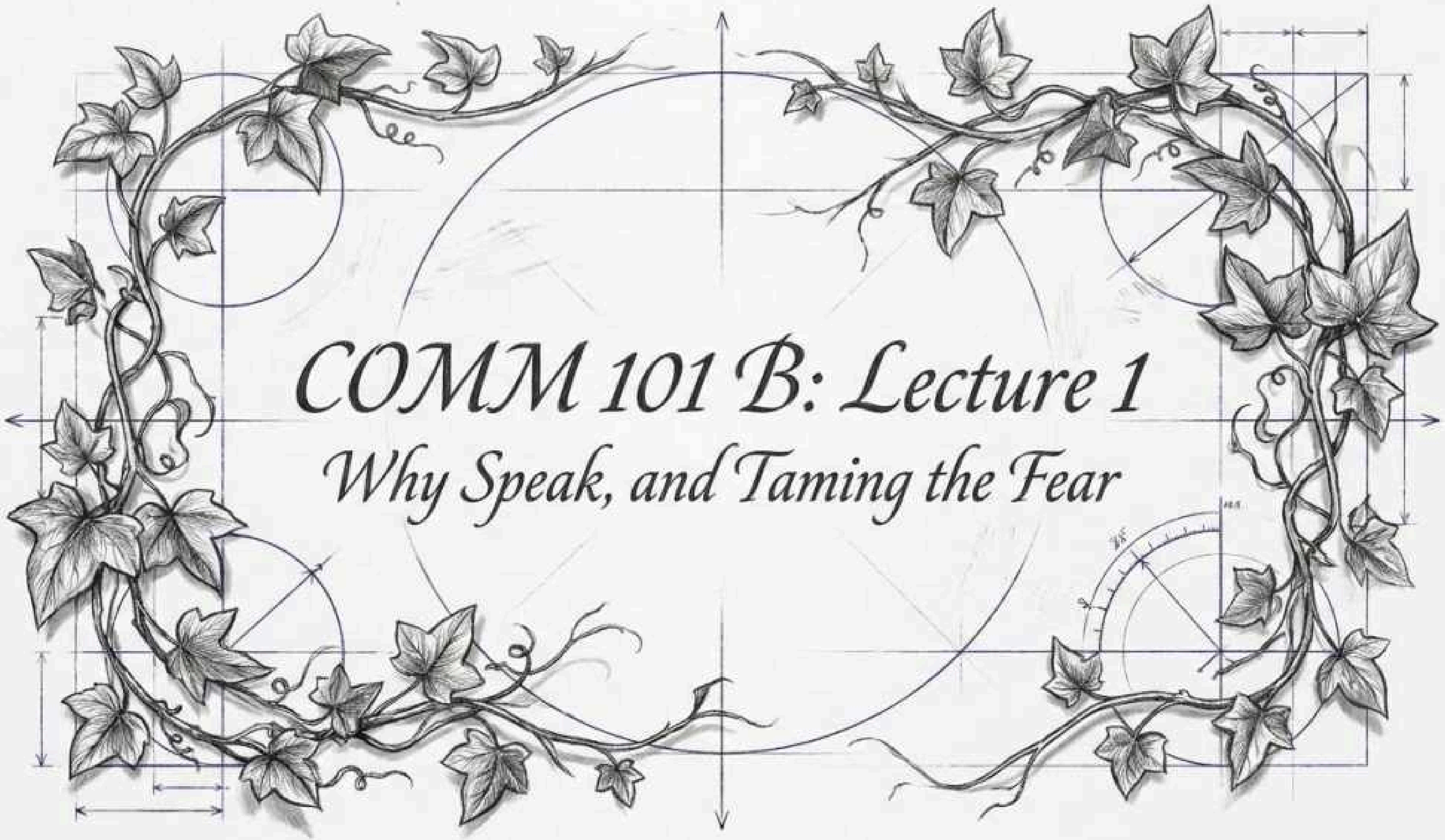
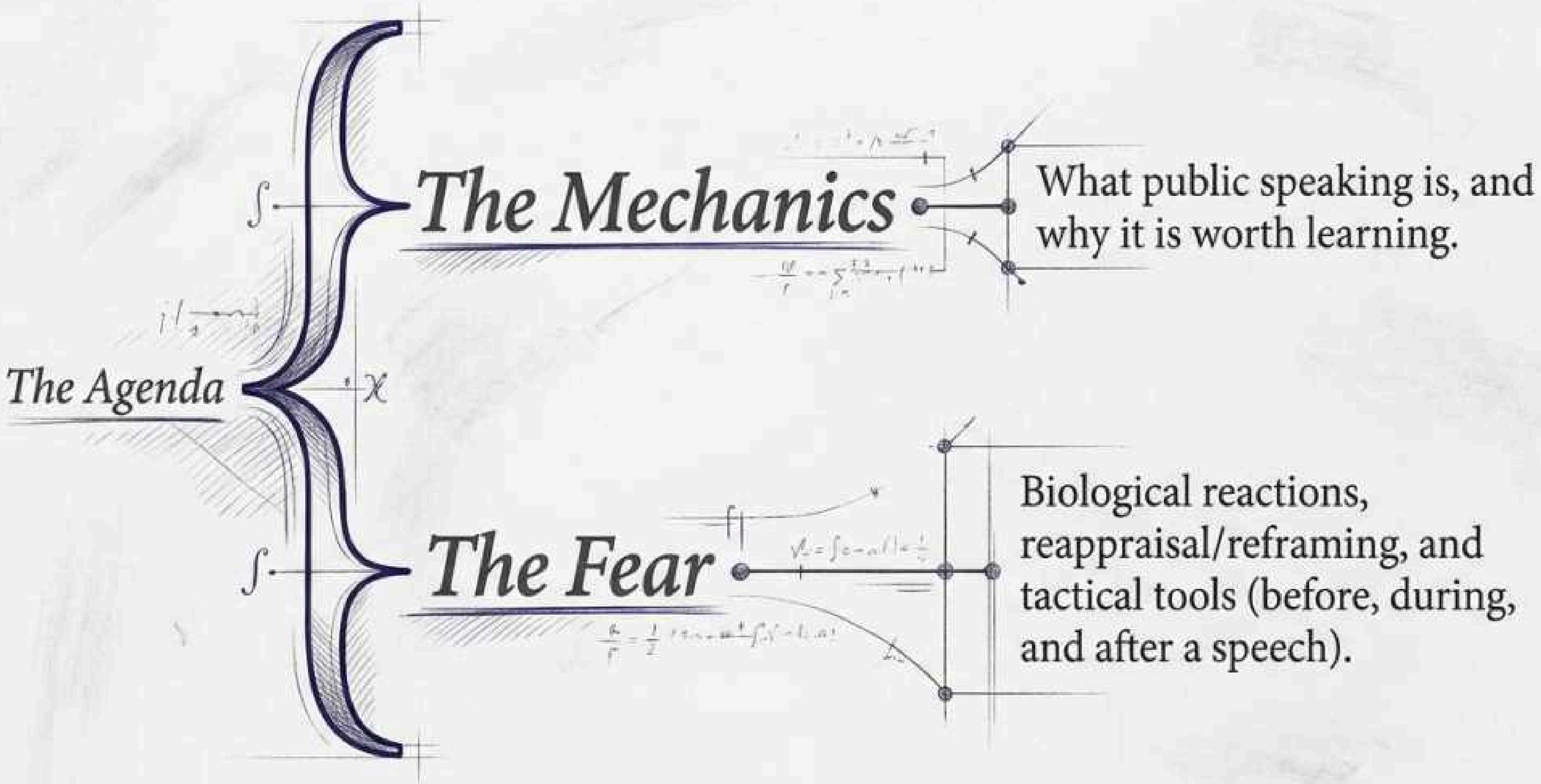


