

AN EVALUATION IS NOT A REVIEW

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We hear it all the time in our various Toastmaster club meetings.

For some reason it is a very common way to evaluate our speakers. But, it is *not* the approved method according to our manual on evaluations. Nor is it logical or helpful. (See *Effective Speech Evaluation*, Number 202 in our supply catalog.)

I'm referring to the evaluation which turns out to be merely a review of the speech. A review is easy to do but does not generally point toward improvement. When an evaluator says something like, "You said this and then you said that and then you gave us three points and then you pointed to your chart...." - it is not helpful to the speaker.

With rare exceptions, speakers remember what they have said and done in delivering their speeches. They do not have to be reminded unless some aspect is *significantly* incorrect and needs comment. What they *do* need is to be given guidance to help them improve in the future. That is what the evaluation process is all about. A speaker needs solid suggestions for improvement.

The evaluation process is at the very heart of the Toastmasters experience. It is a direct means by which we learn how we are doing and how we can improve. When we turn it into a mere review of the speech, we nullify the process.

The two or three minutes allotted to each evaluation is too short and too potentially valuable to be wasted on a recounting of what we have just heard and seen. Those valuable seconds must be used to point out to the speaker, in a kind and gentle manner, what he or she can work on to improve future speeches. This might include such aspects as organization, use of the voice, pacing, gestures and flow of ideas.

We owe it to our speakers to give them evaluations of high substance in a clearly understandable manner. We owe it to them to refrain from merely throwing their speeches back at them. We owe them precise and substantive suggestions for improvement. It's the Toastmaster way.

A review is not an evaluation!

EFFECTIVE EVALUATIONS

DO	DON'T
1. Before the speaker begins, ask about key areas to notice (grammar, gestures, etc.	1. Show off your wit or wisdom
2. Have extra manuals to go by; or	2. Criticize
3. Have a standard Evaluation form if manual is not available	3. Get personal
4. Know objectives of the speech	4. Evaluate the topic
5. Locate the speaker in the audience	5. Repeat the speech
6. Listen actively	6. Mention embarrassing issues
7. Call the speaker by name when giving the evaluation	7. Concentrate on the negative
8. Match the evaluation to the speech and speaker	8. Whitewash
9. Give specific feedback, including examples	9. Give 'canned' evaluations
10. Give strengths & recommendations	10. Get long-winded
11. Leave "embarrassing" issues out of the verbal evaluation	11. Overwhelm with praise or recommendations
12. Use "I" words – saw, believe, think, heard, felt, would have liked	12. Treat all speakers alike
13. End on a positive note.	13. Use "you should" language
14. Complete the "Assignment page in the back of the manual	14. Mention areas beyond speaker's control – eg., a speech impediment
15. Send a written note of encouragement!	15. Forget that you were once a new Toastmaster!