Training Exercise – Managing Anxiety

**Introduction: Write Your Own Introduction**

**Body: Use the content below**

Let’s think back to the beginning of this class when it was announced you would be doing a 3 minute extemporaneous presentation. What was your first reaction?

* First – recognize your fears. Then planning and practice will help you overcome them.
* Identify your fears.
  + What if I forget what I’m going to say?
    - Practice.
    - Keep notes handy.
    - Including questions or exercises for the audience can give you a little time to collect your thoughts.
  + What if I embarrass myself?
    - Unless it’s a really big one, you’re probably the only person who will notice.
    - If it’s really big, turn it to your advantage. If you fall flat on your back on stage, get up and make a joke. Self-deprecating humor always scores big with audiences.
  + What if I make a mistake?
    - Ask yourself, what mistakes you could possibly make? Actually, there probably aren’t too many.
    - Make a list of “what-ifs” and their solutions.
  + What if I say something that damages me professionally?
    - It’s highly unlikely that something you say in one speech is going to damage your whole career.
    - However, if you just can’t do a presentation because of fear that might hurt your chances for advancement.
    - Do not fight nerves, welcome them! Then you can get on with the presentation instead of focusing in on being nervous. Actors recognize the value of nerves...they add to the value of the performance. This is because adrenaline starts to kick in. It's a left over from our ancestors' “fight or flight” syndrome. If you welcome nerves, then the presentation becomes a challenge and you become better. If you let your nerves take over, then you go into the flight mode by withdrawing from the audience. Again, welcome your nerves, recognize them, let them help you gain that needed edge.

**Alleviating Anxiety**

* Take ownership of the room.
  + Alleviate anxiety by walking around.
  + Check out the room; familiarize yourself with it.
  + Pay particular attention to things you may need like power outlets and any setup errors that may have occurred.
  + Welcome the guests as they arrive. It helps with relaxing both you and your audience, as well as making eye contact easier.
* Do stress-reduction exercises.
  + - Bend forward from the waist, letting your hands and arms hang loose.
    - Do deep-breathing exercises, letting the air out slowly.
    - Flex and relax the muscles in your face, arms, stomach, and legs.
    - Do arm, leg, and neck stretches.
    - Focus on success.
    - Do you have a lucky charm? A silver dollar, rock or something that you could carry in your pocket?
    - Visualize the future – how you want your audience to react at the end of your presentation, then focus on making it happen. It can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.
    - Right before you go on, have a little conversation with yourself about what a great presenter you are.

**Conclusion: Write Your Own Conclusion**