

Survival Guide to Table Topics

1. When you first hear the topic - smile, it will make you feel good and look confident
2. Immediately decide if you strongly like or dislike the topic. Go in that direction; your emotion will fuel your thoughts.
3. Begin by stating, "There are 3 things that come to mind about this topic" - even if you can't think of 3 things when you start. As you speak you will search for 3 key ideas and thus give your response apparent structure.
4. Try the pro / Con method. State the pros, then state the cons. Then clarify your position, by supporting one side more than the other.
5. When your mind goes blank and you don't know what to say next, smile, look at the audience and pause (breathe). The audience will review your last words & reflect on how profound they were. This will give you time to plan your next words.
6. If the pause & smile don't get you going, repeat the topic or your last point in a different way.
7. Look for a lesson in the word; relate it to a book you've read, a TV show, daily news, your work or your hobby.
8. Bring your family into the topic. It is a universal way to relate to people. When you talk of family, be sure to use their names, it creates a stronger emotional picture for the audience.
9. Use the topic as a channel to your main message. Politicians do this all the time, make the transition smooth and the audience will go with you.
10. Use humor. When the audience laughs with you, they relax and so do you.

By G.Torok, CTM, Skyway Club, Canada

TIPS FOR TABLE TOPICS

A table topic is an impromptu little speech – often no longer than 1 ½ minutes. We practice these in our meetings because they help us learn to think more clearly when expressing our thoughts.

For instance, they come in handy during job interviews, question and answer sessions, and even in our daily conversations.

The *ELEMENTS* of a well rounded Table Topic speech:

- **Address** the Table Topic Master : “Mr./Mme. Table Topic Master”
- **Opening** – Use this to grab the audience’s attention. Make a bold statement
- **Body** – Be any or all of the following: Topical
 - Humorous
 - Suspenseful
 - Creative
- **Close** – Either: Summarize
 - Repeat the opening line
 - Ask a bold question
 - Make a call to action
- **Re-Address** the Table Topic Master: “Mr./Mme. Table Topic Master”

The *STRATEGIES / FORMULAS* that make tackling these topics easier:

- State your opinion and justify it
- Describe past, present and future
- Argue for and against
- Tell a story
- Explain the problem and the solution
- Local versus national
- Personal versus general
- Explain the cause and effect
- Use 2 or 3 points to make our point, if it fits:
ie. 1 – 3 points (1...2...3...)

Above All remember to *have fun*, and keep in mind that you don’t have to tell the truth, as long as you are convincing