

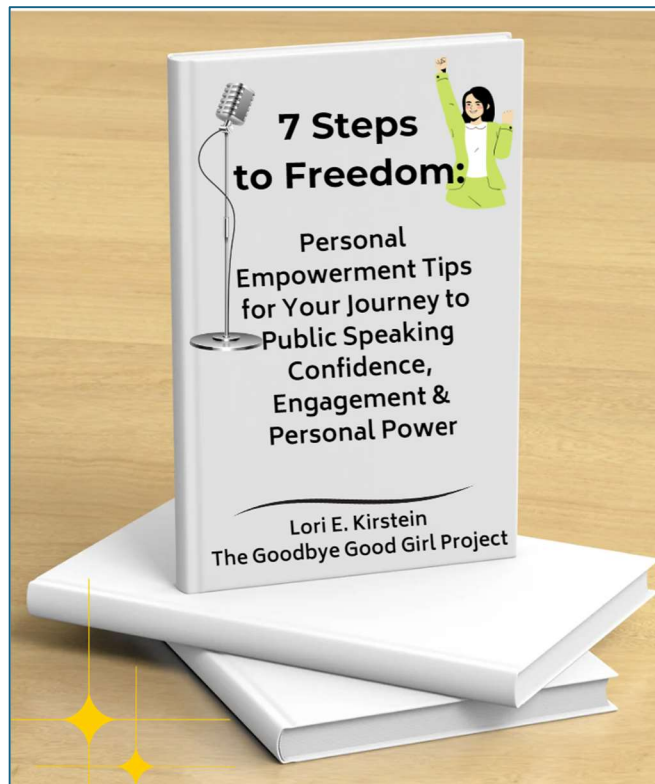


The Goodbye Good Girl Project

---

# 7 Steps to Freedom:

Personal Empowerment Tips for Your  
Journey to Public Speaking Confidence,  
Engagement & Personal Power



Lori E. Kirstein



## Contents

I. Introduction .....	3
II. Overcoming Fear and Anxiety .....	4
A. How do you transform fear into fascination? By playing! .....	5
B. Warm Up With Pretense .....	5
C. To Do This Right You Have to Do It Wrong .....	6
III. Take Up Space! .....	7
IV. Embrace Your Authentic Voice .....	8
A. Story .....	8
B. Words and Phrases.....	9
V. Your Body On Stage: Body Language and Presence .....	9
VI. Mindset and Confidence .....	10
VII. Who are you?.....	11
VIII. Resources and Further Learning.....	12



# 7 Steps to Freedom: Tips for Your Journey to Public Speaking Confidence, Engagement & Personal Power

## I. Introduction

Which would you rather do: go to the dentist for a root canal, or do a public speaking event? If you feel your knees buckle when you walk on stage, you are probably going to go with the root canal.

Or, if you're one of those people who can do public speaking without sweating, which would you rather be: competent, or compelling? If you are aware of needing more impact you are probably hungry for that feeling of being compelling.

Whichever type you are, the answers to becoming the speaker that you would like to be, admittedly both confident *and* compelling, lie in your being exactly who you are in all of your natural strengths, right out loud.

But we have learned to follow rules of behavior to keep ourselves safe, and only visible when we feel good and ready to do so.

I want to help you feel good and ready to give a talk that feels good for you as well as actually inspiring and changing your audience!

### **It's a freedom thing**

Moving through public speaking training can be as freeing as taking a course in improvisation or acting because in both the speaker and actor worlds the rules are very different; there is no "right and wrong" as much as there is "freer" or "less free". It is actually about whether you can be more your true self right out loud.

The Goodbye Good Girl Project is so named because when we find our true voice, our true path, our true *anything*, it is because we have done the work of stepping back from the "shoulds" of our social upbringing – from being blindly obedient to the rules we follow - and asking ourselves, "What do I want?", "Who am I, really?", "Who do I want to be?", "What is my true nature?"

Nothing else is as freeing or satisfying as finding and living the answers to those questions, and the work that I do steps people out of their fear and into fascination and release in ways that are lasting.

