

# **PUBLIC SPEAKING TOPIC SECRETS**

For College, Community,  
Toastmasters and TED Talks

By Ramakrishna Reddy

## Praise for this book

"Ramakrishna Reddy has demonstrated a much wanted ability to simplify the fieldwork of public speaking. The book offers lucid and practical guidance to discover the purpose and tools to a great talk anywhere, everywhere. This little book is smart and genuinely human to help people stand up and effectively share their amazing ideas and thoughts with the rest of the world.... A practitioners toolkit to public speaking"!

- Nancy Katyal, Lead Image Coach and Soft skills Trainer

[www.theperfectyou.in](http://www.theperfectyou.in)

“Good research and simple language. References of speeches will help the audience understand the topic more appropriately. This book is indeed a great read. Ideas that have been shared in this book seem to address the basic problem of selecting a topic. Impact of the book is so much that I already got an idea for my next speech”

- Pritam Arekar, 2013 District 41 Toastmasters Humorous Speech Champion

"I just got a million speech writing ideas after reading this book. Earlier I thought that writing a speech was difficult but now, I feel I was wrong. With every example mentioned in this book, I realized how easy it is to come up with a speech topic. Well-done Rama! You are a true and one of the best orators."

- Noelle Nams, Author of, '*It is All Because of You*'.

“The book presents an amazing amalgamation of simplicity and efficacy of ideas in selecting speech topics. The gripping speech illustrations further help the reader in weaving the ideas into a storyline. The book is written with such spontaneity that it not only acts as a guide to Public Speaking but also ensures that the reader enjoys the journey of writing a speech.”

- Manisha Rana, Corporate Executive HR, ITC

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## Dedication

To my mom, *Ammayammal*, my guardian angel

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## Introduction

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The stage was set. Auditorium was jam-packed. I was called to the stage. I held the mike. I started to speak. "Time and tide waits for no man. So we should, so we should, hm, ah, hm, I mean', '.....thank you'. It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life. I was in my third grade. The auditorium was full. In the same contest, my school principal's son gave a splendid talk. I remember saying to myself "Loser... Stupid"... Everybody in the school will make fun of you". I kept asking, 'If he can, why can't I'? The fact was - I had FEARS. I was really scared to face 100s of people from stage. I wanted to win this fear. But I never took any real action. Time passed by. I completed my graduation and got a job. Only after I started my career, I realized the importance of speaking and communication. Once again, I said 'hello' to my old friend - Public Speaking. I struggled for few years and then there was no looking back. This shy kid now competes at national level competitive speaking, anchors corporate events, and helps people sizzle on stage. The same kid also published multiple books selling on Amazon, creates online courses and much more. I'm no big than you or anybody. I also learnt the skills from kind people who mentored me. One of whom I can mention in every book or article is Jerry Aiyathurai. He is a fantastic mentor, amazing speaker and a genuine human being. Had it not been for him, I would not have continued to learn. Just that, this experience will help me to give you straightforward and simplified information.

Over the years, I observed that the main reason, people don't take up speeches is because of lack of a speech topic idea. Today, we are going to solve that problem.

This audio book is designed to give you 'specific' information so that you can get started with a solid idea for your speech. I have kept the language as conversational as possible.

I sincerely believe that this work will help anyone who wants to give a speech - whether you are a student, a corporate employee, an entrepreneur or a toastmaster. If you are someone who wants to give a speech, this is for you.

Often, people ask me how to select an appropriate speech topic. When questioned about why they could not find a topic, the usual reasons I hear are: '*Audience won't be*

*interested in my speech*, *'I am not convinced'*, *'I am not ready'*, *'I might forget the speech if I select this topic'*, *'I am not good at writing'*, etc. I believe everyone has an innate potential to speak on the platform. This work is an endeavor to spark those creative juices in your mind to find the Perfect Topic.

