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Suggested Design and Structure of a Speech

1. Three main parts
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Body
 - c. Conclusion
2. Time allocation, generally
 - a. Introduction, a few sentences at most. The shorter the overall time budget, the shorter the intro. Perhaps could be one sentence, a few seconds. Generally, not more is needed than a minute.
 - b. Body should be the longest allocation of time.
 - c. Conclusion should be concise, perhaps taking one sentence to recap each of the main points in the body. This could take only a few moments, generally longer than the introduction, but not by much.
 - d. The three sections of the speech are not equal in importance, and not equal in time allocation.
3. Purpose of sections
 - a. Introduction must cover at least these items to set up the speech and have the audience decide to give your speech the attention you seek
 - i. If not already done so by the person who introduces you, what is subject and why it's relevant to the audience
 - ii. If not already done by the person who introduces you, who you are and why you are qualified to speak on this topic
 - iii. What are the main points you're going to cover in the speech, and what points you're going to omit, and why
 - b. Body must convey in an organized manner the main points of your topic, each of which is introduced by why this point is relevant to the audience.
 - i. Depending on the time budget, the number of main points can be one to a few, but not generally more than five.
 - ii. Each of the points must be introduced by a transition sentence, from the prior point to the new point. This serves as a very mini conclusion to the prior point and an introduction to the upcoming point. Transitions help the audience keep track of your points and when you're switching from one point to another.
 - iii. At the end of your last point, the transition sentence should inform the audience that the conclusion is next, so as to prepare them for this segment of your speech.
 - c. Conclusion should briefly summarize what your main points have been in the body
 - i. Preferably in one sentence each, tying each point to the next with a few words
 - ii. Perhaps about their relevance and how each point ties into the overall objective of the speech

- iii. The conclusion sentence of the conclusion section should say something about having fulfilled the promise of the introduction, as if to say, “I’ve delivered on my promise.”
 - iv. It would be gracious if you ended the conclusion of the conclusion with some words of best wishes in using the information, or hoping the information was useful or helpful, again referring or implying to the audience that the usefulness or relevance of the topic was fulfilled.
 - v. **DO NOT SAY THANK YOU TO END YOUR SPEECH.** The audience will thank YOU by their applause. THEN, you can say thank you, FOR THEIR APPLAUSE. It’s very ungracious to ask the audience for their gratitude in advance by saying “thank you” to end your speech before they have determined on their own to thank you by their applause. Virtually every politician makes this mistake, as they are not trained public speakers. They nearly always also ask for God’s blessing, which is a predictable ending. **DON’T DO IT.** It’s the mark of a cheap shot and an amateur, President of the United States or not.
4. Importance of Time Budgets
- a. Budgets are critical to your host, because if they’re professionals, they’ve got a schedule to keep.
 - b. The audience will generally not be tolerant of the speaker who ignores the time budget and jeopardizes the program schedule. It’s unprofessional, selfish and shows the speaker is either self-centered or an amateur. Either way, it diminishes the speaker’s respect and dilutes the message of the speech.
 - c. Keep in mind that you will always go over the budget if you don’t practice and if you think you don’t need to practice and hone the speech. If you don’t think you need to consider time budget, see above. You’re an amateur and you won’t be asked to return as a speaker.
 - d. If you have to, present your speech under budget rather than risk going over budget.
 - e. You can always consider, depending on the venue, opening the matter for questions, but only if the venue permits and only if the master of ceremonies grants permission.
 - f. If you’re done early, great. It makes for a brisk pace and the M/C may appreciate it, especially if the prior speaker has been a jerk and blown the whole schedule. You’ll be the hero.
 - g. IDEA. If you know the budge has been blown by a prior speaker, consult with the M/C and ask if you can shorten your speech to make up for some time. This will be greatly appreciated and you’ll be the hero. Inform your audience in your introduction that you’ll be retaining the main points, but omitting some of the extra material in the interest of time. They will respect and admire you for it.
5. Importance of Practice
- a. Practice in front of a mirror
 - b. Use a stop watch
 - c. Put time intervals in your written draft
 - d. Check to see if you’re making your interim time deadlines as your progress through your speech.
 - e. Do several complete practice runs without stopping
 - f. Practice staying calm
 - g. Practice speaking slowly so the audience can understand you
 - h. If you have an accent, keep this in mind and slow down your pace to keep the audience with you.

- i. If you have an accent, do not speak louder to make up for it. That's an insult. Just speak clearer and more slowly. The audience will appreciate it and respect you for your consideration.
- j. Keep track of your timing if you speak more slowly to be clearly understood. This could add 20% to your budget.
- k. To help overcome the jitters, memorize the first several sentences of your speech. Once you start with the memory part, you'll get quite used to standing there, and the rest will come easier.
- l. Refer to your notes only in summary form.
- m. Don't read your speech if you can help it. The audience knows you're reading it and there's a certain feeling of "disconnect" when they're read to.
- n. When practicing, use your normal voice and vocabulary. Although you should avoid too many slang words, and absolutely avoid any profanity, if you're authentic and genuine, the audience will accept you more easily, as you're not trying to "put them on."
- o. Remember, generally the audience wants you to succeed. Keep that in mind, and you'll do fine.
- p. But, don't put off the practice. If you feel invincible, you'll be sorry you did, and make a fool of yourself and the person who invited you to speak.

