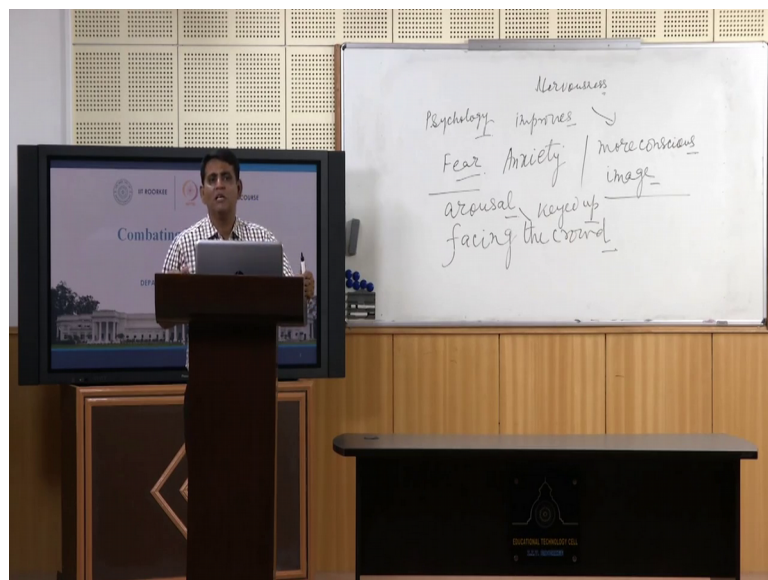


Soft Skills
Dr. Binod Mishra
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture – 48
Combating Nervousness

Good morning to all of you listening to online lectures on Soft Skills. And as you all remember presently we are discussing advance speaking skills. In the previous lectures we have talked about the various components of speaking and also the differences between various advance speaking situations, namely of debates, speeches and oral presentations.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:13)



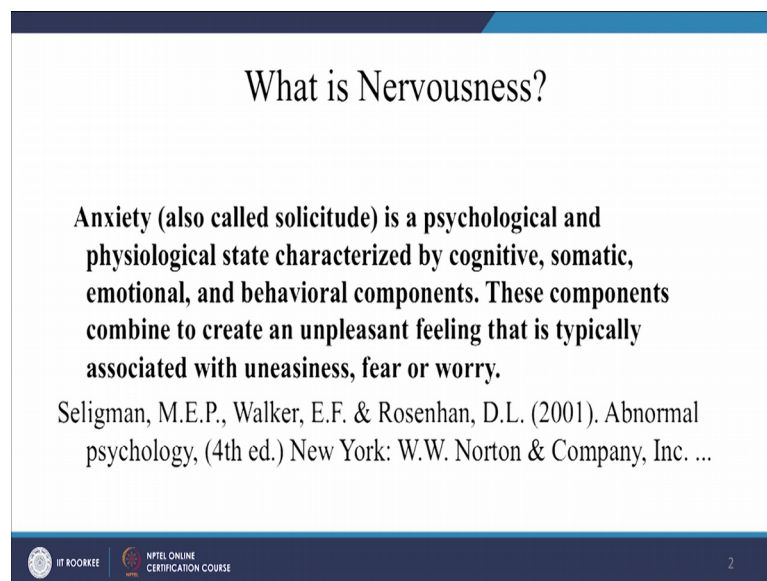
But before I start this lecture let me ask you a very important question. And that question is have you ever felt nervous. I know you may not like this question, because for every speaking situation most of us feel a little bit of nervousness.

Since occasions for speaking are different. And specially those who have started their career, for them this question of nervousness is more. I know you may not answer like other speakers, when they are also ask the same question that how often have you felt nervous, when you have been called to speak. Whether it is a situation of debate or oral presentation or speech the very occasion actually makes most of us nervous.

Let us go back to our past times either at school or in college, when you are asked to give a speech and remember the response. That you had you actually wished as I said in the previous lecture, that it could have been better had your name not been announced. What was it why your intelligent you have knowledge you have ideas you can express it well, but still you are frightened.

