

A bride and groom are embracing in front of a large, multi-towered stone castle. The bride is wearing a white, off-the-shoulder wedding dress with a long veil and white gloves. The groom is wearing a light-colored suit with a striped vest and a boutonniere. The background features a tall evergreen tree on the left and a balcony on the castle tower to the right. The sky is blue with light clouds.

The Secret
To Amazing

Wedding
SPEECHES

The Secret to **AMAZING WEDDING SPEECHES**



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Forward

This is it, the big day. Your friends are getting married and you have been assigned to say a few words on that all important occasion. There's no pressure on you they say, we just want our best friend to make our special day even more special.



You mentally tear at your hair, but calmly agree to the whole thing, managing to paste what apparently passes as an enthusiastic smile on your face at the same time. No pressure indeed!

There could be worse things happening to you, but at the moment you fail to find any of them to cheer yourself up. You take a minute to yourself when the happy couple leaves to lean back against your front door and hyperventilate in increasing panic.

Your moments of self indulgence however, have to stop when your dog gives you a funny look and comes to keep you company in the panting sweepstakes. You decide to take his offer of company and sit down next to him, a glassy look on your face.

So alright, there is definitely nothing worse that you can think of than having to stand up in front of large crowd and having to make any sense while being happy at the same time.

Don't your friends understand, you ask your sympathetic canine companion. You would most definitely prefer to be boiled, tarred and feathered than have to give a speech!

In fact even a visit to the dentist's sounds fun right about now. But the only problem, you say as you lean in confidently, is that there was simply no opening in purgatory for you to be accommodated on that particular day. And if you don't have that as a good excuse then nothing else will do.

So you sigh and contemplate your future, while mentally reviewing all the possible things that could go wrong with your speech.

If this or even some aspects of this sounded familiar to you, then don't worry, you're one of the reassuringly large number of people who absolutely can't stand up in front of even two or three people to deliver a small speech or a toast, much less be able to deliver an important wedding day speech in front of a large number of people.

And this is where I come in. I was once one of you. If ever I had to make a speech I would come down in a cold sweat, my vision would get blurry around the edges, my legs would feel rubbery and my clothes would get drenched from top to toe with sweat.

Obviously this was not a state of affairs that I cared for, but nothing I did to help me through my problems worked for me. Until the year that I call the Big Oh-Oh, came about.

I have to say that it started out just like any other year, with a lot of bang and fizzle, and one massive hangover. As I said, it was like any other year, and it continued to be that way, until the first disaster struck.

My best friends were getting married. Naturally enough this was not the disaster. The disaster came about when they asked me to deliver a speech (sound familiar?). I agreed, sweated, hyperventilated and managed to pull off a minor miracle.

This in and of itself was alright, nothing to give rise to the Big Oh-Oh. That happened a few months later when the marriage bug caught another of my friends and I was again asked to give a speech. Besides the fact they were also very good friends of mine, they had liked the speech I had given at the earlier wedding.

A few weeks I was again privy to the good news of another impending marriage. This time it was my cousin who was getting married. Again, I was invited to speak, and again I couldn't refuse.

This time however, I was in a bit of a bind. Their wedding was only the day after day wedding number Two. I could see disaster looming on the horizon. I was bound to get everyone's names mixed up and say the wrong thing at the wrong moment.

At this point I knew that unkindly fate was having a good jest at my expense. Having managed to successfully avoid anything that

resembled a speech, a toast, a lecture, or a discourse on anything for that matter, I was now being very cruelly asked to do two one after the other. After having been forced to already do one wedding speech a few months earlier.

Well, to cut to the chase, let's just say that I managed to get through the entire thing without creating a major embarrassment to either myself or my friends or family.

By the end of wedding number three, I was getting a pleasantly fuzzy feeling (no, not from the champagne, although that did help afterwards), about my abilities as a wedding speech deliverer. I was even making a joking reference to the fact that I could become the Wedding Speech-er (as in "Wedding Singer", and yes, I did have one three many glasses of the bubbly at that point).

This next disaster I believe is what really led to the year being labeled as the Big Oh-Oh. Because as chance would have it, or rather cruel fate in my opinion, I was fated to attend another wedding, this time, cruelty of cruelty, the wedding of my brother. You can see how this story is also going to swing, right?

Yes I was duly asked to give a speech, because by this time my oratorical prowess had been long elevated to God-like status, forget the fact that I had to be on valium the day before I had to give the wedding speech!

This then was the culmination of the year of the Big Oh-Oh, and the year in which I gained for the very first time, the confidence to stand up in front of a crowd and speak without embarrassing myself.

