

# 23 Tips to Introduce A Speaker Without Embarrassing Yourself



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***NATIONALLY RENOWNED PUBLIC SPEAKERS***

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## ***23 Tips for Introducing a Speaker Without Embarrassing Yourself***

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Michael Nichols & Jamy Bechler**

We have provided this eBook as a resource so please feel free to use any parts of to add value to others. We both speak in a variety of different settings and in front of audiences, both big and small. We understand that the greatest fear many people have is the fear of public speaking so if this eBook can help you or someone you know in overcoming this phobia, we would love to hear about your story. You reach us at [michael@guidestonegroup.com](mailto:michael@guidestonegroup.com) or [jamy@coachbechler.com](mailto:jamy@coachbechler.com)

# “There are only two types of speakers – the nervous and the liars (Mark Twain)”

You’ve heard it said that a speech’s opening words are perhaps the most important part of the speech because it can draw the audience in. However, there is another important introduction to a speech and that is the way the speaker is introduced or announced prior to giving the presentation.

A good speaker introduction assists the audience by informing them of the speaker’s background and credibility. It also helps them understand why this speaker is presenting. The audience wants to know WHO and WHY?

- Who is the person speaking to us?
- Are they qualified?
- Can I know, like or trust them?
- Will they add value to my life?
- Why should I care?
- Why should I pay attention?
- Why is this topic important to the audience?



You should connect with the audience and then help bridge the gap between speaker and audience. Audiences will listen to those they know, like and trust. You are probably that person and by pointing out similarities that you and the speaker have, you can start the process of getting the audience to know, like and trust the speaker. There are 6 kinds of introductions you can receive when you are giving a speech:

- Audience is directed to the program to read for themselves who the speaker is.
- Person is well-known to the audience already.
- So-and-so is here to speak to us today. The End.
- Read the script verbatim.
- No introduction. Speaker is on their own to start presentation.
- Introduction is internalized and interesting.

Each of the 6 introductions can be done in an enthusiastic or dull manner. It is your choice, but it is always best to choose enthusiasm, as it is contagious. An enthusiastically read script is better than a dull (almost laconic) demeanor on an introduction that is internalized or memorized. The audience will oftentimes mirror your behavior. Your verbal and non-verbal actions will be noticed by the audience.

**So here are 23 tips for  
introducing a speaker  
without embarrassing  
yourself . . .**

*If you are a speaker, you will have a great deal of control over this aspect of the speech and will want to make it interesting and memorable. If you are the person introducing the speaker, you have an extremely valuable role – and, we are here to help you prepare a great introduction that will help set the stage for the speaker.*

1. Pronounce words (especially names) correctly. Ask ahead of time.
2. Don't just wing it. Even if you are saying just 3 sentences, you should know exactly what you want to say and how you'll say it. Be prepared and practice your introduction. Even a good speaker has difficulty overcoming a poor introduction.
3. If you don't know the speaker then get to know them through internet research. You can even reach out to them. They will probably be impressed by that. Speakers love a good introduction.
4. Avoid giving away too much of the content of the speech. This typically happens if you are also an expert in the field or have heard the speaker speak on this topic in the past. It is not your job to present the material to the audience. Let the speaker make their points the way that they want to make their points. It is the speaker's job to decide how best to convey their material.
5. Long introductions that are filled with resume information are boring and pompous. The longer the speech, the longer the introduction can be. However, typically the introduction should be 30-90 seconds long.
6. Avoid clichés like "This speaker needs no introduction", "We are gathered here today", etc...





7. Be careful of hyperbole. You want to create anticipation with the audience and give credibility to the speaker but you don't want to create lofty expectations that can actually sabotage the presentation.
8. As you transition from the introduction into the presentation, know where the speaker is located so that you can greet them properly. Typically you will wait for them to come to you, as opposed to going to them. You will then shake hands with them and "turn the floor" over to them. You should be aware if the speaker has a special entrance in mind.
9. Know how the speaker wants to be addressed. Do they want "coach", "doctor", "Miss", "Mr." or some other title used? Do they go by a nickname that is important to their brand?
10. Avoid using language or remarks that could be inflammatory, disrespectful, prejudicial or discriminatory. Talking about a person's looks, marital status, family, or political views is inappropriate in the majority of situations.
11. If the speaker has an introduction that they want read, then respect their wishes and be careful deviating from the script. However, you want to memorize or internalize the script. The fewer notes you use and the less you read, the more compelling the introduction will be.
12. Unless you receive permission from the speaker, do not talk about their family or personal items as this is inappropriate and could be potentially embarrassing for you and them.



