All Choked Up

1. Attention-getting device (AGD), in which she makes herself more accessible and sympathetic to the audience by showing that she does this too. Oratory should always be ‘we’ and ‘us,’ NEVER ‘you’ or ‘society.’ Also, NEVER ‘we need to’ or ‘we must’ but ‘we can’ and NEVER ‘we have to first …’ but instead ‘let’s … ‘I know I can do this. I KNOW I can do this. Or so I told myself. I took the stage, the judges nodded, and I was off. My mouth and hands were in perfect synch. I nailed my first point, then my second, then my third … But then, at No. 8, I watched my hand shake. My throat closed. And with that, the Rancho Cucamonga Chubby Bunny Annual Marshmallow Eating Contest became a thing of horror. All those months of high-calorie practice for nothing. I ran from the stage, a disgrace to the greater San Jose marshmallow community. Worse, my college apps, where I’d already listed this victory, needed immediate revising. As I hid backstage, a friend rushed over. She said, “Are you OK? You looked like you were choking!” 2) transition to thesis Well, I wasn’t—not literally, anyway. But then I confronted a more figurative definition. 3) thesis When the pressure hits and we think it’s all on the line, we often\*do\* choke. You see, too many of us have an 8th marshmallow in our lives. We taste it everywhere. 4) she begins her statement of significance here by showing everyday examples so audience gets how pervasive it isAsking for a date. Interviewing for a job. Testing … auditioning … sticking that landing. We let destructive thoughts and behaviors sap the success and satisfaction we’ve trained for [PAUSE]…. and deserve. This is the substantiation for the statement of significance: Renita Kalhorn, a corporate performance strategist with an MBA, a music degree from Juilliard \*\*\*and\*\*\*\* a black belt in karate says, “What’s funny is that while it was our brainpower that’s instrumental in getting us to that point of achievement, it’s also the culprit that sabotages our performance. (Okay, it’s not that funny.)” HERE’S THE LINK TO HER AND HER BIO: <http://www.evancarmichael.com/Leadership/6233/WHY-YOU-CHOKE-UNDER-PRESSURE--AND-HOW-TO-AVOID-IT-PART-I.html 5>) her roadmap begins with a ‘today’ phrase So today, let’s stop this NOTE: THIS A VERY POPULAR MARSHAMALLOW SNACK—I LOVE IT BECAUSE IT SOUNDS NUTTY AS IN INSANE: fluffernutter hinking. And it crystallizes here: First, we’ll swallow some hard truths: the reasons we choke. Next, we’ll [MAKE MARSHMALLOW GESTURE pinch] at their harms and finally, puff right back up with solutions that, like any decent marshmallow, stick .. 6) clincherand are 100% gluten-free.

Intro to cause no. 1: One of the most successful managers in baseball history, Gene PRONOUNCE THIS ‘MOWK’: Mauch ID HERE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene\_Mauch, once said, “Losing streaks are funny. If you lose at the beginning, you got off to a bad start. If you lose in the middle of the season, you're in a slump. If you lose at the end, you're choking.” LINK TO THAT VERY FAMOUS QUOTE: <http://boatagainstthecurrent.blogspot.com/2011/09/quote-of-day-gene-mauch-on-losing.html>. Now Mauch may not do marshmallows AWESOME JOKE:–he’s dead—but I think he was on to something there. SUCCINCT STATEMENT OF FIRST CAUSE:When we focus only on the result, not the process, we too often strike out.] See? I’m down with the lingo. DATA/EXAMPLE TO SUPPORT HER ASSERTION: University of Chicago psychologist Sian Beilock, author of Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To agrees with Gene. She says, “Thinking too much about what you are doing, because you are worried about losing the lead...” leads straight to disaster. THEN SHE WIDENS THE APPLICATION TO ALL OF US WITH ANOTHER STRING OF EVERYDAY EXAMPLES TO MAKE THE QUOTE MORE APPLICABLE, LESS ABSTRACT: When we obsess on getting an A or the trophy or the cash or the job contract, we \CUTdevalue the process and hard work that CUTlead us there.

SHE CONTINUES WITH A DIFFERENT KIND OF EXAMPLE, DATA/STUDY, TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXPERT’S QUOTE ABOVEA recent experiment shows this all too well. MOVEDDr. Randall Engle, a professor at Michigan State University, gave a standard course test, in which his students had nothing at stake but a decent grade. [THEN MAKE A DISMISSIVE GESTURE, LIKE, SHOULD BE NOTHING---I’LL DEMONSTRATE ON SKYPE] Then he had them take the same test again. He told them that those who scored well would win fabulous cash prizes. This time, those who did best the first time scored more than 10% lower. Why? Because, Engle and others conclude, NOTE FIXthe tantalizing new focus distracted them.

TRANSITION TO SECOND CAUSE, WHICH SHE ARTICULATES CLEARLY AND BRIEFLY: When we’re not focusing on the result, we choke another cause: NOTE CUT others’ opinions. SHE GETS SMARTY-PANTS CRED BY INVOKING A SYNDROME HEREPsychology professor Marci DeCaro of the University of Louisville calls this “monitoring pressure.” THEN SHE EXPLAINS THIS BRAINY IDEA, MAKES US \*FEEL\* IT, BY APPLYING IT TO A STRING OF EXAMPLES IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES: And the monitors could be our friends, our family, judges, coaches, and ex-boyfriends. We often project all sorts of fantasy expectations onto these people, thinking they’ll judge or disown us if we fail. And so we do fail. When usually, they only wish us success and accept us for who they are. Except my ex-boyfriend, who collects voodoo dolls. HERE IS THE LINk <http://bodyodd.nbcnews.com/_news/2011/08/12/7349831-dont-choke-why-we-buckle-under-pressure?lite> : THEN A STUDYDeCaro asked 30 people to classify simple shapes and objects. When told they were being watched, they started bumbling and fumbling. One even cried. See what voodoo can do?

