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We are now ready to begin the Realtime Reporter Skills Examination. Following is 5 minutes of dictation at 180 words per minute. Ready. Begin.

The day has finally arrived. Today is the day that you have been waiting for. Today is the day that you have been so excited about. You have become so eager that you have been almost sick with anticipation. You have spent time getting prepared. You have done your homework. You have asked yourself whether this event would actually happen. You wondered why you agreed to put yourself through this. This was really something you thought you wanted to tackle. You honestly believed that you should do it. You do have enough knowledge to pull it together. You are as qualified as you need to be. You really were invited to be here. They truly think you are the appropriate person for this job. At this moment, you are thinking of a million other things you could be getting done or dreaming of a dozen other places you could have gone. You might have spent the afternoon enjoying the beach. You could have taken a hike in the mountains. Maybe you would finally read that highly recommended book. You could have caught up on correspondence or taken yourself to a movie. You might have a conversation with your best friend. But none of these activities will be accomplished now. You made a commitment and now you have to follow through.

Yes, today is the day you are scheduled to deliver a speech. Two of the top fears of many people are dying and having to speak in public. In fact, people are so intimidated by public speaking it might appear they would rather die than give a speech. There is no avoiding it. At some point in life, almost everybody will have to give a speech or/and an oral presentation. We are going to go through a few details to help you survive the big moment.

First, remember that the audience is on your side. That's the good news. People are sacrificing their time and maybe even their money and they really want you to be excellent. They will stay on your side for approximately 30 seconds. You have that much time to get and keep their attention. Do not assume that they expect you to fail. That isn't correct. So how do you keep them interested even past that first 30 seconds? You must look the part. Dress comfortably but professionally and look like you know what you are doing. Smile. Look them in the eye. Show emotion. Move around if you can. Keep changing your position. Stand and walk forward. Speak loudly and then softly. Be serious and funny. Do you remember hearing that you should pick one friendly face in the audience and look at them? If you do, that person will think that you are going to ask them out to eat later. Do not only look at one person. Look around the whole room. Make contact with as many individuals in the room as possible. As previously mentioned, the first 30 seconds have the most impact. You should begin by sharing a story or a quote or something that will grab attention. Unless you have a very funny joke, don't begin with one. If you use a bad story, the audience will stop listening. Stay on time but don't make it obvious that you are checking the clock. If you are getting off your schedule, don't invite questions. Drop one of the

stories you were thinking about sharing. Retain the major objectives you were expecting to talk about. If you need to fill additional time, invite somebody to share an experience they had or allow people to ask questions.

Think about the physical space you're in. There are several items you can check before you start that will put your mind at ease. Learn how to turn the microphone on or off and how to remove it from the stand or clip it on to your clothes. Practice moving around the area while rehearsing your talk. If you are planning to include a laser pointer or a projector, make certain you know how to operate it. Check your Power Points and make sure they are in the proper order. If you are giving statistics, include them in a hand out. Give out materials only as you refer to them so that people do not stop listening to read the notes. If you recite them you will bore the audience. Don't read your speech. Only actors or professional speakers can read full sentences and make the language sound like regular talking. Look people in the eye. Be friendly. Make your speech address the following ideas:

This is where I started
This is where I am currently
This is how I arrived here
This is where I am going

Practice using a tape recorder or in front of friends and family. Avoid putting your hands inside your pockets or leaning on anything. Do not face the board or screen. If you are really nervous when you start, stretch your body, wiggle your toes and breathe deeply. Remind yourself that you know more about the subject matter than the people who are listening. Remember that of millions of talks, a handful have been excellent more than double that number were terrible and the rest fell somewhere in between. After you've finished your first presentation, you may decide you liked it and you may want to do it again. Really.