These are the most important things about the "you" part of public speaking:

- Are you authentically you, and comfortable?
- Are you speaking with your real voice and saying what you mean to say?



- Are you able to improvise, to respond quickly and easily to the unexpected?
- Are you okay with making mistakes, and rolling forward?
- Are you connecting with your audience in a real way, and taking them on the journey with you?

If fear is all that you feel, you can't move into these deeper areas of being an engaging and joyous public speaker.

## II. Overcoming Fear and Anxiety

So many crazy fear-fighting techniques have been proposed over the years. Picturing the audience in their underwear is one that comes to mind. This one is a mystery to me! How is picturing a stranger in their underwear supposed to relax you if you feel edgy about looking at them as they already are: dressed, and looking at *you*!

The truth is that fear and anxiety happen when we enter a situation for which we do not feel prepared, one which we have no predetermined way to approach. That's all. Period. With public speaking, fear and anxiety arise because:

1. We are outside of our visibility comfort zone and as a result we feel out of control and vulnerable.
2. We have not practiced feeling – and “walking around in” – being more visible where the behavioral rules we know and follow so well no longer apply. We are trying to “behave” appropriately, but on that stage or in that boardroom we don't have those guidelines. *Yet*.
3. We fear what we don't yet know and understand.

What this means, then, is that we need three things:

1. A 360-degree understanding of the more expansive rules of being visible
2. To speak in safe spaces that allow us to stop “behaving” and start exploring the magic of becoming freer to be ourselves in any space, and
3. To get familiar with ourselves as strong and emotionally and behaviorally flexible.

With these skills and experiences under our belt, now we will feel the thrill of trying a new skill. We may feel nervous, but we will not be stopped by anxiety. We won't be thrown into numbness or avoidance. Now, we will be deliberately activating the childlike explorer of us, the one who says, “I don't yet know how much or who I can potentially be, and I want to know!”



You are worth more than terror and fight-or-flight. You have dreams of having an impact – at work, at home, in the world – and making your world and the people in it feel the uplift, the inspiration, that makes everything work better!

The only way to break the fear and anxiety is to do the thing you fear.

The best way to break past your own resistance and do the thing you fear is with willpower or a guide who understands that it is your existing personal strengths that give you wings. Willpower is not high on the totem pole of successful application. How many diets have *you* tried??? Right. So much for willpower.

But if you reach for your existing personal strengths and speak from those places – harnessing not just your ability to speak without shaking, but your hyper-effective authenticity in your presenting - your progress will be much more fun, and faster.

## A. How do you transform fear into fascination? By playing!

Have you ever realized that you improvise every day of your life?

Think about it! No one gives you the day's script when you get up in the morning. You head out and face people and situations you don't expect and somehow you manage to get through it and even be clever, funny, responsive, thoughtful, and express a whole host of other emotionally-motivated aspects of your personality.

But do you do it as comfortably as you wish? Not always. Certain situations push you into awkwardness or self-defensiveness. So, the question is how to be ready for a stage situation and not lose your mind beforehand.

That is where I hope to help you with an experience that can change your self-image.

You will do this all alone in your room with a mirror and no one there to judge you at all.

Let's do this!

## B. Warm Up With Pretense

Did you ever play games when you were a kid? Dress up for Halloween? When I was in second grade a family moved in next door. They had four girls and we all became best friends immediately, the way that little kids do.



We all wanted to be grown up and have long beautiful hair like the television heroines. So, we figured out a way to pretend that we were grown up: we put pajama bottoms on our heads and draped a leg over each shoulder, stroking them to show each other our “long hair”.

Have you ever done something like that? Have you ever pretended? Well, it’s time to regenerate that practice.

Choose a paragraph of your talk and deliver it in at least three ways. Here are three that you can use if three of them don’t immediately come to your mind.

- As if you are a governmental operative.
- As if you are a goofball.
- As if you are from another country.

Why?

Because when you deliver something differently in mind, it allows you to *hear* it differently too!

Be a goofball! Be wrong! Be silly! If you can do a weird accent, do it! Make a stupid-looking face? Do it! Just for 5 minutes. This allows you to expand emotionally and to see the words you are speaking from a little bit of distance; this gives you insight you would not have otherwise.

