

Quick Guide to Speech Evaluations

(Details that Pathways evaluation forms do not tell you)

A speech evaluator is a very important role in a Toastmasters meeting. Evaluations are how Toastmasters improve their speaking and presentation skills. Evaluations inform speakers what they did well and what they need to work on.

Using the Pathways evaluation form for the speaker's particular project is the recommended procedure. Every Pathways evaluation form is a little bit different, as there are criteria pertaining to that particular project. Therefore:

1. Contact the speaker a few days before the meeting and ask him/her to send to you the Pathways evaluation form for that project. Review the form before the meeting.
2. Ask if there is anything in particular for which he/she wants you to watch or listen when the speech is given.
3. Otherwise, you may want to look for things such as:
 - a. Was the speech well organized?
 - i. Attention-getting opening (a quote, question, dramatic opening)
 - ii. Supportive middle
 1. What was the point of the speech?
 2. Did it meet the objectives of the project?
 3. Were there well-defined sub-points?
 4. Were sub-points well supported with anecdotes, examples, or data?
 5. If a PowerPoint was used, did it start up well, slides changed well, not wordy, helpful photos and graphics?
 6. Was humor and/or other techniques used to illustrate the points?
 - iii. Memorable conclusion
 1. Wrapped up the point well with a summary, quote, etc.?
 2. Mentioned what he/she learned?
 3. Was there a "call to action" for the audience to perform after the meeting?
 - b. What about other presentation skills, such as moving with purpose; gestures; eye contact; vocal variety, including pauses to emphasize important points; use of notes; and (if meeting was online) standing while speaking?
4. When giving the evaluation during the meeting, first read the objectives of the speech as written on the evaluation form.
5. Use the "sandwich method" by starting with what the speaker did well, then what to work on, then ending positively.
6. What does he/she need to work on?
 - a. Use words such as, "I believe ...," "My reaction was ...," "I suggest that"
7. What can he/she do to challenge himself/herself in future speeches?
8. End your evaluation with a positive conclusion of his/her performance, and that you look forward to his/her future speeches.