

The Speaker's Toolbox

*Taking Your Speech
Writing To The Next
Level*

cannon.mike@gmail.com

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

THE SPEAKER'S TOOLBOX



47 Tools to Build Better Speeches

BRIAN WOOLF



100 YEARS

Login | Find a Club | Start a Club | Contact Us Search

FIND A CLUB

About | Education Programs | Membership | Resources | Magazine | Events | Shop

Home / About / 90th Anniversary / 90 Tips From Toastmasters

| 90 TIPS FROM TOASTMASTERS

1. Know your material. Speak about a topic you're interested in and know a lot about. Reinforce your message with facts and statistics, if possible. [X Post](#)

2. Make it personal. Use humor, personal anecdotes and conversational language to make your speech engaging. [X Post](#)

3. Practice makes permanent. Rehearse your speech aloud using any equipment and/or visual aids you'll use during your presentation. Rehearse as often as you can. [X Post](#)

4. Time yourself. Time your speech every time you rehearse it to ensure you don't go over the five- to seven-minute time limit. [X Post](#)

5. Pace yourself. People tend to rush when they're nervous, so practice keeping your speech at a calm, steady pace. [X Post](#)

6. Arrive early. Give yourself enough time to get acquainted with the stage or presentation area, and test the microphone and any visual aids you'll be using. [X Post](#)

7. Relax. Breathe and stretch before taking the stage. Pause for a few seconds, smile and count to three before speaking. [X Post](#)

8. Visualize your success. Imagine yourself giving your speech: your voice is loud, clear and confident. Imagine hearing the audience's applause – it will boost your confidence. [X Post](#)

9. Trust your audience. The audience isn't your enemy - they want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you. [X Post](#)



90 Tips From Toastmasters

- 1. Know your material.** Speak about a topic you're interested in and know a lot about. Reinforce your message with facts and statistics, if possible.
- 2. Make it personal.** Use humor, personal anecdotes and conversational language to make your speech engaging.
- 3. Practice makes permanent.** Rehearse your speech aloud using any equipment and/or visual aids you'll use during your presentation. Rehearse as often as you can.
- 4. Time yourself.** Time your speech every time you rehearse it to ensure you don't go over the five- to seven-minute time limit.
- 5. Pace yourself.** People tend to rush when they're nervous, so practice keeping your speech at a calm, steady pace.
- 6. Arrive early.** Give yourself enough time to get acquainted with the stage or presentation area, and test the microphone and any visual aids you'll be using.
- 7. Relax.** Breathe and stretch before taking the stage. Pause for a few seconds, smile and count to three before speaking.
- 8. Visualize your success.** Imagine yourself giving your speech: your voice is loud, clear and confident. Imagine hearing the audience's applause – it will boost your confidence.
- 9. Trust your audience.** The audience isn't your enemy - they want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you.
- 10. Don't apologize.** If you make a mistake, there's no need to say you're sorry. Pick up where you left off and keep going.
- 11. Use humor when things go wrong.** If something goes wrong during your speech, tell a quick joke to help put you and your audience at ease. For example, if the lights go out, a good joke might be: "Who forgot to pay the electric bill?"
- 12. Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective communication. Joining a Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need in a safe and encouraging environment.
- 13. Eliminate filler words.** Using umms and ahhs in your speech will distract your message. Briefly pause to gather your next thought, or take a sip of water.
- 14. Ditch distracting mannerisms.** Nervous fidgeting or gestures will detract from your message. Use purposeful gestures to give your speech more impact.
- 15. Keep your notes in check.** If you need to use notes, be subtle and do not read your speech.
- 16. Test your volume.** Before your speech, ask a friend or colleague to listen to you from the back of the room to ensure you're speaking at the right volume.
- 17. Enter contests.** Entering contests is a challenging and fun way to improve your skills. Toastmasters offers various speech contests throughout the year.
- 18. Enjoy yourself.** Choose a topic on something that is important to you, and that you feel passionate about. Your commitment to the topic will help sell the speech to your audience.
- 19. Use visuals.** Make sure your visual aids reinforce your message and don't distract from it.
- 20. Embrace your unique style.** Don't copy the style or gestures of other speakers, as your audience will sense a lack of authenticity. Be yourself; no one does that better than you can.
- 21. Fuel your mental engine.** Eat a light meal at least 20 minutes prior to your speech.
- 22. Burn off anxiety.** Your body produces cortisol when you're anxious or stressed, which limits your creativity and ability to process complex information. Be sure to burn off cortisol with exercise before any speaking engagement.