So, now, what actually is nervousness? And how we can cope with this nervousness. And why people feel nervous. This question is more or less related to psychology. Psychology of course, when you speak in a group of your friends you feel very natural. You do not have any fear, but when you have to address a gathering of more than 50 or 100 people, you actually come across this feeling of nervousness. Now what is this nervousness? This nervousness actually is a sort of fear you are frightened and it is actually this this fear or this frightening factor is it all of us, I am speaking for all these years.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:52)



What is Nervousness?

Anxiety (also called solicitude) is a psychological and physiological state characterized by cognitive, somatic, emotional, and behavioral components. These components combine to create an unpleasant feeling that is typically associated with uneasiness, fear or worry.

Seligman, M.E.P., Walker, E.F. & Rosenhan, D.L. (2001). Abnormal psychology, (4th ed.) New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. ...

IT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 2

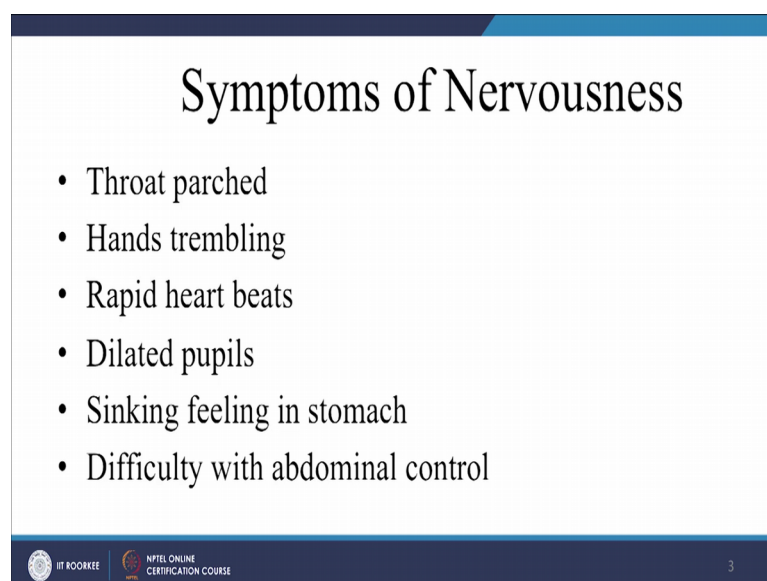
But whenever I have to speak once again for a different sort of crowd, I also come across some amount of nervousness, but you know services that this nervousness is common especially with new people with somebody who has a started with somebody who is inexperienced. So, this nervousness is actually a sort of anxiety. Now what happens? Despite the best preparations you have made for your debate for your speech for your presentation, you often find that you have actually a sort of feeling that you may not be able to deliver the best.

Now, this is actually a sort of anxiety. And anxiety is a psychological process and in this state of anxiety you know imagine know, if you were to start driving a car and you did not know what happened? Somebody told you that you can also drive, but you had once again a sort of fear. How? Now the question of this nervousness is because you do not know you are frightened it is a sort of anxiety is not. So, it is a sort of psychological and physiological state, which is characterized by cognitive you sometimes feel that you do not know if, if your name is called all of a sudden and you have to speak.

So, you start you start feeling the sort of butterflies in your stomach and emotionally also you actually get. So, keyed up the psychologists give this term. They call it a sort of arousal. And in this arousal we are keyed up and what happens you can watch the symptoms. Now as a speaker you can feel it because this fear it may not be watched it may not be observed by audience members, but you can feel it inside and these components they actually give you a sort of unpleasant feeling, you know and this unpleasant feeling because you are frightened of how we will perform.

So, this nervousness is actually a feeling that tells you how you will be able to perform. And you know since it is a psychological process you suddenly can realized that your throat, becomes dry throat is parched and your hands started trembling.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:58)



The slide is titled "Symptoms of Nervousness" and lists six symptoms in a bulleted format. The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains the IIT Roorkee logo, the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", and the number "3".