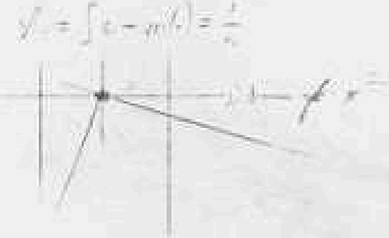
# COMM 101 B: Lecture 1

## Why Speak, and Taming the Fear


The Agenda
The Mechanics
What public speaking is, and why it is worth learning.
The Fear
Biological reactions, reappraisal/reframing, and tactical tools (before, during, and after a speech).

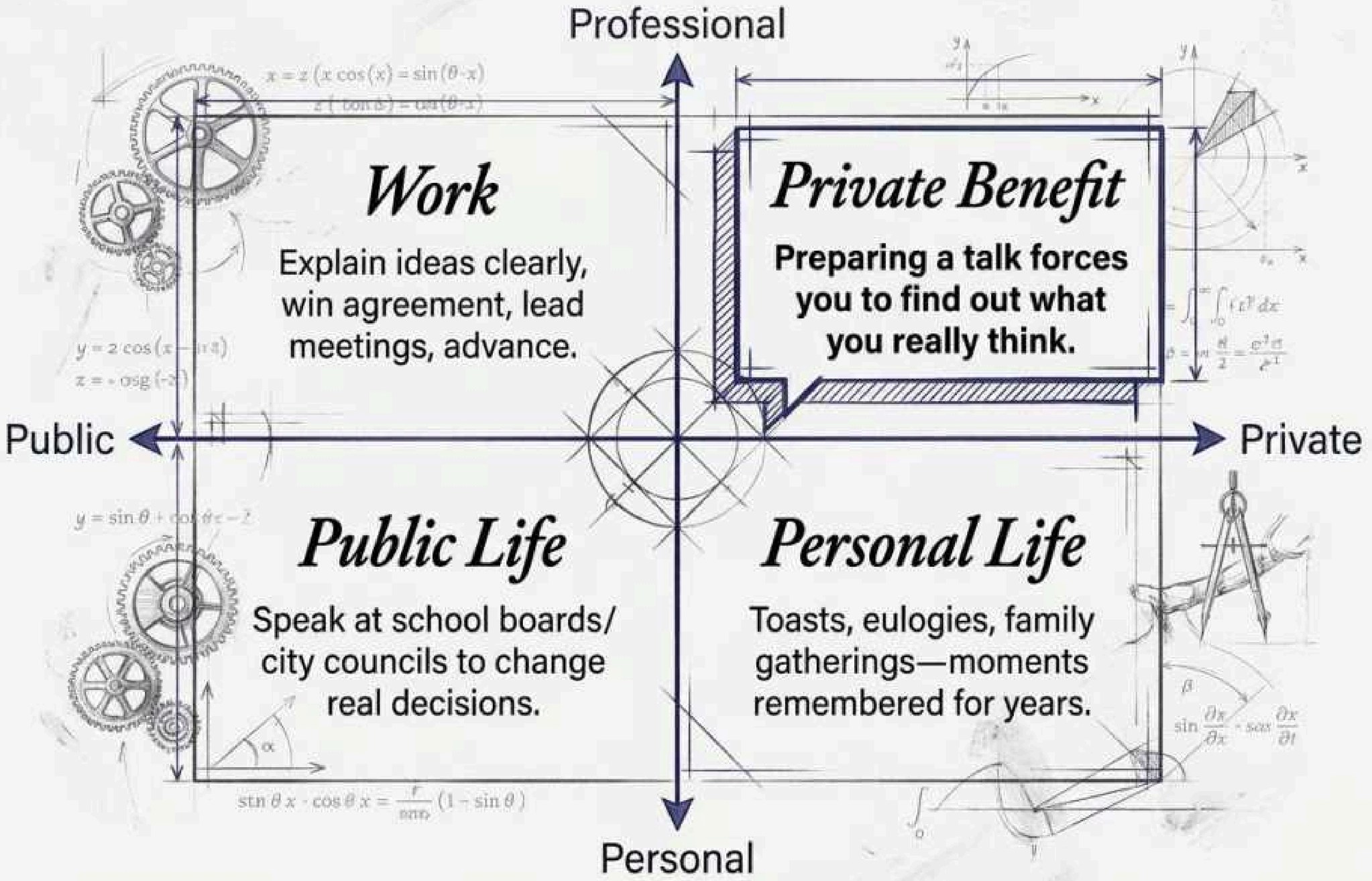
# *Public Speaking vs. Ordinary Conversation*

| | Ordinary Conversation | Public Speaking |
|---|---|---|
| Planning | Spontaneous | Advanced |
| Structure | Loose | Highly Organized |
| Talk Time | Shared Equally | Single Speaker Dominated |
| Feedback | Verbal Interruptions | Facial / Adjusted |

