



Beat Public Speaking Anxiety with Positive Stress Techniques

Description

I recently returned from Seattle, where I conducted a workshop on persuasive speaking skills for employees and senior executives at Microsoft. The conference organizers offered me the chance to rehearse the presentation the night before, and I welcomed the opportunity to practice under what I consider to be 'beneficial stress.'

This type of stress, known as 'eustress' in neuroscience, has been shown to enhance performance, while negative stress, or distress, can lead to clouded thinking and physical symptoms associated with public speaking anxiety, such as sweaty palms and a racing heart.

The key to boosting confidence and reducing anxiety when speaking in public is to minimize distress and increase positive stress. Surprisingly, one scientifically-backed method to alleviate anxiety is to heighten stress levels during preparation.

Studies on peak performance reveal that choking under pressure can be avoided by equipping individuals with cognitive tools to excel when the stakes are high. One effective strategy is to cultivate the habit of practicing under pressure.

Integrating stress into practice sessions can help manage nerves, as stated in research on peak performance. By simulating high-pressure situations, individuals can build comfort and familiarity with challenging scenarios, bridging the gap between practice and performance.

My experience at Microsoft underscored the value of practicing under stress. Familiarizing myself with the presentation room's setup allowed me to address various technical and logistical considerations, ultimately boosting my confidence and enabling me to focus on delivering an engaging performance.

To excel in presentations, it's crucial to schedule ample rehearsal time under varying conditions. Adding stress to practice sessions can reduce anxiety and enhance confidence, fostering a more enjoyable and impactful presentation experience for both the speaker and the audience.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Eustress** /'ju:.stres/ (noun): A positive form of stress that can enhance performance.
2. **Distress** /dis'tres/ (noun): A negative form of stress that can lead to anxiety and impaired performance.
3. **Cognitive** /'kɒgnɪtɪv/ (adjective): Related to the mental processes of perception memory and judgment.
4. **Rehearsal** /rɪ'hɜ:səl/ (noun): The act of practicing a presentation or performance.
5. **Performance** /pə'fɔ:rməns/ (noun): The act of presenting a speech or artistic work in front of an audience.
6. **Logistical** /lə'dʒɪs.tɪ.kəl/ (adjective): Related to the organization of complex operations or arrangements.



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What type of stress was highlighted in the text as beneficial for performance?
Option: Eustress
Option: Distress
Option: Hypostress
Option: Hyperstress
2. What can negative stress lead to according to the text?
Option: Clouded thinking
Option: Enhanced performance
Option: Physical strength
Option: Calmness
3. What is one scientifically-backed method to alleviate anxiety mentioned in the text?
Option: Heightening stress levels during preparation
Option: Avoiding all stress
Option: Ignoring stress
Option: Relaxing before presentations
4. What can help manage nerves according to research on peak performance?
Option: Integrating stress into practice sessions
Option: Avoiding stress completely
Option: Never practicing under pressure
Option: Taking medication
5. What did the experience at Microsoft underscore the value of?
Option: Practicing under stress
Option: Avoiding stress
Option: Winging presentations
Option: Not rehearsing
6. What is crucial to excel in presentations according to the text?
Option: Scheduling ample rehearsal time under varying conditions



- Option: Avoiding rehearsal
- Option: Presenting without preparation
- Option: Stressing for no reason

True-False

- 7. Adding stress to practice sessions can reduce anxiety according to the text.
- 8. Practicing under stress can boost confidence and focus for presentations.
- 9. Choking under pressure is not addressed in research on peak performance.
- 10. Cultivating the habit of practicing under pressure is considered an effective strategy.
- 11. Minimizing distress and increasing positive stress can help in public speaking.
- 12. Neglecting rehearsal time can lead to a more impactful presentation experience.

Gap-Fill

- 13. One effective strategy to excel when the stakes are high is to cultivate the habit of practicing under _____.
- 14. Familiarizing oneself with the presentation room's setup can _____ confidence and focus.
- 15. Adding stress to practice sessions can reduce _____ and enhance confidence.
- 16. Practicing under challenging scenarios can bridge the gap between practice and _____.
- 17. When is it crucial to schedule ample rehearsal time under varying _____?



