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INTRODUCTION

The first part of this booklet is specifically aimed at wedding speeches. The second part of the booklet is devoted to birthday speeches, graduation speeches, and retirement speeches. The last part of the booklet is devoted to writing and delivering the perfect eulogy.

WEDDING SPEECH ETIQUETTE GUIDE

Most people are intimidated at the thought of public speaking. There is no reason to be intimidated. Below you'll find all of the advice necessary to prepare and deliver a wonderful speech.

The formal order of the speeches is:

1. father of the bride
2. the groom
3. the best man

In modern times, it is not uncommon for the bride, maid of honor or even some guests to say a few words.

The speech segment of the reception is usually held after the meals but there's no reason why the speeches cannot be before the meal.

There is no need to panic or have any anxiety about delivering your speech. With a little preparation anyone can deliver a speech flawlessly.

Father of the bride

Firstly, you want to thank the guests for sharing in the celebration. In particular, you might want to thank guests that are from out of town. Secondly, you want to at least acknowledge the financial contributions to the wedding. Most commonly this will be the groom's family.

The core of the speech is a tribute to the bride. You'll want to highlight her positive attributes and maybe even make a few jokes at some of her well-known flaws. In this segment, most people compliment the bride on her beauty and grace. Next you'll want to welcome the groom into the family. Finally you will end the speech with a toast to the bride and groom.

Bridegroom

Commonly this is the second speech of the evening. You will want to compliment the father of the bride for his kind words. Secondly you want to thank the guests for their participation and their generous gifts. You then want to thank both sets of parents for their contribution to the wedding and for being wonderful parents over the years. You will then want to compliment the beautiful bride. The bridegroom may also want to thank the best man for fulfilling his obligations. Finally the bridegroom will deliver toast to the bridesmaids.

Best Man

The first order of business is to thank the groom for the toast to the bridesmaids.

Secondly the best man will want to comment on the happy couple. For example, you might want to mention how the groom has changed since meeting his lovely bride.

Normally, the best man's speech is expected to be humorous. A few gentle jokes about the groom are common. The best man also has the duty to read any cards or messages from absent relatives or guests. Finally, the best man will make a toast to the bride and groom.

The Bride

Firstly, the bride will thank the guests for coming and sharing in the celebration.

Secondly, the bride will express gratitude to her parents and bridesmaids. The bride will pay compliments to her handsome groom. The bride will then make a toast. There is no formal protocol as to the recipient of the toast. Most brides choose to toast their husbands.

The Chief Bridesmaid or the Maid of Honor

The first duty is to thank the bride for choosing you as her maid of honor. You will then want to pay compliments to the groomsmen. Finally, you will prepare a toast which will usually be the bride.

Top 10 Pointers for Delivering Wedding Speeches

1. Always remember that the audience at weddings is one of the most encouraging types of audiences to speak in front of. They will laugh at your jokes and listen attentively. There is nobody in the audience that will be hoping that you perform poorly.
2. Have written notes at the podium with you. Even if you have memorized your speech word for word it still makes sense to have a written copy of your speech in your hands. There is the off-chance that you will experience public speaking anxiety and forget what to say. Having the insurance of a written speech handy eliminates that risk.
3. Make effective use of pauses. Commonly, inexperienced speakers will forget to breathe and pause after sentences and paragraphs. For example, if you've made a joke and the audience is laughing let the laughter soak in before you continue on with your speech.

4. Be brief. Your speech is more of a toast than it is a speech. Most people think that they are expected to deliver a lengthy speech that makes people laugh, cry and inspires the audience to change the world. The fact of the matter is that wedding speeches are meant to be less than five minutes. Most speakers violate this rule. Think to yourself, have you ever seen a wedding speech where you complained that it was too short? Most speeches are too long and this is due to inadequate preparation.
5. Prepare. Read your speech aloud, practice the speech in front of other people and record the speech on your MP3 player or digital camera. Pay particular attention to the timing of the speech. Is it under five minutes?
6. Check for duplicate stories. Usually the bride or groom will have a few stories that are standouts. It is important to check with the other speakers to make sure that they are not using the same anecdotes or stories.
7. Try to memorize the opening of the speech. The first two or three lines of the speech should not be read by notes. You want to grab the attention of the audience and display confidence and preparation.
8. Respect the formalities. You want to know the order of the speeches and whether or not you need to reply to another speaker. Similarly, you may be expected to

speak on behalf of absent guests or relatives. You need to answer these questions in advance.

