

Here are Peggy's top tips for making toasting a part of every celebration:

1. The host goes first



Traditionally, the host or hostess offers the first toast. The more informal the occasion the less this tenet applies. Around a dinner table with friends, a guest can propose the first toast and often does as a way of thanking the host for bringing everyone together. The host toasts first rule does still apply at wedding receptions and other large functions.

2. Rise to the occasion

The person delivering the toast stands (the exception: a small, informal occasion). Everyone else—including the person being toasted—remains seated, unless the toaster instructs everyone to do otherwise—"Please stand and raise your glass to the happy couple..."

3. The response

When toasted, the "toastee" does not stand, nor drink to herself. Once the toast is finished, she simply rises, bows her acknowledgement, and says thank you. She may also raise her own glass to propose a toast to the host and anyone else she wants to honor.

4. Prepare

Keep it short and to the point. You want the spotlight to stay on the toastee, not you. Tie what you say to the event that is being celebrated. Write out what

you will say ahead of time and practice. Don't let nerves bother you—speak clearly and with confidence.

5. Aim for sincerity over eloquence

Including a few personal remarks—a reminiscence, praise, or a relevant story or joke—is good, but keep with the emotion of the occasion. Lean toward sentimentality at a wedding, nostalgia for a retiring employee. A touch of humor is rarely out of place. Express your feelings.

Sample Toasts for Spring and Summer Occasions

A Toast to Health & Happiness

"Here's to good cheer, health and happiness for us all."

A Toast to the Host

"To Melinda, a true friend, great hostess and terrific cook."

A Toast to Mom

"Here's to my loving mother. How can you thank someone for the thousands of things they have done for you day in and day out your entire life? Thank you, Mom!"

A Toast to Dad

"To Dad, for all of your love, support—and patience!—over the years."

A Toast to the Graduate

"To Jennifer, as she accomplishes one goal—graduating from college—and begins the task of seeking out new goals, new dreams to follow. May success and happiness follow her through each endeavor."

A Toast to the Bride & Groom

"To Alexis and John—may they always be as happy as they are today."