And for those of you who see a passing reference to the movie "Four Weddings and a Funeral" in the story that I related, yes there are four weddings, but no there was no funeral (thankfully); and no, as absurd as it may sound, it really did happen, for my misfortune. The truth as ever, is stranger than fiction, or in this case, it only mirrors fiction somewhat.

The long and short of it though, is that when I looked back on my unhappy experiences, I came to the realization that with each passing wedding speech under my belt, I gained more and more in confidence.

I also found that they really weren't such unmitigated disasters as I had come to think they were. In fact, I have to say that one or two (or three or all four!) of the speeches were not too bad.

And if it doesn't sound too much like bragging, I will even go so far as to say that on a scale of one to ten with ten being the best; of the wedding speeches I gave that year of the Big Oh-Oh, most of them would rank between seven-and-a-half to nine!

This was what really persuaded me to finally write this book. Not the fact that I am an accomplished speech writer – although I am, I just found it hard to talk in front of people – nor was it the fact that I had given four wedding speeches, successfully I might add.

Frankly speaking, it was the realization on my part that although I dreaded every single moment of it, when push came to shove I was able to do the unthinkable and deliver my speech if not flawlessly, then at least with sincerity, feeling and a little bit of humor thrown in.

It was the realization that along with millions of other people I shared a terrible phobia, but due to unavoidable circumstances I had managed to overcome it to a very great extent.

So how does this tie up with my writing a book on wedding speeches? Well, it's simple really. I have the ability to write great speeches; I have the experience of delivering wedding speeches; and I know exactly what you're going through when you believe that you would rather be dumped in a vat of boiling oil than have to give a speech, especially on an occasion as important as a wedding.

Thus are the vagaries of life, and as it so happens, some of us unfortunate souls will have the unhappy privilege of giving a wedding day speech. Of course, if you're lucky you will only have to give a speech for the less intimidating dress rehearsal, but "them's the way the cookie crumbles" to quote a friend of mine.

And yes, I also realize this is an unusually long "Forward" but the way I see it, if the last thing on earth you want to do is to give a wedding day speech, then the very last thing that you want is to go into this book unless you believe in the fact that I know exactly what sort of agonies and miseries you're going through even as you read this.

Let me reassure you. I know what you're going through, and I'm here to help you.

Introduction

“The brain is a wonderful thing. It never stops functioning from the time you’re born until the moment you stand up to make a speech.”
- Herbert V Prochnow and Herbert V Prochnow Jnr

Let’s face it, there are really very few people in the world who can step up in front of a large crowd and not have every single thought in their heads fly away. The truth of the matter is that most of us dread having to face any kind of gathering, be it large or small and have to address them.



This at least in my mind, is a refined kind of torture. You know you have to do it, you know there’s no way that you can get out of it barring your falling off a cliff without the benefit of a bungee chord or a hang-glider, and you know that unless you do it right, this day, this moment will more than likely come back to haunt for the rest of your living years.

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. If we dig deeper we’ll find that public speaking of any kind is a terror all by itself. In most cases it surpasses even our fear of heights, of closed in spaces, or spiders, or snakes, or being alone.

In short, making a public announcement of any sort is for a great many people, just one step short of meeting the devil. For other people, besides those of you who are wondering what on earth I’m talking about and who actually *like* public speaking, it is akin to having all your worst fears come true, all at once.

That of course, is just the beginning. We could go on and on about what drives these fears of public speaking, but since I am most definitely not Freud, and since I definitely have no desire whatsoever to spend my time trying to figure out what makes me tick, I feel that we can safely leave that up to the experts.

And now if I've scared you enough on the aspects of public speaking, we might get down to what this book is really about – dealing with your fear of public speaking! Actually that was just a joke. You didn't read the title incorrectly. We will instead be taking a look at wedding speeches and toasts.

And if that scares you because you have to give one in just under an hour, I have only one question to ask you: what are you doing reading the introduction? You should be looking at the speeches instead!

There is truly nothing as bad as going up in front of large gathering of expectantly waiting people to find that you have no idea what to say, so get cracking and start flipping through the various ideas in the book.

If however, you don't even have that much of time left and you're truly desperate, nothing works better than a small but heartfelt speech along the lines of,

“Hello everyone (Good morning/ evening also works here if you want), if I might have your attention I would just like to say a few words. (Insert small joke here if possible).

It's great to see so many faces here to help us/the happy couple, celebrate this joyous occasion.

There's really not too much I can say on this occasion except perhaps, may there always be love, laughter and joy in the lives of *John* and *Jane* (Insert bride and groom's name here).