Symptoms of Nervousness

- Throat parched
- Hands trembling
- Rapid heart beats
- Dilated pupils
- Sinking feeling in stomach
- Difficulty with abdominal control

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 3

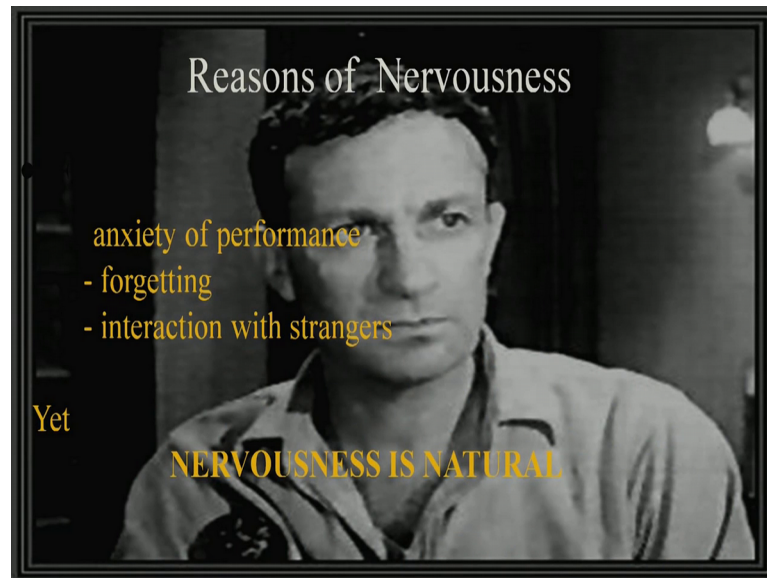
Your voice suddenly became quivering. I mean there were simple ups and downs in your you know your physical state you felt a sort of difficulty in your abdominal control and

in your stomach there is actually a feeling sinking feeling. And the sinking feeling is what would happen you do not know you are in a state of uncertainty you start feeling that something wrong may happen.

Now, why all these things happen because you actually as a person you want to perform better. Now if you have this feeling suddenly you know as it is said that there is a sort of disorder within you which you only can feel. Heartbeat becomes very fast rapid heartbeats the words that you speak they become very faster, and suddenly it is it is said that there is a sort of adrenaline surge in your body and this adrenaline surge. In your body they actually key you up they gives you a feeling of arousal.

Now, if it is so you might be thinking that you are the only person who comes across such a feeling no my dear friend not you are not alone. It is only because you realize it that is why you feel otherwise; audience do not have the time to understand your fear they actually look at you only how do they know that you are nervous. So, if you have all these feelings and you feel that you are nervous. Please ensure that this nervousness is good. Now you might feel; however, saying that nervousness is good you know on the one hand you feel as if something bad will happen, and I am telling you this nervousness is good yes this nervousness is because you try to perform better if you look at the examples of various people in their various fields. Either as a speaker as a musician, as a singer as a cricketer, as a swimmer you know all these people when they went for their first competition all of these people who are nervous.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:32)



Now, when they became nervous, they actually I say it in a different manner that they became more conscious. You become nervous because you become more conscious, more conscious of what more conscious, because you want to perform better you actually you are aware of your potential no doubt, but you want to prove yourself and while you want to prove yourself, you become over conscious more conscious and that is why this nervousness.

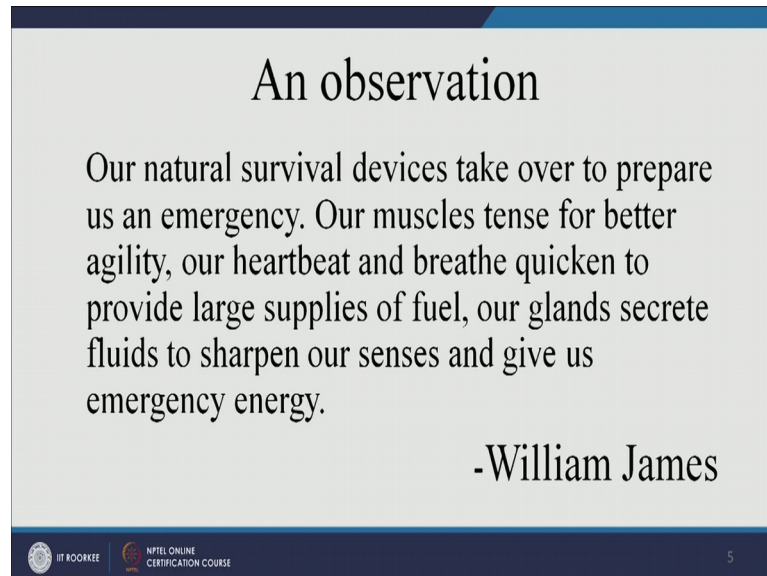
So, this anxiety of performance, because you want that you should out sign others and that is why this feeling is generated, but my dear friends let me tell you this nervousness is very natural. Now a sort of relief this nervousness is very natural, it is very universal you know it has often been said that even celebrities even experienced to speakers when they had to give their speech they also felt nervous. And that is why you know in a survey eighty percent of people said that they preferred death then to speak in public.

