

# How to prepare and give a Wedding Toast or Speech

**A well-prepared toast or speech is a wonderful addition to a wedding celebration. Here are some tips to help you prepare and give a great speech.**

Keep your toast or speech short, between 3 and 5 minutes is best. (Speaking at a moderate pace, you'll need approximately 75 to 100 words for each minute.)

## ► *Prepare your speech in sections...*

1. **INTRODUCTION...** BRIEFLY introduce yourself to the audience and BRIEFLY identify your relationship to the bride and groom. Example: "Hello everyone, my name is Fred Wilson and I've known Harry since the 3rd grade."
2. **SEGUE #1...** This is where you create a bridge from your introduction to lead in to your speech. Example: "I'm not a fortune-teller, however I knew that when Harry met Sally, they had a very strong connection."
3. **BODY...** Come up with a few (3 to 5) interesting points about the bride and groom that you can share with the audience during your speech. Keep it simple. Think about how the couple met, why they're perfect together or how great their families are.
4. **SEGUE #2...** Create another bridge from the body of your speech to lead in to your conclusion. Example: "And so here we are today, celebrating the union of Harry and Sally."
5. **CONCLUSION...** Wrap up your speech with a heart-felt sentiment or thought. A short, appropriate quote is good. Avoid clichés.
6. **TOAST...** Be sure to ask everyone to raise their glass and join in a toast as you wish Harry and Sally a lifetime of love, luck and happiness.

## ► *Make sure the bride and groom are the subjects of your speech...*

It's about them, however this is not the place to take a trip down memory lane. Keep your speech upbeat and friendly with lots of praise and positive thoughts. A reference to the bride or grooms mother, father, brother, sister or family is good if you are close to one or all of them. Humor is fine, but should be used sparingly and only when appropriate. Avoid honeymoon jokes, obscure references, or inside comments.



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- ▶ One or maybe two memorable quotes are okay. Just be sure the quote is appropriate for the point you want to make.
- ▶ Rehearse your speech (out loud) several times in advance before you give it. Add some style and flair with a little drama, excitement or intrigue. Don't over do it, as you'll want to sound confident and friendly. Don't be surprised if rehearsing prompts you to do a rewrite of your speech. Cut out any unnecessary words and shorten up any long or awkward phrases.
- ▶ Use index cards to keep yourself on track. When you find yourself getting nervous or flustered, don't adlib or go off on any tangents. Just pause, take a deep breath, smile and continue. The audience will just think your being thoughtful or sentimental.
- ▶ When using index cards, try not to focus all your attention on the cue card. Glance at the card and then look up at the bride and groom or the audience, smile and make eye contact as you speak.
- ▶ Always stand when giving a speech or toast. Stand where everyone in the room can see you. The speech or toast is very important and although you may be nervous, you shouldn't hide.
- ▶ Speak up and speak clearly. Even though you may have a microphone, it won't compensate for a weak or lack-luster vocal style. Watch your breathing too, as microphones tend to pick that up.
- ▶ Ask someone to look you over a few minutes before your speech, to be sure you look your best.
- ▶ Don't be distracted by whatever might be going on in the audience during your speech. The wait staff may be moving about, a baby may cry, or someone's cell phone may ring. Don't let it throw you and don't make a joke about it. Stay on track and your speech will be great.

Cheers!



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