

# DIVORCE DISCOURSE

## 9 STEPS TO GETTING CLIENTS FROM CIVIC GROUP SPEECHES

Getting Rotary and other speaking engagements isn't difficult. It's a natural extension of your other networking activities. You're usually just an e-mail or phone call away from a speaking gig.

*Civic groups are an amazing source of business and referrals.*

*Rotary is the best example (it has more than 1.2 million members worldwide).*

*When I speak to a Rotary Club, I'm confident that, within a day or two, I'll have a new client.*

*I'll give my speech and answer a few questions. I'll mingle after the talk and answer a few more questions while shaking some hands.*

*Within 48 hours, someone will call. It might be someone I met at the meeting. It's often the employee, relative, or adult-child of one of the attendees.*

*"My dad/boss/friend heard you speak at Rotary . . . I need to make an appointment," I'll hear through the phone.*

*Rotary is just one of many types of civic groups. These groups exist in every community, regardless of size. They're in big cities and small towns. They're everywhere.*

**How can you make it happen? Take these nine steps.**

## STEP ONE – DEFINE YOURSELF

### Get clear on who you are, what you do, and why you do it.

You need to decide what you're doing for a living and be prepared to tell the story. If you can't describe your business in 10 seconds, you need to figure that out first. The "I do a little of this and a little of that . . ." approach isn't going to cut it if you want to make an impact with your speaking.

Personally, I'm a divorce lawyer. I help people find a fresh start. I don't like it when I feel clueless and out of control (like I did when I had open-heart surgery), so I help folks going through divorce understand what's happening so they can influence the process and reach a resolution that's best for them.

I'm ready, willing, and able to tell that story (over and over again). Are you ready to talk about yourself? What's your mission? Are you clear? Can you tell your story like immigration lawyer [Wendy Whitt](#) tells hers?

Telling your story is essential to everything you'll do in marketing your practice. It's especially important when you're pitching your speeches to meeting planners and then presenting yourself to your event audience. Clearly defining yourself makes you memorable.

STEP TWO – **DEFINE YOUR MISSION**

**Having a clear sense of why you're doing what you're doing is the next step. What are you trying to accomplish when you speak?**

The easy answer is that you'd like more clients. Yep, that's true, but the world doesn't work that way. Wanting it isn't enough.

First, before they call you, meet you, and pay you, they've got to understand the value you deliver. You need to show them what you've got.

Your speech is a chance to prove your worth. Think of the speech as a free sample. It's a demonstration of your capabilities.

You need clarity about what you're demonstrating and how you're going to do it. That's going to be different for each lawyer, but for me, it's about walking into the room, stepping up to the podium, and leaving behind some information, inspiration, and energy. While I'm at it, I like to add some humor to the mix.

I recognize that at a Rotary Club meeting, my audience isn't showing up for me. They're coming to the meeting to see their friends and build relationships. They're worried about their lives and their businesses—not mine. In fact, they hope not to need my family law services—ever.

If I can deliver on my goal of energizing, inspiring, and informing, I'll have added some value to their day. In fact, if I can do just one of the three during my few minutes at the podium, I'll have done well.

## STEP THREE – GET MEMORABLE

**What do you need to do to be remembered after a speech? It's simple. If you want them to remember you, do two things.**

First, touch their hearts. Do it through stories. You've got about 16 minutes for your speech. That's time to open, close, and tell three short stories.

Use those three stories to make them feel something. Make them feel joy, sadness, or pride. Make them angry or hurt, or let their hearts fill with love. Make them feel something—anything: it's essential to being remembered.

If you don't use stories, you're lost. There is no way to touch hearts without stories. Craft your stories around the emotional impact you're seeking to achieve. Yes, this is challenging, but it's worth it, and you can use the same stories repeatedly for the next 30 years. Dig deep and find the stories you can tell.

STEP FOUR – **BUILD YOUR SPEECH**

The starting point is the emotion wrapped up in the story. The rest of the speech is easy. Create an introduction and a conclusion that put your three stories into the appropriate context.

The introduction is your chance to share your personal background and explain your reason for doing what you do.

The conclusion is where you pull it all together, offer more information, and mention your availability for more speeches.

Here's the structure of your speech:

- Introduction (who you are, why you're here, and what you're doing for the next 10 minutes)
- First Story
- Second Story
- Third Story
- Conclusion (how the stories relate to who you are and why you're here, how to stay in touch, and what your availability is for future speeches)
- Q&A
- Second Conclusion (have another conclusion to really wrap things up, remind them of your stories, and hit the emotions one final time; transition to it as Q&A wraps up)

Most civic groups are non-religious and non-political. Stay away from controversial topics and keep it clean. Personally, I find it hard to avoid dropping the occasional “F-bomb.” This is not the place to let one fly. You'll get a quick laugh if you do it, but you'll alienate people.

