

# Dealing with panic during rounds

Someone asked me how to cope with anxiety, nervousness, or panic during rounds. These are my tips:

1. Pray. Back when I was competing, I would say a prayer before every single round (I accidentally forgot before one round at the Massachusetts Open tournament and then proceeded to get absolutely crushed, so it does work!). Ask God to give you peace and protect you from being nervous or anxious; ask Him to give you confidence and to help you to think clearly and debate to the best of your abilities.
2. Take a deep breath. I also get nervous during rounds and often give very messy or confusing speeches. One thing I've found which helps is to simply take a deep breath to calm myself. If you find yourself panicking or not thinking straight during prep time, stop for 3 seconds and take a deep breath, then keep going. Right before beginning a speech, after asking if the judge, timer, and opponent are ready, take a deep breath for a couple seconds, then begin the speech. This seems simple but does help a lot.
3. Have confidence. And even if you don't feel like you have confidence, just fake it til you make it. Don't have so much confidence that you act cocky or arrogant, but believe in yourself that you have what it takes. Even if your opponent is grilling you in CX and you know that you are getting destroyed, don't let them see that; just smile and act like absolutely nothing is wrong.
4. Practice! The best way to get over nerves while debating is to practice debating. Go to lots of practice tournaments and tournaments. Find a debate friend and practice with them. If you can't meet with them in person, debate them over Zoom, Skype, or Facetime.