9. Most speakers have a tendency to mumble or not enunciate words clearly. It is important to practice speaking in front of the mirror or recording your speech into an MP3 player in order to practice enunciating each word clearly.

10. Remember, you are not David Letterman. Humor is one of the most difficult parts of public speaking. For some reason, most speakers insist on trying to be funny and it only results in forced laughter and inappropriate comments. Aim to write and deliver a lighthearted speech rather than a speech that has the audience rolling in the aisles.

Wedding Speech Etiquette Tips

1. If you're the one being toasted never raise your glass or drink from your glass until the toast is finished and other guests have sipped their drink.

2. No jokes that have ethnic or racial connotations.

3. Avoid any profane language.

4. Do not make any reference to any past/future lovemaking between the couple – eg – the honeymoon.
5. Don't mention previous marriages.
6. Don't chew gum, put your hands in your pocket or shuffle from side to side as you deliver the speech.
7. Don't drink more than a glass or two of alcohol before the speech.
8. Avoid any "sore" subjects such as a recent death in the family.
9. Always stand when delivering the toast.
10. Don't hit a glass with a spoon to gain attention. It is more polite to stand and hold your glass and wait for silence.

BIRTHDAY SPEECHES

Birthday Speech Format

A birthday speech follows the following format:

1. Firstly, welcome all guests and specifically thank guests that have travelled to celebrate the birthday.
2. Comment on the vibrant atmosphere and how happy you are that everyone has taken the time to be together.
3. You want to thank the people who have organized the party for their hard work.
4. Talk about what a birthday means. Depending on which one it is, you could find a poem or a quotation that sums up how you feel. If it is a special one such as a 21st there is even more reason to celebrate so start searching for that appropriate phrase that will stand out in the birthday speech.
5. You want to brainstorm a few characteristics of the celebrant. It is always best to focus on unique characteristics and to “back up” your claim with a specific story.
6. Generally, you then want to counter the positive characteristics with a few lighthearted characteristics. Is the celebrant a klutz? A shopaholic? Known for being a generous scorekeeper during golf?

7. After adding a bit of humor, revert back to a positive sentimental tone by talking about how the celebrant has impacted your life. Is the celebrant a great listener? Does he or she spice up your day with their sharp wit and sense of humor?
8. End the speech on a high note. Generally, speeches will look forward to the future. For example, one talk about how he or she looks forward to travelling to Europe or going on a fishing trip in the northwestern United States. Be forward looking and positive and you're sure to end the speech on a high note.

Eight Tips for Delivering Birthday Speeches

1. Don't be nervous because everyone is pulling for you. The audience is encouraging and they will laugh at your jokes and listen attentively. There is nobody in the audience that will be hoping that you perform poorly.
2. Have written notes with you. Even if you have memorized your speech word for word it still makes sense to have a written copy of your speech in your hands or in your pocket. There is the off-chance that you will experience public speaking anxiety and forget what to say. Having the insurance of a written speech handy eliminates that risk.
3. Make effective use of pauses. Commonly, inexperienced speakers will forget to breathe and pause after sentences and paragraphs. For example, if you've made a

joke and the audience is laughing let the laughter soak in before you continue on with your speech.

