



JIM HARSHAW JR.

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #250

Jim Harshaw Jr Solo - How to Become a Better Public Speaker

Research shows that speaking publicly is one of the most common fears. It's also one of the most important skills if you want to gain influence, improve credibility, advance your career, and make your mark. Even though you are not likely planning on becoming a professional speaker, it's a skill that, more than any other, will benefit you personally and professionally. You may have to make a presentation at work, speak to a small group of 10 people, lead a meeting, speak at a wedding, or even give a eulogy. You don't want to screw these opportunities up.

This episode is a story of my own personal struggles with public speaking and a blueprint for how to avoid the same mistakes I made.

Quotes

"You become a professional once you get paid."

"I'm an old man and I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." - Mark Twain

About My Limiting Belief 04:57 - 07:59

If you don't have solid public speaking skills, you are going to be put into a place sometimes where you have to speak. You are required to do it. If you have poor skills, it can hold you back. Developing this skill can propel you forward while ignoring them can hold you back. Let me share with you a little bit about how I came to be a public speaker, especially from a person who feared it and shied away from that kind of thing. My job at the University of Virginia, I was a major gift officer, raising millions of dollars for the University of Virginia athletics. I was kind of in my element there, right? I was a former All-American athlete, three-time ACC champion, former assisting coach there, and I'm kind of the guy who came back to his alma mater and got to serve in this role. I have two degrees from this school. was very much in my

element, working in the athletic department, telling the story of student-athletes, telling the story of coaches. I was a non-scholarship, recruited walk-on when I showed up. I was almost a full scholarship athlete by the time I left. Being in my element, you would think that I had no fear of speaking because this is my world, my school. I'm a former successful athlete there. At one point, I decided to step out and speak. It was at an event with 200 or so people there. I had the microphone in my hand. Someone handed me the mic because I raised my hand, I stood up, asked a question to the then President of the University in front of 200 people. I froze. I got the question out but I was visibly nervous. You could see this. Why did I get so dang nervous? I'm looking around at all these people standing up and asking questions and I'm thinking nobody else is nervous here. But I'm realizing now that there were 6 people who stood up but there was 194 who didn't and were probably afraid to stand up. I wonder why do I have such a fear of this and how do I break out of this? The thought starts going through my head that I'm not good enough. This was a limiting belief that I had. Everybody has limiting beliefs. Usually, they show up as something where you just think it's true and is a fact. So it was just a fact that I couldn't speak publicly. I came to realize that was just my limiting belief."

Darius Nabors 14:19

"Darius has a website, <https://59in59.com/>. He actually traveled to 59 national parks in 59 weeks. It's a really cool website and I recommend that you check it out. He's hilarious, by the way. This is his [TEDx talk](#) and it's a hilarious one."

About Moving Towards Fear 16:29 17:18

"I love the quote 'You can't stumble into something unless you're moving forward.' I would not have stumbled into my TED talk had it not been for fear and failure and moving forward, moving into that fear. I didn't know where this path was going to take me. You never will, but you have to move forward. I'm going to step out of the conversation about public speaking for just a second. This goes for any part of your life. It almost doesn't matter what you do. Just pick something. Move forward. Connect with a person. Call your Darius Nabors. Call somebody who has done what you want to do. Reach out to them. Send a text. Connect with them on LinkedIn. Whatever it is, move forward. That's what I did and I stumbled into this."

About Cognitive Conversion 22:05 - 24:34

I did struggle to get comfortable and I didn't really have a framework for crafting a talk. So I learned about another individual, Rob Gilbert, who hosts the Success

