Communication Apprehension

Nature or Nurture?

Think of a continuum...

Stage Fright

Communication Apprehension

General Anxiety

Definition: Communication Apprehension

- An individual’s
  - level of fear or anxiety
  - associated with either real or anticipated communication
  - with another person or persons.

McCroskey, 1977
Degrees of Communication Apprehension

- **High** Communication Apprehension (High Comm Apps):
  People who fear communication to some degree

- **Low** Communication Apprehension (Low Comm Apps):
  People who are more likely to enjoy communication.

Types of Communication Apprehension

- **Trait** Apprehension: A general trait of the individual; fear of communication generally.

- **State** Apprehension: Related to a certain state (e.g. public speaking)

General Causes

- Home environment
- School environment
- Trauma
- Communibiology
What (specifically) can cause Communication Apprehension?

- Novelty/Lack of experience
- Formality of the situation
- Degree of conspicuousness & degree of attention from others
- Degree of evaluation
- Unfamiliarity/inadequate preparation
- Familiarity
- Subordinate Status
- Prior history

General Treatments for Communication Apprehension

- Systematic desensitization - work in stages, starting with small steps
- Cognitive restructuring - changing the way you think
- Rhetoritherapy - skills training

General Suggestions to Reduce Apprehension levels

- Acquire communication skills & experience
- Prepare and practice
- Familiarize yourself with the situation
- Have realistic expectations
- Focus on success & Think Positively
- Try to relax
- Put communication apprehension in perspective