



Book Last Minute Speeches and Toasts

Andrew Frothingham
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Recommendation

Business books are often informative, but rarely entertaining. Lucky for all of us, Andrew Frothingham's latest book on public speaking manages to integrate both objectives into one clear, concise and funny book. He splits the book into two parts: "About Speaking" and "Gems You Can Use." The first part presents the author's wisdom on effective speech making. He cites rules, pointers and strategies to build your toolkit for designing and delivering great speeches. The second part of the book is composed of well-known quotes grouped into logical speech topic areas such as education, ethics and marriage. Taken together, the two parts of this book form an educational and enjoyable read. Virtually any speaker will find valuable tips and useful quotes for a future presentation. *BooksInShort.com* recommends this book to anyone who ever has to give a speech (at the last minute, or not) or to anyone who just likes enlightening tips and quotes.

Take-Aways

- A last-minute speaking engagement is an opportunity to look good at little cost.
- The Internet and the Bible are two sources of information for a last-minute speech.
- Quotes increase your topical authority in a speech.
- A good speech is structured like a good sales pitch.
- Try to use less time than allocated when giving a speech.
- A speaker should try to engage the audience fully within two minutes of starting.
- A good speech has no more than four main points.
- Customize your speech to make it more interesting and persuasive.
- The Internet is not yet reliable as an audio/visual presentation mechanism, but it is reliable for research.
- Toasts and roasts are forums where it is necessary to give orations that are shorter, but more memorable.

Summary

On Speaking Well

Consider these possible scenarios: you are scheduled to speak to a group with plenty of notice, you are asked to fill in for another speaker at the last minute or you are asked to say a few words right now with no advance warning. These possibilities may give you reason to panic, but that's the last thing you should do. Rather, now is the time to use five secrets that will help you form the right perspective to give the best speech of your life. They are:

1. Being asked to speak at the last minute is a golden opportunity - This is a no-lose situation. Expectations are lower and the people you are helping out are grateful.
2. Being asked to speak at the last minute has become the norm - Everyone today is so busy that being asked to speak at the last minute is becoming common.
3. It is permissible for a speaker to stray from the topic - Once you have acknowledged the assigned topic you can move on to another topic that you care more about.
4. It is permissible for a speaker to use imperfect grammar - Writing and speaking are different. When you speak, you need to sound like you are talking, so it is okay to use fragments and slang. The bottom line is to use whatever works effectively.
5. It is permissible to use less than your allotted time - Running short on your speech is never a problem, but running long always is. If you have any doubt about the effectiveness of short speeches, remember that Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," one of the greatest speeches of all time, was only 269 words.

Using Quotes

Using quotes can add great authority to your speech, but only if the quotes are relevant and appropriate to your audience. Remember these pointers when using quotes:

- Use quotes to reinforce your message, not to show off your knowledge.
- Use quotes from people whose names the audience will recognize.
- Use the author's name only if you can pronounce it.
- Mention the date of the quote only when it adds meaning to the quote.
- Quote accurately and fully.

Speech Structure

For maximum effectiveness, consider the structure of your speech. The old "Three T's" sales technique applies to effective speaking. It goes like this: 1) Tell'em what you are going to tell'em, 2) Tell'em, and 3) Tell'em what you told'em. This means that the first part of your speech tells the audience your major points in outline form. The second part of your speech repeats your points, and fills them out. The third part of your speech repeats the points again by announcing that you are repeating, recapping or summarizing.

“Last minute speaking is a golden opportunity.”

You can say too much as a speaker. The best rule is to limit yourself to four points in your speech. The first two or three points should build upon each other so that if you have a fourth point, it is an inevitable result of your previous points. The same rule applies to question and answers following your speech. You should only answer questions about the four points you presented in your speech. Any questions that stray away from your four points should be politely declined or answered later in a one-on-one session.

Killer Opening Strategies

You need to have a killer opening strategy to be a powerful speaker. The goal of your opening strategy should be to grab the audience's attention within the first few minutes of your speech. These killer-opening strategies will help grab your audience's attention:

- Compliment the audience - Audiences love to hear about themselves.
- Offer your audience valuable information or opportunities - Audiences love to take something with them.
- Put your audience in a state of suspense - Audiences respond to surprises.

- Scare your audience - Audiences pay attention to terror.
- Break established speech protocol - Audiences respect the unusual.

Last Minute Resources

Sometimes you won't have time to do research before a last minute speech, or you might have time, but no Internet access. In those cases, you can either quote from the Bible (usually available in your hotel room) or consider getting your inspiration from one of these sources:

- Get a copy of the meeting invitation or program and scour it for ideas.
- Get a copy of a dictionary and use the definition of your topic to start your speech.
- Check the local newspaper (or TV) and use the local weather report to start your speech.
- Check the local newspaper (or TV) and use a local sports event to start your speech.
- Buy two dozen-fortune cookies at the nearest Chinese restaurant - Open the cookies in front of your audience and read the fortunes. Stop when you find a saying that applies to your topic.
- Quote from your family - Family sayings can be very quaint and very on-point.

