

A collage of three images. The top left image shows a woman with brown hair, wearing a maroon dress and a pearl necklace, smiling and gesturing while speaking to an audience seated in red chairs. The top right image shows a man with dark hair, wearing a dark sweater over a white collared shirt, standing at a wooden podium with the Toastmasters International logo, gesturing with his hands. The bottom image shows a man with curly hair, wearing a light blue shirt, speaking to a group of people, with a woman in a red top visible in the foreground.

The Better
Speaker Series



**WHERE LEADERS
ARE MADE**



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CONCLUDING YOUR SPEECH

The Better Speaker Series

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www.toastmasters.org

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
- ▶ CD of a PowerPoint presentation to be viewed along with your speech

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. You are encouraged to use them. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, you will need a data projector, a laptop computer, a table to support them, and a screen for viewing.

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 you cannot arrange for projection equipment but still would like to use visuals, you may copy the material on the visuals onto a flipchart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does not seep through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Also, make your letters large and heavy with plenty of space between them.

Follow these tips when using visual aids:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners. Place your projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen. Focus the image.
- ▶ Bring spare equipment, including a projector bulb, extension cord, extra marking pens, etc.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flipchart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flipchart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Do not talk to the screen or flipchart. 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.

EVALUATION AND THE ADVANCED COMMUNICATOR SILVER (ACS) AWARD

Because this is an outlined presentation, for presenting it you will not receive credit toward completing a manual speech project, but you may receive credit toward your Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS) award. Ask your vice president education to assign an evaluator for your presentation.

Conducting any two presentations from *The Better Speaker Series* and/or *The Successful Club Series* is one component of qualification for ACS recognition. For further details, please view the Toastmasters International website: www.toastmasters.org.

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* (Item 1167E) 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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