4. Be brief. Your speech is more of a toast than it is a speech. Most people think that they are expected to deliver a lengthy speech that makes people laugh, cry and inspires the audience to change the world. The fact of the matter is that birthday speeches are meant to be less than five minutes. Most speakers violate this rule and ramble on due to inadequate preparation.
5. Prepare. Read your speech aloud, practice the speech in front of other people and record the speech on your MP3 player or digital camera. Pay particular attention to the timing of the speech. Is it under five minutes?
6. Try to at least memorize the opening of the speech. The first two or three lines of the speech should not be read by notes. You want to grab the attention of the audience and display confidence and preparation.
7. Most speakers have a tendency to mumble or not enunciate words clearly. It is important to practice speaking in front of the mirror or recording your speech into an MP3 player in order to practice enunciating each word clearly.
8. Remember, you are not David Letterman. Humor is one of the most difficult parts of public speaking. For some reason, most speakers insist on trying to be

funny and it only results in forced laughter and inappropriate comments. Aim to write and deliver a lighthearted speech rather than a speech that has the audience rolling in the aisles.

Birthday Speech Etiquette Tips

1. If you're the one being toasted never raise your glass or drink from your glass until the toast is finished and other guests have sipped their drink.
2. No jokes that have ethnic or racial connotations.
3. Avoid any profane language.
4. Don't chew gum; put your hands in your pocket or shuffle from side to side as you deliver the speech.
5. Don't drink more than a glass or two of alcohol before the speech.
6. Always stand when delivering the toast.
7. Don't hit a glass with a spoon to gain attention. It is more polite to stand and hold your glass and wait for silence.

GRADUATION SPEECHES

Graduation Speech Format

All commencement speeches from grade eight to university follow a similar structure.

A graduation speech follows the following format:

1. Usually the salutatorian will start with a quotation. The quotation will commonly relate to youth or something general about life.
2. Secondly, welcome all guests and thank them for coming.
3. Talk about the teachers, coaches or administrative staff that has had a profound impact on your life as well as on the lives of other students.
4. Talk about the successes and achievements of the entire class rather than your own achievements. You might want to mention particular events that are noteworthy such as football championships or dances.
5. In the next section you might want to mention obstacles that your class has overcome.
6. You want to brainstorm a few characteristics of the celebrant. It is always best to focus on unique characteristics and to “back up” your claim with a specific story.
7. End the speech on a high note. Generally, graduation speeches will look forward to the future. You would mention the specific challenges that face your generation. After your experiences, how are you now prepared to deal with these challenges? Be forward looking and positive and you’re sure to end the speech on a high note.

Eight Tips for Delivering Graduation Speeches

1. Don't be nervous because your classmates are pulling for you. The audience is encouraging and they will laugh at your jokes and listen attentively. There is nobody in the audience that will be hoping that you perform poorly.
2. Have written notes with you. Even if you have memorized your speech word for word it still makes sense to have a written copy of your speech in your hands or in your pocket. There is the off-chance that you will experience public speaking anxiety and forget what to say. Having the insurance of a written speech handy eliminates that risk.
3. Make effective use of pauses. Commonly, inexperienced speakers will forget to breathe and pause after sentences and paragraphs. For example, if you've made a joke and the audience is laughing let the laughter soak in before you continue on with your speech.
4. Be brief. Most people think that they are expected to deliver a lengthy speech that makes people laugh, cry and inspires the audience to change the world. Check with the organizers to know how much time you have at the podium.

5. Prepare. Read your speech aloud, practice the speech in front of other people and record the speech on your MP3 player or digital camera. Pay particular attention to the timing of the speech. Is it under your allotted time?
6. Try to at least memorize the opening of the speech. The first two or three lines of the speech should not be read by notes. You want to grab the attention of the audience and display confidence and preparation.
7. Most speakers have a tendency to mumble or not enunciate words clearly. It is important to practice speaking in front of the mirror or recording your speech into an MP3 player in order to practice enunciating each word clearly.
8. Remember, you are not David Letterman. Humor is one of the most difficult parts of public speaking. For some reason, most speakers insist on trying to be funny and it only results in forced laughter and inappropriate comments. Aim to write and deliver a lighthearted speech rather than a speech that has the audience rolling in the aisles.

RETIREMENT SPEECHES

Retirement Speech Format

A retirement speech will vary depending on whether the speech is a tribute or if the retiree is delivering the speech.

