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After the Speech

By Stephen D. Boyd

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Usually the emphasis on making an effective speech is what you do in preparation before the presentation begins. But if you speak very much, what you do after the speech can help you become a more effective speaker.

As soon as possible after the speech, write down impressions of how you felt the speech went. Answer at least two questions about the speech: What was the best part of the speech? What part of the speech can be improved the next time?

Some of your best ideas will come to you as you are speaking. Write them down as soon as the speech is over so you can be prepared to use those lines or ideas the next time you speak.

Think about the peaks and valleys in the speech. Consider when the audience seemed to listen best and when the audience seemed restless and disinterested. Write down your reactions while they are fresh on your mind.

Talk to someone about the speech within the first day after your presentation. You'll remember best what you talked about and you might discover a better way of telling a story or making a point as you summarize your speech to a friend or colleague.

Keep track of stories you tell and case studies you include so you'll not repeat yourself if you speak to that audience again. In addition, keep records of how long you spoke, what you wore, key people you met, and anything unusual about the speaking context. Occasionally look back over your records of individual speeches and look for trends in your speaking that you are unaware of. When you speak to this group again, this information will be the basis for your audience analysis. This is especially important if you speak frequently within your company and your audience will be made up of listeners who have heard you before. You don't want to develop a reputation for telling the same stories over and over.

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If the group has speaker evaluations, ask that a copy of the summary be sent to you. Look for any pattern in the comments as you analyze the summary. If one person said you talked too slowly, it may be a personal preference and you don't need to give much consideration to the critique. If four or five people make that comment, however, then you might want to consider changing the pace of your speaking for the next speech.

Certainly your main concern should be with your preparation before the speech. However, don't underestimate the effort of what you do in analyzing the speech after the audience has left the room.

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The Graduation Speech: Farewell And Hello

By Analese Burnabaker

Anyone who has ever graduated from anything – high school, college, or perhaps a program lasting only a few months – has sat through a graduation ceremony. No doubt that ceremony was filled with a variety of elements. Perhaps special music was played, perhaps someone shared on the accomplishments of the graduates, and maybe you had to share or present part of the ceremony. One element that is present in almost every graduation ceremony is the graduation speech.

There are two main types of graduation speeches that are often presented during graduation ceremonies. First, a common type of graduation speech is given by the valedictorian of the graduating class. If you were privileged to graduate at the top of your class, then you know this speech very well. This type of graduation speech is primarily an avenue upon which a member of the graduating class gets to share memories and advice for their fellow graduates. Students share laughter and sometimes tears over the memories that the graduation speech details. The speaker gives advice and encouragement for the graduates that are about to leave one phase of life and enter a new one.

A second type of graduation speech often found at a ceremony is given by someone outside of the graduating class. Similar to the valedictorian speech, this kind of graduation speech is meant to give encouragement, wisdom and advice for those entering a new phase of life. The speaker is usually someone of importance, a business owner or a person of prominence in academia. The graduation speech usually includes a combination of humor and seriousness.

Do you have the task of preparing a graduation speech for an upcoming ceremony? If so, it does not have to be as hard as it first sounds. Begin by brainstorming a list of ideas. What do you want to

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communicate to your audience in the graduation speech? Do you want to primarily use humor, or will you go for a more serious speech?

Once you have brainstormed plenty of ideas for the graduation speech, begin making an outline to organize your thoughts. Do not include anything outside of the main theme that you want to communicate. If there is a time limit on your graduation speech, be sure to keep your speech within that limit. Then just be creative and have fun with it. Make the graduation speech you give memorable by being uniquely you. You know how you can best relate to the audience, so do it. Be yourself and show your personality in the graduation speech. People will be more interested if they think you are being authentic in your words.

So, whether you are about to attend a graduation ceremony and hear a graduation speech or whether you are about to present a speech, enjoy it. Graduation speeches do not happen every day. They only happen on graduation day.

Analeese Burnabaker has given many graduation speeches in her day. She loves to consult with people who are about to speak at graduations or any other big events. Discover more at www.

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