- 23. Be prepared for the worst.** Murphy's Law states that anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Be prepared by having print-outs of your presentation slides and a copy of your presentation on USB drive.
- 24. Pause.** Before addressing your audience, pause for a few seconds. This will gain their attention and increase impact.
- 25. Ask a thought-provoking question.** Capture the audience's attention by asking a question they may not know the answer to. For example, "Do you know why the sky is blue? It's a question many kids ask their parents as kids, and I'm honestly not sure I could explain it without a Google search. But I do know what will turn the sky from blue to grey, and that's pollution."
- 26. Share a startling fact.** Everyone loves an interesting piece of information. Be sure to share something that audience will find surprising.
- 27. Don't overload your slides.** Keep your slides concise; don't overload them with too many talking points.
- 28. Repeat the audience's questions.** If an audience member asks a question, repeat it back so everyone can hear it and knows what you are speaking to.
- 29. Give your audience an immediate action item.** Audiences love to come away from a speech feeling motivated. Take advantage of their current motivation and give them an immediate action item.
- 30. Push the envelope.** Take risks, but know your audience and don't present material simply for shock value. Have a point and the facts to back it up.
- 31. Seek opportunities everywhere.** Public speaking doesn't have to happen in front of an audience. Seek opportunities to practice your communication skills, whether it's sharing an idea at a work meeting or talking to people in public.
- 32. Be specific.** Try to keep your speeches and discussion to the topic on point. Don't convolute your message with too many stories that stray from the original purpose.
- 33. Be the expert.** Make sure that you've done the appropriate research prior to your public speaking engagement. Explore the topic in depth so that you're ready for questions and feel comfortable speaking to your topic.
- 34. Speak to groups as individuals.** While you may be speaking to a group of people, speak to them as though they are just one to make the speech feel more intimate and personal.
- 35. Learn about your personal leadership style.** Everyone has a different leadership style. What's yours? Learn about your leadership style and embrace the positive attributes and make an action plan to change the negative.
- 36. Find your strengths.** Strengths include, voice volume and timbre, expert knowledge, comfort level and ability to think on the fly. Find those strengths and look for a way to capitalize on them.
- 37. Be passionate.** Find topics that mean a lot to you. If you are asked to speak to a topic that you don't feel connected with, look for a connection that interests you. Find something that you can take away from the message.
- 38. Have a positive attitude.** The best way to fail at something is to think you will. Go into every public speaking situation thinking that it's an opportunity to grow and engage.
- 39. Practice impromptu speaking.** Test your skills in business meetings, speaking with a bank teller, or social events.
- 40. Encourage honest evaluation.** The best speakers learn from each experience. Encourage your audience or interviewer to give you their honest critique of your presentation.
- 41. Use quotes, stories and anecdotes.** They will help reinforce your message and entertain the audience.
- 42. Use "you" and "we".** While your speech may require personal stories or anecdotes, be sure to connect the topic with the audience as well. Circle around to explain why it's important to them.
- 43. Don't take things personally.** Your audience may have strong opinions about a topic, especially if it's controversial. Consider their responses educational.
- 44. Trust your instincts.** With leadership and public speaking, it's always important to trust your instincts. If your gut tells you to steer into another direction or bring up a certain topic, listen to what it says.
- 45. Distinguish your goals and targets.** It's important to know the goal of your message and WHY you are speaking to it. The best way to bomb a speech is to not understand the purpose.
- 46. Learn from your mistakes.** Everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is to appreciate the lesson you learned, and keep moving forward.
- 47. Know when to lose your script.** Gauge your audience's response to your message and know when to change or lose the script. If your audience seems bored or uninterested, move onto to something else.
- 48. Know the dress code.** Research the culture of the audience and how they dress. Dress one level higher than the audience – typically business or business casual.
- 49. Use slang with caution.** Slang words don't translate well across different cultures and ethnicities. Be careful to make sure that the meaning behind your words is interpreted as intended.
- 50. Breathe out.** Take slow deep breaths in and then release your breathe from the bottom of your abdomen to get the maximum