Now, if I give you this statistics, you will realize that you are not a loner you are not the only person. Psychologists go on saying that people become nervous only because they are more concerned about their image. And about their image before the crowd, they feel that their nervousness is being watched by the people sitting there. And that is why they feel that it may bring a sort of the match to their personality. And in this state of nervousness what people often do they forget even with the best intentions and best

content that they have come here they start forgetting things, they start forgetting their lines only because they are going to interact with these strangers.

So, nervousness my dear friend is natural, it is often better that you become nervous.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:20)



An observation

Our natural survival devices take over to prepare us an emergency. Our muscles tense for better agility, our heartbeat and breathe quicken to provide large supplies of fuel, our glands secrete fluids to sharpen our senses and give us emergency energy.

-William James

ITR ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 5

Because once you become nervous you try to perform better. Now the question is doing all of us become nervous? Yes. To some extent now suppose you are to cross a bridge even when you are driving on the road you have little amount of fear because you do not know how the bridge is like you start imagining you start visualizing. And then when the bridge is there you cross the bridge very smoothly because you are more conscious when you are crossing the bridge.

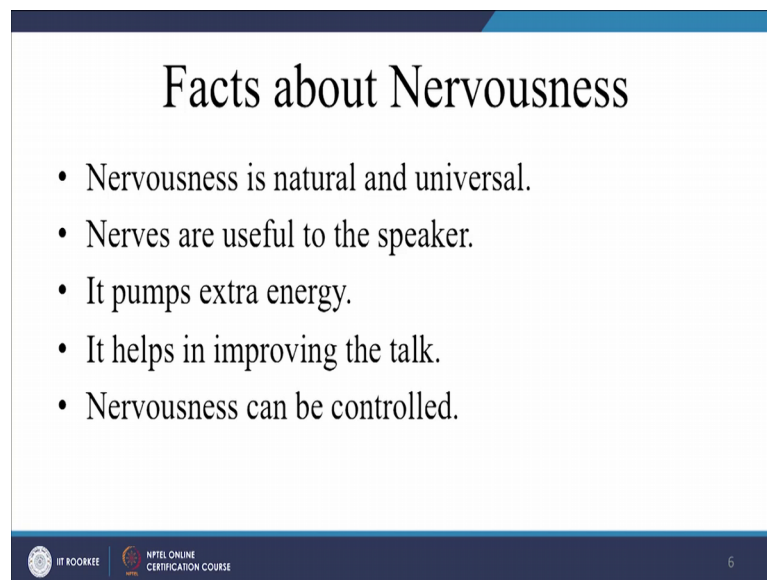
So, whenever we are exposed to unknown situations and whenever we are to interact with strange people especially audience members we do not know that is why we said in one of the lectures that you need to understand who are the audience members. And when you become nervous you start losing your confidence level, you start losing your confidence level, but my dear friend let me tell you that good number of psychologists they have also realized that this nervousness is natural and it is universal.

Let us see what William James a famous psychologist says and what he says in essence means since we want to survive we want to have a survival strategy, that is why we feel nervous. Our natural survival devices take over to prepare us an emergency. As I said use

you want to perform better and that is why there comes a situation of emergency and you know what happens is you want to perform, it in such a manner that is really your entire body and they go several changes. Our muscles tense for better agility you want to be more prompt heartbeat and breathe quicken to provide larger supplies as I said the adrenaline surges they actually begin in our body, but then it has another positive side to it is more energizing. It has been said that the more this this adrenalin surges they actually pump more energy into your body. And once this energy is pumped and you start speaking after some amount of time, there is no nervousness the fears are gone because you have been able to control.

