



On Speaking Well: How to Give a Speech With Style, Substance, and Clarity

By Peggy Noonan

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For anyone who fears the thought of writing and giving a speech--be it to business associates, or at a wedding--help is at hand. Acclaimed presidential speechwriter Peggy Noonan shares her secrets to becoming a confidence, persuasive speaker demystifying topics including:

- Finding your own authentic voice
- Developing a text that interests you
- Acing the all-important first paragraph
- Using logic to move your audience
- Creating, developing, and reinventing the "core speech" for diverse audiences
- Strengthening your speech with a vital element: humor
- Winnowing your thought down to the essentials
- Handling professional jargon, clichés, and the sound bite syndrome
- Presenting your speech in the best way
- Collecting intellectual income--conversing your speech treasures
- Breaking all the rules and still succeeding
- Reading for inspiration--how to use the excellence of others

Complete with lessons, tips and memorable examples, *On Speaking Well* shows us how to create forceful, persuasive, relevant speeches that will resonate with our audiences. Engaging, informative, and always entertaining, this is undoubtedly the authoritative how-to guide for anyone writing or giving a speech

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Noonan (What I Saw at the Revolution), George Bush's most publicized speechwriter, describes her book accurately as "advice and anecdotes about the writing and giving of speeches." Not political speeches, which are probably an art form unto themselves, but the kind of speeches most people are at some time called upon to deliver. Noonan states her advice clearly: No speech should last more than 20 minutes; the text should be written out (no ad-libbing from outlines); humor is essential; read your draft speech aloud (speaking is different from writing); keep sentences short (the audience is hearing it, not reading it). One section deals with the special requirements of writing for other people. Shorter sections deal with situations such as toasts, tributes and eulogies. There are also tips on handling questions, walking up to the platform and meeting the audience afterward. The anecdotes deal chiefly with Noonan's adventures on the political circuit and in the White House with Presidents Reagan and Bush and are the fluffy sort of things the author herself probably uses facing audiences. The advice is practical and fairly obvious, but if speaking in public is indeed most people's Number One Fear, this is a calming, logical and sometimes entertaining guide.

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From Library Journal

Noonan, author of the best-selling *What I Saw at the Revolution* (LJ 3/15/90), presents a guide to communication that succeeds because of the entertaining and informative anecdotes drawn from her experience as a speech writer for presidents Reagan and Bush. She provides good, basic, but not original advice?keep speeches to 20 minutes, use plain language, incorporate humor, and, most important, be sincere. The author includes insightful commentary on Earl Spencer's eulogy for his sister, Princess Diana; President Clinton's oratory, which she faults for its reliance on cliches and for its emphasis on style rather than substance; and President Reagan's skill at using speeches to connect with the public. Recommended for public libraries, especially as an overview of presidential speechmaking. ?Karl Helicher, Upper Merion Twp. Lib., King of Prussia, Pa.

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From [Booklist](#)

Drop your dislike of her politics (especially if you're a liberal Democrat). Ignore your instinct to treat this tome as yet another how-to approach to speechifying. Because Noonan, author of *What I Saw at the Revolution* and former speechwriter for Republican presidents, has bared her soul in an engaging and serious attempt to get all of us "speaking right and speaking simply." Sure, the book is disorganized--and there aren't any outlines or long lists. But what Noonan offers is solid advice, delivered simply. Speeches should last only 20 minutes. Write out your text. Use plain and simple language. Speeches must have content. And in exhorting her readers to do this or that, she inserts personal lessons she has learned, as well as examples from the greatest speakers, including Lincoln, Churchill, Reagan, and, yes, Earl Spencer at Diana's funeral. To read and reread . . . and remember. *Barbara Jacobs*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Smith:

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Philip Brown:

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