### **Do you wait for things to happen?**

In general, you might want to wait for things to happen. Maybe you wait till you get that perfect speech topic idea. But from experience, I realized, waiting increases your scope to be lazy. This book is going to help you break the blocks to begin your speeches as soon as possible. You see - any good book will just provide you with good information. Unless you take action, it is not going to be of any use.

And I am also going to offer a valuable gift to you. As you inch towards the end of this book, you'll get a link to download the professionally narrated audio version of this book for free. It's on the house!

Without further ado, let's get started on finding a perfect speech topic for you.

Thanks  
Rama

## Chapter 1: Blueprint For Speech Topic Ideas

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Imagine the stage is set. You are called on stage. You hear the audience applause as you walk towards the stage. The applause subsides, and you start, '*Ladies and gentlemen*'; you give an outstanding speech and say those final words '*Thank you very much*'. Your audience is rejoicing, cheering, and clapping. How does it feel? I am sure you will be thrilled. So, what is the first thing that you need to present a speech? Pat your back if you said '**A Speech Topic**'. A Speech topic is the first and foremost item that needs to be finalized for your presentation. In the past, sometimes, I thought, anything and everything could be a speech topic but most of the times, I felt all the topics were already taken! When I think about it now, I laugh at myself.

Let us understand the below blue print on finding a perfect speech topic.

### Step 1: Larger Purpose of the speech

Some questions you can ask to find the larger purpose:

1. Why are you giving the speech?
2. What is the occasion for the speech?
3. What type of speech will suit my larger purpose?

### Step 2: Topics that interest YOU

Some questions to find your interest:

1. What do you know?
2. What are you enthusiastic about?
3. What are your life experiences?

### Step 3: Topics that interest Your AUDIENCE

Some questions to find your audience's interest:

1. What are your audience's needs?
2. Do they belong to a certain age group?
3. What are their shared experiences?

When you place the three steps in separate circles and intersect those circles with each other, the sweet spot at the heart of the intersection will be your 'PERFECT TOPIC'

According to Toastmasters International, general or larger purpose of any speech can be classified into the following four types of speeches.

1. Informational
2. Entertaining
3. Persuasive
4. Inspirational

The aim of the first step in our blueprint will be to identify your speech's larger purpose. Before we do that, let us understand the types of speeches.

**Informational Speeches:** As the name suggests, these are speeches about a specific subject. You will give an informational speech when your objective is to help the audience gain knowledge on the particular subject, or strengthen their current knowledge level. Example: Project findings, 'How-to' speeches

**Entertaining Speeches:** People like to laugh and if you can make them laugh from the stage, you will go a long way as a speaker. You can convey a point in a straight forward way or in an entertaining way. You might have seen speeches, which are given in an entertaining fashion. Stand-up acts will fall under entertaining speech category. Humorous speeches also fall under entertaining speech category.

**Persuasive Speeches:** These are speeches to persuade the audience to accept your point of view. These speeches make the audience think, act or feel your point. These speeches are powerful, as you will have to deal with the psychology of the audience. If you have seen Barack Obama's acceptance or nomination speeches, they are perfect examples for persuasive speeches. Humor can also be used in a persuasive speech. Motivational humorists use humor to entertain and persuade the audience at the same time.

**Inspirational Speeches:** These are speeches that will help your audience reach their highest potential. These are powerful speeches where you need to change the way

your audience think/feel or act after listening to your speech. Your aim is to convince the audience to do noble things or follow greater ideologies.

Based on above information, do you get an idea of your speech's larger purpose? If not, go back to Step 1 and answer the questions. You should at least be able to tell what type of speech suits your need or requirement. Assuming your general or larger purpose is set, let us explore topic ideas that could overlap your interest and your audience's interest so that you end up with the perfect 'speech topic' idea.

*Note:* At a high level, speeches can be classified as Informational, Entertaining, Persuasive, and Inspiring but on a deeper level, speeches are a combination of the above. And also the speech topic ideas given in this book are not restricted to the respective type of speeches. For example, if a topic under informational speech section sparks a speech topic idea for persuasive/inspirational/humorous speech, then you should go for it.

