



# Practical Guide to Managing Stage Fright

Project  
**The Future of Human Rights in the Digital Age**

Based on Meisner Technique, Actor's Studio, and Improvisation.  
Specially designed for young people in global spaces.

## 1. Before you begin: understanding stage fright

Stage fright is not a lack of ability; it is an overload of the nervous system in situations of evaluation, high exposure, or uncertainty.

**In global advocacy spaces, this is compounded by:**

- Speaking in another language
- Representing communities
- Pressure regarding the impact of what is said
- Power dynamics

**Objective of this guide:**



**To transform fear into presence, connection, and clarity.**

## 2. Pre-scene exercises

(Physical, emotional, and mental preparation — 5 to 10 minutes)

### 2.1 "The Meisner Activity": Focus reset

● **Objective:**

To connect with your immediate environment, getting out of your head and into the "here and now."

● **How to do it:**

1. Place a simple object in front of you: a pen, a glass, your notebook.
2. For 60–90 seconds, describe it out loud without trying to be eloquent:

*"It's blue... it has a silver line... it's light... it feels cold..."*

3. Every time your mind goes to "what if I fail?", return to the object.

**This exercise grounds you and reduces anticipatory anxiety.**

### 2.2 Actor's Studio calibration: breathing and "releasing the body"

● **Objective:**

To deactivate the sympathetic nervous system (alert) and activate the parasympathetic system (presence).

● **How to do it (3 minutes):**

- Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Exhale through the mouth for 6–8 seconds.
- Release shoulders, jaw, tongue, and stomach.

**Body shaking:** a body-based practice used in acting techniques, active meditation, somatic work, and anxiety management to release physical tension and reset the nervous system. It consists of gently shaking the body (legs, arms, shoulders, chest, and head) for 10 to 60 seconds to dissolve accumulated tension, release muscular rigidity, and reduce activation of the sympathetic nervous system (stress response).



## 2.3 Sensory imagination exercise (Actor's Studio)

● **Objective:**

To expand presence and confidence before speaking.

● **¿Cómo se hace?**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close your eyes and visualize a room that supports you.</li> <li>2. Hear applause or voices saying: "We're with you."</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Feel warmth in your chest and back (a sensation of support).<br/>This emotional priming improves vocal tone and clarity.</li> </ol> |
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# 3. Exercises to enter presence and control

(For moments right before speaking or debating)

## 3.1 Meisner Repetition – Global spokesperson version

● **Objective:**

To connect with the other person, not with fear.

● **How to do it?**

**(1 minute with someone, or imagining them):**

1. Observe a neutral trait of the person in front of you (gesture, posture, breathing).
2. Repeat it out loud: "You're breathing deeply... you're breathing deeply."
3. When it changes, name it: "Now you're looking down... you're looking down..."

**This takes the mind out of judgment and places focus on interaction.**

## 3.2 "Emotional traffic light" (improvisation)

● **Objective:**

To enter the moment of speaking with confidence.

● **Red:** Pause for 1 second before starting (this gives you control).

● **Yellow:** Mentally name your intention ("I want to connect," "I want to be clear").

● **Green:** Speak from purpose, not from expectation.

## 3.3 "Voice forward" (acting + improv technique)

● **Objective:**

To eliminate vocal trembling.

● **Exercise:**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Say three sentences, projecting your voice toward a distant point (a wall):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I am here."</li> <li>• "I have something important to say."</li> <li>• "My voice matters."</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Keep diction clear, without shouting.</li> <li>3. Feel the vibration in your chest as you speak.</li> </ol> |
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## 4. Exercises for real advocacy situations

(Debates, panels, and short speeches)

### 4.1 "The 30-second story" (improv)

- **Objective:**  
To organize your thoughts under pressure.
- **How to do it?**  
**Create three versions of any idea you plan to present:**
  - 30 seconds
  - 15 seconds
  - 5 seconds

**This trains clarity and synthesis, and reduces fear of getting lost while speaking.**

### 4.2 "Intention anchor"

- **Objective:**  
To maintain emotional stability during long interventions.
- **How to do it?**
  1. Choose an internal anchor phrase:
    - "I am in service of the message."
    - "I breathe and continue."
    - "I don't need to be perfect; I need to be useful."
  2. Return to it every time you feel tension.

