



TOASTMASTERS  
INTERNATIONAL

# CONCLUDING YOUR SPEECH



The Better  
Speaker Series



WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE



# CONCLUDING YOUR SPEECH

## The Better Speaker Series

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Item 271A



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**

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# THE BETTER SPEAKER SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Better Speaker Series* is a set of presentations offering instruction on basic speaking skills. Designed to be delivered by members to their clubs, presentations in this series provide new speaking techniques and facts that can help all club members develop their communication skills.

Presentations in *The Better Speaker Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM

"Concluding Your Speech" helps members learn effective ways to end a speech. The presentation identifies the criteria that every speech ending should fulfill and offers methods for ending a speech. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

### *In Your Own Words*

*The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.*

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance.

In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
- ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in the online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.

## **BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of becoming a Distinguished club—or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

# CONCLUDING YOUR SPEECH

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Concluding Your Speech” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmasters Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.



# CONCLUDING YOUR SPEECH

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION

A conclusion is important to the success of any speech. All too often, an otherwise excellent speech loses its effectiveness because of a poor closing. People remember the last thing they hear more than any other part of your speech. If you want people to remember and be favorably impressed with it, you must strive to conclude your speech positively and forcefully.

### CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSIONS

Successful speech closings meet three criteria:

- ▶ **Achieve a sense of closure:** People need and expect closure. An effective closing signals to the audience that your speech is ending and reminds them to pay attention to your final words. The following are common ways and phrases to tell listeners you will be ending your speech and leading them to closure:
  - “in conclusion”
  - “let me end by saying”
  - “in summary”
- ▶ **Make an impact:** A good ending makes a lasting impression on your audience. As mentioned earlier, people remember the last thing they hear the longest. After a few weeks, your listeners may have forgotten most of your speech. However, they will remember the last words you said to them and how they felt after hearing those words if you deliver the ending in a striking, forceful, or meaningful way.
- ▶ **Take less than five to 10 percent of the entire speech time:** Most of your allotted speaking time should be spent on the body of your speech. Your conclusion should take only five to 10 percent of your entire speech time. For example, a 10-minute speech should have a closing of 30 to 60 seconds.

### CLOSING TECHNIQUES

There are certain techniques, if applied with the criteria that will create a lasting and vivid impression with your audience. The following six techniques will help you create strong speech endings:

#### **Presenter:**

*Personalize the following techniques by referring to speech endings used by some of your fellow club members. For example, if Betty Smith ended her speech last week with an appeal for listeners to take action, refer to it when you discuss “Call for action” below.*

V1

V2

- ▶ **Use a quotation:** Used properly, a quotation can add authority to your closing, amuse your listeners, or dramatize your speech points. Whatever quote you choose, keep it short and related directly to your speech topic.

*Example: A presentation encouraging people to become concerned about the future environment could close with George Bernard Shaw's words, "Some men see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dare to dream of things that never were and ask, 'Why not?'"*

V3

- ▶ **Tell a short story or anecdote:** A powerful story or anecdote can make a memorable close. It can be inspirational or funny, but it should be short, develop quickly, and be related to or reinforce your message. Personalize it if possible, too.

V4

- ▶ **Call for action:** If your speech was intended to persuade or urge your listeners to take some kind of action, your closing statement should clearly explain what action they should take.

*Example: You could conclude a speech about drug abuse prevention by saying, "Educating our young people about drugs begins with you. After you leave here tonight, I urge you to go home and talk to your children. Tell them you love them and are concerned for them. Talk to them about drugs."*

V5

- ▶ **Ask a rhetorical question:** End a speech by asking one question or a series of questions that relate to your topic. The audience will think about an answer and thus your speech.

*Example: "You may ask, 'Can we afford to do this?' I ask, 'Can we afford not to?'"*

V6

- ▶ **Refer to the beginning of the speech:** Tie your closing words to the beginning of your speech to reinforce your message.

*Example: "I began my remarks by reviewing the challenges our company must confront if we are to continue to be successful. I believe these challenges provide opportunities for each of us to learn and grow as individuals. Let's not be afraid of these challenges; let's welcome them as opportunities and move forward."*

V7

- ▶ **Summarize your main points:** Repeat the points presented in the body of the speech. Repetition reinforces your message and enhances your audience's learning.

*Example: "Remember, please, the three keys to making this new program work: understanding, commitment, and teamwork. Only when we all know the program, commit to it, and work together will we achieve our goal."*

V8

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

You can do several things to ensure that your speech ends with impact:

- ▶ **Memorize your conclusion:** A memorized, polished ending enables you to end confidently and adds impact to your speech.
- ▶ **End on time:** Too many speeches are ruined because the speaker goes far beyond the allotted time. By ending on time and with a dynamic conclusion, you will leave your audience with a favorable image.
- ▶ **Refrain from adding new points:** Occasionally, you may forget to mention a point in the body of your speech. Bringing it up in the conclusion of your speech detracts from the effectiveness of the conclusion and can confuse the audience.

## CONCLUSION

Sometimes, an otherwise-excellent speech loses its effectiveness because of a poor closing. Do not let this happen to you. You have put too much work into creating and presenting your speech. Do not risk leaving your audience with a less-than-favorable impression. Make a lasting impact. Use some of the methods presented to conclude your speech positively and forcefully.

*"Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending."*

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



## Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Better Speaker Series* and the presentation itself?
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own speeches?
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



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