



A ROTARIAN'S CRAFT TALK

Soon after you become a Rotarian you will be asked to “give a craft talk.”

First and foremost, allow your craft talk to reveal the essential elements of your approach to the craft of living. Tell us a story, your story. What life experiences have shaped your character and how? Organize your presentation any way you please. There is no particular formula or format to follow. Everyone has a distinct and different story.



Yes, networking is a feature of membership in Rotary, but networking is not the same as selling. The craft talk should not be a sales pitch. Yes, Club members want to know of any particularly significant turning points in your life, such as what led you to the occupation you now pursue or have pursued in the past. They would enjoy hearing some unusual or humorous experiences in your life or vocation. But they do not want for you to use this as an opportunity to troll amongst them for business; please, no advertising, not even a hint of selling (those who wish to use your services will come to you). On the other hand if you have had critical or important or funny or revealing experiences that describe the nature of your occupation, business, or profession by all means relate those to us as part of your life story.

The key to a successful craft talk is whether, after hearing you speak, Club members feel they know you and your family. Club members wish to know how they and you together fit into, and form a unit within, the Family of Rotary.

What you choose to talk about is completely up to you. Points around which to weave a revealing story about your life might include: - - important glories won or significant traumas overcome - - ordinary stable everyday undertakings you treasure or highly erratic instabilities that challenge you - - moments of happiness or disappointment. Club members want to have some idea, even a little glimpse, of who you are down deep inside.

Preparation of the Craft Talk:

A Check List of Nitty-Gritty Points Everyone Already Knows.

Make a list of all the points you want to cover, in order of importance; working your way from the most general characteristics of your life and career to specific observations. Write out a complete draft of your speech. Include examples and anecdotes to help explain complicated points and to make your talk more lively. Avoid using professional jargon or cryptic acronyms. Your listeners will lose interest if they are puzzled by what you say. Read your finished draft aloud and precisely time your delivery. Thorough preparation makes a difference. Practice and refine your speech until you know it thoroughly and can deliver it in a confident relaxed 15 minute one-way conversation with club members, your audience. Then try it out on a colleague or family member assigned the task of identifying points you have missed or need to be clarified; be sure to select someone who will give you honest comments about your style of delivery based on this description of how to prepare. **DO NOT READ** your talk to the Club.

What you chose to talk about is completely up to you; however, you might wish to include:

- ☀ A brief history of your life and career: Your full name, marital status, significant family members, hometown/place of birth, your upbringing, other important places you have lived, education, military service, any experiences you consider important, as well as when, how, and why you come to Los Angeles and Westwood Village Rotary Club, what you do for entertainment and relaxation, and, finally, a small part of the talk should be about your vocation, describing your business or profession and your duties within it. The craft talk is an excellent basis for networking with Rotarians, but please note that networking is not the same as selling.
- ☀ Characteristics most needed for success in your business or profession; aspects of your vocation that you find most rewarding or most difficult.
- ☀ Technical standards of practice in your field; changes in technology, environmental factors, or government regulations, or other outside forces that impact on your vocational field and how related fields might be affected.
- ☀ Ethical standards in your field. What ethical issues do you face in your work and how does Rotary help you deal with them.

The following points might help you to give a lively presentation that will keep your audience interested:

- ☀ Speak clearly. Practice shaping the full sound of specific words. Slurred words and mumbling are sure fire ways to lose the audience.
- ☀ Maintain eye contact with the audience. Direct your gaze at specific individuals in different sectors of the audience throughout your talk.
- ☀ Be conscious of the direction in which you project your voice. When you look at a person's face your voice hits that person's ears, when you look down your voice hits the floor, when you look up -the ceiling, to the side -the wall, etc.
- ☀ If a microphone is available, aim your mouth directly at the mike and hold the mike away from your mouth, about 6 to 7 inches.
- ☀ Avoid nervous habits; such as coughing or toying with a pencil. Avoid the annoying repetitive use of "Aaaah..." or "You know..." or "I mean..."
- ☀ Use hand movements sparingly. Your bodily movements should be thoughtfully related to what you are saying. Gestures can help you be more expressive, but will be distracting and annoying if continuous, jerky, or unrelated to what you say.
- ☀ Be relaxed to the fullest extent possible. Many books on public speaking offer techniques for relaxation such as breathing exercises.
- ☀ Genuine emotion will help establish rapport with the audience. On the other hand, the audience will easily and quickly see through fake, or exaggerated, attempts to convey emotion.
- ☀ Consider using visual or audio aids to enliven your presentation.
- ☀ Test audiovisual equipment before the meeting; if at all possible do a dry run. It is terribly distracting for an audience to wait while the speaker rearranges visuals or struggles with faulty equipment.
- ☀ Stick to your prepared text. Extemporaneous ad lib presentations virtually always ramble, lose the thread of the talk, causing the audience to lose interest and be annoyed.
- ☀ Do not rush. Be deliberate and purposeful in delivery, but do not rush. Do not read your talk to the Club.
- ☀ Following your talk, allow an extra 2-5 minutes for questions.
- ☀ Preparation is the key to an effective presentation. Prepare, prepare, prepare!