

Introducing Others

Just like a speech, an Introduction should be well planned and well organized. The purpose of an introduction is always to establish a common bond, a positive relationship, between a speaker and the listeners (audience.)

⇒ The beginning of the introduction – the introduction of the introduction – should arouse interest and anticipation.

⇒ The body should be solid content, specific qualifications, clever, honestly complimentary, and can contain humor.

⇒ The conclusion should move the audience to helping you warmly welcome the speaker to the lectern.

A good introduction answers the question:

Why this speaker to this audience on this subject at this time?

A few do's and do not's of introductions:

Do:

- Adjust the mood of the meeting to match the speaker's message.
- Build-up the presentation (Why is it important to the audience?)
- Get the audience and the speaker acquainted.
- Give PERTINENT credentials of the speaker
- Play a secondary role as the introducer (you are not the reason the audience is present.)
- Be correct and use notes if necessary (and it usually is!)
- Know the purpose of the occasion.
- Keep sober.
- Play it straight and keep cool.

Do Not:

- Steal the speaker's thunder. (Tell too much about the speech or presentation, upstage the speaker's humor.)
- Build the audience up for a let-down. (Avoid words like "best" and "most" or "greatest.")
- Try to use misplaced humor.
- Glorify self as Introducer.
- Be Windy.
- Build an introduction around "the" story.
- Use hackneyed or trite expressions. ("This speaker need no introduction." - If so, don't give him one!)
- Embarrass the speaker.
- Apologize. ("Don couldn't make it this evening so Jim is going to fill in for him, for example.)
- Give your views on the speaker's subject.
- Call the speaker a "dear friend" unless he/she is.
- Read a written introduction verbatim.

Unless a dramatic change in audience mood is needed, a 30 to 45 second introduction is quite ample for a speech of less than 10 minutes.