

The Toast

The origins of the Toast is lost in antiquity with examples dating back thousands of years where a drink is raised in honour. The term "toast" is believed to be derived from the Middle Ages when the practice of putting pieces of toast in a drink to enhance it's flavour was common.

What is a Toast?

A Toast is a call for good health, best wishes, praise, congratulations or a tribute to a person, persons or an organisation.

A Toast sets the mood for the gathering and therefore it's important to get right.

How long should a Toast be?

The length of a Toast should not exceed 4 minutes as a general rule. It is far better to err being too short rather than too long. However, too few words may risk loosing the sincerity of the Toast.

Preparing a Toast

The occasions when Toasts are given vary widely, however, a successful Toast pertains to the person, occasion and the audience. This requires plenty of thought and preparation to tailor the Toast to the event.

The thought required is to clarify the message of your Toast, i.e. praise, good health, tribute etc.

The preparation is to ensure that you are aware, and so avoid any aspects that would cause embarrassment to the recipients or the audience.

Above all else, a Toast must be sincere. To this end, don't try to emulate someone else. Be yourself and re-enforce with personal statements. If your style is to be humourous or spontaneous, then speak this way, always speaking from the heart.

Your material must be appropriate and relevant to the occasion. Introducing something new about the recipients will add depth to your Toast. Your words must be complimentary, positive and encouraging but be aware to avoid exaggerated flattery.

What a Toast is not.

A Toast is not a chance to make the recipients embarrassed, to point out their faults or a place for disparaging comments.

Avoid bad taste, slander and sarcasm absolutely!

Proposing a Toast

1. Five to ten minutes before, announce that a Toast will be proposed soon so people have a few moments to get their drinks. This will avoid the embarrassment of audience members being caught with empty glasses or them making distracting murmuring and fiddling noises while they fill their glasses....when you're speaking.

2. Just prior to speaking, charge your glass in preparation.

Announce "Ladies and Gentlemen, please charge your glasses for I now propose a Toast" (Wait until the audience settles before commencing to speak).

3. Deliver your speech.

4. Conclude your speech, spoken loudly, clearly and slow with "Ladies and Gentlemen, please be upstanding (wait until they do) for a Toast to recipient."

5. Lead the Toast by raising your glass high.

Further Points to Note

- Speak so everyone can hear.
- Avoid being drunk.
- Everyone should stand except the recipients.
- The Toast is for the recipients, not you. Always direct the audience attention to the recipients by using hand gestures, looking towards them etc.