



—INTRODUCTION—

[If you have a stage, begin your message on the floor. At a later point in the message, you will step onto the stage to illustrate how the platform commands attention]

Ok, I have an assignment for you, I need you to go home after youth group tonight and work on something for me. I need each of you to work on a twenty-minute presentation on the history of Eastern Europe. Then, I want you practice it and be ready to present it to the entire group!

It needs to be perfect – no using your notes while presenting. You must remember the entire thing. Also, it needs to be ready by next week.

[Pause for effect. The students will likely know you are joking, but you can let it hang for a couple of seconds]

Now obviously I'm kidding, but how would you feel if it was real, and you really had to do that? Some of you might literally poop your pants! Not because of the content of the presentation, but just because you had to speak in front of all these people!

But for real, how do you usually feel when you have to get in front of a group of people and present something?

For most of us, there is something about being on a platform that is absolutely terrifying. We hate it when all eyes are on us— when people are watching our every move!

Maybe you've had to do one of these in the past:

- A presentation or speech in class
- A band concert
- A play or recital
- A talent show

When you're up on the stage, usually all attention is on you. That can make many of us feel pretty uncomfortable.

Maybe for some, you LOVE Being on stage. You get excited when the focus is on you, when you get the chance to WOW everyone!

Like, you would come up on the stage for the fake presentation I'm going to make you do, and you would make up all kinds of lame facts about Eastern Europe and you would enjoy doing it!

—TENSION—

Regardless of how the platform makes you feel, when you're on a platform, people notice.

[At this point I moved from the floor to the stage to illustrate the point.]

The fact remains that when someone is up on the stage, the attention is on them; people are watching.

When I am up here on the stage, versus on the floor, your attention is drawn to me. When I was on the floor, I was probably easier to ignore me. You may have thought you could get away with talking to your friends more. You may have been playing a game on your phone, and I didn't even notice. But now that I am on the stage, underneath these lights, it's a little bit harder to ignore me.

The stage is a place of influence. For good or bad, when someone is on a platform, other people take notice.

Now, think of your life this way: it is on display. You have the opportunity to influence someone. People are watching what you do.

You have a platform.

You might say, *“Actually, I do everything I can to stay OUT of the spotlight! I don't want to stand out at all.”*

That may be true, but I would suggest this to you:

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