A retirement speech follows the following format:

Top 10 Pointers for Delivering Retirement Speeches

1. Don't forget to thank your mentors and assistants.
2. Try to keep your speech less than six minutes.
3. Do not make any negative comments about your work organization.
4. If you're the one being toasted never raise your glass or drink from your glass until the toast is finished and other guests have sipped their drink.
5. No jokes that have ethnic or racial connotations.
6. Avoid any profane language.
7. Don't chew gum; put your hands in your pocket or shuffle from side to side as you deliver the speech.
8. Don't drink more than a glass or two of alcohol before the speech.

9. Always stand when delivering the toast.
10. Don't hit a glass with a spoon to gain attention. It is more polite to stand and hold your glass and wait for silence.

EULOGY

What Should A Eulogy Accomplish?

There are two common misunderstandings about the content in a eulogy. Firstly, a eulogy is not a summation of one's life. Secondly, the speaker does not speak for everyone at the funeral. A eulogy is more personal than that.

A eulogy should convey the feelings and experiences of the person giving the eulogy. A touching eulogy will be written from *your* heart and will include personal anecdotes that richly highlight characteristics of the deceased. You can also ask friends and family members for their anecdotes and include them as well.

The Eulogy Structure

The eulogy first begins with an introduction where you introduce yourself. What is your relationship to the deceased? You can begin by simply saying “this is a eulogy for Brian who has been my friend for over thirty years.”

Many people segue by using a famous quotation or a quotation that the deceased lived by.

The body of your speech will include personal anecdotes that vividly detail qualities of the deceased. In this section don't be afraid to use humor as it is a welcome temporary relief from the sadness.

The ending should be a brief paragraph that wraps up everything into a neat package. The audience should know that the eulogy is finished. Often, inexperienced speakers will include random thoughts and anecdotes that belong in the body of the eulogy. Never introduce a new thought in the conclusion. You may want to summarize how the deceased impacted your life or reiterate an important point in the conclusion.

Top 10 Questions to help you write stories and anecdotes

1. What was your relationship to the deceased?
2. How long did you know your loved one?
3. Was your first meeting a memorable encounter?

4. What were some of your loved one's most unique and endearing qualities? (e.g., sense of humor, kindness, compassion, sensitivity, thoughtfulness, generosity)
5. What do you want everyone to know and/or remember about this person?
6. How has your life changed by knowing this person? What did you learn?
7. Was this person active in the community? Charities, professional or trade associations? If so, what contribution(s) were made?
8. What were his or her hobbies? Any stories relating to these hobbies?
9. What were some of this person's favorite things—and what do these things say about this person?
10. Are there any accomplishments of which this person was very proud?

Top 10 Pointers for Delivering Eulogies

1. Avoid any negative comments. If the deceased had some flaws or negative characteristics do not mention them.
2. Do not be a perfectionist. Your altered emotional state makes it difficult to write a perfect eulogy.
3. The ideal length for a eulogy five to eight minutes. Be brief. Most people think that they are expected to deliver a lengthy speech that makes people laugh, cry and inspires the audience to change the world. Stay under eight minutes.

4. Have written notes with you. Even if you have memorized your speech word for word it still makes sense to have a written copy of your speech in your hands or in your pocket. There is the off-chance that you will experience public speaking anxiety and forget what to say. Having the insurance of a written speech handy eliminates that risk.
5. Make effective use of pauses. Commonly, inexperienced speakers will forget to breathe and pause after sentences and paragraphs. For example, if you've made a light hearted comment and the audience is laughing, let the laughter soak in before you continue on with your speech.
6. Don't be afraid to use a little humor in the eulogy. It is a somber occasion, but a little humor lightens the mood and is appropriate.
7. Prepare. Read your speech aloud, practice the speech in front of other people and record the speech on your MP3 player or digital camera. Pay particular attention to the timing of the speech. Is it under your allotted time?
8. Try to at least memorize the opening of the speech. The first two or three lines of the speech should not be read by notes. You want to grab the attention of the audience and display confidence and preparation.
9. Most speakers have a tendency to mumble or not enunciate words clearly. It is important to practice speaking in front of the mirror or recording your speech into an MP3 player in order to practice enunciating each word clearly.
10. Use personal anecdotes. Do not simply list characteristics. You need to add "color" by providing vivid detail.