

## Ponder Points for “Controversial” Speeches

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- Possible goals of the speaker:
  - To Educate/Inform/Persuade?
  - To Inspire/Encourage?
  - To Entertain/Humor?
  - To Tell Personal Stories?
  - To Have a Cathartic Experience?
  
- Define speaker’s purpose/intent (**the actor**)
  - Does it maintain the speaker’s dignity?
  - Is it respectful and does it add value to the meeting?
    - Is it too self-indulgent or selfish?
  - Does speaker express personal views without bashing others’ views?
  - Does it include inappropriate language?
    - Prohibit undeniably, unacceptable language; in general, profanity lacks creativity
  - Does it meet the mission and purposes of TI and the club?
    - There is a *right* way to approach *any* topic if the club atmosphere is ultimately one of fellowship and respect
    - With help from the Toastmaster, Evaluator, Leaders and audience, a potential meeting crisis can be turned into a learning experience that brings club members together
  
- Identify *or* define audience (**the captives**)
  - Is the audience asked to be in “character”?
    - “Uncomfortable” material can be “appropriate” material
    - “Unpopular” opinions can become “popular”
  - Is the audience encouraged to listen?
    - Listening can create compassion/understanding
    - An offended audience is a tuned out audience resentful of being held captive
    - An audience member *can* leave before the speech if material is too sensitive for that “individual”
  
- Utilize the Toastmaster (**the director**)
  - The Toastmaster can set up, or direct, the audience for purpose and mood of speech
  - Don’t surprise and disrespect the Toastmaster with a “surprise,” “controversial” speech
  
- Utilize the Evaluator (**the enforcer**)
  - Teams with speaker to identify speech’s purpose and goals
  - Evaluator holds speaker accountable as the enforcer
  - Don’t surprise and disrespect the speaker’s Evaluator by not communicating with her/him
  
- What is the responsibility of the President and other Officers (**the “elders”**)?
  - Club has the right to limit *or* expand speech subjects, content and/or language, *but must have the consensus of its members* for defining the club’s parameters
  - Know the club’s culture as inappropriate material for one club may be appropriate for another
  - Have strong club leadership
    - Does the current President have the skill set and emotional intelligence to approach the speaker about an “inappropriate speech”? Does the club have a wise elder to handle such situations?