

# A Simple Recipe for a Winning Contest Speech

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## The Ingredients

- CLEAR MESSAGE** The audience should be able to state your message in one sentence.
- ORIGINALITY** Be *completely* original; use your own stories, invent your own quotes or memorable phrases, if possible.
- CONVERSATIONAL STYLE** Develop a conversational style for your contest speech. Share with the audience.
- PERSONALITY** Show your individual style and personality. Be yourself. Take a risk.
- UNIVERSAL MESSAGE** Use a theme and supporting stories to which everyone can relate. Talk about ageless subjects that are applicable to everyone.
- HUMOR** The speech *must* contain some humor. Humor is powerful. It is the yeast that makes a speech rise to the top. No matter how serious your theme is, tell it in an entertaining way. Develop humor from your own true-life experiences rather than using jokes. Weave the stories into your theme. All winning International speeches contain some humor. Lift your audience.
- “FOCUS ON YOUR DREAM”** Write out your goal to be a champion. Aspire to the highest in Toastmasters! Have fun out there. Stand up, speak up, and shine.

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Dacia Jones Nickerson, DTM  
1998 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking Finalist

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## Factors to Consider

### **SPEECH CONSTRUCTION**

Each word should be exquisitely crafted. Write a speech that will give *you* energy when you are presenting it, and energize the listening audience as well.

### **TIME**

Time is a *critical* factor. Allow for audience response to avoid rushing or editing on the spot. Keep your speech on the shorter side as audiences get larger.

### **DELIVERY**

The delivery is the strongest element in a contest speech. "How you say it" is more important than "what you say." Perfect your presentation skills, augment your gestures, and enhance your performance.

### **VOICE**

Although listed as counting for only 10% of the delivery on the ballot, it is much more important than that. Use as many vocal techniques as you can master.

### **PRACTICE**

You can't practice a contest speech too much. If you have an uplifting speech, it will energize you as you practice.

### **WATCH TAPES**

Watching winning contest tapes will not only inspire you, but will prepare you for what to expect. Video taped your speech.

### **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES**

Different audiences respond differently, especially concerning humor. You may be funnier than you think. You may just need a different audience.

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