



FOPS

Why the fear of public speaking is wrecking women's careers

We've all heard of FOMO, or the Fear of Missing Out, but now a new acronym has been coined to describe the debilitating fear that strikes many people – FOPS, or the Fear of Public Speaking. JUSTINE ARMSTRONG explains why FOPS is rampant in the workforce and is becoming a real issue for people, especially women.

Fear of Public Speaking (FOPS) is damaging people's careers, and in fact there are women who haven't gone for promotions, or have even lost business and income, because it means they will need to do some public speaking in their work life.

Too many women put their career or business development on hold because they can't face their fear of speaking. They endure sleepless nights, can't eat and have churning stomachs in the days leading up to a speaking opportunity.

FOPS totally takes over.

It's no longer just those who give keynote presentations who are required to speak. Speaking is becoming a very necessary skill and if you don't have it, your career or business can go backwards quickly. Women may need to speak in front of clients, potential business partners, interview panels or audiences. They may need to give updates, briefings, information sessions or business pitches. These days, it is no longer enough for women in the workplace to be great at what they do. They must be able to convey it in a way that engages their audience and builds trust, respect and credibility.

Although both men and women experience FOPS, men often cover that fear with bravado and soldier on with the presentation, while women allow it to overcome them and end up panicking about it for days or even avoid presenting altogether.

Why do people develop FOPS?

Most people suffer alone and believe they are the only ones with this fear, however there are numerous studies that indicate over 75% of the population is anxious about speaking in front of groups. There are also studies that indicate that Glossophobia (fear of public speaking) is one of the most common of all phobias.

People who have FOPS are usually anxious about public speaking after a bad past experience where they may have felt embarrassed or humiliated. They do not want to feel embarrassed or humiliated ever again. They are terrified of saying the wrong thing, forgetting their information or being judged negatively by the audience.

Steps to overcome FOPS:

- **It's your right to be nervous:** Often women give themselves a hard time for being nervous in the first place. This creates a downward spiral. Tell yourself you have every right to be nervous and then use that adrenalin to your advantage. Understand what your fear is protecting you from and it will dissipate.
- **Don't be fake:** Authenticity is another key to overcoming your fear. People can spot a fake a mile off, so be yourself. It doesn't have to be perfect and sometimes it's better if it's not, as that will help your audience warm to you.

- **Less information please:** Stop delivering too much information. It bores the audience. Focus more on your message. Texture your presentations, for example, tell a story that highlights a point you're trying to make. Or use an image that evokes an emotion, curiosity or insight. Speak from your heart, no matter what the topic.

- **Connect with your audience:** Focus more on them and their needs than on yourself.

- **Inspire:** Don't be afraid to offer some inspiration to your audience. People will remember how you made them feel, not just the facts and figures you share.

Those who know how to speak and present to groups effectively are more likely to present better in an interview situation and their prospects of promotion increase dramatically. Business owners are more likely to gain and retain business over the long term.

If you haven't yet overcome and dissolved your fear then seek help. You will gain clarity around what your audience needs, learn how to create connection and become comfortable and confident whenever you are called to your feet. ■

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NEWS FLASH: Why are women on track to become 'The New Poor'?

By caring for the needs of those around them many women are unwittingly setting themselves on the path to financial failure and doomed to live below the poverty line.

YES - money management and planning for the future might seem a complex and daunting task, but I can give you peace of mind and a better understanding of where you are headed by assisting you to get your money matters organised and working as hard as you do!

Make 2017 the year that you get support with achieving YOUR financial goals.

Call or email me now so we can **arrange your FREE initial consultation.**



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