So, provide large supplies of wealth our glands secret fluids to sharp in our sensors and give us emergency energy. That is why when you feel nervous you will find that you want to out sign others you want to outperform others and that is why this nervousness is better. Let us try to understand certain facts because if you are nervous you can be normal also how many novice speakers, they got nervous in their first speech many novice players.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:07)



The slide is titled "Facts about Nervousness" and contains a bulleted list of five points. The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains the IIT Roorkee logo, the text "IIT ROORKEE", the NPTEL logo, the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", and the number "6".

Facts about Nervousness

- Nervousness is natural and universal.
- Nerves are useful to the speaker.
- It pumps extra energy.
- It helps in improving the talk.
- Nervousness can be controlled.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 6

When they went to the field you know they start thinking, you know somebody gets a test cap.

And goes for the first time to bat in a test match. So, he is actually thinking by the bouncers and the googlies and then he starts feeling the sort of nervousness, but once the

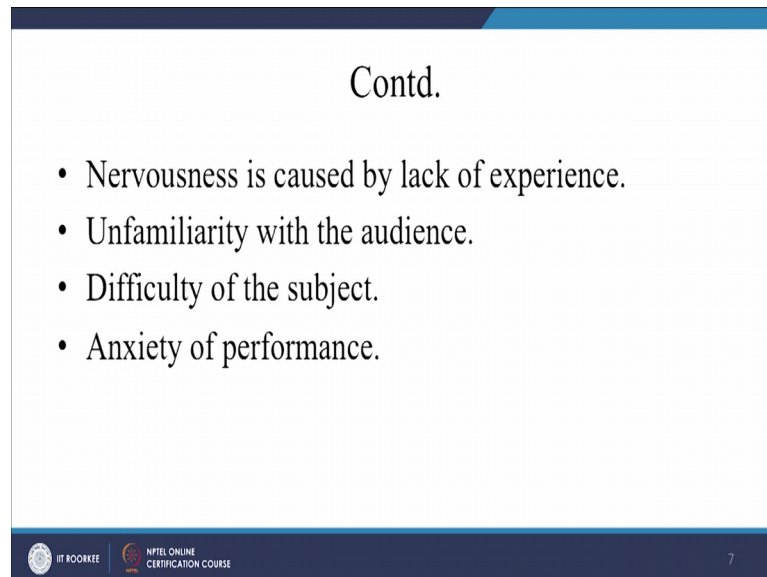
ball has come and he is able to different or he is able to be in line soon this nervousness is gone. So, the same is true even of speeches nervousness is natural and it is universal. Nerves are actually useful to the speaker useful how because they provide you with excess of energy, it is energizing. No, it is for you to decide as another philosopher named Sartre you have heard he says that it is for the people to realize that they are coward. And then he says and then again it is for the people to understand that they have a choice whether they want to be coward or not.

So, this nervousness if you treat it in a different manner and, but then if you are tumbled under this fear and nervousness, you are not able to perform. So, if some amount of nervousness is felt within you start thinking that this is natural this is normal. So, soon this storm will go. It actually pumps extra energy and you become more resign you become more active and you start, but then you have to say yourself as you know one of the writer's dale Carnegie says, start thinking you are I am okay. This you is the audience now why do we fear this nervousness why are you frightened we actually a frightened. Because before us there is a large crowd of members and you start thinking that if my nervousness becomes visible on my face if they come to realize what will happen. What will happen? My dear friend will these audience members come and suit you no not at all they do not have the time to think about your nervousness it is you only who are thinking like this.

So, it is better to say a farewell to nervousness and think about your own performance it actually this nervousness helps in improving the talk many people feel that, when they feel nervous since they become more energetic because this nervousness has another facility it is more energizing. So, it pumps extra energy and it helps in improving the talk. Now all you need to do is you need to control this nervousness. And as a speaker when you are before all these 100s and 1000s of eyes before you should tell them yourself that they all of these people they have invited me, because they want to listen to me what a great opportunity to. So, my skill and my caliber because I will be talking to these people they know that I have got a sort of expertise in this area meaning thereby tell yourself that everything is fine there is no problem at all you should start concentrating on a performance then thinking about your nervousness.

So, nervousness can be controlled control the nerves to do better and you have the nerves within and the nerves can be controlled my dear friend, but how to do that? It is actually tell yourself that you get nervous and you know I often say in the reason lies the remedy.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:24)



Contd.

- Nervousness is caused by lack of experience.
- Unfamiliarity with the audience.
- Difficulty of the subject.
- Anxiety of performance.

