

10 Tips for a Great Wedding Speech

Make sure your wedding speech is memorable for all the right reasons!



Well Said & Associates

Right words – Perfect timing

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1. The first ten seconds are the worst! Have the first sentence of your speech well-rehearsed to get you over the nervousness.

Public Speaking is number one on the Top Ten List of Fears – above death and spiders! Whenever fear grips us, our body has an instant reaction called the fight or flight response. This is a survival tactic ingrained in us from prehistoric times.

You may be standing in front of your friends and family, but in your mind you are deep in the dark, dark jungle and you have just heard the roar of a very large and hungry lion. Your body immediately gets ready to battle the beast or to hightail out of there as fast as you can!

You feel hot and sweaty, your heart starts pounding, your mind goes blank, you go wobbly at the knees and you feel out of breath. Some people even feel sick in the stomach! This is all evidence that adrenalin is surging through your body – to pump up your fighting muscles or to give you the energy you need to escape.

A lot of people think they will feel like this through the whole speech. But this is just an initial reaction. It is proof that your body is functioning properly. It will pass. I promise you!

And the best way to manage this perfectly normal reaction is to accept that it is going to happen and prepare for it. I recommend learning the first sentence of your speech. It will help you to stand up confidently and keep talking until your knees stop knocking.

Then you can take a deep breath and know that the rest of your speech will be easier. And if you are well prepared, even fun!

...in your mind,
you are deep in the dark, dark jungle



2. Funny stories make a speech memorable so have one early in your speech. It will help you to relax when guests respond.

Your wedding speech should be more than a list of 'thank you's'. If you want to catch the attention of your guests, tell them a funny story. When they respond with a chuckle or a grin, you will relax straight away.

And they will respond – mostly with a sense of relief because they realise that you have taken the time to make your speech interesting. You may even notice them lean forward in their seats eager to hear more rather than yawning from boredom!

If a story doesn't come to mind immediately, give yourself time to think about it. Ask friends and family to help you.

Try not to make the story too long – just a short observation about the Bride or Groom – or about relationships. Please make sure that it is appropriate and will not offend anyone.

3. Write down stories and make a point about each one to create a theme.

A great way to ensure you do not ramble when you are making your speech is to have a theme. This provides a structure, which makes it easier for you to add stories and funny lines.

Remember that your speech is an important opportunity for you to express your feelings about the happy couple without becoming too emotional or sentimental. Stories are a great way to do this. You can make a point about the qualities you admire of the bride, groom or the couple together.

Write down as many stories you can recall about them and see if you can find a common theme amongst them. This immediately makes your speech more interesting and, more importantly, will help you remember your speech!

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4. Add stories to your speech and put them into a sequence – baby to beautiful bride today – new friend to best man, etc. Make a highlight of a particular hobby, activity, work role or sports team.

If you want to make your speech more interesting for the guests, take them on a short journey about what you have learned about the bride or groom. You can feature their favourite sport, a particular career path they have taken or a hobby they enjoy. Show how this has been important to them and demonstrates some of their finer qualities.

There are many ways to add funny lines to make the story more interesting. Remember, the more everyone enjoys your speech, the more relaxed you become!

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5. Look for quotes on relationships, growing older and wiser etc. Add one or two of these after a funny story to emphasise the point you are trying to make.

You can add interest and humour to your speech by referring to quotations and anecdotes about relationship or communication between men and women, etc. These can add depth to the theme of your speech. They are a great way for guests to relate to your speech and remember it.

Remember to make these appropriate so that you do not offend your guests. Try to keep these short so you do not get distracted from the main theme of your speech. Short, humorous quotations are also easier to remember.

Make your speech entertaining – your guests will be delighted – and so will you!



6. Don't read the speech from the page, have key words listed to prompt you. The speech will seem more natural and you can maintain eye contact with everyone.

If you are constantly looking at the page of notes, your voice will be directed away from the guests and they may lose some of the details you are saying. This means they might miss your funny stories and great punch lines. You will appear less confident and probably feel less confident.

Rehearse your speech by reading out loud in front of the mirror using your notes printed out in a large font on a page. This will help you hear if the words sound right. Change any words you stumble over. You can record yourself to hear how your voice sounds and practice changing the way you say things.

Practicing this process helps you remember your speech too. Eventually, all you will need to see is the beginning of a sentence and you will be able to look up and remember the rest of what you have to say.

7. Try to avoid jokes in your speech as they often sound unnatural. Funny lines, personal stories and observations are more effective. Stay away from jokes that might offend.

There are a lot of jokes available in print and on the internet. Using jokes is risky as they can offend some of your guests. Even if the joke is appropriate, it has to be worked into the rest of your speech so that it doesn't just stick out on its own. It will sound obvious that you have stuck a joke in for the sake of it.

Your speech needs to sound natural and the best way to add humour is to use funny stories. You can exaggerate them to make a point; you can add tension and ad-lib lines; this helps to build the laughter and everyone will think you are clever and appreciate being entertained.

...everyone will think you
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8. Have a sip of water before you make your speech, it will lubricate your voice box and eliminate any 'frogs' in your throat.

One of the symptoms of nervousness can be a dry mouth. Sometimes nervousness can cause your throat to feel dry as well. These are natural bodily responses, which can be easily overcome by making sure you drink water before and (if you need) during your speech.

A dry mouth or throat makes it more difficult for you to speak and will make it obvious to your listeners that you are nervous ... which can make you feel more nervous! Manage this reaction proactively and you will be able to speak comfortably with a clear voice.

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9. Try not to rush what you have to say. Don't be afraid to add pauses. Give everyone time to respond to what you say. Speak up – you don't have to shout, but lift your head up so your voice can project across the room.

When you have taken the time and effort to create a speech, you want to make sure that everyone gets to hear it. It is tempting to "just get it over and done with" when you are nervous. However, rushing your speech will not ease your nervousness. If anything, it will cause you to breathe faster and you could become more anxious.

Stop. Pause. Slow down a little and enjoy the process. As the guests begin to respond with smiles and laughter, you will find it easier to be relaxed. Adding pauses also creates a bit of tension and, used well, can bring bigger laughs from your stories and punch lines.

Take the time to practice your speech so that you become comfortable with the pace at which you need to speak. Time yourself. Try out a few different ways of saying things to add interest to your speech. Recording yourself will also help you hear how this sounds.



10. Take this opportunity to say special things you've always wanted to say. This is your moment to shine – make the most of it!

You may not get a better opportunity to show how much you care for these important people in your life. If you mess it up, if you cause embarrassment or if you just rush through your speech, you are creating a moment you may regret forever.

Create a speech that you feel proud to present and which will raise you to the status of champion on the day. Stand up, speak up and receive the applause you deserve.

Make a moment that the bridal couple and the guests will treasure.

...stand up, speak up and
receive the applause you deserve

Saying the words you want, to people you love, is the greatest feeling there is!

If you are finding it hard to create your speech, let Well Said & Associates help you prepare a great speech that everyone will be talking about for years to come!

We write your speech so that it sounds like you wrote it yourself.

We use a proven five-step process that creates a great speech and leaves you confident, well prepared and able to enjoy the experience.

**For more information go to www.wellsaid.com.au
or call Sheridan on 0419 547 810**

