Seven Points on Nervousness

1. Every speaker has it – professional and student. We all worry about not doing well in a public display.

2. You appear more confident to your listeners than you feel. Nervousness does not show nearly as much as the speaker thinks.

3. Use your nervousness to your advantage rather than letting it disable you.

   HOW?

4. Accept nervousness as a natural way to help you to be alert, sharp, and energized to do your best. Just like pre-game tension, which every sports player or professional actor gets before a game or performance, a mild case of stage fright will help you to stay on your toes.

5. Practice can reduce nervousness considerably – though never completely.

6. Experience will teach you to deal with your nervousness and use it to your advantage.

7. Preparation is the key. The better you know your material, the less nervous you will be and the less likely to make a mistake.

On Choosing a Topic for Your Speech

As Professor Gordon Hoestettler correctly observes, speaking on trivial subjects also undermines the teaching of the speech by making others in the academic community suspicious of it. In his words:

Only subject matter of substance can be admissible in the speech classroom. Frivolous, shallow topics – “My Weekend at the Shore,” “How to Park a Car,” “My Hobby,” and the like – can serve only to sap and impoverish the minds of students and to debase the study of speech. Such practice . . . makes speech suspect, and properly so, in the academic world.