Facts That Can Spice Up Any Speech

The following facts can help add spice to any speech:

- Andrew Jackson is famous for fighting in the Battle of New Orleans. The battle was fought two weeks after the War of 1812 ended. Thousands of people died because of slow communications. Remind your audience of the need to communicate quickly.
- Based upon a screen test, movie-studio executives believed that Fred Astaire was a bad actor and a bad singer. They thought he could dance a little. Remind your audience that experts are often wrong.
- It is possible to drown in a puddle with an average depth of six inches because if the puddle is big enough there could be a six-inch average depth and a six-foot deep sinkhole. Remind your audience that averages don't matter.
- The sun provides our world with light, warmth and energy from a distance of 93 million miles. Remind your audience that good works carry for a far distance.
- The investment of one dollar at 10% interest compounded annually doubles in seven years. Remind your audience that things add up.
- Genetic research indicates that all humans are descended from a small number of females. Remind your audience that we are all related.
- A baseball-batting star gets on average one hit for every three attempts at bat. Remind your audience that trying is always worthwhile.

Pro Tips

These tips can help with any speech:

- Have something concrete to say about your topic when you have strong feelings.
- Be yourself, you should know what works and what doesn't work for you.
- Take control during the first two minutes. Control starts with your introduction.
- Don't panic when things go wrong. Acknowledge problems and move on.
- Close your speech with a bang. Finish your speech with a strong positive and if possible, memorable note. After you finish, calmly sit down.

“The standards for speaking are very different from the standards for writing.”

A speech that has been customized to the audience is always more effective than a speech that is repeated without change. Consider asking these informative questions:

- How many people will be in the audience? What do they expect?
- Who is the audience? For what purpose are they gathered?
- What is the gender distribution of the audience?
- Where is the audience from? What mood are they in?
- Where is your speech on the program agenda? What was the agenda at the last meeting?

Your Speech Fallback Position

What should you do if you have no expertise on the subject matter you have been asked to address? Your fallback position is to talk about speaking. You can use quotes about speaking (Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Every man is eloquent once in his life.") You can use sayings ("A good speech is like a pencil; it has to have a point.") Or, you can tell jokes (What is the "definition of a great speech? A strong beginning and a great end, preferably close together.")

Using Audio-Visual Tools

Great speakers are effective at using AV demonstrative tools. But great speakers are never dependent upon demonstrative tools. Here are some tips:

- When using slides, keep them short. Text on a slide should be in phrases, not sentences.
- Never turn your back to the audience when using AV tools.
- Never rely on your AV tools to make a key point. Plan your speech as if your audience is blind.
- Don't use the Net as an AV tool; maybe it will be dependable in the future, but not today.

Toasting and Roasting Tricks

Toasts are speeches that are shorter and less complex. Today toasts average less than 30 seconds in duration. Make your toasts positive. Start with an appropriate quote if possible. Don't fuss over whether the toaster has water or spirits and don't make a big deal over the entire room being silent when you start.

“One of the biggest mistakes speakers make is trying to say too much.”

At a roast, speakers insult the guest of honor (the "roastee"). The point is not to go easy; you can be harsh. In fact, the closer the group members are, the harsher you can be. Yet, while you are being harsh, don't talk about the roastee's parents, spouse or kids. Tell the audience who you are and what your relationship is to the roastee. If necessary, make yourself part of the roast. And, when it's over, it's over - don't repeat comments made at the roast and never tape the proceedings. Some things are better kept in the moment.

Being A Keynote Speaker

Being asked to keynote an event is an honor and a trap. It is an honor because you are being asked to be the highlight of the meeting or conference. It is also a trap because you will be expected to deliver a memorable, fairly long speech while people are eating. Expect that:

- You will be able to define your own topic.
- You will be permitted to speak about broader issues than the other presenters.
- You will be delivering your vision or big picture on the future of the topic and your place and/or your company's place in that future.
- You might be able to request that your speech be presented after everyone is served to get better audience attention.

“Using a quote can add authority to almost any point that you are making.”

You might be able to request a reduction in your scheduled time from the standard 45 minutes to 10 or 15 minutes. Remember, shorter speeches are usually more memorable.

About the Author

Andrew Frothingham has a wealth of experience in helping people find the perfect words for every occasion. He has written for companies from A&E Network to IBM, from Seiko to Winstar. He has also co-written books for speakers including *Creative Excuses*, *And I Quote* and *Crisp Toasts*.
