Voice shaking with anxiety, I felt tears threatening to pool in my eyes. Any hope of confidence was very quickly draining away. I knew my face was bright red with embarrassment as I continued to stay frozen in place. My world was turning dark despite being in the spotlight and I felt tiny before the twenty-something classmate audience.

I could no longer speak, only whimper and shake my head in an attempt to communicate how I felt. I held my head in my hands and let the tears flow. Thankfully, one of my classmates understood my despair as she rose from her seat to help me off the stage.

I felt miserable and had no one to blame but myself. I had not memorized my lines and was unprepared because I wasn't expecting to present that day. Thankfully, it was only a rehearsal and there was time for me to prepare. I spent every day leading up to the final performance studying my monologue and movements, trying to diminish my stage fright and regain my confidence. I refused to let it happen again.

The night before, I studied my lines one last time and told myself *you can do this, you'll be fine, just go to sleep and don't worry about it.* The next day I woke up feeling somewhat nervous, but ready. With each passing class, I kept my focus on the clock and my upcoming performance. Finally it was time, and I was ready. I walked to center stage and positioned myself.

Given the cue by my teacher to begin, I *became* my character, rather than my nervous self. Studying my lines the night before was almost pointless because I improvised my way through the entire skit. My movements felt powerful as I moved as my character would, arms flailing around as she tried to run away from a "creepy guy" on a train. My voice felt strong as all of the nervousness from before had magically escaped me.

After my performance, I felt my cheeks begin to burn crimson again- but this time because of pride. There was no embarrassment or shame, not with the way the words were flowing out of my mouth along with my explosive movements. I transformed from being terrified to momentarily feeling the confidence of an experienced Broadway performer.

It almost happened too fast and I wanted to feel the whole process again, like finishing a good book and wanting to immediately get that first read back. I even wanted to relive the nightmare of crying in front of everyone. Now you might wonder to yourself *why would anyone ever want that?* Well who wouldn't want to be faced with a challenge, fail, try again, and then succeed in the end? It was such a satisfying feeling to learn from my error, to grow from the experience. It may have only been a small moment to someone else but, to me, it was significant.

Finally, I had no more stage fright. Better yet, I felt confident. Sure, from time to time when I need to present, my voice shakes a bit - but hey, at least I'm speaking! When I look back at this moment in my life I realize how it changed the way I present myself and how confident I am. Now, I am not scared to break barriers, however big or small they may be.

ORIGINAL:

My voice was shaking with anxiety and I felt the tears in my eyes. My confidence was very quickly draining away. I knew my face was bright red with embarrassment as I continued to stay frozen in place. I felt small before my twenty-something classmates. My world was turning dark despite being in the spotlight.

I could no longer speak, only whimper and shake my head in an attempt to communicate how I felt. I held my head in my hands and let the tears flow. Thankfully, one of my classmates understood my despair as she rose from her seat to help me off the stage.
I felt miserable and had no one to blame but myself. I had not memorized my lines and was unprepared because I wasn't expecting to present that day. Thankfully it was only a rehearsal and there was time for me to prepare. I spent every day leading up to the final performance studying my monologue and movements, trying to diminish my stage fright and regain my confidence. I refused to let it happen again.

The night before, I studied my lines one last time and told myself *you can do this, you'll be fine, just go to sleep and don't worry about it.*

The next day I woke up feeling somewhat nervous, but ready. With each passing class, I kept my focus on the clock and my upcoming performance. Finally it was time, and I was ready.
I walked to center stage and positioned myself. Given the cue by my teacher to begin, I became my character, rather than my nervous self. Studying my lines the night before was almost pointless because, as I recited my monologue, I improvised my way through the entire skit. My arms were flailing around because my character was trying to run away from a "creepy guy" on a train and she was making a scene trying to get rid of him. My voice felt strong as I spoke. My movements felt powerful as I moved as my character.

After my performance, I felt my cheeks begin to burn crimson again- but this time because of pride. There was no embarrassment or shame. Not with the way the words were flowing out of my mouth along with my explosive movements. I transformed from being terrified to an experienced Broadway performer.

It almost happened too fast. I wish to do the whole process again. Even reliving the nightmare of crying in front of everyone. Now you might wonder to yourself *why would anyone ever want that?* Well who wouldn't want to be faced with a challenge, fail, try again, and then succeed in the end? It was such a satisfying feeling to learn from my error. To grow from the experience. It may have only been a small moment to someone else but, to me, it was significant.

Finally, I had no more stage fright. Better yet, I felt confident. Sure, from time to time when I need to present, my voice shakes a bit - but hey, at least I'm speaking!
When I look back at this moment in my life I realize how it changed the way I present myself; how confident I am; how I am not scared to break barriers.

I may not be the most confident but I'm not afraid of taking a risk.