I had a lot of anger issues and learned to meditate to relax and let things go, I have kept that technique in my life ever since. It really helps to clear your head. The music can also be a great distraction. In high school I always had a Walkman (way before the ipod was invented) hidden in my pocket. The music was only playing through one ear bud and I kept the volume turned down so that it wasn’t a distraction. For some reason the music helped me forget everything else and concentrate. I swear by listen to music while I do work. I use cognitive restructuring with my wife all the time, because my dad taught it to me. Every time my wife is worried about something I start having her point out how unlikely it is and how easily we can overcome any situation she thinks up. Without using cognitive restructuring my wife often doesn’t get sleep before an important event or meeting. Visualization is also a great technique. It helps with my confidence level a lot before giving a speech. Again something my dad taught me as kid when I was preparing for my first oral report in the 6th grade.