13. Oftentimes a celebrity can have a dull presentation but we give them the benefit of the doubt because we've already been introduced to them. We already know, like or trust them. Through your introduction, you want to try (in the very limited time that you have) to begin to make the speaker a celebrity to the audience.
14. Captivate the audience. Generate excitement in the audience. Transition their attention to the speaker.
15. Look at the speaker when thanking them for speaking.
16. Make it clear when you want the speaker to come to the microphone or podium. It is embarrassing if the speaker walks halfway to you and then realizes that you are still going with your introduction. Inviting the audience to join you in welcoming the speaker to the stage is also a good indicator.
17. Do your job. When making the introduction, be careful not to overshadow the speaker or show off your speaking skills.
18. Make the speaker feel welcome and express gratitude toward the speaker for time out of their busy schedule share their insights and expertise with the audience.



“  
Picture yourself in a living room having a chat with your friends. You would be relaxed and comfortable talking to them, the same applies when public speaking.  
(Richard Branson)

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19. If the speaker's name is prominently displayed during your introduction (big poster, sign, power point, flyers on the tables), then you don't have to use their name in your introduction until the end when you crescendo to their appearance. However, if it is not prominently displayed (in a program is not considered prominent), then use it throughout the introduction so it is clear who the person is that will be presenting.
20. Every speaker should have their own introduction. It is appropriate for you to ask in advance, "do you have an introduction you'd like me to use", "how would you like me to introduce you" or "is there anything special you'd like from me in the way of an introduction"? If the speaker doesn't provide you with anything tangible, then you'll need to prepare one for them by doing research and through your conversation with them.



21. A good introduction will probably be forgotten but it will set the tone for the presentation, which the audience will remember as being good. A bad introduction will be remembered.
22. Don't just regurgitate the speaker's resume. Mention only information that is relative and interesting. You can add some personality to it as long as it is appropriate. It should sound like one friend introducing another friend to the audience. What is most important? What is most interesting about the speaker that will get the presentation started off right?
23. In his book, *Effective Speaking*, Dale Carnegie teaches the "TIS Formula" (Topic, Importance and Speaker). Your introduction doesn't have to follow a formula but it can help in keeping it brief and focused. A formula can serve as a reminder of what the purpose of an introduction is really about.

**Keeping these tips in mind will allow you set the stage for a great presentation that adds value to your audience.**

**As a bonus, here are two examples of an introduction speech . . .**



**Introduction provided by Michael Nichols ([michaelnichols.org](http://michaelnichols.org)):**

About 15 years ago, in Jacksonville, Florida, I became acquainted with a guy who has continued to challenge and encourage me personally and professionally. Over the past couple of years, he has become one of my best friends.

He's spent years counseling, guiding, and directing career professionals and executives to pursue meaningful work by helping them discover and pursue their vision and passion. He challenges me more than any other person in the world. And I know he's gonna do the same for you.

So I am most honored – and I would be very grateful if you would help me welcome to the stage, my friend and someone who I know is going to impact your life greatly.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jonathan Milligan.

**Introduction provided by Nick Morgan ([DrNickMorgan.com](http://DrNickMorgan.com)):**

*Here at (insert company name), we live and die by our communications successes and failures. So it is with special excitement that I'm pleased to welcome Dr. Nick Morgan to our annual gathering. Nick is one of America's top communication theorists and coaches.*

*He has coached people to give Congressional testimony, to appear on the Today Show, and to take on the investment community. His latest book, *Trust Me: Four Steps to Authenticity and Charisma*, was published by Jossey-Bass last year. And he has one of the best blogs on communications.*

*Have you ever wondered why you can't take your eyes off some charismatic public figures, while others put you immediately to sleep? Nick is going to demystify charisma and storytelling for us today, giving us lots of practical ideas we can immediately put to work when we're back in the office on Monday...*

*Please join me in welcoming Dr. Nick Morgan!*



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**MICHAEL NICHOLS** is an executive business coach that was listed as one of Inc.com's Top-100 speakers in 2014. He has served as Chairman and CEO of an international marketing firm and been a college and university executive. Currently he is a Partner with GiANT Worldwide, the President of The Guidestone Group and Chairman of the Board of Directors for The GreenTree Foundation, a non-profit charity. He has a passion for vision development, strategic planning, and work-life balance. You can learn more about his work and inquire about his services at [michaelnichols.org](http://michaelnichols.org)



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