## C. To Do This Right You Have to Do It Wrong

I want you to allow yourself to do the above exercise *all wrong*! By knowing that the measure of success is in fact *not* to succeed, a lot of your nervousness goes away.

You may be thinking, “Wait a second! I’m not an actor! What does this pretending thing have to do with public speaking?”

It has *everything* to do with public speaking, and your ability to handle anything from the stage.

But as we get accustomed to this practice, we need some “special sauce”.

The special sauce is allowing yourself to “do it *all wrong*”.



Think of how freeing that is! If you have no standard of perfection to meet, you are apt to allow yourself to free-flow, and that is what we are looking for: your ability to be your more comfortable self on stage.

You might be surprised to learn how difficult it can be to free from yourself from the “shoulds” in your head, but you will be extremely happy to learn that in doing this playing exercise, you are getting an enormous head start on those who want to do it “right”, following a set of rules that are not authentic to them, and therefore running the risk of being cookie-cutter.

You don’t want to be cookie-cutter. You want to stand out!

So while you are practicing this, please do it oh-so-wrong!

### III. Take Up Space!

There you are, up on a stage or in front of a roomful of people, and you may immediately feel the “shoulds” crowding your brain, making you feel awkward.

But the shoulds dim as you discover the power and joy available to you as you dare to take up space.

Particularly for women, owning the space in a room or an auditorium is daunting. The reason for this is our conditioning to be agreeable, to fit in, not to “upset apple carts”, to look a certain way. We can absolutely overcome this conditioning!

When I say that you should take up space, what I am asking you to do first is notice whether you are physically playing small. Look in the mirror as you deliver a speech and ask yourself if you feel tense and if that tension shows itself in how you are holding your body. Are your shoulders a little high? Are you slouching? Are you standing in a military, ready-for-the-attack position?

Understand that when you feel confident that no matter what happens you will be fine, your audience can relax and listen more deeply to what you are saying and to what you are emotionally delivering.

This is absolutely what you want.

When you feel *uncomfortable*, your audience feels uncomfortable with you. Obviously this is not what you want.

So, go into a room of your living space and stand there, aware that the empty space you are perceiving is not actually empty! It is full of unseen energy, and you can open your



arms and send a huge smile into that space, or you can pretend you are the Queen of All That Is, throw open your arms, and stand there *owning* that space, feeling your ownership and your care for all that lies around you.

It is an empowering feeling.

When you do it on a stage, it is a transformation of you and the people who are listening to and watching you.

## IV. Embrace Your Authentic Voice

People talk a lot about finding their voice. What this really means is that they are trying to speak from an honest place – a place that is natural to them instead of producing some masked mode of communication that is not representative of them.

You've heard these types of talks: the flat monotoned talk, or the talk whose pace is nervously too fast or carefully too slow. And the talk dreaded the most is the “just the facts, Jack” talk which provides lots of information but no interesting context to which we can connect.

Without context – that is to say: story – we have no way to retain the information. Our brains simply cannot stay alert.

If you are someone who is naturally expressive, you have a fairly easy way to judge whether you are closer or further away from your natural, authentic voice. But what if you are not?

What if you are the kind of person who is shy, or introverted, or someone whose topic is particularly personal and therefore frightening to share?

The answer to this problem lies in two interesting places: in the words and phrases you use, and in story.

### A. Story

Story is how we retain information, and it makes giving the talk much more fun! Even the driest of topics can be changed to story. I worked with a Financial Manager and CEO of a company who gave talks about her offerings. She wanted to fix the presentation and her speaking style to get listeners to stay throughout the talk and ask engaged questions afterwards.

We took her presentation – all of the facts and steps of her financial assistance – and turned it into a story about climbing a mountain with a sherpa as guide. Not only did this





make her presentation more memorable, accessible and memorable, it helped her give the talk without painful memorization. A story is far easier to remember than a script!

