

## **Evaluation: The S.O.S. Approach** by Madeleine K.

The District 2 Officers Training held on July 14, 2001 at North Seattle Community College was an intense morning, crammed with helpful sessions. One of the highlights was the session on Effective Evaluation by Walter Carlisle which Carol Johnson and I attended. His handout from the session is re-printed below.

The purpose of an evaluation, says Walter, is to support the speaker. The challenge for the evaluator is to be engaged, but to take a half step back to focus on the speaker's organization and delivery. Some techniques for doing so are listed in the hand-out. As Walter pointed out, it a good idea to warn the speaker if you plan to use some of these techniques, such as the listening-with-your-eyes-closed technique.

### **What Should you Evaluate?**

Focus on PCOD--purpose, content, organization, delivery--says Walter, a master of the acronym.

### **How Should you Evaluate?**

Send out an SOS--be Supportive, Own the point of view, and be Specific. Walter had a very helpful metaphor to illustrate how to be supportive. Think of the speaker as climbing a staircase. Being supportive means acknowledging the speaker at whatever step he or she is on right now. What are his strengths, the base of his skill as a speaker? Then give ways to get to the next step, trying to minimize the distance to that step. This approach, by the way, works just as well for the general evaluator--who is evaluating the speech evaluators--as it works for the speech evaluators themselves.

### **What should You Not Do?**

Walter closed with some pet peeves, based upon his observation of a great many evaluations.

- Don't waste limited time in an evaluation; talk about the speech, not about yourself.
- Don't argue with the content of the speech, no matter how tempting it is to do so. Evaluate the delivery and organization.
- Don't quibble with factual content in a speech.
- Don't just reiterate or summarize the speech. Evaluate it.

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Evaluations - The most important slice of a great Club Sandwich

The biggest challenge is learning to OBSERVE.  
Take a Half Step Back.  
To Improve, try this:

- Close your eyes and just listen to a whole speech
- Plug your ears and just watch a whole speech
- Watch a speech and write down what you think and feel- real time and no censorship

## PCOD

**P**urpose - Why is the speaker giving this speech? What is their intent?

**C**ontent - The information, story, the words

**O**rganization - Opening, Body, Close. Single thread of thought?

**D**elivery - Body language, vocal variety, movement, eye contact

## SOS

**S**upportive

Idea is to Encourage--Give Courage

Sandwich approach:

- Establish trusted connection
- Support speaker's current achievements
- Suggest ways to get to the next level
- Re-support speaker in summary

**O**wn point of view

You can only share what you feel and think: I think, I feel - not- We think, We feel

**S**pecific

So the speaker knows exactly what you are talking about

So YOU know exactly what you are talking about

If possible- DEMONSTRATE the point -- Multi-Modal Reinforcement

Adapted from hand-out distributed at District 2's Toastmaster Leadership Institute for Club Officers and Interested Toastmasters on July 14 and August 4, 2001. Published by permission of Walter Carlisle of District 2.