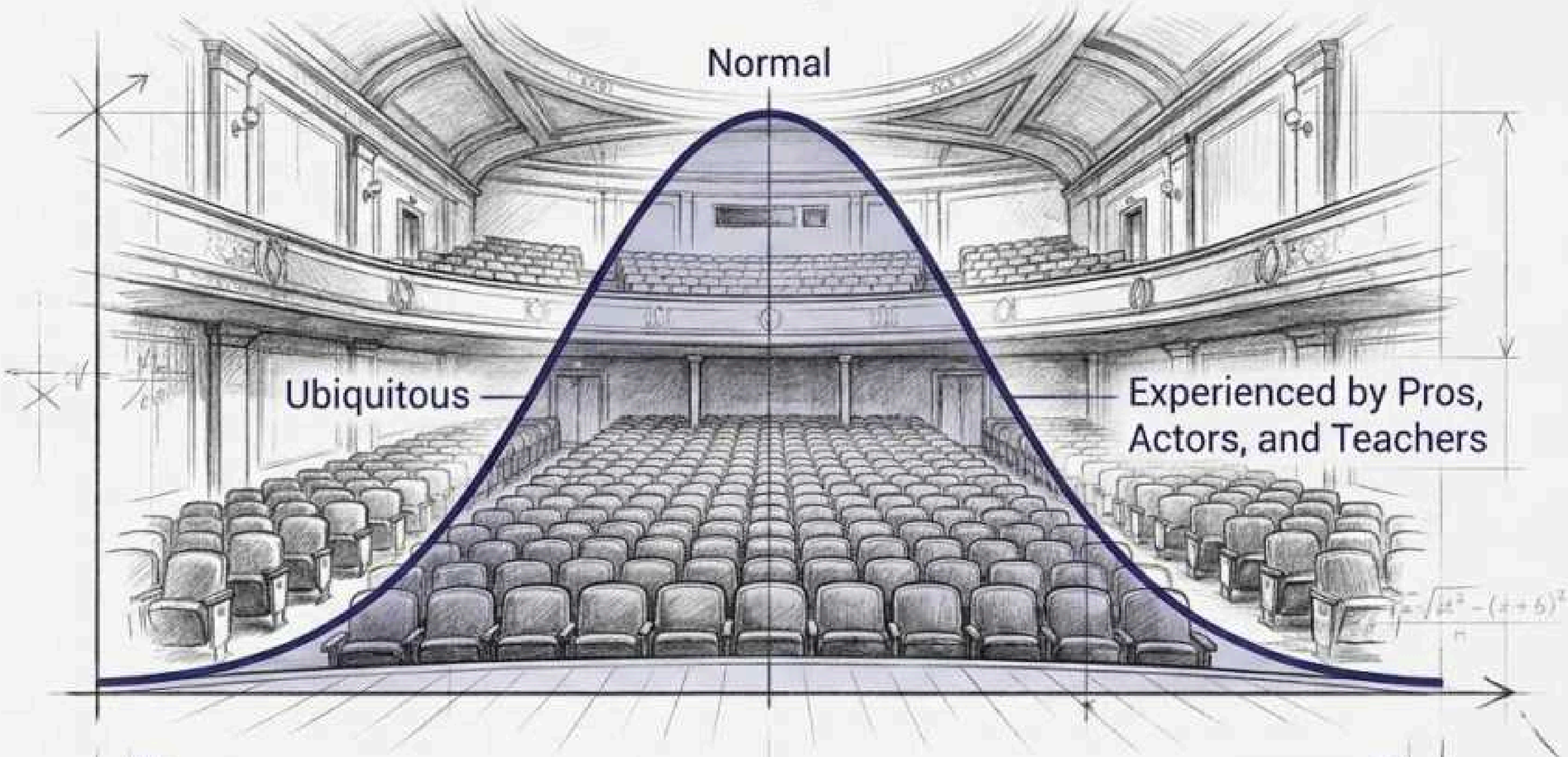


A good speaker watches the faces in the room and adjusts to them as the speech goes on.

***[Public Speaking = Ordinary Conversation + Structural Architecture]***


Professional
Work
Explain ideas clearly, win agreement, lead meetings, advance.
Private Benefit
Preparing a talk forces you to find out what you really think.
Public
Private
Public Life
Speak at school boards/ city councils to change real decisions.
Personal Life
Toasts, eulogies, family gatherings—moments remembered for years.
Personal

# The Ubiquity of Fear

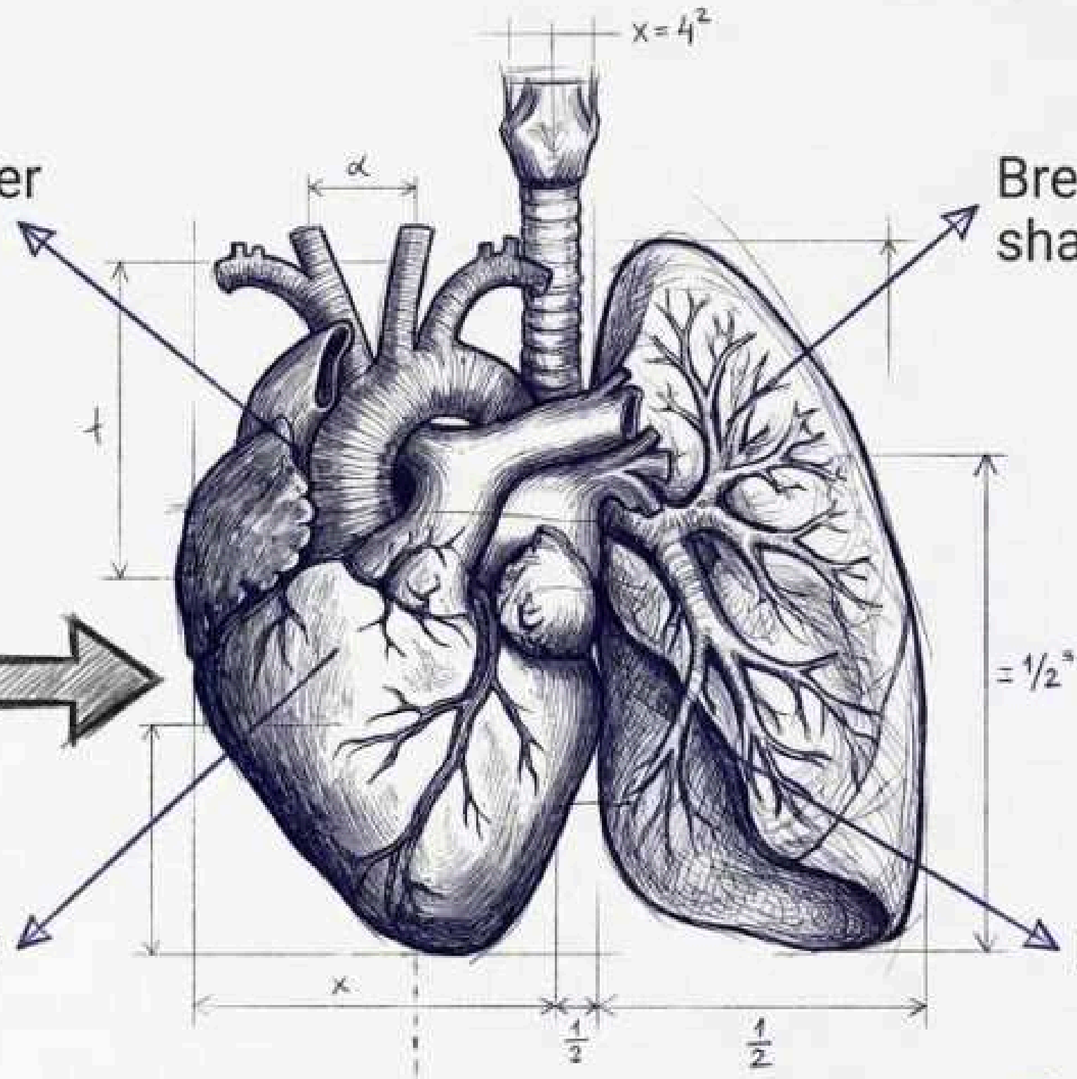



The variable for success is not the presence of fear, but your response to it.