## B. Words and Phrases

Underneath the words and phrases we speak lie an ocean of meaning that we may not see. But we feel that meaning. When a word or phrase is spoken that lies far from who you feel yourself to be, you feel uncomfortable. It feels like you are lying.

Imagine giving your talk to yourself in your living room, but doing it while paying attention to how the words and phrases impact *you*. As you do this, you will find it easy to notice when you feel more comfortable or less comfortable.

When you hit upon a less comfortable state, change the words or phrase that make you feel awkward. It is not necessary to change the meaning, but you can do so of course if the entire sentence feels *off*. Change those words and/or phrases to those that are more comfortable for you, and now speak again. Compare how you feel now with how you felt before and you will see that you can have this kind of control over how your speech feels and comes across.

If you are not accustomed to paying attention to how you feel and you don't feel 100% confident about choosing this kind of adjustment on your own, this is where a coach proves invaluable.

You know how this works: It always seems easier to see solutions and snags in others than in yourself. We all need good coaches, teachers and guides to help us really shine.

## V. Your Body On Stage: Body Language and Presence

Imaging that you are standing on stage now and if all you can think about is, "What do I do with my hands?", and "I have no idea how this is going!", or, "Did I forget Page 5???", the important focus is being missed: how you and your audience feel.

Your body reveals your comfort level and your energy informs your presence.

Remember, when you are comfortable so is your audience. When you are stressed out and nervous, that is what the audience will pay attention to much more than what you are communicating.

So, what are you to do?

First, become honest about the fact that you are scared. This alone takes away a lot of tension.



Next, tell your mind that you are not in fact going to die; that this is fear born of never before having been this visible, or of being in front of people whose opinions matter a lot.

The third thing to do is to understand why you are frightened. Is it because you doubt yourself, or because your preparation was incomplete? Is there an emotional trigger there, or one based on problems that could have been avoided?

When I am nervous about something that is not actually life-threatening, I often remind myself that “no blood will be spilt” in the doing of the thing that is frightening me. It helps because it makes me smile and because it’s true!

How do you know if you seem nervous or calm to your audience? You can of course ask someone for feedback, but to start with yourself, start with self-awareness.

Pay attention to your body while you are practicing your talk.

Some of the patterns that beginner speakers come up against are:

- Nervous walking – Pacing back and forth on the stage
- Rocking – Shifting one’s weight from foot to foot and back again repeatedly
- Mt. Rushmore – Standing in one place without moving

Most people are not accustomed to being so very *visible!* The result is all kinds of nervous habits. This is why it is so much easier to be coached into the cycle of release: awareness, easing into your strengths, and relief.

The study of public speaking is really the study of intimacy with an audience. There are tips and tricks to everything, including speaking, but when it comes to connecting with an audience and revealing yourself as a person from the stage there is so much to uncover and enjoy about public speaking!

## VI. Mindset and Confidence

Could you give up judging yourself as “right or wrong”?

Could you instead consider the study of public speaking as an adventure, and the “screw ups” as opportunities to fine-tune or to become beloved? Let me explain.

There was a speaker who bought a new jacket for his big speaking engagement at a university. He was one of a handful of speakers brought to campus for the event. He got up on stage and gave his first talk, and afterward people pointed out that he had neglected to take a tag off of his jacket.



Of course, he felt silly. But then he thought, “Wait a second! People keep calling me ‘Tag Man’ so I’m going to go buy a bunch of tags and put my name and the words ‘Tag Man’ and my contact info on them and hand them out!”

He became “Tag Man” and people did not forget him even after the event!

This is what happens when you give up “right or wrong” and allow yourself to be more childlike and creative about who you are and how you are as a speaker.

What people want to be is entertained and informed. They do not want to be bored and they do not want to spend their time worrying about you.

Your best mindset would come from taking some improvisation classes. Improv has one basic rule: “Yes, and...” What this means is that when your partner in an improv scene says something outrageous that you didn’t expect, you are not permitted to say, “Wait, no! That’s not what I was talking about!” You have to say, “Oh, yes! And...”

Person 1: So, I understand that your brother went home from the party and found the dog dancing with the cat!

