

Top Five Wedding Speech Tips from a Professional Speechwriter

By Mary Korica (www.marykoricaspitchwriting.com)

So you've been chosen to deliver a wedding speech—congratulations! That's a big honour but, for most of us, also a source of jitters verging from mild to mega sweaty palms. Fair enough—composing a speech is not easy and talking in front of a roomful of people can be nerve-wracking. Here are a few handy tips for you to consider when you're staring at that blank piece of paper:

1. Tell a story. Pick a theme and draw on that training from way back in high school: have an introduction, middle and conclusion. That'll save you from rambling and help make sure your audience is following your message. Use specific anecdotes from real life that are related to the lovebirds/courtship/wedding/proposal/marriage/your friendship with the married couple, etc. This will be much more interesting for the audience than anything an internet search will dig up.

2. Bring the funny. It's a party and not everything you write needs to be a tearjerker heartwarming anecdote. People are in the mood for a good time and ready to laugh. That said, wedding speech humour should be gentle. This is not the time to dig up old embarrassing moments that could have some people rolling in the aisles but make others cringe or, worse yet, hurt someone's feelings. It's worth considering whether you have a fair sense that everyone in the room will be laughing when you deliver the punchline—and then doublecheck with someone who has a good read on these things (possibly, but not necessarily, someone who thinks exactly like you). Check with the bride and groom if you'd like to use a personal story about them. But if you're going to poke fun, the safest bet is to poke fun at yourself.

3. Keep it short. A wedding speech doesn't need to be over 3 minutes. There are no hard and fast rules, but people didn't come to the party to be talked at for long, they're just expecting you to touch their heartstrings a little, give them a laugh or two if you can swing it, and say something appropriate, personal and meaningful before toasting the lucky couple. Then there's stuff like dessert, dj's and dancing to get to.

4. Keep it clean. The old rule of public speaking applies: know your audience. There are often people of all ages at a wedding so keep the bawdy tales and swearing for other choice moments.

5. Have fun! When those public speaking jitters take hold, remember why you're doing this in the first place: it's a celebration. So go ahead, smile at the audience, breathe, look down at that piece of paper to get going, and have fun...but not too much fun—don't forget to hold back on the drinks until after you deliver that kick-ass speech.

We all remember the wedding speech that went right and that other one that went wrong—what are your wedding speech stories? Email me yours at mary@marykoricaspitchwriting.com. And if you think you could use a little help with your wedding speech, don't hesitate to be in touch!

Mary has been writing and editing for over a decade, and she loves the challenge of turning ideas and information into clear language tailor-made to accomplish the messenger's goals. Through marykoricaspitchwriting.com she is helping people find that perfect turn of phrase for business and personal occasions. There is no match for professional training and experience when it comes to making

sure you've hit the mark when it comes to your public speaking—whether polishing up existing text or starting from scratch, she can help.