

10 Tips for a 3-Minute Introduction

(That Won't Put Your Audience to Sleep)





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In many groups and organizations, members have the opportunity to give a short “about me” introduction. Does the thought of public speaking leave you sweating and speechless?

Don't worry --- you're not alone. With some preparation and a few talking points that reflect the real you, you can deliver a great introduction.

This is possibly your first opportunity to introduce yourself to the entire membership. So let's start with the end in mind. **What is the single most important thing you want your listeners to remember about you?**

During my 10 years as a Rotary club member, I heard many classification talks. Some were memorable for their engaging, blessedly brief presentations. Others had a lasting impact for all the wrong reasons. As the club president, I came to appreciate even more those thoughtful members who honored the 3-minute request.

With this as your goal, you're ready to dive in.

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.1.

KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)

Plan to talk for 3 minutes.

“I was going to write you a short letter, but I didn't have time so I wrote you a long one.” This quote really serves as a reminder of just how difficult simple communication can be.

Any longer than 3 minutes, and you will lose your audience and disrupt the meeting flow. You'll be surprised how difficult it is to cram your entire life into a short 3 minutes!

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.2.

“I was born”

We were all born sometime somewhere so skip this one unless your birth story is truly remarkable. Starting at the very beginning causes your audience to assume this is going to be a long, tedious talk. Just watch them reach for their phones.

Start by making a list. You can edit it later.

- What are those things you are really passionate about?
- Share a humorous event in your life.
- Where did you attend school and college?
- Family is important so share your spouse and children with your club.
- Note* --- if you have had multiple spouses, it isn't necessary to talk about all of them! This is one of those memorable for the wrong reason introductions I will always remember.
- Why did you join the organization?

You get the idea. The list is yours and will help organize your unique story.

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.3.

Keywords Aren't Just for Search Engines

Write down a few keywords for each of the items you want to include in your talk.

Now make some notes about what you want to say. Include your keywords to help you remember the important points.

Main Point

Keywords

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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.4.

Storytelling Works Every Time

Now organize the points on your list into a story outline.

Most people use a chronological order - early years to the present - but you can be as creative as you like. You may want to start with today and work backward.

Remember that a story has a beginning, middle and end so string your points together in a way that your listeners can follow.

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.5.

Don't Be a Salesperson (Even If That's What You Are)

Relationships come first.

While this is an opportunity to share your profession and achievements with your fellow members, this is not the time for a sales pitch. This is about you, the interesting person that you want everyone to know.

Remember -- There may also be other members in the group in similar professions so tread lightly.

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.6.

Forget What You Learned in School about Perfect Sentences

Prepare notes for your presentation.

People tend to be more comfortable writing out their entire speech, but this can be a trap. It's difficult to read a speech and still hold your audience's attention. You want to be connecting with your listeners, not showing them the top of your head.

A recommendation is to outline the main points. If you practice your presentation (*and you will many times!*), you will be able, confidently, to fill in the information for each main point.

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.7.

What Do Your Clothes Say About You?

Wear what makes you feel confident – and is appropriate for the setting.

You're on stage with all eyes on you. Three minutes is a long time for your audience to study you.

Dress the way you would like to be remembered.

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.8.

You're On!

As you move to the head of the room, those last minute doubts and nerves might come rushing at you. It's natural. Don't panic.

Just take a few moments to

- pause
 - take a few deep breaths
 - grasp the podium like you own it
 - look around the room with confidence
 - find two or three people in the audience you can speak to
 - go for it!
- ...

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.9.

Body Language Talks Too

A few simple tips as you deliver your confident, memorable 3 minute talk ---

- Use your hands as a way to emphasize your words
 - Be animated – but not crazy
 - Look at your audience, not at your notes.
 - Make eye contact with a few people for several seconds. This gives people the feeling you are speaking personally to them.
 - Remember to look at the entire audience - left, center, and right.
- ...



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.10.

One Final Tip

Practice, practice, practice!

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Congratulations!

Now applaud yourself on your remarkable introduction.

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