

## **A Guide To Toasting**

A well made toast can make a simple moment special, as few things in life do. This gracious gesture can be delivered by anyone. All it takes is a little forethought, practice, and a familiarity with some toast etiquette and protocol.

### **Guide to Gracious Toast Giving**

There are no hard-fast rules to toast-making and giving. What follows are guidelines to give you a starting point.

- Be Eloquent, Whimsical, and Witty. Make sure that the toast you are delivering is appropriate to the intended audience and occasion.
- Be Simple. Keep your toast short and to the point. Avoid use of big words. The simplest words often sound the most sincere.
- Be Yourself. Give it from the heart.
- Be Brief. Avoid more than just a few sentences. Don't use the toast as a soapbox.
- Be Prepared. A good toast is a speech in miniature. Any good orator will tell you, it takes far more work to craft a short message, than a long speech. It takes practice to sound spontaneous. It's not a bad idea to have two or three short toasts memorized for when the opportunity presents itself. If you're quoting a well known work, know the context of the lines so as not to leave people reading something else in, between them.
- Be Done. End on a positive note. Clearly define the end by saying "Cheers!", asking your audience to "Raise your glass," or some other accepted gesture.

### **Toasting Etiquette & Protocol**

The following comments are some of the accepted patterns of behavior when giving or receiving a toast.

- Never drink a toast or stand, when it's being offered to you. However, you should always stand up and respond to the toast, even if this means just thanking the host for the gesture.
- Never should a toast be offered to the guest of honor until the host has had the opportunity to do so. If it appears that the host has no intention of offering a toast, it would be polite to quietly request the host's indulgence to do so yourself.
- You should always stand when offering a toast unless it is a small informal group. Standing can help you to get the attention of the group and quiet them down. It is best not to signal for quiet by rapping on a glass. You could easily end up with nothing to toast with.

- It is not a good idea to push someone to make a toast who would otherwise prefer not to. You might hear a toast that you would just as soon not hear.
- Never refuse to participate in a toast. It is more polite and perfectly acceptable, to participate with a non-alcoholic beverage or even an empty glass than not at all.

### **Toasting Etiquette for Special Occasions**

Toasts are very much a part of those special occasions in our lives — anniversaries, birthdays, reunions, holidays and weddings. What follows are a few reminders of the particulars that have become customary at some of these events.

- At a christening luncheon, toasts are offered to the child first by the Godparents, followed by the parents, the siblings and then any guests.
- Engagements are formally announced by the father of the bride with an appropriate toast.
- At a wedding reception, at which a meal is served, toasts are offered once all of the guests have been seated and have been served their drinks. At less formal affairs, toasts should be offered after everyone has gone through the receiving line and has been served a drink. With large weddings, it may be more practical to do most of the toasting at the rehearsal dinner than at the wedding reception itself.
- Whether at the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception, the toasts are generally offered to the bride and groom beginning with the best man. The groom should then respond with a toast of thanks. Other toasts then may be offered if desired, in following order — Fathers, beginning with the father of the bride; Mothers, beginning with the mother of the bride; Groom to the bride; Bride to the groom.

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