Why you should pursue public speaking and how to get there

@yennycheung #EuroPython
About me

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Agenda for today

- Introduction
- **Why** public speaking?
- Overcoming our **fear**
- How to **get better**
- Where to **start**
Introduction

Public speaking by Yelpers
Why public speaking

My public speaking journey
Why public speaking

The benefits I got from public speaking

- Easier for me to talk in meetings and present in front of the company
- Being a software engineer is much more than coding, it’s about good communication
- Getting better at crucial conversations
- Great trick for introverts to meet people
Overcoming our fear

What hold us back from public speaking?
Overcoming our fear

What hold us back

- Our heart racing
- Forgetting what to say
- Being exposed as a fraud
- Not being good enough
What holds us back

Our heart racing
What holds us back

Our heart racing

- Come to terms with our nervousness
- Find your harbor
- Power pose
- Humor

Photo src: Tim Goedhart
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say
What holds us back

Our heart racing

- Come to terms with our nervousness
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- Power pose
- Humor

Photo src: Tim Goedhart
WHAT IF I TOLD YOU

YOU CAN PREP FOR SCREWING UP
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- We can rehearse for forgetting what to say:
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- We can rehearse for forgetting what to say:
  - Practise your comeback if you forget what to say
  - Time yourself
  - Q&A

Photo src: Sonja Langford
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- We can rehearse for potential problems:
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- We can rehearse for potential problems:
  - Rehearse the presentation **without slides**
  - Try not to rely too much on **speaker notes**
  - Wifi is bad? **Local copies** of video / links
  - Bring your own **adapters**
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- What if I really blank out on stage?
What holds us back

Forgetting what to say

- What if I really blank out on stage?
  - Try not to tell the audience you blanked out → your audience is supportive
  - “Let’s skip this for now”
  - Drink water
What holds us back

Being exposed as a fraud
What holds us back

Being exposed as a fraud

- The art of saying “I don’t know”
What holds us back

Being exposed as a fraud

- The art of saying “I don’t know”
- You don’t have to be the best on the topic to give a talk about it
What holds us back

Not being good enough
What holds us back

Not being good enough

- Imposter syndrome is dangerous!

![Perceived ability vs. Actual ability graph]
What holds us back

Not being good enough

- Imposter syndrome is dangerous!
- Set your expectations straight:

“One of the best advice for public speaking, is that your first talk will suck. You will get over it!” – Mario Stallone
What holds us back

Not being good enough

- **Imposter syndrome** is dangerous!
- Set your **expectations** straight
- It probably **went better** than you think
Not being good enough

How good is good enough?
Not being good enough

How good is good enough?

- Attend conference talks. You can use that as a reference
Not being good enough

How good is good enough?

- Attend conference talks. You can use that as a reference.
- Not all the talks might be engaging to you → that’s great! The topic that you think will not interest anyone could actually be a hit!
How to get better

Ways to get better at public speaking
How to get better

The Lean Startup model

- Build
- Measure
- Learn
- Repeat

Photo src: Campaign Creators
How to get better

Building the proposal and the talk
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Common misconception: all meetup and conference organizers are swarmed with applications.
- Reality:

  "Most organizers spend a lot of time sourcing for talks!" – Antoine Minoux
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Pick topics you’re truly interested in
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Pick topics you’re truly interested in
- Check the call for proposal form first

“I recommend you mention in your proposal how you would modify your talk for a shorter slot. That way, the program WG might consider your talk for a shorter slot, should they run out of longer slots.” – Raphael Pierzina
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Pick topics you’re truly interested in
- Check the call for proposal form first
- Think about the “Who, what and how”

Who - your target audience
What - what is the takeaway
How - how do you achieve that (e.g. showing code snippets, walk through examples, theories)
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Pick topics you’re truly interested in
- Check the call for proposal form first
- Think about the “Who, what and how”
- Leverage on your own experience
How to get better

Building the proposal

- Pick topics you’re truly interested in
- Check the call for proposal form first
- Think about the “Who, what and how”
- Leverage on your own experience
- Apply again to other places if it didn’t work out for one conference!
How to get better

Building the talk

- Rubber-ducking
- Find a good **feedback crew**
- Finetune your talk by knowing your **audience**
How to get better

Most good speakers are not naturals, they practice

“Dry-run,
Dry-run,
Dry-run ...
”

- Nicola Corti

Photo src: Uwe Kils
How to get better

Measure
How to get better

Measure

- Gather feedback from your feedback crew and from the audience
- Watch your presentation video
- Take notes on what questions are being asked. These are areas that people are interested in!
How to get better

Learn
How to get better

Learn

● Brace yourself for **taking feedback**

**Scenario:** After the dry-run for my talk, my colleague gave me some suggestions to improve.
How to get better

Learn

- Brace yourself for **taking feedback**

*Scenario:* After the dry-run for my talk, my colleague gave me some suggestions to improve. *Fixed mindset:* “Bummer, I totally messed it up. Now my colleagues must think that I wasn’t prepared.”
How to get better

Learn

• Brace yourself for taking feedback

**Scenario:** After the dry-run for my talk, my colleague gave me some suggestions to improve.

**Fixed mindset:** “Bummer, I totally messed it up. Now my colleagues must think that I wasn’t prepared.”

**Growth mindset:** “I’m thankful my colleague gave me those tips. Now my real talk is going to go better.”
How to get better

Learn

- Brace yourself for taking feedback
- What are the action items? Let’s tackle them one at a time.

Photo src: Kelly Sikkema
How to get better

Repeat
How to get better

Repeat

● And then you **reuse** your talk in different occasions
Where to start

Finding **opportunities** for public speaking
Where to start

Looking for speaking opportunities

- Standups, team meetings, presentations at your company, giving a speech at a party
- Internal / external speaking opportunities
- Conferences: first-time-speaker friendly
- Local meetups, underrepresented groups in tech
- Public speaking groups / classes?
Recap

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- **Why** public speaking?
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References

- https://speakerdeck.com/lara/demystifying-public-speaking
- Raphael Pierzina’s twitter thread on public speaking https://twitter.com/hackebrot/status/1123188824631316480
- “Crucial Conversations” by Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler
- “Mindset” by Carol Dweck
I encourage you to apply for a public speaking opportunity within these 2 weeks and get started now!

@yennycheung #EuroPython
Thank you! Any questions?

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