Audience Stares

Threat Detected
(Fight-or-Flight)

Adrenaline
Release

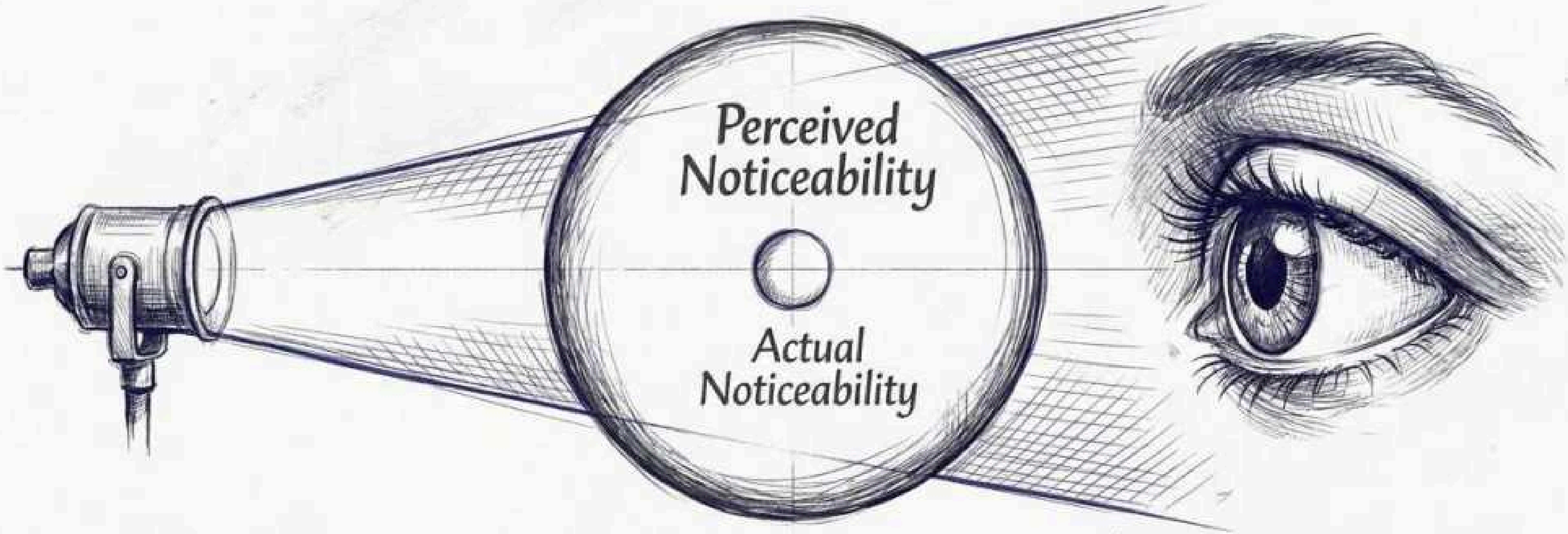



[ Your nervous system cannot tell the difference between a predator and a staff meeting. ]

**Physical Arousal** + **Cognitive Label** ("I am excited") = **Enhanced Performance**

Nervousness and excitement are physically almost identical (racing heart, rush of energy).

Alison Wood Brooks (Harvard): Speakers who said "I am excited" outperformed those who tried to calm down.




Thomas Gilovich T-shirt experiment

The audience wants you to succeed. A bored or embarrassed speaker makes listeners uncomfortable. You notice your nerves far more than they do.




1. Know your opening almost by heart.
2. Know your overarching structure.
3. Rehearse out loud, on your feet, several times.

Note: Focus on delivery mechanics.

*Uncertainty shrinks when you know your material.*
*Confidence follows competence; it does not precede it.*

# T-Minus 60 Minutes

## The Body

Breathe slowly (exhale longer than inhale to settle the body)

Move around, stretch, shake out hands.



## The Environment

Arrive early, stand at the front to own the space

Test equipment, drink water, avoid heavy caffeine.

