

TOP 10 Speech Tips



that will help take your speech from Good to Great!

1. Have a **strong opening** to your speech and a **strong closing** (memorize if you can). Please DO NOT open with, *“For those of you who don’t know me, my name is...”* As the MC, I will have already introduced you so if you do it again, it will start you off on an awkward vibe :-)
2. **Write out your speech** to organize your thoughts – don’t wing it or think you can adlib. Unless you are a polished Toastmaster, you can’t. Even stand-up comedians write out jokes. You will likely end up finishing your speech, sitting down with regrets about things you forgot or things you said that you probably shouldn’t have.
3. Keep your speech to **5 minutes TOPS**, 3-4 minutes is best. If you hit the 15-minute mark, the crowd may slowly turn on you after loving you for the first 5 minutes – 5 minutes is about 500 words if you need a guide. When reading it out loud, the timing isn’t always accurate as you need to allow for the fits of laughter and effective pauses!
4. Do not try to read it off your tiny phone screen. **Print it out on paper** with a big easy-to-read font that you can add last minute items. Lighting may be dim— a bigger font will make life easy.
5. Include us all in your speech – **avoid inside jokes** that we don’t understand or aren’t a part of!
6. **Use humour** – people WANT to laugh during wedding speeches. Any attempt at humour will be met with encouraging eyes!
7. **Practice practice practice!** Don’t just read your speech over. You need to PERFORM your speech OUTLOUD to someone else and accept their feedback. Then condense/refine your speech.
8. **Be genuine and positive!** Don’t be negative about marriage in your speech! This is a great day for this couple and your speech should be nothing negative.
9. **Present Slowly!** (notice I didn’t say READ). Pretend everyone in the audience is a grandma that ‘don’t hear so good!’ – so slow down!
10. **Easy on the alcohol.** Proven fact -- Alcohol does not make your speech delivery better, “take the edge off”, or put you more at ease. While it might make you dance better, it will not make your speech better. A drunk speaker only makes everyone nervous and on edge. There will be plenty of time to indulge after the speeches.



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more wedding tips!

TOP 10 Speech Tips

Let's start with the end in mind. You are going to ACE your Wedding speech! How great with that feel? Being asked to give a speech at a wedding is a great honour. With some careful thought and planning, your speech/toast can be an excellent addition to everyone's wedding experience, including our special couple.

As an MC and DJ, if I do the math (average 4 toasts a night, 65 weddings a year, for the last 17 years), I have heard well over 4000 speeches. A few of those produced *cringe-worthy* moments (See Speech Tips #2), while most were good. However, **the memorable ones were incredible**. Those speeches had the crowd in stitches, feeling the emotions, hanging on every word, and receiving standing ovations.

As you prepare your speech, **picture yourself as a guest**, listening to *your* speech. What would you love to hear? Funny stories? Entertaining stories that reveal their character? Consider your guests expectations and experience and your speech will be better.

You have been given the opportunity to speak for a reason. You have some insight, some **personal connection** to the couple. Use that special relationship as your basis and primary content for your speech.

If there isn't a podium mic, please please please hold the **microphone up to your mouth**, not at your bellybutton like an ice cream cone. Channel your best rapper as you need to hold the mic very close to you mouth, almost resting on your upper chin.

Frame any potential nervousness as just excitement. Few people truly love speaking in front of people (they call us 'freaks'), but you are speaking about people you love, not selling us anything. You are speaking to an **empathetic group full of encouraging eyes** that are glad THEY are not up there speaking. Try to relax and enjoy the moment. Focus on how great it will feel to sit down after delivering an awesome speech – hear the applause – work backwards now and do the work to earn it!

Finally, bring your drink with you if you are doing a toast. I have discovered the best way to close a toast is to ask **everyone to stand** and raise their glasses (please wait for them to do this), offer your final parting words, and then finish with *"To the bride (or groom or both!) Cheers!"* (at which point, everyone clinks their glasses together in celebration), then drinks, then sits down and applauds wildly for you and your hard work! FYI, Guests enjoy standing with you (anything to move around a little during the most passive part of the reception) and it hits **"refresh"** on the crowd too for the next speaker! You will be awesome!

Please email me at jeff@djaymaker.com if you would like some additional help or if you want me to look your speech over! I am happy to help!

With thanks to **Dave Ternier** from Special Request Weddings and Vice President of the Canadian Professional DJ Association (CPDJA—of which I am proud member) for the initial inspiration for me to help my speakers at every wedding. Thanks Dave!

I wanted to share some of Dave's additional resources for Wedding Speeches. Here are a few REALLY GOOD YouTube videos to watch. These are quick and worth your investment of time!

<http://tinyurl.com/howtotoast>

<http://tinyurl.com/toastingdosanddnts>

<http://tinyurl.com/howtotalktoacrowd>

DJ Haymaker Final Checklist

- I will write out and then print out my speech in big 15+ font.
- I will practice presenting my speech out loud and welcome feedback to help me improve my speech.
- I will remember the Microphone Technique (eat the mic).
- I will email admin@djaymaker.com by Wednesday before the wedding if I need any additional AV support (for a surprise nostalgic video or photo).
- I will remember to bring my glass with me to toast the couple.
- I will smile and be grateful for the chance to add my energy and words to this incredible wedding celebration! Booyah!

