

A Simple Recipe for a Winning Contest Speech

The Ingredients

- CLEAR MESSAGE** The audience should be able to state your message in one sentence.
- ORIGINALITY** Be *completely* original; use your own stories, invent your own quotes or memorable phrases, if possible.
- CONVERSATIONAL STYLE** Develop a conversational style for your contest speech. Share with the audience.
- PERSONALITY** Show your individual style and personality. Be yourself. Take a risk.
- UNIVERSAL MESSAGE** Use a theme and supporting stories to which everyone can relate. Talk about ageless subjects that are applicable to everyone.
- HUMOR** The speech *must* contain some humor. Humor is powerful. It is the yeast that makes a speech rise to the top. No matter how serious your theme is, tell it in an entertaining way. Develop humor from your own true-life experiences rather than using jokes. Weave the stories into your theme. All winning International speeches contain some humor. Lift your audience.
- “FOCUS ON YOUR DREAM”** Write out your goal to be a champion. Aspire to the highest in Toastmasters! Have fun out there. Stand up, speak up, and shine.

Dacia Jones Nickerson, DTM
1998 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking Finalist

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Factors to Consider

SPEECH CONSTRUCTION

Each word should be exquisitely crafted. Write a speech that will give *you* energy when you are presenting it, and energize the listening audience as well.

TIME

Time is a *critical* factor. Allow for audience response to avoid rushing or editing on the spot. Keep your speech on the shorter side as audiences get larger.

DELIVERY

The delivery is the strongest element in a contest speech. "How you say it" is more important than "what you say." Perfect your presentation skills, augment your gestures, and enhance your performance.

VOICE

Although listed as counting for only 10% of the delivery on the ballot, it is much more important than that. Use as many vocal techniques as you can master.

PRACTICE

You can't practice a contest speech too much. If you have an uplifting speech, it will energize you as you practice.

WATCH TAPES

Watching winning contest tapes will not only inspire you, but will prepare you for what to expect. Video taped your speech.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

Different audiences respond differently, especially concerning humor. You may be funnier than you think. You may just need a different audience.

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