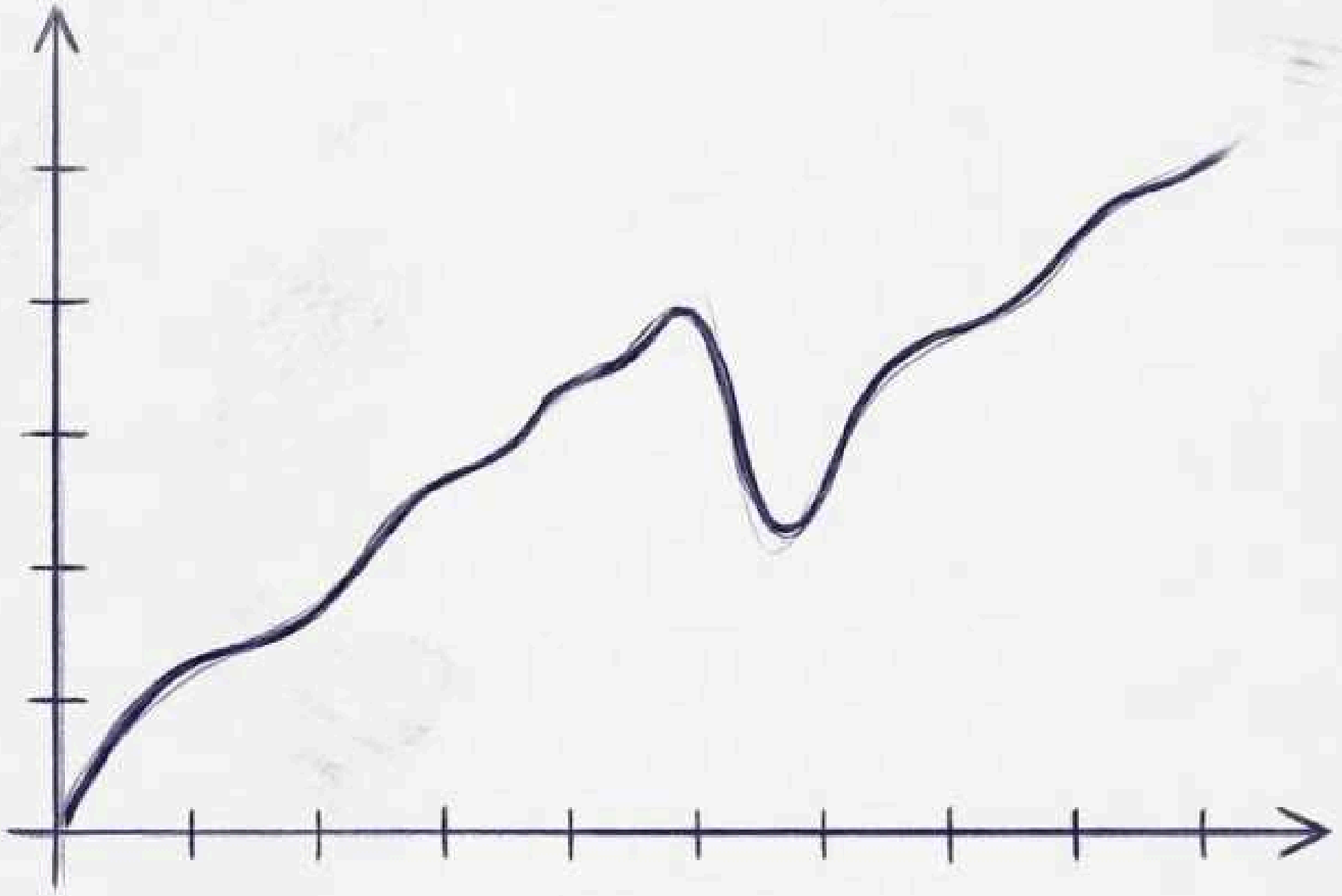
*Chat with early arrivals. A friendly face you have already met is a great help.*



Pause → Take a Breath → Look at the Audience → Speak Slow

- Talk to one person at a time.
  Finish one thought with one face.
- If you lose your place: Stop.
  Look at your notes. Find it.

*Speaker's Eternity = Listener's Moment of Thought.*



*Recovery Protocol*

[X] No Drama.

