

Practical Ways to Boost your Confidence Speaking English

Transcript: <http://www.privateenglishlessonlondon.co.uk/>

Speaking a second language is not easy. No matter what your level of English is - whether you are a beginner or you have been speaking English for many years - you may have confidence problems when speaking English. That's because speaking a different language is difficult. You may also worry about saying the wrong thing and appearing stupid. For many people, their problem is not being able to express themselves with the same personality they have in their native language. For example, if you are somebody who likes to tell jokes in your language, you might not be able to think so quickly in English to say something funny. Many jokers, people who like to tell jokes, feel as if they have lost their personality when they speak English. They can't really tell good jokes in the English language. They can only make physical, obvious jokes.

Or, perhaps you're like me. You communicate in a very precise way. You think carefully about what you say. You choose your words carefully. I would say that compared to most people, I think about my language and my choice of words a lot. If you're anything like me, you're a perfectionist with your language. When you speak a different language you want to say everything perfectly, just like in your native language. Of course, this isn't possible. And it really is a problem. It's a problem because it can lead to confidence problems when you are speaking English.

In my job as an English language coach on Skype, I help people become more confident when they speak English. Did you know that what you say isn't as important as how you say it? You may be surprised to know that in business or a job interview situation, the appearance of confidence is more important than the actual words you use while speaking. That's because communication isn't just about the words you say. Successful communication is about more than your speech, it's about your posture, the way you stand or sit, and also about the sound of your voice.

If you lack confidence speaking English, other people will notice your lack of confidence. It shows in different ways. Some people try to avoid speaking English, especially around native speakers. For people who work in an English-speaking Environment, however, speaking English just cannot be avoided. A confidence problem speaking English in this situation is a big problem. I'm going to talk about some of the ways this confidence problem shows in your speech. And then, I'm going to explain some activities you can practise at home by yourself to increase your confidence.

When we don't feel confident in a situation, it shows both in our bodies and in our speech. It shows in your shoulders - you do not sit or stand with good posture. You slump. Your eyes may also look down slightly, especially to avoid being spoken to by a native speaker. You may also appear restless - you will not be able to sit still - you will play with things in your hands or you will tap your legs.

What I am going to tell you now is very important. You must become aware of your body

language and you must control it. It is ok to feel nervous or uncomfortable but you must not let your body express this. Control your body. Take a deep breath until you feel your shoulders raise and push back. You will feel your whole body posture rise. Good. Now take shorter breaths and keep your shoulders pushed back and down. If you are standing, keep your hands down at your sides. Don't have them in your pockets. Now, the amazing thing is that when you sit or stand correctly with the right posture, you instantly feel more confident. And more importantly, you will appear more confident around your colleagues and friends.

Now I'm going to explain an exercise you can do at home. It's very simple but you will feel stupid doing it at first. If you really do want to increase your confidence speaking English, you have to give it a try. It is a million times more effective than reading about how to build up your confidence when you speak English. To become good at something you always need to put the theory you have learnt into practice.

You will need a mirror that is big enough for you to see at least your face and shoulders. A full length mirror is the best, but smaller ones are okay too. Whenever I do this - for example - if I'm preparing for a presentation - I take the mirror somewhere I can practise without being disturbed by other people. Put the mirror somewhere you can see your face and shoulders as you are standing.

The first thing you do is take some deep breaths. The second thing you do is correct your posture. Look at yourself in the eyes until you are happy with your expression, your face should look relaxed and your posture should appear confident. Remember this image. This is how you will stand and feel next time you are speaking English with someone.

Now, you are going to talk to yourself in English. You are going to introduce yourself and make some polite conversation - to an imaginary friend / business associate. I want you to freestyle - to speak without making any notes. Remember, how you say it is more important than what you say. Don't worry if you make any mistakes.

First of all, I want you to practise making introductions in a business environment. Imagine you are at a networking event, or you are talking to a potential new customer.

It often happens in a group business or training situation that you are expected to introduce yourself to a full room of people. I want you to practise what you would say. Here's an example:

Hello everybody, my name is Julia Carter and I'm the brand manager here at Smithson's. I've been working here for just over two years. I make sure that all our products meet our branding guidelines. I'm the one to call if you have any queries about branding.

Experiment with your tone of voice. Try to make it sound lively and full of energy.

[More energy]

Hello everybody, my name is Julia Carter and I'm the brand manager here at Smithson's. I've been working here for just over two years. I make sure that all our products meet our branding guidelines. I'm the one to call if you have any

And lastly the next exercise I want you to do requires you to speak louder than usual. I don't want you to shout, but I do want you to talk loud enough so that you feel slightly uncomfortable. You will feel stupid doing this, especially if there are other people in your house or office while you practise. Don't worry if you feel stupid, however. This exercise is worth it because it really helps a lot. Now, imagine the kind of person you want to be when you speak English. See yourself as that person and talk to yourself as if you are that person. All your sentences should be in the present simple tense.

For example:

I am confident when I speak English.

Other people understand me with ease when I speak English.

I speak English in every situation without a problem

Building your confidence speaking English doesn't happen overnight. You have to do a lot of hard work on yourself. To make a real change you will have to do these exercises regularly. Like I said, you will feel stupid at first. The important thing is to ignore these negative thoughts. Let me know if you find these exercises useful. I have lots of other exercises for you to try, if you think they will be helpful for you. See you.