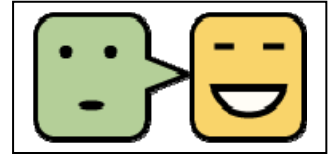




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Speaking Tips # 52 Part 1 2011-01-29

A Swedish Wedding Party Toastmaster - Preparations

As a Toastmaster (TM), you are only committed before and during dinner and possibly some of the subsequent celebrations if additional speeches have been planned. Your role is primarily to be responsible for organizing the speeches in the right number, in the right order and length so that they are not so long that they impinge negatively on the meal or the following speakers. You will also introduce the speakers and other potential actors in their turn, and read any incoming telegrams. Let's look at how you can prepare yourself:

It is the TM who decides how many speeches will be allowed. Too many can be devastating for the party. If so, then it is better to introduce some of them after dinner, when coffee is served or during a dance break. The main speaker is traditionally the bride's father. Next in rank is the groom's father. Mothers can also speak, for example if single or if they just feel for it. Thereafter come relatives and finally friends. Those who usually speak are the bride's father who not only greets welcome at the table but also later, being the first speaker, addresses the bride and groom. Then comes the groom's father, who will also give a thanksgiving speech during desert if he has the hostess on his right side. Then come the bridesmaids, the priest, best man, and finally other relatives and friends. The acceptance speech will be held as said above by the gentleman who has the bride's mother on his right side, usually the groom's father. This acceptance speech is sometimes combined with a short address to the wedded couple if the groom's father has not spoken before. You should allow yourself plenty of time (days, weeks) before the party to contact the bride and groom and/or event organizer to get a guest list.

Contact the bride's father and find out how long he intends to speak and write down all further information. Tell him gently that it should preferably take a maximum of 5 minutes. Think about how you can introduce the bride's father and consult him about that. He may have preferences.

Then contact all others who might want to speak, to have it confirmed and suggest that they keep within a shorter timeframe than the bride's father. 2 - 3 minutes can contain a lot of speaking! Interview the speakers and ask if they have any requests for the introduction! Also ask a little about what they intend to say. Write down the answers (you will forget), and use it as a basis for your introduction (without revealing the entire contents). Your questions could be, for example: the relationship to the bride and groom, how long they have known the bride and groom, any special circumstances relating to their friendship with the bride and groom, something special that you can make fun of, etc. Irony and joking is OK if you know the speakers well and know that they can take it.

Contact those responsible for dinner (Kitchen/Restaurant and serving staff) and discuss how the speeches can best be distributed during dinner. Such personnel often have good experience in speech planning. They must not be kept waiting which could spoil the dishes. The time allocation will also depend on the number of dishes. Try to introduce one or a couple in between dishes when guests would not eat. If you know the speakers or the speech content well, you would do well in putting some rap and funny speaker at the beginning and towards the end and put the slightly more serious ones in the middle.

Notify service personnel. When the schedule is clear, leave a written copy with the staff so that they are prepared. You also hand over a list to each speaker who will then know when he / she will speak.

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