

Laugh Lovers Toastmasters Club
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Humor Skill Workshop:

"Getting the Summer Season into Your Humor"

Seasonal themes: opportunities for irony and humor

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It is summer time and you need to write a speech. You want to put in humor. So, "mine your experiences." They are full of humor.

When it comes to humor and speeches, we often forget that everyone has a funny experience. Usually, though, it starts out painful. Look back: Was it is really fun at that summer camp? No. But today, if you talk about it, you might have a different point of view. You might be able to see the humor and make it humorous.

Humor in speeches works if you remember that you are tapping into the common experiences in life. Some experiences can be metaphors for larger personal growth. Some are actual memories. Remember, we have similar ideas. All can have a humorous attribute. And summertime is a good place to start.

Summer time humor

Let's look at Alan Sherman's song, "Camp Granada." ("Hello Mother, Hello Father, I am here at Camp Grenada...") It is a disaster written from the perspective of a homesick boy at camp. We can identify with him. Who has not been on a vacation from hell? His experiences are ironic and a bit sad. But also humorous because of the way it is presented.

We can expand our identification: For example, what if in Alan's song, he knows that his parents sent him there for his own good. They told him so. But, really it was theirs. Did they want a vacation from him? Is this a common summer experience? And did he/they take it out on you/them?

Every Summer Camp movie's basic premise is getting rid of the kids. To the kids, and now us the adults, it is a different story. And, it is not always funny. But that is the irony. We can make it funny.

So, when you are writing your humorous speech, remember it is really a story. And, any story must be constructed well to "work." Now we will take a look at construction.

In any story, remember these three rules:

Find a theme that you are passionate about. Did this happen to you? If so, you will be in tune with the pain or joy of the situation. Use this to pull your audience into the speech.

Make the time and setting detailed to give the audience a visual image. If it was hot at the beach, talk about sweat running into your eyes or the glare from the water. Set the stage

Finally, make sure that there is a lesson you learned. This gives the audience resolution to the speech and the reason they came with you on this journey. For example: The beach bully really only wanted to be a part of the group. Don't we all?

This is nothing more or less than what you have always done. Telling your story will work and you can make it humorous

Experiences to "mine"

Now, let us look at some summer speech ideas that have implied humor. You will have many of your own. Add them. Share them. Write a speech, make it poignant, and give us the humor. We will love and laugh and be better for it.

At the Beach

The parking lot dance

The beach bully who kicked my sand castle and got bit by a crab.

Sand: in your toes, pants, swim suit, car, food

The sun burn from hell.

Falling asleep in the sun.

The tanning lotion message on my back/stomach.. "I am stupid"

Give me shade: the beach umbrella dance.

Get me off the hot sand. Give me a cool drink. Give me room in the water.

The lost bathing suit in the water.

Heat/tuna salad/mayonnaise sandwiches: Food poisoning; Mothers nightmare

Hot dogs and cotton candy: brain food.

Getting sick on hotdogs and cotton candy.

The beach blanket music.

Radio blasters that I love.

Girls in bikinis smaller than lingerie.

Binoculars

Car full of toys and they play with a cardboard box

No room to swim.

Sharks

At Home in the summer

The wading/swimming pool.

He/she stepped on the sides and let the water out
The air tube is leaking
My mother will not let me fill the air tube with the vacuum cleaner
Running through sprinklers. (Ours and/or theirs)
My Grandmother's laundry changed the water pressure
My Grandmother's laundry on the clothes line, our muddy football, collision, RUN
Slip and Slide through life.
Toys in the pool. He/she is playing with my toys.
My rubber ducky is better/tougher/smarter than yours
You can't play in my pool.
I wanted to play in the water alone.
He/she pee-ed!
The spot on the grass from the pool.
He/she won't give me the hose
Birds bathing, cats watching

At the BBQ

The Backyard Chef
A little bit of sauce, lighter fluid, advice
The bad neighbor who BBQs better meat/starts his sprinkler/plays louder music
BBQ Charcoal, lighter fluid and other intelligence tests/challenges
BBQ on the fire escape
BBQ in the Park. The kibitzers. The ants. The Flies. The Wasps!
My mother with the can of Raid

Summer Camp

The YMCA trip from Hell
Cabin/tent madness
The Campfire stories
Hiking into the Mountains of Madness
Snakes can swim.
Alan Sherman was right. (Camp Granada)
The obligatory letter home
Square lanyard keychain projects that I loved/changed my life/I gave to
Aunt/Uncle...
Camp mates that made my life unbearable. And ended up working for me.
Camp mates whose life I made unbearable. And I ended up working for.
Co-ed camp!
The girls/boys across the lake
And then, it rained/snowed/blew/froze/baked...
Bugs!

Back Home

Summer Pet themes

Fido on the chain.

The cat in the yard

Cats under the car

Cats in the engine compartment

Birds in the bath

Superman saves cats from trees. What's a dog owner to do?

Living at Home Depot

Honey Do's and Honey Don'ts

Tom Sawyer incarnate

Riding bikes

Climbing trees, falling down

Trips to the Emergency Room

Stepping on bees

Hot sidewalks. The fried eggs do not taste good/do not flip easily/My mother's reaction

Hot sidewalks and life's lessons

"When it cools off..."

"Hot enough for you?" and other stupid questions

Company picnics.

The VP's frozen chicken cooking adventure

The obligatory baseball game

The three legged race I won/lost and the promotion I lost/won

Who is he/she and what did I really say?

Too much/too little alcohol

Kids, stop fighting!

Parents, stop fighting

Sports

At the Little League/soccer/basketball/you name it sport.

Winning and losing: the truth

Parents in the stands

The umpire/referee had to make a choice

I hit the ball, missed the ball, dropped the ball

The ball broke the window. I started to run with the others...

The Lessons Learned

We survived
We learned to love/hate/forgive/give up
We learned to not take ourselves too seriously
We did it our way
They did not realize that it was dangerous
They did it anyway
The message was clear to all
Forgive me
Forgive them
Forget it

In conclusion, you can take any summer theme and make it into a humorous speech. Try it now.

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