

# STAGE FRIGHT?



*Seven tips to get you through those presentation jitters*

- 1. Show Up Early**- You will always benefit from being early to your presentation. You may have a chance to head off some technical difficulties or ask your professor a last minute question before your presentation starts. By showing up early, you'll remove the stress of rushing and give yourself a chance to cool down after that walk from the parking lot.
- 2. Know Your Material**- To avoid the anxiety of presentations, your best defense is to be prepared. Gather information from multiple sources to gain a better understanding of the topic. Don't rely solely on your textbook as your source of knowledge.
- 3. Carefully Consider Your Props**- Are you going to use Power Point, a poster board, or handouts? Take into consideration how you are going to incorporate the props into the presentation. Don't use props if they will distract the audience or if they will distract you.
- 4. Humor Can Be Good**- When humor drives the presentation forward, it can be a great technique to keep the audience interested. Avoid using canned jokes that don't depend on the context of the presentation. They can lead to awkward moments.
- 5. Allow Time for Questions**- Many people judge the quality of a talk not by the 20 minutes of presentation, but on the 30 seconds you spend answering their questions. Block in time for questions throughout the presentation or at the end.
- 6. Record Yourself**- If you can, record your presentation and play it back to yourself. Listen for "ums" or other words that you repeat. Also listen to the speed of your voice and try to learn the words. The more you can commit to memory the less nervous you will sound.
- 7. Watch Yourself in the Mirror**- Be cognizant of tendencies to play with your hair, crack your fingers, sway, or do other distracting habits. Half the battle is realizing you have a distracting habit. Try folding your hands in front of you, holding note cards, or pulling your hair back to keep yourself focused on your presentation.

*\*Developed from Edward Tufte's seminar on presenting*