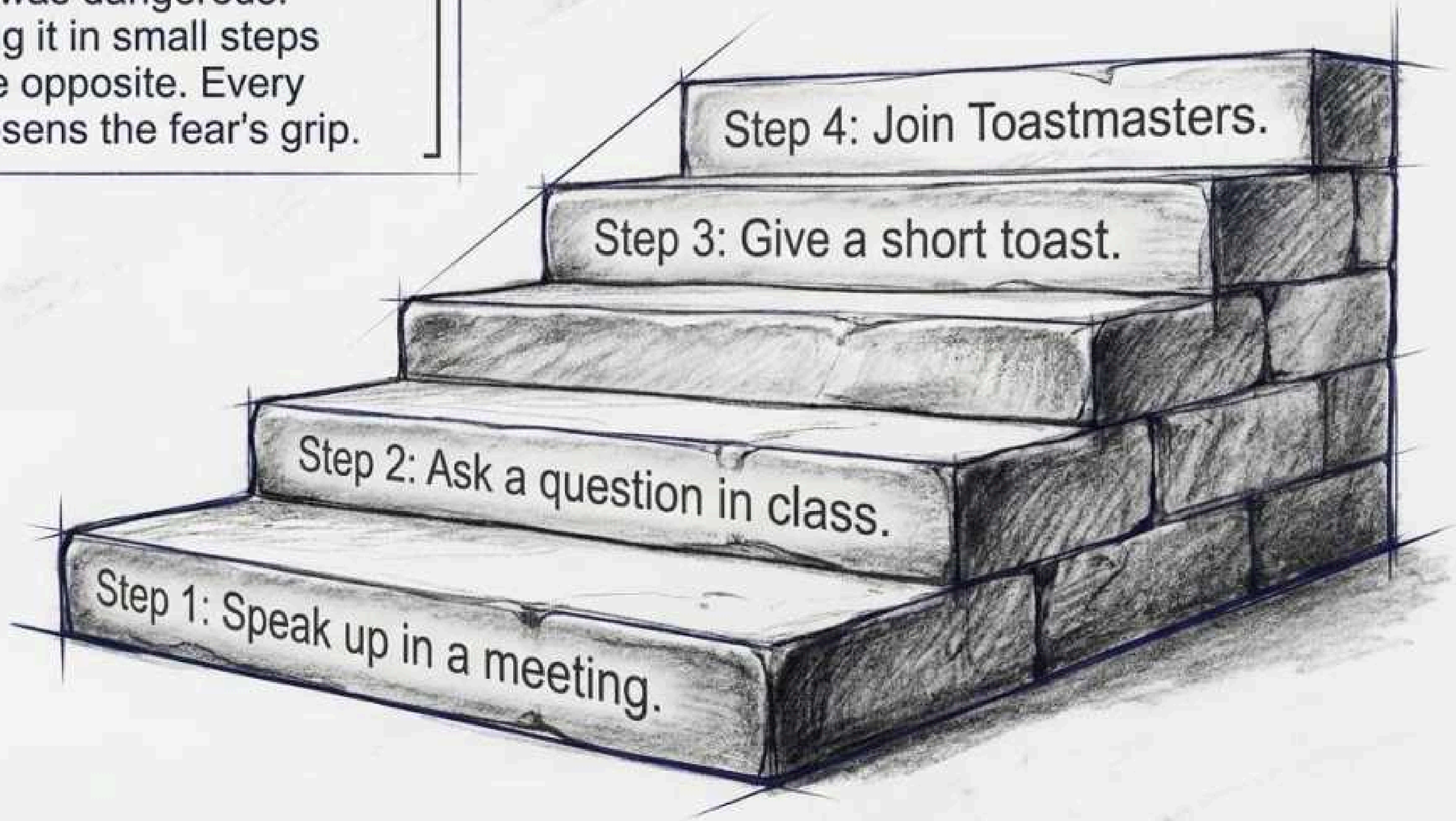
[X] No Apologies.

[X] No Announcing Nerves.

Audiences forget a slip within seconds unless the speaker highlights it.

「Mental rehearsal (picturing success) works best when it supplements physical practice, not when it replaces it.」

Avoiding the thing we fear teaches the mind it was dangerous. Approaching