benefits of release and relaxation.

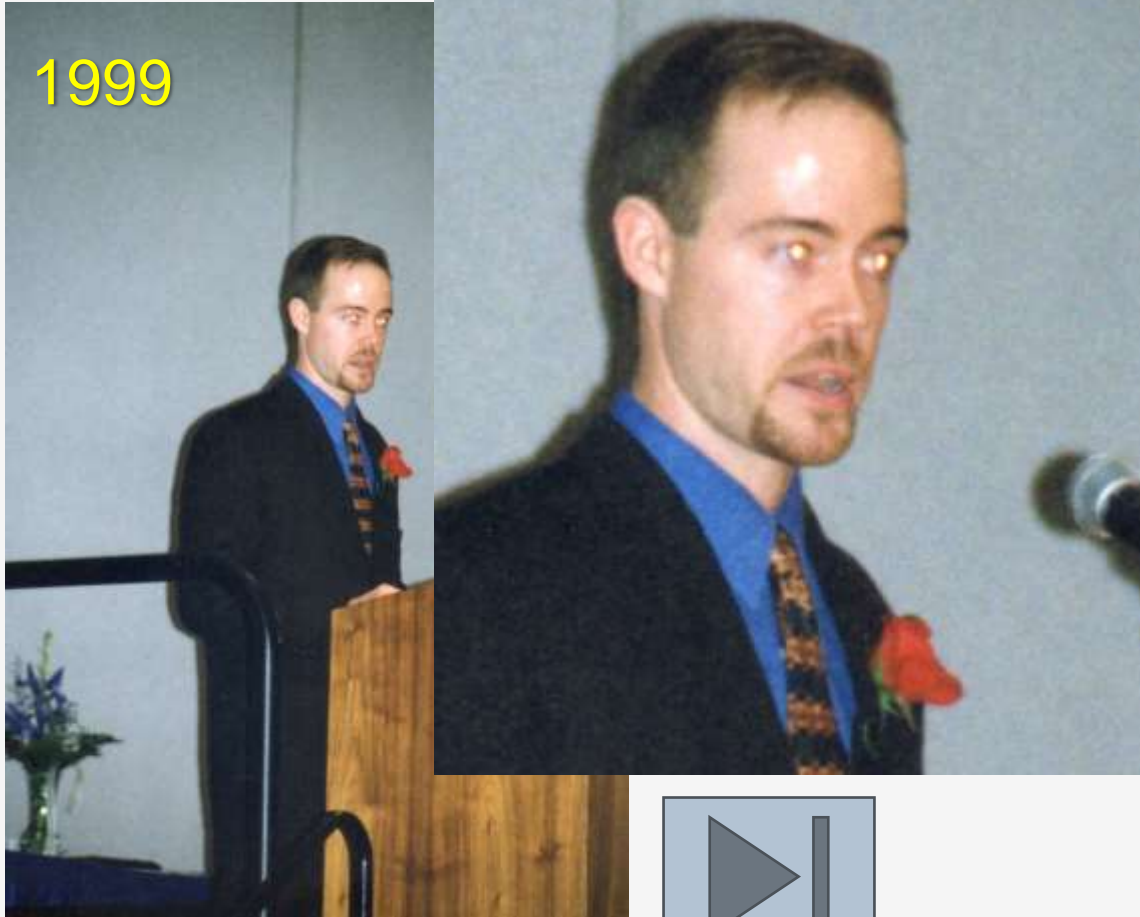
- 51. Be patient.** Becoming a great speaker will not just happen overnight. There is a process so be patient with yourself.
- 52. Treat your speech like fine dining.** Approach your speech like a fine five-course meal to be savored one bite at a time, not a fast food meal to be gobbled in a few bites. There's no need to rush.
- 53. Start your career off on the right note.** The way that you speak in the beginning of your career will set the tone for your career path. Don't put off building an authentic and powerful speaking style. Make sure you have it before you need it!
- 54. Own your worth.** You deserve the chance to be heard and share your ideas. Don't feel bad sharing them.
- 55. When you disagree with someone, rebut their ideas, not them.** Always discuss the topic rather than the person. Personally attacking your opponent or audience will take credibility away from you.
- 56. Stand. Settle. Smile.** When you take the stage, stand, settle in your place for a few seconds and then smile prior to speaking.
- 57. Speak your needs.** Don't expect your audience, interviewer or club to guess what you want. Be candid and clear with your intentions.
- 58. Get rest.** Nerves may keep you awake, but try to get an adequate amount of sleep prior to your speech to ensure optimal mental alertness.
- 59. Avoid negative topics.** Try to focus on positive or uplifting messages. While sometimes it's necessary to speak to a negative topic, include positive ways the issue can be improved or resolved.
- 60. Smile and introduce yourself.** Let the audience know who you are and why you should be speaking about this topic.
- 61. Practice eye contact.** Practicing eye contact in all social situations will make it easier on stage. Practice eye contact with people you work with, the cashier at the grocery store, etc.
- 62. Limit caffeine.** Too much caffeine can make you shaky during your speech. Try to limit your caffeine intake the day of and night before your speaking engagement.
- 63. Don't hide from your audience.** Though you may be nervous, try not to stay behind a podium or hide behind your presentation
- 64. Use color.** Mark your notes with colorful symbols that mean something to you.
- 65. Don't alienate your audience.** Be sure to arrive on time and speak to the topic promised.
- 66. Know your audience.** Don't approach your speech with a one size fits all. Use the internet to search about foreign countries and cultures where you will be speaking. This includes corporate cultures. Speak to your audience. Don't confuse your audience by using technical jargon, industry jargon or complex statistics.
- 67. Avoid speaking in monotone.** Use inflection to signal significant points in your speech and keep the audience engaged.
- 68. Free your hands.** Freeing your hands to use gestures is one way to help eliminate filler words such as "umms" and "ahhhs".
- 69. Be succinct.** Make every word of your speech count. Avoid talking just to "fill the air".
- 70. Be open to evaluation.** Evaluations help boost your confidence and provide tangible direction on how to improve. It's a road map to get you where you need to go. (from the Toastmaster, August 2014, page 14)
- 71. Give evaluations.** Evaluating other speakers in an opportunity to help others find their voice while strengthening your own in the process. (from the Toastmaster, August 2014, page 14)
- 72. Use blue note cards.** Blue note cards are less distracting to an audience than white cards.
