



# TIPS FOR PRESENTING

## To · a · Large · Class

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### Nerves Are Your Friend

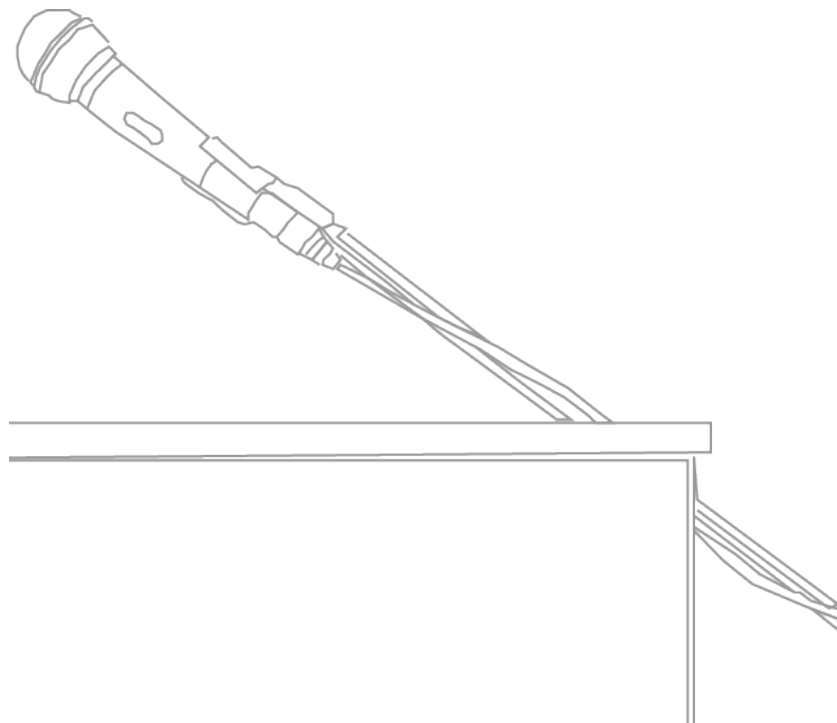
When our brain senses a possible threat, like the threat of maybe looking silly in front of a lot of people, it triggers our sympathetic nervous system. The result is that your body is energized. The first thing to realize is that when you are at the front of a large class energy is a great thing to have! If you feel over-energized, then drink less coffee, or perhaps even have a chamomile tea, before you teach. Although, NOT being nervous should never be the goal. Being a bit nervous makes you interesting and dynamic, so embrace and harness that energy and use it for what it's there for, to defeat the threat of nerves!

### Stack the Cards by Being Prepared

Anytime you walk into a classroom you are already the strongest expert on the topic in the room. That doesn't mean you know it all, and you should never behave as though you do. But you should realize that if you're honest about what you know and what you don't, you simply WILL NOT look silly. The best way to insure this is to make double sure you are prepared for every class. It is important to be well planned, organized, to have read what students have been assigned to read, to have key questions identified, and to have anticipated key questions from students. Being prepared will make you feel confident, and it will better allow you to channel your energy in positive ways as you focus on the students and their learning, rather than on your own feelings of preparedness.

### Care, and Communicate Your Caring

Often the first words I utter when meeting a new class are meant to convey to them that I understand my role, and that I truly want to perform my role well. That is, I want my class to be interesting and informative, and to the extent that this is not the case I am not reaching my own potential as a teacher. When you communicate that caring to students you can suddenly bring them on side, making them partners in the classroom experience. They will want to help you and, in so doing, they will be helping themselves. You may even want to bolster this caring by providing a question/comment box that students can slip comments or feedback notes into anonymously. You can also gather formative feedback from students throughout the course to let you know what is going well, and what might be improved. Modeling this form of development is anything but a weakness -- it is a great opportunity to highlight the value of an open mind.





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## Appreciate the Opportunity

Bands, singers and comedians often find themselves performing to 3 or 4 people, silently wishing they could be performing to 100s. They would love to have the opportunity you have, a large classroom full of students listening to you and watching you. Realize that this really is a great opportunity, a chance for you to share your academic values, your passion for the subject, and yourself. Years from now, you will have students tell you that your lectures or class sessions significantly affected their lives. See that potential each time you enter the class, and realize how great an opportunity you have right in front of you.

## Be BIG

Ronnie James Dio was the lead singer for a number of hard rock bands, including versions of Black Sabbath. Dio was maybe five feet tall, and perhaps 120 lbs wet. He often claimed that his stature was irrelevant because when he went on stage he grew to three times his size ... and he sort of did. All of his gestures were bigger, his movements were more extreme, even when he spoke he spoke loud and strong. He took that energy and psychologically inflated himself with it, making him a more dramatic and fascinating person on stage than he ever was off stage. There is a great lesson in this; teaching is indeed a version of performing, and you should see the front of a classroom as a place where you can feel free to push the boundaries of your typical personality. It's a little zone of freedom where being a little over-the-top is actually a really good thing. So if you still feel nervous, let it out via some "big" behaviors every now and then. And generally speaking, inflate yourself ... stand tall, feel strong, use the energy!

TOP  
**5**  
TIPS!

### Summary

1. Nerves are Your Friend
  2. Stack the Cards by Being Prepared
  3. Care, and Communicate Your Caring
  4. Appreciate the Opportunity
  5. Be BIG
- ...and Enjoy!