it in small steps teaches the opposite. Every survival loosens the fear's grip.



*Don't eliminate the butterflies;*
*get them to fly in formation.*



Zero Nerves =
A flat, lifeless performance.

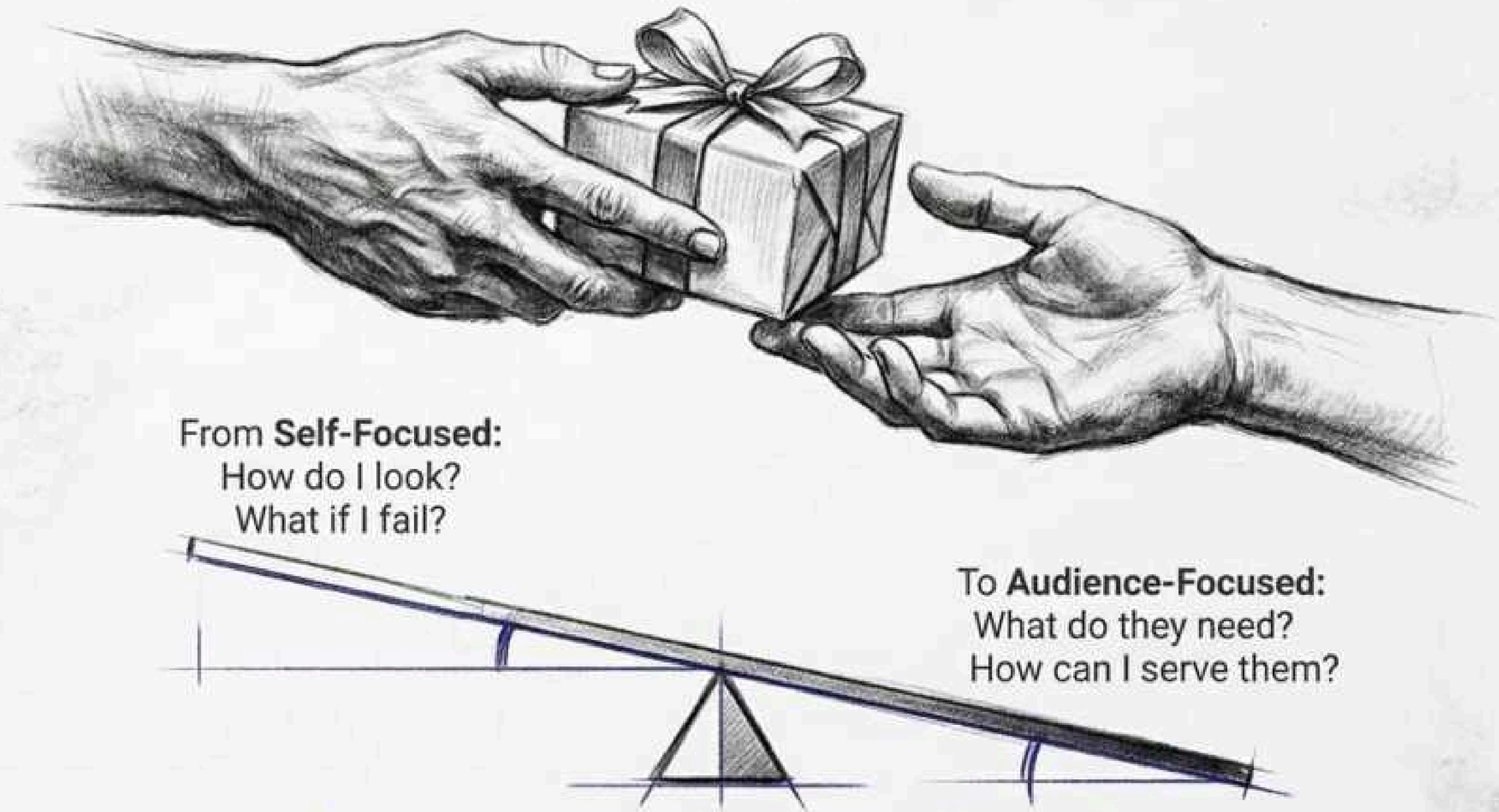
Controlled Nerves = Adrenaline as fuel, providing energy, alertness, and a livelier voice.