- 73. Join the online conversation.** Follow Toastmasters International on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, and interact with members from around the globe. Follow your own club's and district's social media pages too.
- 74. Share the wealth.** If you have a friend, family member or colleague who may benefit from Toastmasters, invite them to a meeting to check out the program.
- 75. Start your journey.** If you're not currently working on the Communication or Leadership track as a Toastmaster, now is the perfect time to start. You'll discover new confidence and self-empowerment as you reach your goals.
- 76. Accept accolades.** When you're given a compliment or an award, it's important to accept it graciously. The "Accepting an Award" speech assignment in the Special Occasion Speeches manual will help you master this.
- 77. Step up.** If you haven't filled a certain meeting role in your club yet, make it a point to do so at an upcoming meeting. It will not only get you out of your comfort zone, you'll better understand the overall club experience.
- 78. Chat with ease.** If you feel nervous engaging in one-on-one conversations, you're encouraged to attend club meetings and complete the "Conversing with Ease" assignment in the Interpersonal Communication manual.
- 79. Manage your time.** Serving as a timer at your club meetings and giving speeches with time limits will help you master time management skills that will help you in all areas of your life.
- 80. Make them laugh.** You may not have aspirations of being a stand-up comedian, but you can still learn to give humorous speeches. See the Entertaining Speaker Manual for guidance.
- 81. Speak your case.** Sometimes public speaking has an audience of one, such as a traffic court judge or customer service representative. Presenting a well-organized argument can help you win your case. See the "Organize Your Speech" assignment in the Competent Communication manual for guidance.
- 82. Keep the peace.** As a leader, it's essential to know how to diffuse conflict. See the "Defusing Verbal Communication" assignment in the Interpersonal Communication Manual to help you become a pro at conflict resolution.
- 83. PREP (Point, Reason, Example, Point).** Start your speech with a clear point. Explain your reason for choosing the subject. Illustrate your point with examples. End with a clear point that wraps up the speech.
- 84. Give a top-notch toast.** Stand up, raise your glass, speak from the heart, keep it brief, and stay focused on the person or event being honored.
- 85. Tap into the past.** If you're interested in Toastmasters' evolution over the past 90 years, visit our [90th anniversary page](#) for videos, photos and resources.
- 86. Use common language.** Impress your audience through your presentation and mastery of your topic, not by using complicated words. For example: say "help" instead of "assist" or "use" instead of "utilize".
- 87. Don't get lost in translation.** If you deliver a speech in your second (or even third) language, use humor, metaphor and analogy sparingly, as these don't always translate well into other languages.
- 88. Take jokes for a test drive.** If you want to include a joke in your speech, write several options and test them out with your family, co-workers or club members to see how they are received.
- 89. Use people's names.** People love to be addressed by their name in conversation. To help you remember someone's name, be sure to say it back to them to verify you have it right, and try to use it several times to make it stick.
- 90. Keep a journal.** When you get ideas for speech topics, jot them down in a journal so you have them to refer to when you're tapped for ideas and need inspiration.