Hotline. I had him on the podcast in Episode 33. I talked to him about speaking and he said, "Jim, it's so easy. Let me teach you.' So I hired him. I started paying him to be my coach. Lo and behold, I got better. My second experience with a coach. Now I'm starting to get paid. Now I'm starting to get paid real money. I remember at one point, I got paid \$2500 for a one-hour talk. this is crazy, right? This is peanuts compared to some of the top speakers out there. But I just kept feeling that I was average or even below average. And then I started getting testimonials that I was really making an impact. I kept feeling that I'm just not good enough. 'Maybe these people are just being nice.' Then I took my own medicine and I started using something that I now call a cognitive conversion. I talk about this in Episode 139. this is a shift in your mindset if you have a limiting belief. You do have a limiting belief and like I pointed out earlier, it's something that shows up as a fact. It's something like, 'I can't do _____ because of _____.' Whatever it is, fill in the blanks and there you have it, your limiting belief. 'I can't write a book because I'm not a good writer.' I identified those and I created a mantra. It was akin to, 'I am good enough, I am smart enough, I can inspire an audience.' That was it, something very simple that I don't even remember what it was. Then I started visualizing myself being successful on stage, and stepping off stage with people going, 'Jim, that was incredible.'" That started happening even more. I created a success log, logging all my success and victories not only in speaking, but also in business, in my personal life, professional life, etc."

Framework For Dealing With Nerves 28:50 - 30:36

1. Serve. **This not about you. This is about serving your audience.** One of the things I do before going on stage or even before these virtual talks I'm doing now, I literally visualize myself on my knee, serving this audience. I just heard this quote when I doing a meditation on the Calm app. This quote from H. Jackson Brown said, 'Remember that everyone you meet is afraid of something, love something, and has lost something.' This type of quote helps you remember that everybody is a real person. I don't care who they are, how amazing they are, how much money they make, etc., they are afraid of something, they love something, and they have lost something. You can serve them.

2. Make them laugh. Find a joke, either from something that happened that day at the event, or to you, or to the audience, or pre-plan something that will make them chuckle.

3. I **remember that this is just a short part of my day**. This is just a 15-minute talk or an hour-long talk, it's just a small part of my day.

4. I remember that I've already won. That can be just to **remember you've already won by having gratitude**. For me, I live in America, I live in a great community. I'm so blessed and thankful for my family, etc. Or it's even being grateful for the opportunity to speak and to present. If you are a follower of Christ, like I am, then you certainly have already won. You have nothing to worry about. I love the phrase, 'No longer a slave to fear for I am a child of God.'

5. Have a framework for delivery and preparation.

About Framework for Creating an Amazing Talk 31:03

1. Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. I don't remember who this quote is attributed to, certainly not me. But it's so simple. It's a great framework for any talk that you give. People want to know guideposts. At the beginning of the episode, I told you I'm going to give you why, I'm going to give my story, and I'm going to give you the how. So I told you what I was going to tell you, now I am telling you, and then I'm going to wrap up by telling what I told you.

2. You must have the mindset of serving your audience. **Know your audience**. Know their pinpoints. Know their experiences. Know their lingo. Learn about their industry. Know your audience.

3. Your job is to energize. Dr. Gilbert tells me this all the time. **Your job is to engage and energize the audience**. If you do nothing else but energize them, then you will have done a good job. You do this through stories, sometimes activities.

4. Be authentic. **Share something that makes you real**. I hope I did that with you today when I shared with you I failed.

5. Don't rely on PowerPoint. You can use it but don't have a ton of words on the slides. I use Guy Kawasaki's framework for PowerPoint presentations, which is 10 slides, 20 minutes, 30-font. This is pitching for venture capitals but it's relevant for us here as well. So, it's minimal slides, however long you need to present, and size 30 font.

6. Practice. Join Toastmasters. You can go for a free meeting. Google them and look for the local chapters in your town. Or just find a way to speak up at your staff meeting. Call a meeting with a few of your colleagues. Practice.

7. Get a coach. **Find somebody who can help you. Find a coach**, or at the very least, a mentor. There's no reason for you to have to do this alone. I have a speaking coach. I have a business coach. It's extremely valuable. I encourage you, pay somebody, hire somebody to help you.

TEDx Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgzjMTtf400>

Free Clarity Call

<http://jimharshawjr.com/apply>

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Episodes Referred

Tim Ferriss: <https://jimharshawjr.com/247> & <https://jimharshawjr.com/248>

Rob Gilbert: <https://jimharshawjr.com/33/>

Jim Harshaw - Cognitive Conversion: <https://jimharshawjr.com/139/>