

Harrison Ford and Julia Roberts Top List of Celebrities Who Found Success Despite a Fear of Public Speaking

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Oct. 15, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- From Abraham Lincoln to Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi, some of the world's most important historical figures have overcome their fear of speaking in public to achieve great success. Glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, is a common social phobia, with an estimated 75 percent of the population experiencing some form of anxiety before giving a speech. For the last 95 years, millions of people have joined Toastmasters to help with their fear of public speaking.

You might find it hard to believe that some of the most famous people in the world tremble at the thought of speaking in front of an audience, but as this list shows, anyone can suffer from glossophobia:

- Entrepreneur **Richard Branson** still breaks out in a cold sweat at the memory of his first speech in front of classmates at school. Although he admits to still loathing public speaking, Branson uses a few tips to help him cope with large audiences and is one of the highest-paid speakers in the world.
- **Harrison Ford** has called public speaking "a mixed bag of terror and anxiety," but that hasn't prevented the "Star Wars" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark" actor from starring in numerous blockbuster movies and receiving the Life Achievement Award of the American Film Institute.
- Before becoming one of the highest-earning stand-up comedians, **Jim Gaffigan** had stage fright and a fear of public speaking when he first began performing in front of an audience.
- When **Samuel L. Jackson** was a child, his speech therapist suggested acting to help combat his debilitating stutter and speaking phobia. Jackson has gone on to win an Academy Award® and appear in more than 120 movies.
- **Julia Roberts** went from a stutterer with a fear of public speaking as a child to giving [a memorable acceptance speech](#) when she won the Best Actress Oscar® for "Erin Brockovich" in 2001.

As the list above indicates, even famous individuals have suffered from glossophobia; however, they were able to overcome their fear and find success in their professional lives. Toastmasters International, the global organization devoted to communication and leadership skills development, offers a casual club setting for people to face their fear and practice speaking in front of a small and supportive audience.

To find a local Toastmasters club where you can develop or improve your presentation skills, visit www.toastmasters.org/findaclub.

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Englewood, Colo., the organization's membership exceeds 358,000 in more than 16,800 clubs in 143 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow [@Toastmasters](#) on Twitter.

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