ITF ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 7

If you understand the regions why you become nervous, you will find that there several regions. The first is that you might be feeling that you are not well prepared. Of course, if you are not well prepare, how will you out sign.

So, first is that you have to prepare well in advance prepare well in advance because nothing is a better antidote than preparation. Preparation is actually the panacea preparation has got the all the keys to help you get a control over nervousness. Another thing is that, you are unfamiliar with the audience that is why you feel nervous. So, it is better when you go to speak. So, do some homework and the best homework is that you talk about you try to have a sort of query about the audience members who are the audience who will listen to me what will be their age what will be their education.

So, if you know about all these things perhaps the tasks become easier you will better frame yourself in a sort of frame where you can use your language you can talk about the experiences you can talk about examples from day to day life from the particular field or from the particular discipline that your audience belongs to and your task will become easier of course, especially for the new people the inexperienced once because they come across this nervousness more.

So, they have to have a control over nervousness and for that the subject of the talk rather that is again a problem for them. So, initially as an any inexperienced speaker the advice is to begin with those topics which you feel under your grip under your control do not try to just touch the sky in the very first attempt you will be able to control nervousness only after you have given so many speeches, nowadays you have several facilities at your beck and call and you can make use of them because of the difficulty of the topic you again feel nervous because you are not able to gather materials.

So, initially inexperienced speakers should begin with those topics where they feel they are familiar with. And if you start preparing this anxiety of performance will go. So, it is better you start concentrating more on the topic and initially you start thinking about speaking on topics, which are familiar which you have come across and which will be appreciated. Of course, this may not be for larger crowds, but for smaller group of people you can always do that especially students they can call a group of their friends and they can say that I am going to give a talk on this, I am going to speak on this and by saying this and by speaking before them, they can also gain their feedback it is always better, to make use of the feedback even if you are. So, shy even if you feel. So, isolated not having friends in this world of friends galore you have the best friend of yours that is your cell phone make cell phone your friend, but then I know you might be utilizing it for all the wrong reasons, but not for the right reasons.

Record your own talk in a cell phone. And look at most of the cell phones have got this audio video facility you can see yourself you look at yourself, how do you look like when you speak how does your body behave. How do your movements react, how do you walk how do you throw your words all these can be seen? And then also see how a particular accent on a particular words or how you are able to situate the silence and pauses how you forget and you start feeling those silences with non words, how you are not able to make use of silence and pauses.

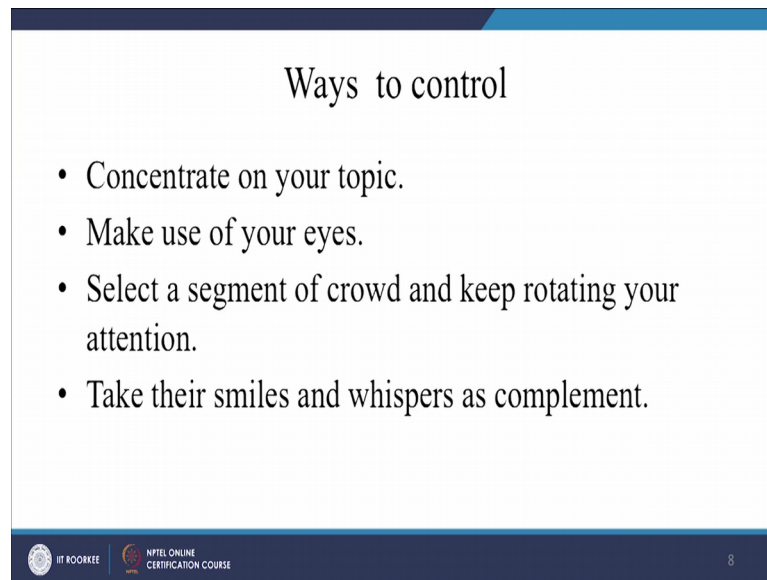
So, these facilities are there all you need to do is to make use of them. If you have decided a topic on which you are going to speak, the first thing as I said earlier first you have to tell yourself that you are not a coward. I am reminded of William Shakespeare who in one of his plays one of his character says cowards die many times before their death. The valiant test of death only, but once. So, you have to decide whether you are a

coward or a brave person, a brave person has got enough nerves to control this nervousness.

