

# The speech template

## 1. Welcome the room, about 40 seconds

You're hosting, so open like a host. Name the room, thank the people who travelled, mention anyone who couldn't be there in one sentence: one, not a list, and not a maudlin one.

*"On behalf of [name] and myself, thank you all for coming. Some of you have come a very long way. [Name] has come from [place], which I'm told involved three trains and a taxi, and I want that noted."*

The specific detail is what makes it a welcome rather than an announcement.

## 2. Your daughter, before today: about 90 seconds

One story. Not three. One.

Pick a moment that shows who she is rather than what she achieved. The prize she won is less interesting than the thing she did when nobody was watching. Age seven to twelve is usually the richest seam: old enough to have a personality, young enough to be funny about.

The test: could this story only be about her? If you could swap in another name and it would still work, it's not the story.

## 3. The turn, about 20 seconds

This is where you move from the past to today, and it's the join most speeches fumble.

Don't announce it. Don't say "but seriously". Just let the sentence turn:

*"She has always been the person who works out what needs doing and then quietly does it. Which is roughly how she ended up organising her own wedding while telling us all she wasn't organising anything."*

The turn is a change of tense, not a change of subject.

## 4. The person she married, about 60 seconds

The hardest part of this speech, especially if you don't know them well yet.

You do not have to pretend to a closeness you don't have. Trying to is obvious and it makes the room wince. What works is honesty about the short acquaintance plus one genuine observation:

*"I've known [name] for four years, which is not long. But I've watched how [she/he/they] listens when my daughter talks, and that told me most of what I needed."*

If you genuinely don't know them well, say what you've observed. If you do know them well, one specific story is worth ten adjectives.

**Say their parents' names.** Welcome them properly. This is the line their family will remember.

## **5. The toast, about 20 seconds**

Short. Land it and stop.

*"Would you all stand, please, and raise a glass, to [name] and [name]."*

Say "please stand", pause, actually wait for them to stand, then say the names. The pause is the whole thing. Speakers who rush this get a ragged, half-standing toast.