Tip #27
Don't overload
your slides

My Journey

1999



Unofficial Tip
Don't be the
hero of your
own story

Tip #2:
Make it
personal

Tip #54:
Own Your
Worth

npr-recording.wav

My Journey

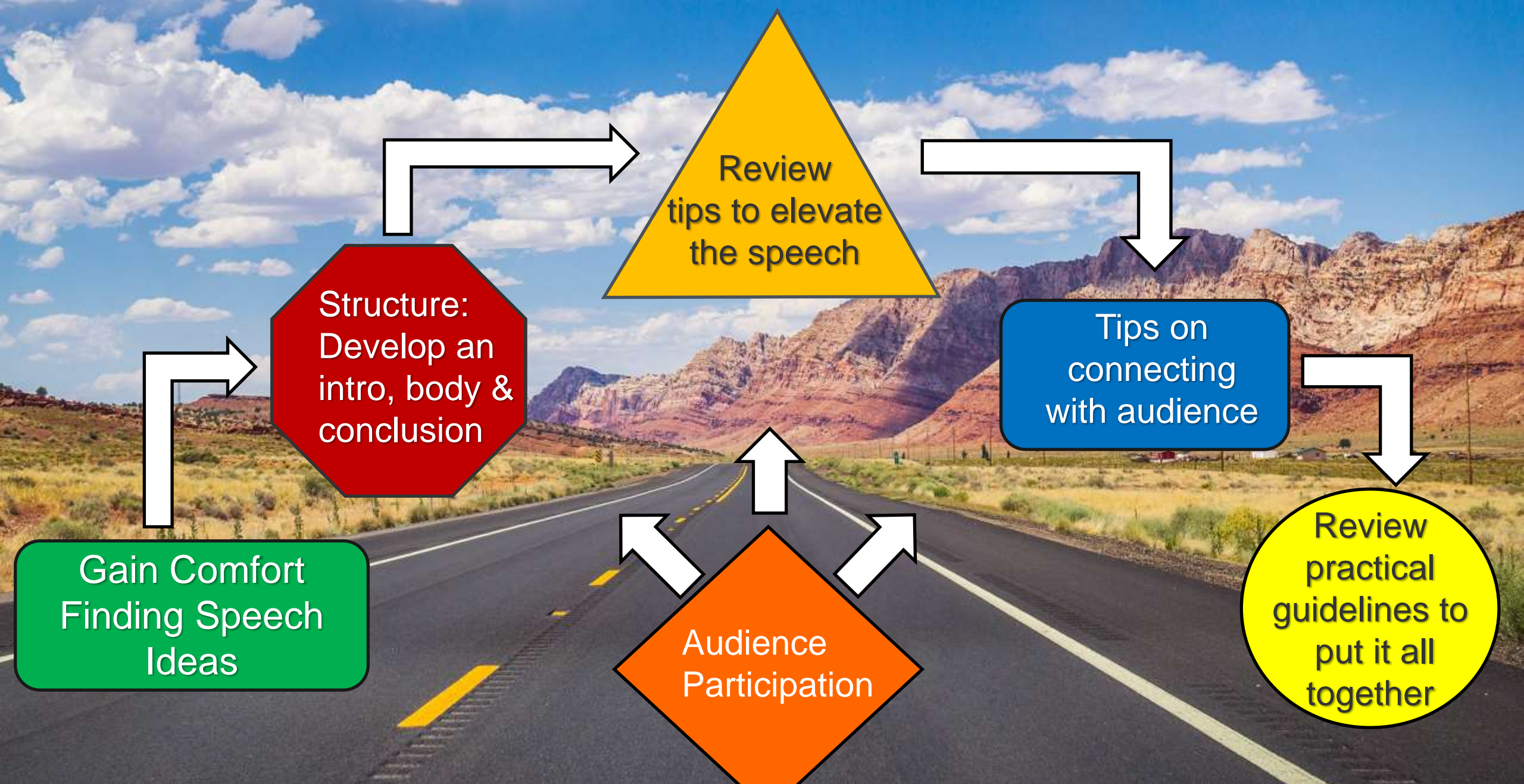
1999



2023



Tip #17:
Enter contests



Structure:
Develop an
intro, body &
conclusion

Review
tips to elevate
the speech

Tips on
connecting
with audience

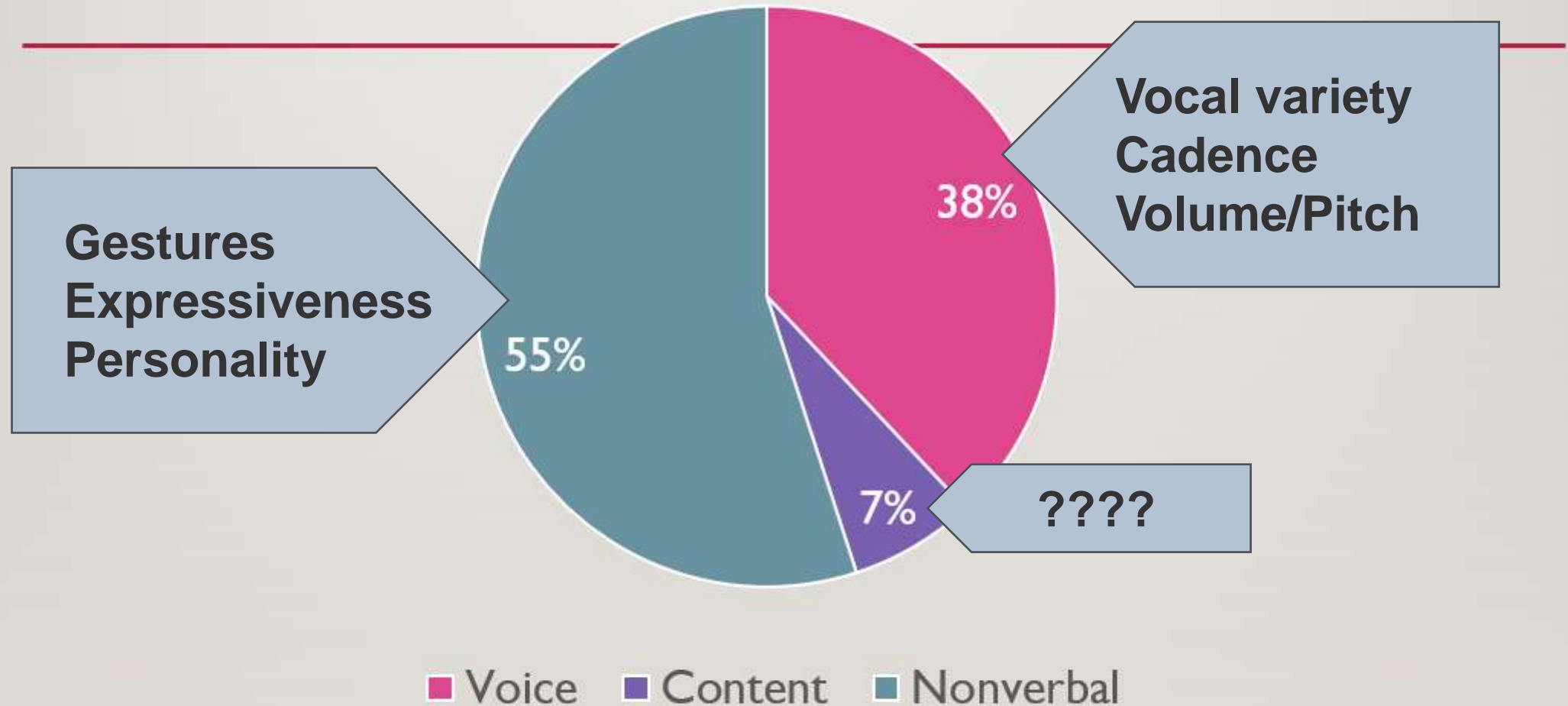
Review
practical
guidelines to
put it all
together

Gain Comfort
Finding Speech
Ideas

Audience
Participation

CONTENT

What Determines Speech Effectiveness?