May they always be as happy as they are now, and may they forever prosper in their marriage.
Thank you”

Okay, so it doesn't have to exactly like that, but something along those lines will almost always work like a charm. I say almost always, because you need to say this with feeling, with sincerity and overall with the belief in every single word you're uttering.

Now, if you're still here after reading that little example speech and you're slated to give a speech in what is now most definitely less than

an hour, what are you still doing here? I might be interesting to read, but you need to be out there mingling and waiting calmly to give the speech.

The trouble is, that if you were the type to be waiting calmly to give a speech you wouldn't even now be frantically trying to get the speech right in your head. I also have a few solutions for you on steadying your nerves before making a speech, and if you feel like it, you can make your way over to that section, "Look confident, Be confident".

If however, you still have a few days/weeks to give your speech, then I would say that it is most definitely in your best interests to read through the entire book.

Although for the most part everything has been neatly wrapped and tied into their respective different sections to make it easier for you to get your wedding speech written and done with, in some places I have sprinkled bits and pieces of little gems of wisdom all over the place. And the best way to get at these is by reading through the book if you can bring yourself to do so.

There are a few rules that you will want to adhere to when writing your speech, and these will most definitely affect how you say your speech. These I have outlined in the section on how best to structure your speech. And if you're like me and prefer to instead to have a few good examples of a speech with which you can then glean all the information that you need

Creating the perfect wedding speech



How does one do that? Create the perfect wedding speech, that is. How do you go about getting over your heebie-jeebies long enough to write one of the best wedding speeches ever given?

Well, funnily enough that's what I'm here to help you with, and the first thing that I have to say is that it's most definitely not a one step process.

First of all you need to decide whether your oratorical skills are up to par for you to actually give a speech. If they are not, and you would prefer to keep things as short and sweet as possible and *over with as soon possible*, you should give the best possible short speech.

On the other hand, if the butterflies in your stomach can be tamped down and your legs will hold you upright for long enough, then you might want to think about giving a proper wedding speech.

As I said, there are a few steps to pulling off one of these miracles, and I have outlined them below for your benefit.

- First, decide what type of speech you want to give – longish or short. Don't drag out the speech for forty-five minutes (that has happened before folks, so beware of the time factor), and don't try and give the best 45-second wedding speech in history. That just won't work.
- Decide what type of speech you want to give – in this case you need to decide whether you want to take a humorous approach, a serious, one or a sentimental approach etc.

The choice as ever is yours. You will however, need to factor in such things as whether the wedding is formal or informal, and what the bride and groom might appreciate as well.

- Next, take a pen and piece of paper, bring them over to a convenient table and leave it there while you go out for a cup of coffee from the gourmet coffee shop around the corner. Although this step is optional, it can help to clear your mind somewhat.
- After inhaling the life-giving coffee, get down to work writing whatever comes into your mind about the wedding, the bride, the groom, and whatever past history you might have with them. This then will be the beginnings of your speech.
- Continue on in this vein until you have cut, chopped and narrowed down your speech to something that sounds passably good.
- Next, drag your dog in front of you (substitute cat, best friend, or lifeless statue if you want), give him a bone and practice your speech on him so you can see what it sounds like.
- After that, stand up in front of large crowd making your speech, when you realize suddenly realize that you have but a brown paper sack covering your strategic parts. Wake up screaming and in a cold sweat (again, this step is optional!).
- Finally, stand up in front of your gathered friends/ family and give your carefully prepared speech, leaving out all the important bits because you forget them and forgot your cue cards.

Manage to finish your speech with only a marginal degree of embarrassment, sit down and get sloshed on the mineral water, because you have to stay clearheaded and do it all again tomorrow. Oh wait, that last bit was all mine, you (probably) won't have to worry about that!

As you can see, there are many steps which are crucial to giving a wedding speech, but there is one that I haven't mentioned and which is, I believe, one of the most crucial ones: Humor.

Not humor in your speech, but humor at yourself. If you don't manage to take yourself lightly and see the overwhelming humor in the situation, especially if things start to go belly up, you will find that you are having a very difficult time indeed.

You will also find that as you read through the book, that most of the steps which I have defined here, I have also explained in the next section, in some detail.

The basics of writing a wedding speech

If you can write really well, if you have a naturally catchy turn of phrase or if you plain and simple know how to keep people entertained without having to think twice about it, then you might have it all made for the part about writing your speech.