THEN A REAL PERSON’S EXTREME EXAMPLE: Meet a man named Hemant Sabnis, who knows this pressure all too well. WHICH SHE TIES INTO A STAT TO WHICH WE CAN ALL RELATEHe is among the 1.1 million unemployed people the U.S. Department of Labor calls “discouraged workers.” They give up searching for employment because they’re tired of failing. THEN SHE TAKES APART THE STAT TO MAKE THE MAN’S STORY RELEVANT IN A WAY WE HAVEN’T THOUGHT OF BEFORE: Lost in this statistic, however, is a key reason why people give up. You see, Hemant says that during his long search for an engineering job, he would always choke during the interview. What worried him wasn’t losing the job, but what his father would think. And his dad wasn’t anywhere near the room.

NOW SHE’S ONTO HER HARMS: What stays in the room, and in our memory, are the harms of the choking mentality. SUCCINCT STATEMENT OF FIRST HARM: A big one: we lose any rational sense and enjoyment of the task we’re performing. We forget that even a marshmallow-eating contest has its very definite sections and steps. THEN SHE TAKES THE HARM AND APPLIES IT TO THE EXAMPLE SHE HAS ALREADY OFFERED IN INTRO, SO THE SPEECH IS MORE UNITED, WHICH IS ALSO CLEVER AND CREATIVE: The joy of the texture. The sugary scent. The third-marshmallow strategy. Hint: it’s all about the left cheek. THEN SHE SUPPORTS IT WITH AN EXPERT QUOTENoted sports psychologist Alan Stein calls this “playing present”: absorbing, enjoying, and growing from all that we can control.

THEN SHE CLEARLY AND DECISIVELY MOVES TO HER SECOND HARM. NOTE THAT SHE NUMBERS THEM SO THE AUDIENCE CAN FOLLOW HER OUTLINE, BUT SHE DOESN’T SEEM TOO ROBOTIC IN STRUCTUREAnd when we don’t? Well, we experience our second harm: the useless self-criticism that choking inspires. We start to tell ourselves that maybe we’re not as good as we originally believed. We don’t take into consideration our past successes and use this single failure as proof that we’re going to continue to fail in the future. Not only that, but we push aside the values we can learn from our experiences, such as tools that will help us improve. Or the recognition of the support we have in the audience. Which leads us only to choke yet again, launching a cycle. And we all know what LANCE ARMSTRONG JOKEcycling can do—just ask Oprah.

EXAMPLE OF HER SECOND HARM: So let’s try swimming. Stephanie Rice, an Australian Olympic swimmer, won three gold medals during the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2088 Female World Swimmer of the Year Award. In London’s 2012 Games, she says she was so pressured to get that repeat medal and please her family … that she choked. It was sad enough that she let this desire and fear destroy her. She then came to believe that all of her previous accomplishments had been flukes. She retired from swimming. And it soon became easier to dump other goals, too. SHE MAKES EXAMPLE LESS EXTREME BY WIDENING ITS APPLICATION: We needn’t be an Olympian to recognize this pattern. In botching a test, or a team tryout, or a work presentation, we believe that we deserve what we got, and do even worse the next time.

SMOOTH TRANSITION TO SOLUTIONSHere’s what we do deserve: to learn to stop choking in the first place. But how? Let’s begin with a list. How often do we list our \*faults\* as a checklist or New Year’s resolutions? Instead, as we enter a pressure-packed situation, let’s list our accomplishments. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves of what we have and can accomplish .. because we are conditioned to undervalue them. Include even the smallest of achievements, like taking a shower in under 20 minutes, or even showering at all. SHE SUCCESSFULLY TAKES A SUPERSTAR WE ALL KNOW AND MAKES HER EXTREME PROBLEM SYMPATHETIC TO ALL OF US, AND WITH HUMORMaybe that would have helped Barbra Streisand, whose crippling stage fright kept her from performing live for 25 years. This woman had won an Oscar, Grammy, and Emmys and sold millions of records. But she was so terrified of a live audience that none of that suck. If she can negate her accomplishments, then so can we. And we can learn to embrace ours, too.

NEXT SOLUTIONNext, we can start to avoid choking by separating what we can control—our performance—from what we can’t …. Competitors’ scores, the judges’ power, the audience reaction. We can seize the challenge as a process … if it’s a job interview, the skills we’ll acquire in researching the company … the pride we’ll derive from looking our best … the confidence from mastering the art of the handshake … three gifts right there that aren’t outcome-related. Author Anthony Robbins writes, “”You might as well enjoy the process…Don’t try to be perfect; just be an excellent example of being human.”

SUMMARY IN CONCLUSION: So we’ve seen some all-TOO-human examples of why and how we choke, and how this harms us long after the last marshmallow melts. RETURN TO THE BEGINNING: I may not be Miss Chubby Bunny 2013. But I now know I can’t let that keep me from next year’s bout. I can taste it