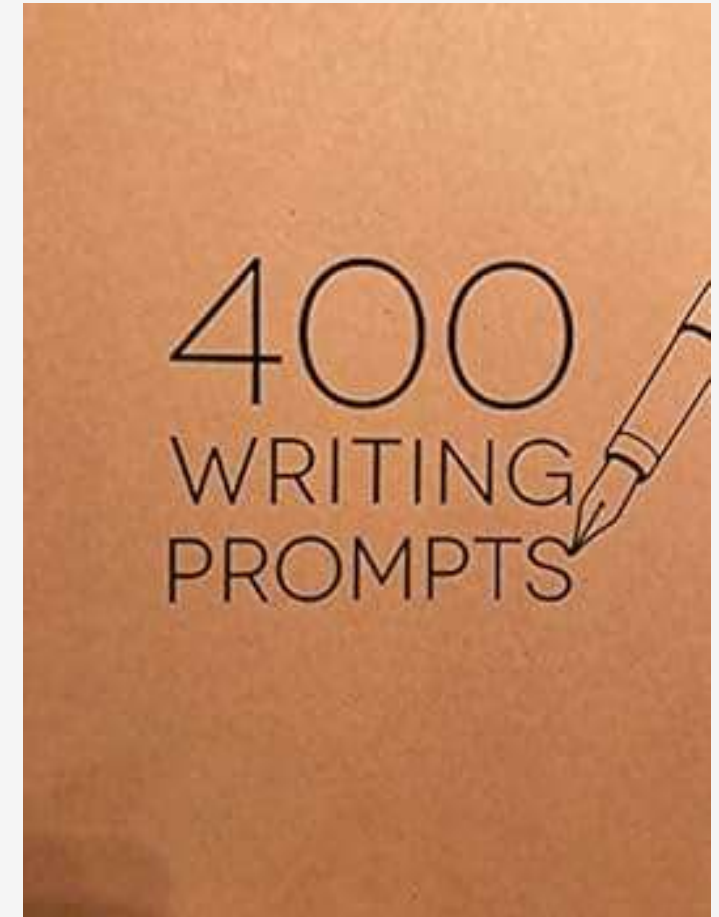
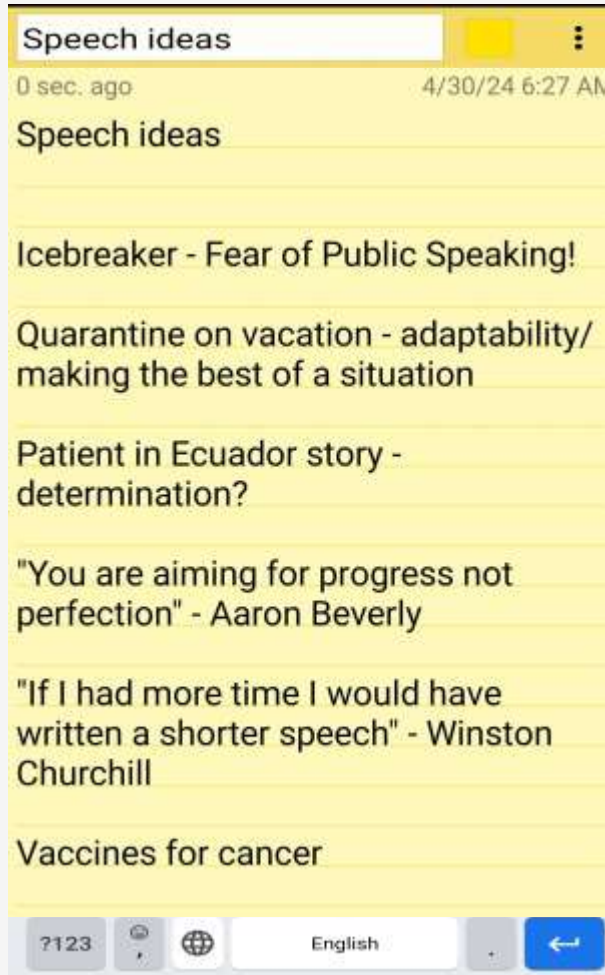
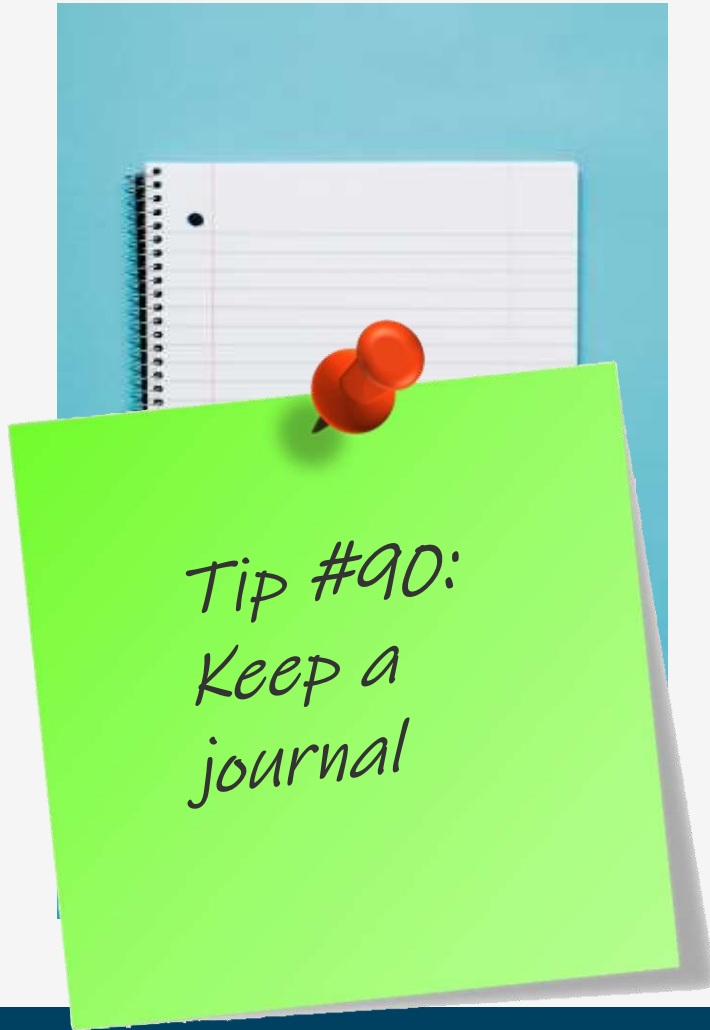


Content – sources of material

- Life events
- Interests
- Family
- Your journey
- Daily routine
- Observations



Finding Content



The Wheel of Topics



1. Hobbies
2. Pets
3. Scariest thing that happened
4. Your work or career
5. Favorite Meal
6. Favorite vacation/road trip
7. Most Exciting thing that happened
8. Secret talent or skill
9. Your Family
10. Your First Car
11. Favorite Movie or Book
12. Audience selection

Content – Does Everyone Have a Topic?

The Why

TED

- What is your message and why does it matter?
- Why is it an idea worth spreading?



Tip #37
Be Passionate

Toastmasters

1. What is my message or point?
2. Why is it important to me? And to my audience?
3. What do I want my audience to THINK, FEEL or DO Afterwards?
4. What can I do to help them remember my message?
5. How excited am I by my message?

Woolf, B. *The Speaker's Toolbox*. Greenville, Teal Books, 2016.

The Why – Common Themes

Inspiration

Motivation

Persuasion

Providing information



Do you have your why?