So, first is decide your topic and then start researching on your topic, because you are going to speak. If you prepare a lot nothing in the world can stop you from speaking of course, when you start speaking initially you may have some bouts of nervousness, but if you tell yourself that it is quite natural after some time this nervousness will go. So, imagine, most of the time these new speakers they do not want to exercise a lot. So, what they should do is they should actually give a small talk in small groups where they can make use of their nonverbal behavior while speaking. And when the chance comes and if they have been provided with a feedback they should work on those feedbacks and then they should also make use of their eyes, now who are going to listen to you your audience members.

So, tell yourself that I am you are and then also treat them not as people, who are enemies, but as friends. Tell yourself that they have been here only to listen to you. They have come from far and wide to listen to you and they are not hostile they are very friendly people. You see they have actually spent a lot of time listening to you. So, they only see the outside they do not see the inside. So, treat your audience members as your friends and then start speaking. When you start first sentence and the following follow up sentences come you will find after some amount of time you have been able to develop a sort of rapport develop a sort of friendship with them and the task will become easier.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:50)



Ways to control

- Concentrate on your topic.
- Make use of your eyes.
- Select a segment of crowd and keep rotating your attention.
- Take their smiles and whispers as complement.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 8

Now, many people often think because in the audience members will find there are people of different categories and some people smile, some people whisper, some people have parallel conversation some people look at you some people give you a steering look. Now all these things may deviate you, but you are thoroughly prepared and tell yourself that perhaps they are realizing or they are remembering their own times when they were also in the same position as yours.

So, you should react to their smiles and whispers as the beautiful compliments that they are providing because you are doing your part. So, beautifully you are enacting your role so beautifully. So, take their smiles and whispers as they are complement and that will help you a lot. My dear friends nothing will happen these audience members they also want that you should deliver a very effective talk a very effective speech or a very effective presentation.

So, for that what you need to do is you need to decide that you are to determine you are to decide that you will do well you will not disappoint your audience members and in order to do that you have to do a lot of tasks before you come to deliver this presentation and that is preparation. Again if such a sort of feeling is there the feeling of some sort of hesitation, some sort of sloppiness some sort of movements, then you find nowadays there are several facilities you know if you are to speak from a day you have another facility that the audience members are not able to see whether your hands or feet or legs

they are trembling. All you need to do is concentrate on your topic and while concentrating on the topic say yourself bear it and not fear it.

Let us face the situation most of the people get frightened because they are not able to face the crowd. Facing the crowd is very important. Facing the crowd that is very important how a speaker comes and stands. We have seen many novice speakers when they come to speak they do not spend a little time rather they start speaking. And when they start speaking, because they are frightened that they will forget. That is why my advice to you is when you come to the dais please stand please spend some time. We have also discussed while discussing nonverbal communication, how it is to stand and how it is to create a rapport.

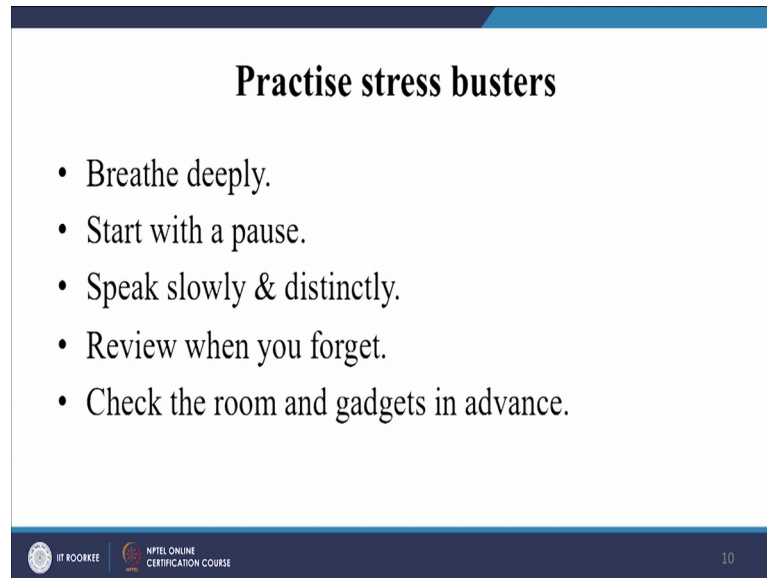
It only takes a very little moment to create a rapport with your crowd, and if you tell yourself that these people are there to listen to me and they are very friendly I think after some time the task will become easier again, but despite having said all this many people may say despite all these things, I do not have the courage to stand these faces. All these eyes looking at me, my dear friend will they gobble you? Will they eat you up and then why do not you think that what ultimately will happen? The ultimate thing that may happen is your talk may collapse. Your speech may not be interesting, but then the audience also are there it is their failure also, but remember nothing will happen. Neither the earth will crumble, nor the sky will fall down and ultimately if anything happens the worst thing that may happen is your talk will not be appreciated.

