

## HOW TO OVERCOME FEARS WHEN SPEAKING ENGLISH: PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

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### Abstract

Fear of speaking English can significantly hinder language acquisition and communication skills. This article explores common psychological barriers faced by English learners, such as fear of judgment, perfectionism, and anxiety. It offers practical strategies to overcome these fears, including building confidence through practice, developing a growth mindset, and using relaxation techniques. By addressing these issues, learners can improve their speaking skills and gain confidence in their English communication abilities.

**Keywords:** Fear of speaking, English language, psychological barriers, anxiety, confidence building, communication skills, language learning, perfectionism, growth mindset.

### Introduction

Learning to speak English fluently is a common goal for many non-native speakers. However, the process is often fraught with psychological challenges that can make the task seem insurmountable. Fear of speaking English can stem from various sources, including past negative experiences, cultural differences, and personal insecurities. These fears can manifest as anxiety, self-doubt, and a reluctance to engage in conversations, all of which impede language development.

The importance of overcoming these psychological barriers cannot be overstated. Effective communication in English is essential in today's globalized world, where English often serves as a lingua franca in business, education, and social interactions. Mastering spoken English, can open doors to new opportunities, enhance career prospects, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

Despite the prevalence of these fears, many learners do not fully understand their origins or how to address them. This article aims to shed light on the common psychological barriers that hinder English speaking and provide practical strategies to overcome them. By exploring these issues, learners can gain insights into their own fears and develop the tools needed to become more confident and effective communicators.

In the following sections, we will delve into the specific fears that many English learners face, such as fear of judgment, perfectionism, and anxiety. We will then offer a range of strategies designed to build confidence, promote a positive learning mindset, and manage anxiety. Real-life examples and case studies will illustrate how these strategies can be applied successfully. By adopting these approaches, learners can

transform their fear into motivation, paving the way for improved language skills and greater self-assurance.

### **Main Body**

#### **Common Psychological Barriers**

##### **1. Fear of Judgment**

Many learners fear that others will judge them for their accent, grammar mistakes, or limited vocabulary. This fear can be paralyzing and prevent individuals from practicing speaking in real-life situations.

##### **2. Perfectionism**

Striving for perfection can lead to fear of making mistakes. Perfectionists may avoid speaking until they feel their language skills are flawless, which can hinder progress and reduce opportunities for practice.

##### **3. Anxiety**

Speaking a foreign language can trigger anxiety, manifesting as physical symptoms like sweating, shaking, or a rapid heartbeat. This anxiety can be a significant barrier to effective communication.

#### **Strategies to Overcome Fears**

##### **1. Build Confidence through Practice**

Regular practice is essential for overcoming fear. Engaging in conversations with friends, joining language exchange groups, or using language-learning apps can provide a safe environment to practice speaking without fear of judgment.

##### **2. Develop a Growth Mindset**

Embrace the idea that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process. Viewing errors as opportunities for improvement rather than failures can reduce the fear of speaking and encourage a more positive approach to language learning.

##### **3. Use Relaxation Techniques**

Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or visualization can help manage anxiety. Practicing these techniques before speaking can create a sense of calm and improve focus.

##### **4. Set Realistic Goals**

Setting small, achievable goals can build confidence over time. For example, starting with simple conversations and gradually increasing complexity can make the process less overwhelming.

##### **5. Seek Feedback and Encouragement**

Constructive feedback from teachers or language partners can provide valuable insights and boost confidence. Positive reinforcement and encouragement can also motivate learners to continue improving.

##### **6. Immerse Yourself in the Language**

Surrounding yourself with English through media, books, and conversations can help reduce fear. The more exposure you have, the more familiar and comfortable you will become with the language.

##### **7. Visualize Success**

Visualization techniques can be powerful. Imagine yourself speaking confidently and successfully in various scenarios. This mental practice can help reduce anxiety and build self-assurance.

#### 8. Join Supportive Communities

Being part of a community of learners who share similar challenges can provide support and encouragement. Online forums, social media groups, and local language clubs can offer a sense of belonging and motivation.

#### 9. Real-life Examples and Case Studies

Including real-life examples and case studies of individuals who have successfully overcome their fears can provide inspiration and practical insights. These stories can demonstrate that overcoming psychological barriers is possible with the right strategies and mindset.

#### Conclusion

Overcoming the fear of speaking English involves addressing psychological barriers such as fear of judgment, perfectionism, and anxiety. By building confidence through practice, developing a growth mindset, using relaxation techniques, setting realistic goals, seeking feedback, immersing oneself in the language, visualizing success, and joining supportive communities, learners can conquer their fears and become more confident and effective communicators. Embracing these strategies can lead to significant improvements in language proficiency and open up new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

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