## STEP FIVE – **BOOK SOME SPEECHES**

### **You’ve got your program ready. Now it’s time to book some speeches.**

Here’s the deal—remember this—they need you more than you need them. The worst job in a civic group is program planner. Groups like Rotary need 50 speakers a year. They meet weekly. They are desperate to fill slots. The program chair is waiting for your e-mail.

Do you already know some club members? If so, and you probably do and don’t realize it yet, they are the perfect introduction to the program chairperson. Their endorsement will immediately seal the deal, and you’ll be put on the schedule.

If you don’t have a friend in the group, then e-mail a short note to the program chairperson indicating your willingness to speak. Track the groups down online and find their contact information. For Rotary, avoid May and June since new officers take over on July 1. Explain why your speech is relevant. I do one called “How to Stay Happily Married” that appeals to nearly everyone. Dream up something good that relates to your practice area. Ideally, you’ll create a sexy, juicy title that draws attention. You’ll usually get a prompt response to your e-mail pitch.

If you don’t get a satisfactory response to your e-mail, then follow up with a call. Some groups require a bit more pushing, but they all have a huge, empty calendar that needs filling. Be persistent, and you’ll get invited to every single group you target.

STEP SIX – **DO YOUR ADVANCE WORK**

**Confirm a few days in advance. Be sure everything is good to go by shooting a quick e-mail off to your program contact. Confirm the meeting location, time, date, etc. and ask who will handle your introduction.**

Prepare text for your introduction. Someone at the club is going to introduce you. It's your job to make sure this person is prepared, so e-mail the introduction in advance and bring a printed copy (in large text) with you to the event. Keep the introduction short since you're going to tell your story yourself anyway.

Check out the club website. See what it's doing as a group. Is it helping a charitable cause? Is it planning something special? Bring yourself up to date in case there's anything going on that affects your presentation.

Review the membership list. Most clubs will send you a list if you ask. Take note of who's involved. Target anyone you might like to get to know better. Use LinkedIn for background research. This should be the beginning of some new relationships. Go into the meeting with a plan for meeting the right people before you leave.

Get ready to go. Be sure you've got the meeting location and put it in your GPS. Give yourself time to get to the meeting a few minutes early, and bring the phone number of your contact with you in case you get delayed.

Memorize the pledge. Yep, some groups say the pledge of allegiance before they meet. Don't be the person who can't remember the words. Memorize it now.



## STEP SEVEN – TRAVEL LIGHT

### **Keep it simple.**

Don't overcomplicate your presentations. Avoid PowerPoint. The clubs aren't always set up with a projector, and you don't want to have to lug your own. Just tell your stories. Steve Jobs didn't need PowerPoint, and neither do you.

Get organized. Bring a printed copy of your speech notes. Bring a stack of business cards and some handouts. Any kind of handout is better than none. Shoot for a one-page "quick tips" printed piece with your contact info. A firm brochure is fine, but it's overkill for this situation. Attach a business card to the handout.

Bring some cash. These groups are invariably collecting money for one thing or another. Bring a few bucks to put in the jar. Some clubs do a "Happy Bucks" collection. Be prepared to say something you're happy about.

**You identified some key members before you walked in the door. Make sure you meet them, and go ahead and ask about lunch. Follow up with anyone else you meet as well.**

Give attendees the opportunity to sign up for your e-mail list if that's appropriate for your practice area. Hopefully, you're e-mailing some interesting legal updates they'll find useful.

Be certain to send thank you notes to anyone involved. Handwritten notes are best, but typed letters are fine as well. Hit the program chair, group chair, introducer, etc. The more notes, the better. Be sure to enclose a card.

## STEP NINE – **GET MORE SPEECHES**

**In the final moments of your speech, be sure to mention your availability for other speeches.**

I like to work it into a Q&A response so it's subtle. Most every Rotary Club meeting will have attendees visiting from other clubs. These clubs understand that they need to keep the speaker calendar full, and they'll want to share your contact info if they enjoyed your program.

Maintain a database of local groups and work your way into every single group. Once you've hit them all, it's time to start over and make the rounds again. You'll likely need a new speech with some new stories, but they'll be ready for you within a year or two. Remember, while it seems like you delivered your speech to them just yesterday to you, it's 50 to 100 Rotary Club speakers ago to them.

Finally, add a section to your website featuring information about your speaking. Get some pictures of you delivering a speech and add them to the page. List the groups where you've presented and include links to your bio, contact info, etc. Some lawyers even add video snippets of themselves speaking.

Civic groups are filled with good people. These folks buy legal services. Getting in front of them and telling your stories is a great way to start a relationship, and it nearly always results in new clients.

# DIVORCE DISCOURSE

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