If however, you find it a hard slog to begin even at the beginning for writing a reasonably good speech, there are a few tips and tricks in this section on writing your speech, as well as plain out and out wedding speeches later on in the section entitled “Speeches” which you can use and adapt for your own.

First though, I feel that I should say that there are a few basics for writing a speech, and these tend follow the same general premise across the board for all speeches etc.

What you’re trying to do here though, is not to create generic speech that anyone can use and which anyone could use before you in their own speech. What you’re trying to create is something that is unique and special and personal all on its own.

This means, that although you can most definitely follow the guidelines which I give in the following sections, you might want to think long and hard about how you can make this speech your own, and how you can make it special for the bridal couple.

To that end, some of the tips which I have given in the following section will be good guidelines to use in making your speech more personal, and the section following can help you to actually sit down and write your speech.

Tips to use when writing (or giving) your speech

You will notice if you look closely that I have placed this particular section before anything else in the way of helping you write your own speech, and I had a very good reason to do this.

The way I see it, if I take you through the vagaries of writing a speech to begin with, and then go through the various tips which will come in handy for you, in a later section, you might find that you don't utilize them because your mind is already preconditioned to what you need to write, and these just won't register properly with you.

By giving you this section first, you at least have the chance to read through these, and get an idea of sorts. Then when you go to the sections on how to write your speech, you can incorporate these ideas as well if you want.

Or you could just skip on through these next few sections and take one of the sample speeches I have laid down in the last few sections, and make them your own. I find that this also works for a lot of people!

Get it all down on paper first

Whatever thought comes into your head, write it down. This is best way to start out writing anything, because now you will have a base with which to go on. You can later cut and chop, add and move around whatever bits and pieces you want.

Getting all your thoughts down on paper in one go will always make it easier for you to make a very personal speech because you will put down thoughts which might otherwise be censored.

Put something down on paper and it kind of becomes hard to go back on it, (this is kind of a variation on, once you say something, it can't be unsaid), and this is what we're aiming for with a great personal speech.

Be yourself

Don't use big words and things if you don't normally use them in everyday language. This can come out sounding awkward and forced in the end when you're actually giving your speech.

The same applies for jokes. If you know that you can't properly pull off a punch line with the necessary panache, then stay away from it.

Stick to your strengths

If you can deliver a cracking good speech that is sentimental and will get every eye in the room filled with tears, then do so. There really are some great speeches out there that don't incorporate any jokes anywhere within them.

Although, a naturally funny moment or two, can relieve emotionally charged moments and diffuse the situation. But this is up to you to know your strengths and your weaknesses.

Toast or speech?

At this point you need to know whether you're going to be giving a toast or a speech. Although some people use these interchangeably, they are vastly different. For one thing a speech is longer than a toast and only a few key people will be invited to give a speech, whereas just about anyone can chip in and give a toast to the bridal couple.

So if you've been asked to give a speech, make sure that you deliver a speech, not a toast. And if you've been asked to give a toast, or you've been carried away by the joy of the occasion and are giving a toast, don't ramble on for minutes on end: You're not giving a speech so can it!

Formal or informal?

You will also need to find out beforehand whether the wedding is going to be a formal occasion or an informal one. The tone of your speech will depend a great deal on this little bit of information as well.

A funny lighthearted informal speech might not go down too well with the wedding party. You might be able to sell the audience on it, but if you were expected to give a formal speech, then you will have failed in your task of giving a memorable speech. It will be memorable but for all the wrong reasons.

Are you part of the Wedding Party?

What you say in your speech will also depend to a very large extent on whether or not you're in the wedding party. If you are, you will most definitely have designated roles and responsibilities to look after.

These will also include making a proper and appropriate speech. Depending on what your role is, you will need to thank some people, so you will also need to take this into account when writing out your speech.

If you're not of the wedding party, then you won't have these responsibilities to take into account, but you will have the responsibility of turning out a great wedding speech.

You were after all asked to make a speech especially by the bride and groom, and you should honor this trust they have placed in you. Don't worry, no pressures here!

Learn about your subject, make it personal

The next thing that you need to do is to learn about your subject. If you know only the groom, make it a point to learn what you can about the bride. And if you know only the bride, learn what you can about the groom.

Don't worry, this is a wedding so it won't seem like prying for you to go around asking questions, after you tell them that you're giving a speech of course!

By going this extra distance and learning what you can about your subject, you will have the ability to make it that much, more personal. And you can be sure that they will both appreciate the extra effort that you went to, to make their special day even more special.

Don't use embarrassing references or anecdotes

This is one thing that you most definitely need to keep in mind when writing out your speech. It's all well and good to go about finding

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