

## Evaluation Basics

Evaluations should use these techniques:

- **Show Sincerity:** Let the speaker know that you are interested. Make eye contact. Smile. Honestly attempt to help the speaker improve.
- **Know the Objectives:** Review the manual project for the stated objectives. Ask the speaker beforehand for any additional objectives.
- **Personalize the Language:** Let the speaker know your words are just one opinion. Use phrases such as “I felt”, “I noticed” and “A technique I found useful is”.
- **Avoid Value Judgments:** Concentrate on the behavior exhibited instead of the person. Comment on “how” the presentation went.
- **Summarize Key Points:** Mention key parts of the presentation only to make a point about behavior. A full summary of the entire speech is unnecessary.
- **Promote Esteem:** Point out several things that the speaker did well.
- **Give Ways to Improve:** Say “how” to improve vs. “what” to improve. The suggestions should be specific and achievable.
- **Focus on the Positive:** Mention only what the speaker should be doing rather than what not to be doing.
- **End on a High Note:** End the evaluation with your favorite part of the presentation rather than “I look forward to your next speech”.

## Tips for Effective Evaluations

Remember these whenever you evaluate:

- **First or Third Person:** Evaluations can be given either by speaking directly to the speaker or to the audience about the speaker. A mixture of the two is best.
- **Your Opinion:** Your evaluation is just your one opinion of how the speaker performed. Other opinions may vary.
- **Never Whitewash:** Singing the praises of the speaker and/or merely giving a summary of the presentation does no one any good. Always find one or two suggestions, your opinion, on how the presentation could have been better.
- **Always and Never:** Avoid using those words during an evaluation.
- **I, You and We:** Mostly use “I” phrases and sometimes “You” phrases. “We” phrase should rarely be used.
- **Before the Meeting:** Try to talk to the speaker before the meeting to review the project and the objectives.
- **Watch the Audience:** While the speaker is talking, observe reactions.
- **Giving the Evaluation:** Try to avoid reading aloud each evaluation page question then giving your response. Make a mini-speech from all of them.
- **Open and Close:** Observe how well the opening grabbed the attention of the audience. Note how the ending wraps up the presentation and ties back to the opening.
- **Follow-up:** Talk to speaker afterwards.

## Evaluation Summary and More Tips

An evaluation is a two to three minute speech that should help the speaker find ways to improve the next time s/he speaks. The evaluation should also motivate the speaker to want to give another presentation using some of the suggestions you gave as the evaluator. The experience level of the speaker should be taken into account to tailor the evaluation. Write as much as possible in the manual even if some of it must be left out of the oral presentation.

Clubs should occasionally have a training session or refresher on evaluations. Three presentations exist on how to give better evaluations. They are:

- Successful Club Series #292, Evaluate to Motivate
- Success/Communication #251, The Art of Effective Evaluation
- Leadership Excellence Series #317, Giving Effective Feedback

Clubs should occasionally give evaluations as a group or a panel. Clubs should also hold the annual evaluation contest each August and send the winners to the Area contest.

## How it Works

Most everyone who joined Toastmasters did so with the intent of learning how to give better presentations. The main way for people improve is through the feedback they receive from fellow Toastmasters. The speech evaluation is the most prevalent method for providing feedback – oral and written comments from others based on what was heard and observed.

Given that, each Toastmaster wants to give the best evaluation that s/he is able. In addition, and just like their presentations, over time, each Toastmaster should strive to make their evaluations better and better. Learning how to give better feedback allows one to see new ways to improve his or her own presentations.

You should always seek feedback every time you stand in front of a group to speak. The Competent Leader (CL) manual can assist since it is designed to have others provide feedback. The speech evaluator role and the general evaluator roles are used in most of the ten projects in that manual.

## For More Information

Observe, or participate in, an Evaluation Speech contest held each fall.

Every time you listen to a presentation, act like you are the evaluator. Listen actively. Take notes. Watch for ways it could be improved. Note the strengths of the speaker.

Successful Club Series #292, Evaluate to Motivate

Success/Communication #251, The Art of Effective Evaluation

Leadership Excellence Series #317, Giving Effective Feedback

Use your Competent Leader (CL) manual in every meeting in which you speak in any fashion.

Visit [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) and click on the site search option. Then type in “evaluate” or “evaluation”.



# Speech Evaluation: How to Give Effectively