

BSS 1 – Beginning your speech

Presented by Jawaad Sheikh @ Phoenix-Toronto Toastmasters – Aug 18, 2009

Topics / ideas to cover:

- beginning your speech with a question / story / bit of drama
- don't write the beginning of your speech first – leave that till last, so that you know how to open
- interactive part – maybe have story about a dog and do a scene with pretend dog licking me
- give boring “fellow toastmasters, guests type intro” and ask whether or not it got your attention
- david brook's talked about us sharing 6 emotions – emphasize on curiosity

Introduction:

- <boring voice> Fellow toastmasters, honoured guests welcome to todays mentorship session
- <pause>
- Can anyone tell me what they thought of that opening statement?
- Was it good? Sufficient?
- Did it do anything for you?
- <let them talk it out a bit> 3 mins
- The one thing I've noticed is the most common way speakers start off their speech is “ladies and gentlemen...”
- Let me ask you -
- Where is it written in stone that you must start your speech off like this?
- But then again why do people do this?

Body:

- I believe most people do this because “its what everyone else does”
- That's the worst thing you could do!
- According to the TM BSS manual, there are 4 key components to introducing your speech
 - Get the audiences attention
 - Establish rapport
 - Introduce your topic
 - Keep it to about 10% of your speech
- I don't believe the last aspect is as important as the first 3.
- Keeping your intro to the first 10% isn't as important because as toastmasters, our speeches are only 7 minutes and chances are our introductions will hit about 30% of our speech so I would apply this rule when you're doing your first 45 minute keynote.
- So that is all I will say about that 4th point.
- Getting your audiences attention:
 - In my opinion there are 2 great ways to start off a speech, one is with a question and the other is to be in the middle of a story.
 - In order to get your audiences attention, you need to get them thinking
 - The best way to get them thinking is to relate what you say to your audience.
 - Such as “do you remember the first time your parents let you drive the car?”
 - Or “when was the last time you had a savoury meal?”
 - Opening with a thought provoking question is your best bet to getting the attention of your audience.

- Lets look at the way I opened this session.
- I said “fellow toastmasters, welcome to this mentorship session”
- Now how could I have redone this to make it better.
- <allow audience to think it over, offer suggestions> 3 mins?
- I would have started off with “do you remember the last time you were having trouble beginning your speech?”
- Or something to that tune.
- The other option is to open in the middle of a story.
- The perfect example of this is CSI – when you watch CSI the first thing you’ll notice at the beginning of an episode is that you’re thrown into the middle of a crime scene or a crime that is about to happen. A story if you will.
- And what is the end result – you’re intrigued, you want, need and must know more!
- That’s why that show is so successful.
- So to give you an example, suppose I’m doing a speech on pet dogs.
- <lie down on table, have toy dog licking my face “good boy, good boy, now run along and play”>
- Ed Tate, the past world champion of public speaking, started off his championship speech with an improv of him getting a ticket and the cop telling him “thank you mr. Tate, next time please slow down”
- Seize the moment, go with it, have fun!
- When you show your audience that you’re having fun, you’re relaxed and easy going, your audience will feel the same and it’ll make it easier for them to learn.
- So that’s how you grab your audiences attention
- Next, establish rapport
 - If you take away anything tonight – this is the golden rule I want you to remember.
 - Its not about you, its about the audience!
 - The audience, the audience, the audience!
 - In order to establish rapport, you need to create a connection with them.
 - Here is how you do it.
 - There are 6 emotions we all share, happiness, sadness, disgust, anger, surprise and fear.
 - When you construct your intro, if you incorporate any of these emotions, you will have connected.
 - So how do you incorporate any these emotions?
 - It goes back to opening with a though provoking question like “do you remember...”
 - Heres another secret – the key word is “you” Y-O-U, you!
 - I call it ‘the you factor’.
 - Do you remember, when was the last time you – remember what I said – its all about the audience – you!
- Introducing your topic
 - Its important to state your purpose
 - If you can’t summarize your purpose in a small sentence then you need to re-evaluate your speech.
 - Once you have caught their attention, and established rapport, you need to tell them why you are here and what your message is.
 - Again how you word things is also important.
 - “today I’m going to talk about fluffy dogs”
 - “this speech is about flying cats”
 - Both of these are poor ways to state your purpose.
 - While they may get the job done – whats forgotten is the magic word “you”

- “today I’m going to talk about fluffy dogs” – nobody cares what you’re going to talk about
- Nobody cares that this speech is about flying cats!
- Remember its all about the audience – the “you” factor!
- So instead try “today you are going to learn about fluffy dogs”
- Today you will receive key knowledge to educate your cat on how to fly”
- It reinforces and reaffirms connection with your audience.
- So we’ve talked about 3 factors:
 - Getting their attention
 - Establishing rapport
 - Introducing your topic
- Finally I’m going to end off with a tip – a very important one
- Especially for those of you who take a long time to write your speech
- I’m pretty sure you spend a ton of time on the intro and trying to figure out how to begin your speech.
- Instead write your introduction LAST
- Yes I said LAST!
- Write your body first, once you’ve established your purpose.
- Then do your introduction, because it will help you to establish that all important opening question
- It will help you to establish rapport – and don’t forget the ‘you’ factor.
- So here’s why – when you put your thoughts down on paper, I can almost guarantee,
- That you’ll come up with questions and ideas for amazing openings.
- When I wrote my giant grasshopper story, the main think that popped out at me was this happened in the summer, I was 16, just got my license – sitting in the car and so on.
- When I wrote my wood chuck story, I thought of it as a mind-boggling most amazing thought in the world. And ran with it.
- In the end theres a ton of ways you could start your speech, but the question is, will it capture your audience. I’ll leave you with that.
- Thank you.