18. One scientifically-backed method to alleviate anxiety is to heighten stress levels during

_____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Eustress 2. Clouded thinking 3. Heightening stress levels during preparation 4. Integrating stress into practice sessions 5. Practicing under stress 6. Scheduling ample rehearsal time under varying conditions

True-False: 7. True 8. True 9. False 10. True 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. pressure 14. boost 15. anxiety 16. performance 17. conditions 18. preparation

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the process of determining the current worth of a business?

- Option: A. Salary negotiation
- Option: B. Employee evaluation
- Option: C. Valuation
- Option: D. Demographic study

2. Which term refers to the highest or climactic point of something?

- Option: A. Transition
- Option: B. Detrimental
- Option: C. Culmination
- Option: D. Legislation

3. Who are the individuals or organizations that hire employees?

- Option: A. Competitors
- Option: B. Investors
- Option: C. Employers
- Option: D. Entrepreneurs

4. What is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another?

- Option: A. Accountability
- Option: B. Empathy
- Option: C. Flexibility
- Option: D. Negotiation



5. What term is used for the practice of an activity for the purpose of improvement?

- Option: A. Surge
- Option: B. Rehearsal
- Option: C. Accountability
- Option: D. Legislation

6. Which term describes a sudden and temporary increase in something?

- Option: A. Anticipate
- Option: B. Surge
- Option: C. Sustainable
- Option: D. Distress

7. What describes something that causes damage or harm?

- Option: A. Detrimental
- Option: B. Exemplary
- Option: C. Legislation
- Option: D. Due diligence

8. What refers to laws or a system of laws?

- Option: A. Valuation
- Option: B. Distress
- Option: C. Legislation
- Option: D. Eustress

9. Which term describes the process of change from one state to another?

- Option: A. Accountability
- Option: B. Transition
- Option: C. Sustainable
- Option: D. Culmination

10. What means to cause someone to be interested in something or someone?

- Option: A. Attract
- Option: B. Cultivation
- Option: C. Anticipate
- Option: D. Sustainability

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. _____ is the process by which individuals attempt to reach an agreement.

12. As a good strategist, it is important to _____ potential challenges in advance.



13. _____ is the answerability for decisions and actions taken.
14. Healthy _____ can drive innovation and improvement in products and services.
15. Companies are increasingly focusing on _____ business practices to protect the environment.
16. _____ is a positive type of stress that can improve performance and motivation.
17. Understanding the _____ of your target market is crucial for effective marketing.
18. In today's fast-changing world, _____ is essential for adapting to new situations.
19. Higher _____ abilities are linked to better problem-solving skills.
20. Regular feedback is important for improving employee _____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. Thorough research and investigation conducted before signing a contract or making a business decision.
22. The hidden, often unpleasant aspects of a situation or society.
23. Feelings of anxiety or fear about the future.
24. The effects or results of an action or event, typically indirect or unintended.
25. Based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic.
26. A sudden and temporary increase in the number or amount of something.
27. Deserving imitation because of excellence.
28. The examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes.
29. The process of trying to acquire or develop a quality or skill.
30. Relating to the organization and carrying out of a complex activity.



Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. C. Valuation 2. C. Culmination 3. C. Employers 4. B. Empathy 5. B. Rehearsal 6. B. Surge
7. A. Detrimental 8. C. Legislation 9. B. Transition 10. A. Attract

Gap-Fill: 11. Negotiation 12. Anticipate 13. Accountability 14. Competition 15. Sustainable 16. Eustress
17. Demographic 18. Flexibility 19. Cognitive 20. Performance

Matching sentence: 1. Due diligence 2. Underbelly 3. Apprehensions 4. Repercussions 5. Empirical 6. Surge
7. Exemplary 8. Introspection 9. Cultivation 10. Logistical

CATEGORY

1. Business - LEVEL5

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