## Chapter 2: How to find Informational Speech Topic Ideas

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To present an informational speech, you need to have knowledge about a subject. But it does not mean that you should have done a Post Doctorate in the subject. I am pretty sure you might be an expert in something or the other. The simple question you can ask, '*Are my audience members 'uninformed' about a particular subject?*' Then ask a question – '*How will this topic help my audience?*' The moment you ask this question, you will start thinking from your audience's perspective and you will know the appropriate information to be used in the speech.

Let us explore some speech topic ideas for informational speeches.

### **Things You Like:**

Let us be honest. When will you give a speech? When you are excited, right? But you will only be excited, when the topic piques your interest. But the question that stops us from selecting a topic is: 'What if the audience is not interested in the topic?' I agree, not all the things that might interest you will be a suitable speech topic. So, let us explore some ideas, which are largely relatable to everyone.

*Books:* Assuming you are a book reader, Can you speak about why one should keep reading books? Can you write 5 major benefits of reading books? Depending upon the audience's age group, can you suggest different options? Can you talk about your favorite book? Can you inform about the importance of reading a particular book?

*Gardening:* If Gardening is your area of interest, can you write a speech on why gardening? Can you give tips on how to maintain a good garden? What are all the features of a good garden? What are the benefits of a good garden? Does it give you joy? What are the challenges? Every question in itself can lead to a speech of its own. Think about it.

*Exercise:* Can you talk about the 3 to 5 major benefits of regular exercise? How have you benefited from it? How does it help you in your day-to-day activities? What are the options available for proper exercise in the current day scenario? What dieting habits to

follow when you are in an exercise program? Take these questions in the direction you want. You *will* come up with an idea for your speech.

*Sports:* What sports do you follow or play? Based on the needs of the audience, you can frame your speech. If they are school students, you can talk about the benefits of playing a sport. If your audience members are adults, you can talk about encouraging their children to play sports. You can as well, talk about the options available for coaching; who are the different coaches, whereabouts of different training centers, or how to get enrolled in an academy.

*Cooking:* Are you a food aficionado? How does it help you? Please don't tell me – 'To Eat!' I am expecting something on the lines of cooking. What are some of the best practices in cooking? What are some quick ways to prepare food? What are the advantages of 'Slow Cooking'? The more specific the information – the more effective your speech will be.

*Psychology:* Does psychology fascinate you? Topics related to psychology are by and large interesting. Can you tap into the variations and specifics of the same? For example, you can explore 'Buying patterns of Consumers, 'Huge Discount on the Thanks Giving Day', 'Why Women Reject Men!' etc. *You get the idea?*

*Internet:* You might be an avid Internet user. This might be a very broad topic. Can you talk about any one particular aspect? Say, you want to address the 'privacy' issue? Say you want to talk about 'Online Marketing', or you can talk about 'Preventive measure to keep away from Hackers' or how social life is changing because of advent of 'Social Media'. *Does this spark any creative juices?*

*Expert:* If you are an expert at what you are doing, you can inform your audience of the same. For example, if you are in the insurance industry, you can explain how your industry works in layman terms. Create the speech as if you are informing a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student. I bet your audience will not lose you even if your information is very specific to your niche.

### **Observations:**

We all read newspapers/magazines. At least we might browse through them. Ok, if you are not into it, at least you might watch television. Now I can hear you say 'Yes'.

Media is 'Gold' for selecting topics because it always posts topics that are current.

Go to your nearby book shop or library. Just browse through the latest magazines. Mainly check for magazines in Health/ relationships /money category. I think it is ok even if you don't buy them. We are only looking for ideas. I am pretty sure this one exercise can give you enough ideas to come up with a speech topic.

Let us take different scenarios.

You see an article that 'Using too much cell phone is not good for your health'. Maybe, even you share the same sentiment. Are you for or against it? You can take three or four main points and support them with data/facts/experiences.