But then you will be able to take some relations out of this which you will realize after this talk is over and you may utilize it in your next talk. My dear friends if you start realizing that you are there to control your nervousness, and why cannot you control you have a well-researched topic you have a very good preparation you have a beautiful voice, you have a voice that can attract many people, you have a face that can launch a thousand ships. You have an appearance that can actually captivate people and you have a sort of personality that can really make you win any crucial moment. Then what is there to fear.

So, fear is actually in the mind and so long as we start frightening we become frightened. So, you have to come out of this fright psychologists call this fight or flight. So, you have to fight this nervousness, and if you start fighting with this nervousness there is

nothing that can stop you. Since it is a psychological process, it is better to practice makes a man perfect and practice some stress busters also.

(Refer Slide Time: 35:03)



Practise stress busters

- Breathe deeply.
- Start with a pause.
- Speak slowly & distinctly.
- Review when you forget.
- Check the room and gadgets in advance.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 10

Now, what are these stress busters? When you start speaking before you start your first sentence, it is better to take a deep breath. It is always better to start with a pause and not start giving a verbal firework or creating a sort of holocaust. Nothing will happen you have to be there and again your voice which is quivering it is quivering because you are nervous, but once you control it you will speak very slowly, distinctly there is no need to speak fast. It is only an inexperienced to speaker who speaks fast. Experienced speakers always know that they have to adopt a certain pace and they divide their thoughts into several units and then they speak slow and steady, as you know they always win the race. There may be many moments when in course of is you are speaking you may feel that you have forgotten certain parts, but once again let me tell you nothing will happen if you forget certain parts, you have another opportunity start reviewing. Because audience members they do not have much time and when you repeat certain things they will realize that you are becoming more explaining you are becoming more candid.

So, review when you forget and by the time you review the next thread of thought will come to you and you will start feeling better. Since preparation is the best antidote, it is always better to check the when venue in advance. When I say venue I mean the place where you have to speak, and the sort of facilities which are there. For example, the

acoustic the microphone the seating arrangements. So, all these actually give you a lot of confidence comes from preparation.

So, it is better to ensure that everything is in order. And once things are in order you feel better. Nothing in the world can stop you from delivering an effective or a fruitful talk then to speak in a manner where it should not be taken that you are imposing your views rather you are interacting. If you feel they there are certain parts where you feel you are not able to you can cite examples, but of course, this may not happen only in the beginning it will actually take years, every experience to speaker who today is a celebrity if you look at their lives because what you see you are seeing it from the surface only, but you do not know how much of industry how much of effort have gone behind making him a good speaker.

So, dear friends nervousness as I said in the beginning is natural it is universal tell yourself that you are not the loner and if you fail in one talk it will bring note the match to your overall personality because there are many more opportunities waiting for you and that will give you chance to realize your mistakes done in the past. So, that when you speak next time taking all these feedbacks into consideration you will be able to give a better talk a better speech a better presentation.

So, let me once again tell you be a little nervous because by becoming a little nervous you will become more conscious. And in course of time you will be able to handle this nervousness combat this nervousness and you will come out as a successful as a meaningful and an effective speaker. Hence the time has come to realize that you also will listen to various speeches to various talks and try to imitate some of the qualities that will help you not only in fighting the nervousness, but in creating a sort of needs for yourself where is you will feel the world is beautiful. Because there are beautiful audience members and they are friendly and they only will provide you the energy to speak better. Hence there is nothing to worry once again tell yourself, you are I am and you will be.

Thank you very much.