

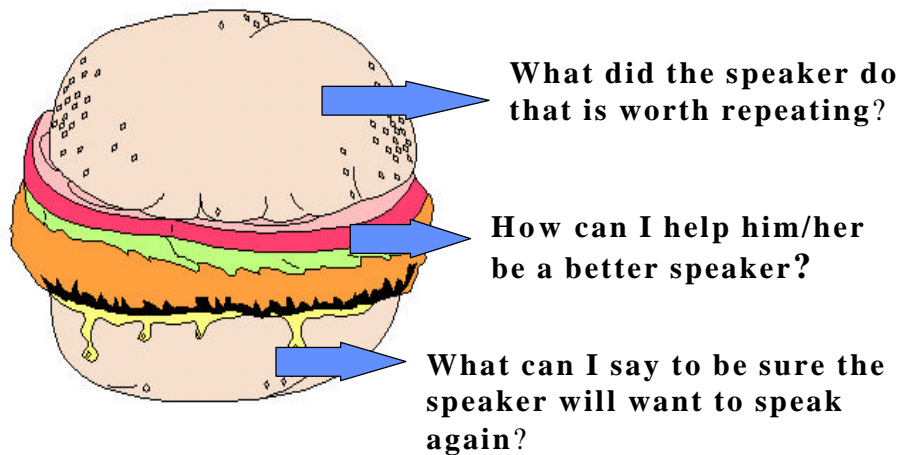
Take the Bite out of Evaluation Jitters

“WHO ME?” is a frequent response from beginning Toastmasters when invited to perform an evaluation. They have the notion that one must be a very accomplished speaker to be able to perform an evaluation. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Imagine for a moment you are on a camping trip. The camp site next to yours is raided by a bear in the middle of the night. As pots and pans rattle and things fall about, all four family members fly out of their tent partially clothed - first the father, then the mother, son, and daughter. They are running faster than the dickens to save their lives. The bear leisurely hangs around to rummage through their ice chest and eat their food.

Now, do you need to be an expert speaker to tell your family and friends what you saw, heard, and felt while watching this drama? Of course not. The same is true when you perform an evaluation of a speaker. YOU are the all-important audience member watching, listening, and feeling. You simply report your response to the speech.

There is a formula, however, that you may find helpful in outlining your response called the "Hamburger Evaluation." It looks like this:



The top bun is the biggest. This is where you point out three or four things the speaker did right--things that you liked and would recommend they do again. (Good eye contact. Loud voice. Good joke. Good story. Good topic.)

Then comes the critical “meat” of your evaluation--the all important "protein" of your observations that enables a speaker to grow big and strong. This is where you make a couple suggestions for improvement. (Perhaps use more gestures. Speak with a bit more vocal variety. Perhaps organize the speech so that the most effective story is last.)

The bottom, skinny bun is where you end your evaluation with one or two more positive things about the speaker and/or the speech. Your comments are ones that make the speaker want to get up and speak again.

The "recipe" of the Hamburger Evaluation can be used any time you are giving someone feedback--whether to a speaker, colleague, spouse, or child. This type of evaluation lends itself to being positive, nurturing, helpful--a "hamburger" that anyone can sink his or her teeth into!