



Best Man Speech Tips.

A wedding, while being the ultimate celebration of love between two people, is also one of the most stressful experiences for all those involved - especially the best man. Not only does the poor chap have to organise the stag party, look after the rings and ensure that the groom is there on time, but he also has to prepare a speech for the wedding breakfast.

Writing a best man's speech is all about striking a balance - we all want to be funny and innovative, but if we try too hard we can end up with a speech that is offensive and clichéd. We asked the Wedding Community for help and below is a wonderful entry that has been culled from their collective wisdom.

Lines

One of the most important things to remember is not to make unguarded comments about any afflictions suffered by family members. For example; try to avoid references to the fact that the bride has just had her wooden leg creosoted in order to avoid rotting while waterskiing on honeymoon. Or that her uncle - the dentist is like a rhino - thick-skinned, and charges a lot! You get the general idea.

Your speech is not etched in stone, so don't be afraid to incorporate events of the big day into your masterpiece. The following story is wise, witty and shows just how creative you can be:

My brother dropped his bride's ring during the ceremony. He was a student rugby player and I was a worker in a jeweller's. This was just after rugby union allowed professional players, so my opening line became: 'I see my brother chose wisely in picking a professional jeweller to be his best man, I just didn't realise he would need a professional rugby player to catch it.'

Another Researcher recalls this classic opening line:

This is the second time today I have stood up from a warm seat with a piece of paper in my hand...

There is a growing trend for people to share the duties of best man and that includes the speech - while you may not be a great stand-up comedian, you may sparkle as one half of a comedy duo - as this account testifies:

I was joint best man for a wedding a year or so back and my co-best man and I cooked up a joint speech, with the pair of us doing sections, but supporting each other with comments flowing back and forth. Everyone there said it was a great speech and that the comedy was hilarious. I opened with the line 'The groom wanted a best man but couldn't find one, so he got two slightly good ones instead' - it brought the house down...

Advice

- The most important piece of advice for any best man is not to get absolutely plastered before delivering your speech - it's not big, it's not clever and it *really* isn't attractive - honest.

The first wedding I went to was cringe-worthy as the best man was hammered and subsequently slurred his way through what was a mediocre speech, thinking he was hilarious, ad-libbing crude jokes. You really felt that it would have been kind to put a sniper in the far corner to put the poor sod out of his misery - sadly this idea only came in retrospect.

- The speech has to be pertinent so that everyone can understand at least a part of what is being discussed. Sly references to one-off acts of derring-do will probably raise a snigger from the three people involved, but without a little more explanation the rest of your audience is going to miss the point entirely.
- Some of the greatest best man's speeches are relatively short, prop-orientated and funny for all those present. Flatter the bride, make sure the groom can show his face in public again and whatever you do, don't upset the grandparents...

Whatever happens, don't suppose for a moment that you can please everyone and make everybody laugh at the same time - just so long as everyone feels that it went well, then you can't ask for more than that!

Research, Research, Research - It's all about Research

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A speech takes a lot of preparation and the more people who help you prepare, the more comprehensive your speech will become. Talk to the groom's other friends and family for good stories and make the speech a joint effort (then you can share the blame too). The following testimonial just goes to prove that married life can be bliss:

My other half was the best man for our friend Myles. I had shared a house with Myles when I was a student and I ended up being co-author of the speech. There was so much material to work with. The speech began with the question 'How many people have seen Myles 'partially' naked?' I think all his friends put up their hands, and there was the bride, of course, smirking, and most of Myles' family. The next question was 'Who has shared a bed with Myles' [meaning platonically!]. Again, most of the audience put up their hands, most of them blokes! The rest of the audience were in no doubt about the direction of the rest of the speech - it was raucous.

Try and find books like *The Best best man's Speeches* from the 1970s which can be really, really helpful. You can get them from charity shops and they can provide flashes of inspiration and hilarity that will liven up any speech. Imagine how you laugh at the fashions from that era - now apply that same idea to the comedy...

Mind your Language

Remember that your audience at a wedding is a varied age group, so think what you're saying and use witty words instead of swear words, it'll be much funnier if you don't offend people with bad language anyway. As for being risqué, allusions are always much better than direct references. Those that get it, get it. Those that don't aren't offended. Let the following serve as a warning to us all...

The best man at my wedding used a swear word and my gran was offended and my nephew kept saying it - he was only six.

Make sure the speech is suitable for the local audience. There is an urban legend concerning a best man boasting of the groom's ability to flirt with girls and kiss them. He said that he was able to 'cop off with any bird'(sic). Unfortunately, this equated to actual copulation in the local slang. Avoid slang altogether!

The Important Bit - the Toast

Don't forget that your principal job is to deliver a toast to the bridesmaids. These are obviously the second most attractive women in the room, following the bride (always a good line to use especially if the bride is your new sister-in-law).

And if you are single, this is as good a chat-up line as you're going to be able to give in your speech. Not that most people necessarily meet their future partners at weddings or anything...

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