You read an article that obesity has increased at alarming rates. You don't necessarily need anyone in your life to be affected. Do you know someone who was affected by obesity? You can talk about the ill effects of obesity. Or you can create a talk on how to tackle obesity. You can cite 3 or 4 major points.

There is a 'get healthy' article on Vegan diet. And say, you try it out. Can you frame a speech about your experience and inform the audience about the same? The larger idea will be to inform about the benefits of a Vegan diet with your story as the backdrop.

You watched a movie this weekend. Can you form a speech based on this movie? It need not be a review of the movie. Maybe, you took some lessons from that movie and implemented it. Will this information help the audience as well? Do you have a favorite movie/director/actor who you admire? Can you form a speech to inform why you admire him or her?

Do you watch advertisements on television? Do you have an opinion on whether the advertisements are bad/good? What do you think? Ask more people about their opinion. Keep jotting down the content. After a while, you will have enough content to give a full-blown speech.

You observe that the traffic has increased multi-fold. You find more people suffering from health issues caused by air/noise pollution. Do you want to talk about the ill effects of the same? Your speech can be to spread awareness on the same. Now, think from your perspective and come up with your angle.

If you watch NEWS channels for a week or so, I think you will have loads and loads of speech topics. Say, you see a product in the NEWS for a period of time? Have you seen a pattern? Is it in the news for good or bad? Can you collect relevant information and form a speech to inform your audience?

Do you see the Discovery channel? Does any phenomenon fascinate or interest you? Examples could be – how a vaccine protects our body, how photosynthesis helps the plants to produce food or how sunlight gets transformed into solar power. *Are your creative juices getting triggered to select more topics on this line?*

Let us observe the Geography of our habitat. Is the place where you live susceptible to heat/cold? Is there a natural calamity that is hitting time and again? Is your area or state prone to such calamities? Can you form a speech to inform on the 'What' aspect, 'Why' aspect or 'How to deal' aspect?

**Problem/Solution:**

Problem is one thing that we all have in common: Every single day we face problems/challenges. I am pretty sure you faced problems and found solutions as well. Would it be a good idea to share your stories on how you solved the problem? I think it would be a great idea!

You were looking for a car and you finally got a good deal. What process did you go through? How did you tackle the salesman effectively? What homework did you do before you went to the showroom? Do you think this information would help if any of your audience members wants to buy a car?

Maybe you had a wonderful vacation this year. But, before going on vacation, you were clueless. So you did a lot of research on the best deals/best places/best time of the year to visit/best mode of transport. Can you structure this information and deliver a speech?

You can talk about common health issues such as diabetes. Maybe you had it. Did you use proper dieting habits or alternative approaches? How did you overcome it? What results did you get? Can you organize the information so that your audience members can benefit?

Do you know someone who was heavy in weight but achieved a lean figure in a short period of time? Maybe it was you. What are the steps you took? What are some key things that one should follow to start building a lean figure? What should one be doing after forming a lean figure? You can take it to any level. But I bet speeches where you give a solution are always revered.

Have you felt stressed, tired and restless? You started finding ways to be energetic. Now you lead a productive and complete life. Can you call it 'Stress management'? What were your observations? Can you form a speech on citing the problem, and then giving a solution?

Have you been through a rough phase in your relationship with your loved one? Did you bounce back later? Can you share information on how you bounced back? What are all the options available out there? If someone in your audience is going through this phase, they also might be interested to know about the same. The relationship could as well be with your co-worker, your boss or your friend. Think from this aspect and I am pretty sure it might spark an idea here or there.

Did you want a website of your own? Whether you took someone's help or you learned to create one, can you form a 'How to' speech on building a website? This idea need not be about building a website. It could be 'how to rebuild your home'. It could be 'how to shoot a professional video'. Any practical information on 'How to' would be a very good idea for an informational speech topic.

Let us see an example of an Informative Speech