# *A Word of Caution.*

If anxiety is severe enough to interfere with school, work, or daily life, effective medical and counseling treatments
This course teaches speaking skills; it is not therapy.

**There is no shame in asking for help.**
**Speak with a doctor or counselor if needed.**






# A speech is a gift to the listeners, not a test of the speaker.



## The Takeaway

Recall a time you spoke to a group.
What did your body feel like?
What helped?

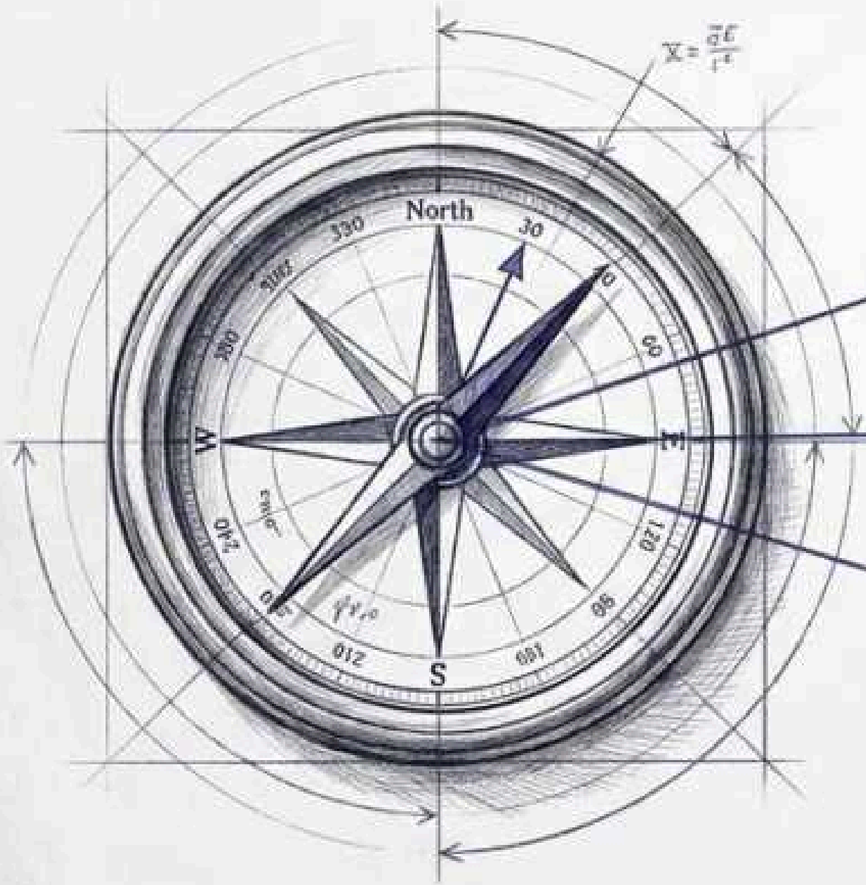
## The 10-Second Rehearsal

1. Stand up in an empty room.
2. Pause.
3. Say your name and one fact about your day out loud.
4. Pause again.

*It takes ten seconds. This is your first rehearsal.*

# Looking Ahead

## Lecture 2: The First Step of Preparation.




- Understanding your audience.
- Choosing your purpose.
- Finding your topic.