

Tips on Toasting ?

May all your toasts be received in the spirit they are proposed....

Interested in a few tips on how to propose a good toast? Well these days, the tradition of toasting is dying - it's useful for a few formal events, but rarely executed well.

If you should find yourself at a wedding and asked to offer a toast, you want to be prepared with something wittier than "May you both be very happy and may all your troubles be little ones." To make sure you put your best foot forward - and not in your mouth - here are some tips from someone to help you on your way...

Any toast should be brief, personal and customized for the occasion. Most of all, it should be heartfelt." So don't try to copy an existing toast, but pick a topic that is personal and... appropriate.

If you don't drink alcohol then you can still offer a toast with sparkling juice and you should never refuse to participate in a toast. In all cases it is more polite to participate with an empty glass or a glass of water than not to participate at all.

Here's how:

- Keep it short - the speech leading up to the toast should be no more than a couple of minutes. Brevity is the soul of wit.
- Practice. Think about what you want to say, and practice the toast in advance. Use friends as sounding boards beforehand.
- Speak slowly, clearly and loudly (if no microphone is available).
- Be positive....this is not the time to recite the groom's college pranks.
- Stay sober, so save the alcohol for after the toast....being coherent helps.
- Dress your best. If you look good, you'll definitely feel more confident.
- Use humour - but keep it clean. Don't refer to "inside jokes" that only a few people will understand.

In summary - end on a bright note. Be sincere, be brief, be seated.

If you are on the receiving end of the toast, stay seated and don't drink the toast to yourself. At the end of the toasts, it's your turn to make some comments.

At a formal event, it is recommended the person offering the toast stands, you should get the guests' attention, lift glass by the stem and say "I propose a toast." Allow time for the guests to fill and lift their glasses and shift their attention toward you. Then offer your comments, take a sip, and inviting others to do the same. At smaller dinner parties, however, there is no need to stand for the toast. Just lift your glass by the stem, speak and touch the glass of the person or persons involved.

Consider one of the most famous toasts of all: Humphrey Bogart's words to Ingrid Bergman - "Here's looking at you, kid" - in the legendary 1941 film Casablanca. Now trade "kid" for another endearment. No big deal? Maybe. But Bogie probably would have achieved another kind of immortality if he'd raised his glass to Bergman and said, "Here's looking at you ... babycakes!"