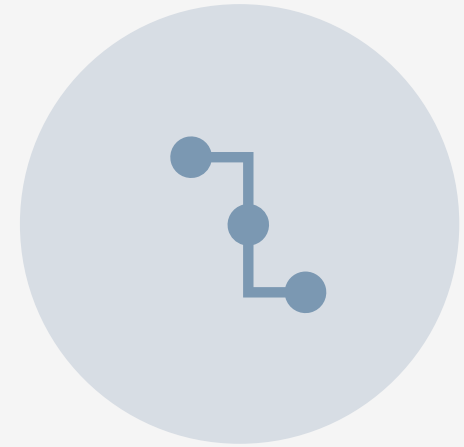
Keys to Speech Success



MESSAGE



RETENTION



CONNECTION

Woolf, B. *The Speaker's Toolbox*. Greenville, Teal Books, 2016

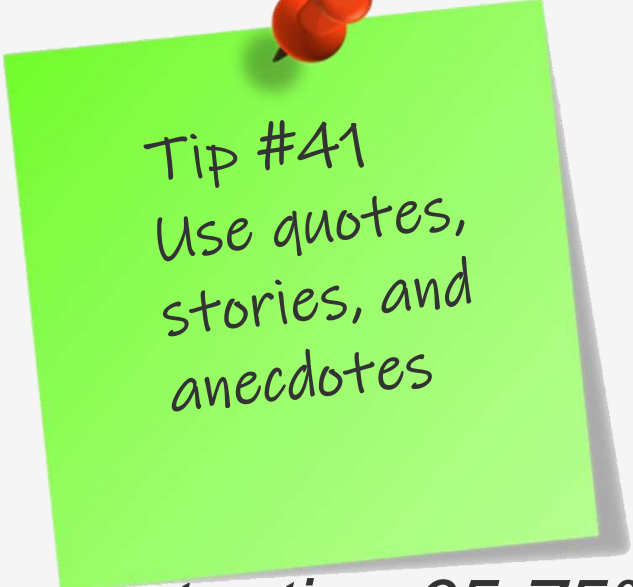
Crafting The Speech – What to consider for content

Facts - retained 5-10% of time

Stories - increase retention to 30%

Engaging stories with emotion & examples - *Improves retention 65-75%*

Attention span is typically 8-10 minutes



Tip #41
Use quotes,
stories, and
anecdotes

<https://speakingcpr.com/the-numbers-dont-lie-stories-not-statistics-make-you-memorable/>

The Body

This is where you lay out your points and subpoints

Most 4-6 or 5-7 minute speeches should have 3 main points

- Or this could be 3 examples

Or in a story, your character is working to overcome a challenge

Add life to each point with examples, stories, facts or explanations

Let's work on the body

The Conclusion

“Tell the audience what you are going to say, say it; then tell them what you’ve said.”



-Dale Carnegie

Conclusion Tips

Where you bring your points together

Or in a story, this is where things come to a resolution

Call to action, restate your thesis or callback to the title, advice, a solution, or an interesting quote



Don't conclude by saying "thank you" – you provided the entertainment

Turn the lectern back to the Toastmaster of the Day

"Mr. Toastmaster of the Day or Evening, fellow Toastmasters and Guests"

Tip #29:
Give your
audience an
immediate
action item

Let's discuss conclusions

Introduction - Purpose

- What is your goal?
 - Establish in the intro
- Set the scene
- Introduce yourself
- Audience should know why you are giving this

Introduction - The Hook

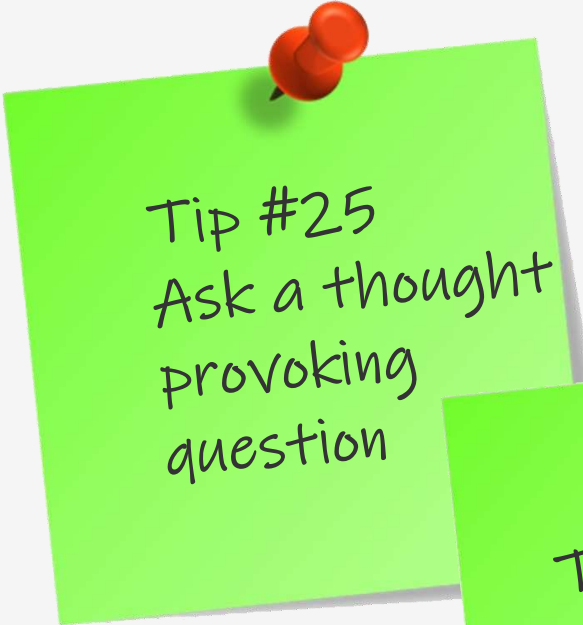
“What if” scenario

“Imagine” scenario

Open with silence

A statistic

Powerful statement or phrase



Tip #25
Ask a thought
provoking
question



Tip #26
Share a
startling fact

Introduction - Discussion Time

Taking your speech to the next level



Enhancing your content

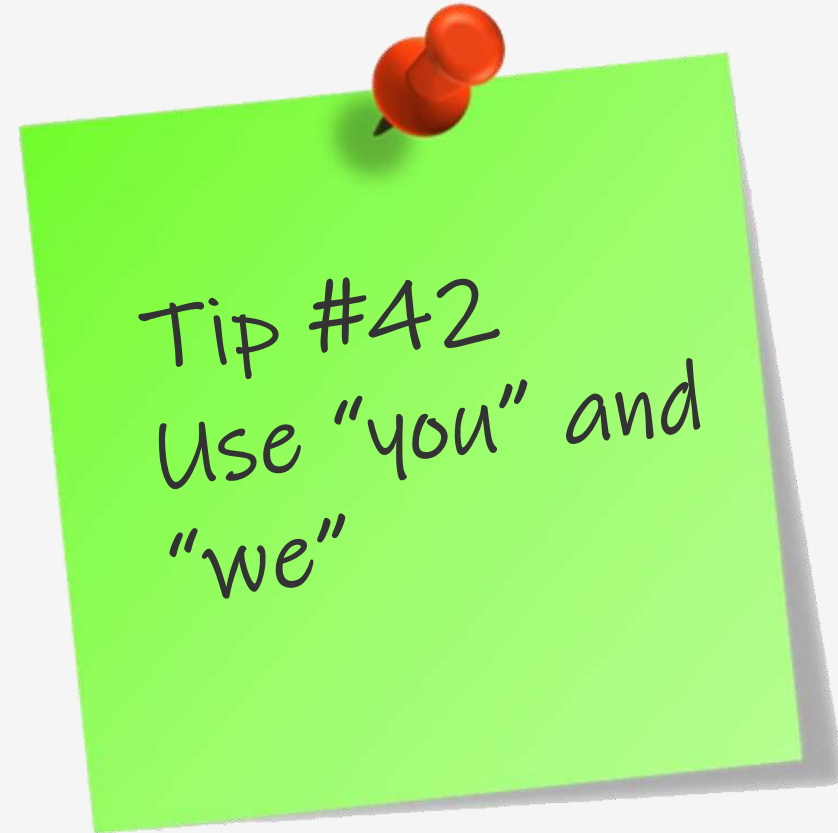
- Alliterations
- Amplification
- Contrast
- Details/Descriptive Language
- Exaggeration
- Memory Hooks
- Metaphors/Similes
- Visual words/Action verbs
- Quips
- Repetition
- Rhyme
- Surprises



