

The reception is the celebration of your new union and your first appearance as husband and wife. It should be a joyous occasion full of family and friends and lacking stress of any kind. Here are a few tips to help create that perfect reception gathering.

## The Reception

All right, you're almost there. You've done a great job up to this point. Now you just need to bring it home with a solid Best Man speech and a few graceful dances. But all your good work has only been a warm-up for the wedding reception, so don't lose focus now. In this chapter, we'll spend a good amount of time getting your speech in order and discussing the day's other events. Who knows? There may even be a spot for you in the Best Man and Groomsmen wax museum, which I hope to build with the proceeds from this book.

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## The Best Man Speech

The Best Man's speech is one of the few moments during the wedding when the Bride and Groom will not be the center of attention. It's a high-profile job, and it unnerves many Best Men, but the Best Man speech is actually a great opportunity. It allows the Best Man to bring the room together in a toast to the future happiness of the newlyweds. It can also be a time for stories, jokes, and prayers.

Again, you may be saying to yourself, "That's great-but what about me? I'm the one responsible for getting up in front of all these people and making magic." At this point you may be questioning yourself, your manhood, and even the Groom's decision to pick you as his Best Man. Don't let doubts like these distract you. There's no better time to begin a dance with your demons. And you may actually enjoy it all if you've done your homework.

Although I can help lessen the fear of public speaking by helping you prepare an organized, thoughtful, and sincere speech, I can't make all your concerns magically disappear. Public speaking is one of the fears that all people seem to share, so take heart, grab a pad



For receptions with 100 or more guests, seating may become a problem. An easy solution is a seating plan where friends and family are grouped together. Placards can be placed at each setting or a table may be set up as you enter the hall with your guests name and their table number. If you add your names and the date these placards become a cute and inexpensive keepsake. Immediate family should be placed close to you.

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of paper, and start writing, Cicero! It'll all be over sooner than you think.

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### Practice

My number one rule is to be prepared. Take some time to think about

what you want to say, write it down in draft form, and practice it out loud. The repetition will give you confidence, and it'll lessen the common fear of blanking out on everything you wanted to say. The practice will also give you time to make any changes-something that can't be done once you push back your chair and stand up from the head table.

### Videotape Your Practice

I'd also suggest that those of you who haven't taken a public speaking course or given many speeches make a video of yourself giving your speech. This may seem a bit much for some, but anyone who has completed this exercise will agree that it's a great learning tool. When you tape yourself you'll be amazed at the number of times you say "um" during a mental pause or the variety of previously unknown facial or body ticks you can develop while speaking in public. When watching the video, don't worry about your voice. It'll sound funny to you, but to everyone else it's actually how you sound. (Reassuring, isn't it?) Another reason to practice is the fact that your speech will probably be recorded at the wedding, so why not take the time to know what it looks and sounds like in advance?