### 4.3 "The elegant mistake" (classic improv)

- **Objective:**  
To deactivate panic when something doesn't go as planned.
- **Practice it like this:**
  1. Simulate making a mistake (stumbling over a word, forgetting a fact).
  2. Respond with a recovery phrase:
    - "Let me rephrase."
    - "What I meant to say is..."
    - "What's important here is..."

**Resume calmly. Your brain learns that making mistakes is not the end of the world.**

## 5. Long-term training

(2-4 weeks)

### Week 1: Dismantling fear

- **3 days:** breathing + Meisner activity
- **2 days:** voice forward
- **1 day:** elegant mistake

### Week 2: Building presence

- Meisner repetition
- 30-15-5 story
- Improv with constraints (speaking only with verbs, five-word sentences, etc.)

### Weeks 3-4: Controlled scenario

- Simulate panels with someone
- Practice interruptions and resumptions
- Rehearse with strict timing



## 6. Reinforcement phrases before speaking

- *“Clarity lives in my breath.”*
- *“My voice amplifies causes.”*
- *“I am a channel, not a spectacle.”*
- *“I trust what I already know.”*

### Minute Emergency Kit Before Speaking

- If you're very nervous and only have a few minutes before speaking in public, you can use this express protocol. The idea is to remind your body that you are not in danger — you are stepping into an important space where your voice is needed.



**Step 1** (1 minute):  
Breathing + releasing tension

- Inhale while mentally counting to 4.
  - Hold your breath for 2 seconds.
  - Exhale gently while counting to 6.
- Repeat this cycle for one minute while releasing tension in your shoulders, jaw, and tongue. Let the exhale be longer than the inhale, as if you were letting out a soft sigh.



**Step 2** (2nd minute):  
Body shaking suave.

- Stand up and gently shake your legs, arms, and hands.
  - Imagine that with each shake, you're releasing a bit of tension.
- The goal isn't to “look good,” but to move your body so that the energy of fear doesn't get trapped.



**Step 3** (3rd minute):  
Project your voice forward + anchor phrase

- Say one or two short sentences out loud, projecting your voice forward as if you were offering it to the room: “I am here.” “My voice matters.” “This message is important.”
- Choose a personal anchor phrase that you repeat internally, such as: “I don't need to be perfect, I need to be useful.” or “I am in service of the message, not my ego.” Repeat this phrase as you take your first steps toward the stage or as you begin to speak.

### Exercise: Claiming the Space

Before the audience enters — or if you have a few free minutes in the space where you'll be speaking — you can do this exercise to make the place feel less threatening and more yours.

1. Walk slowly around the room or stage for 30 to 60 seconds. Look at the walls, the corners, the ceiling.
2. Gently touch a wall, a table, or the podium. Notice the texture, weight, and temperature.
3. Stand exactly where you'll be speaking. From there, take three deep breaths while looking at different points in the room.
4. Imagine the floor supporting you — that you are not alone and that your body has the right to occupy that space.
5. If you wish, quietly say: “This is my space too.”

The purpose of this exercise is to shift from feeling like you're entering a hostile or unfamiliar place to feeling like you're entering a space your body and eyes have already inhabited.





## Final Reminder: Presence Over Perfection

A common trap of stage fright is believing you have to be brilliant, flawless, and impress everyone. From an acting and public speaking perspective, the logic is different: you don't have to be perfect — you have to be present.

Some mantra-like reminders you can use before and during your speech:

- I don't have to impress — I have to be available.
- I don't have to be perfect — I have to be clear and honest.
- I'm not defending my worth as a person — I'm sharing a message.
- I can feel fear and still have the resources to continue.

Every time you practice these exercises, you teach your body that fear is not a signal to run away — it's a signal that you're stepping into something important. Over time, the stage stops feeling like a threat and becomes a space where your voice can live with greater calm and confidence.