Woolf, B. *The Speaker's Toolbox*. Greenville, Teal Books, 2016.

Connecting With Your Audience

- Conversational Tone
- You:I ratio (or we, us etc)
- Use of Asides
- Participation
- Asking questions
- Connecting with segments

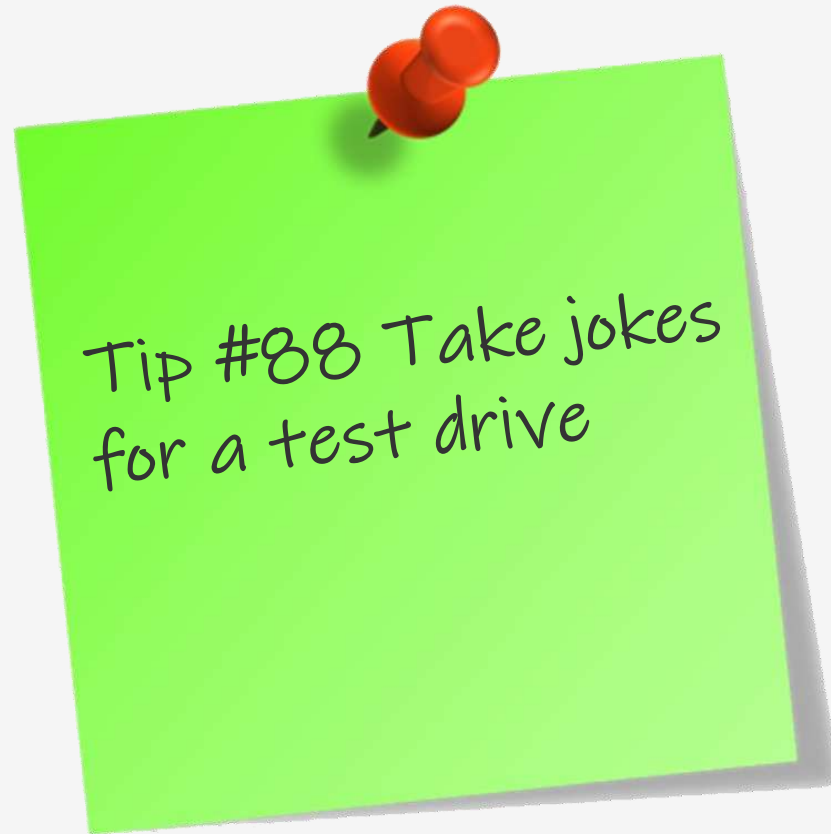


Woolf, B. *The Speaker's Toolbox*. Greenville, Teal Books, 2016.

Connecting With Your Audience

Use of Humor

- Twists
- Asides
- Put Downs
- Exaggerations
- Suprises



Use of Emotions

- Happiness
- Sadness
- Surprise
- Anger
- Disgust
- Fear

What did we forget?

The Title

- Don't make it an afterthought
- Keep it short - 5 to 7 words...or make it 57 words long



- Use it to pique the curiosity of the audience
- Think about your message when constructing
- Don't forget alliteration, rhyme, contrast, etc

Putting It All Together



Tips for preparing the speech

- Write the intro and conclusion and a few lines from the body
- Don't write it all out
 - *Or, write it all out*
- Don't memorize it
 - *Or, memorize it*
- Key is to make it conversational, even if memorized



Length?

- 150-160 words per minute average
 - 4-6 minutes 600-800 words (150wpm) or 640 to 960 words (160wpm)
 - 5-7 minutes 750-1000 words
- But, if you pause or expect laughter, you may need less
- Front and back of a looseleaf sheet, handwritten
- Remember, ***you don't have to say everything*** – the audience will never know what you don't say

<https://toastmasters.yoodli.ai/library>

Michael's Library

My Yoodlis Shared with me

	Title	Created	Type	Label
	video3822739219.mp4	Mar 26	Uploaded	
	video4278056425.mp4	Mar 26	Uploaded	

YOUR SPEAKING INSIGHTS

→|



Coaching **Analytics**

Word Choice Delivery

🏆 What went well

Um counter 2 fillers, 0%

Nice job! It's natural to have fewer than 4% fillers.

1 uh  1 um 

> Weak Words 27 weak words, 2%

💡 What could have gone better

> Non Inclusiveness 1 instance

Preparing a speech

Practice

Practice

Tweak

Practice



Finishing

- Sign up to give your next speech (today)
- Start a speech idea “notebook”
- Think about your “why”
- Enhance your content for connection/retention
- Have fun! Each speech is just a step along your journey



Tip #18:
Enjoy
yourself

cannon.mike@gmail.com



References and Suggested Easy Reading