Person 2: Fortunately, the cat was wearing its people suit and stood about 6’2” and invited my *brother* to dance!

Person 1: Yes, I heard about that! *And* I heard that they ended up eloping, your brother and the cat!

Person 2: Scandalous but true!

No one can say “no” to the other, but each can add to the improv.

This is what improv and acting teach you: to release the perfectionist and embrace the adventurer!

And it is a lot more fun to watch and travel along with an adventurer than a perfectionist!

## VII. Who are you?

We are all far more than we give ourselves credit for. In fact, we are limitless in our abilities, but we tend to restrict ourselves in order to fit in. Standing out feels like being a target for shooting practice. The truth is, it is your own judgments that you are fielding and no one else’s.

Identity is powerful. We spend many years practicing being appropriate and acceptable, which leaves us less prone to develop our natural ways of being,.



I have read many stories of those who lived lives of appropriateness, only to find themselves ill, realizing that they had never given themselves the opportunity to experience living their own heart's desires. The illness gave them the impetus to change, and when they did so their illnesses disappeared and left them with many more years to live authentically.

The sensation of standing on stage – that thrill of nervousness or excitement – is internal notification that you are now visible. But which “you” is visible? The mask that you wear, or the true you that you have chosen to meet at last?

The false mask always feels loose, ready to fall off at a moment's notice.

There is so much security in being exactly who you are, and learning what that means and how to engage it in speaking.

Being yourself does not mean that you become sloppy or unprofessional. Far from it. It means that you learn the difference between feeling uncomfortable, and at ease in your own body.

It means that you are able to throw aside the beliefs and thoughts that torment you – they are incorrect anyway, so throwing them aside is a good move! – and embrace those thoughts and beliefs that buoy up your natural feeling of strength and confidence!

It is quicker and easier with a good coach, but if you want to do it yourself you can – as long as you are connected to your feeling “body” and can work with that awareness to choose the path of strengthening the real you, and weakening all the beliefs that never had a true connection with you in the first place.

## VIII. Resources and Further Learning

An entire lifetime of social training teaches us to do anything other than be visible, emotionally intimate right out loud, or vulnerable.

Your dreams of public speaking, or of being comfortable, or – like my client Mackey – going from a love/hate relationship with public speaking to sheer joy in its practice and performance hinge on your taking steps outside your trained comfort zone.

There really will be no blood spilt. You will not die. But emotional whiplash can feel just terrible.

My suggestion if you wish to do this a little bit at a time is either to join a Toastmasters meeting, or to attend an improvisation/acting class.

Both are available around the world and cost nothing or almost nothing.



If you want to break through quickly and with a sense of calm instead of panic, that is when you need to work with someone who understands the journey; someone who has been there.

You want someone who can tell you exactly how to move beyond the different *types* of blocks that come up: emotional, physical, mental. The shame, the doubt, the fear, the feelings that you may not even be able to name.

You want to feel safe while you undertake an effort that may feel anything but.

You want to feel accepted, and you want to feel that you are in the hands of someone who cares and who knows how to inch you out of bad habits and into truly enjoying being in the flow of finally, *finally* expressing yourself, *as* yourself!

When you are ready, consider setting up a free 30-minute conversation with me during which I will be able to tell you a few things about where you are being most held back and how I would be able to help you move forward.

And be kind to yourself, please! Any time you are transforming an element of yourself, you are up against all of the “rules” that we have all been raised with – all of those appropriate “shoulds” that want to keep you trapped in rigidity.

You don’t deserve that. You have so much more to share.

I always see what is strongest in my clients, and I help midwife it out past the resistances. It is what I have done and continue to do for myself, and it is a powerful and fun process. Crazy to think that powerful and fun could go together but in this case they so do!

You have a voice!

Your world can’t wait to hear it!

\*

### **Ready to get started being your authentic self on stage and off?**

Let’s chat for 30 minutes! I will be able to give you feedback about where you might best start your journey, and how I can support your efforts!

<https://bit.ly/book-some-chat-time>

Visit [www.goodbyegoodgirl.com](http://www.goodbyegoodgirl.com) for more information and testimonials!