

PRESIYAN VASILEV

CHAMPIONSHIP SPEECH BREAKDOWN

Speech Transcript:

The steering wheel jerked. I tried to keep the car in control. That night in Chicago, a flat tire changed me. [ST] [PD] [R3]

I pulled in the nearby gas station and under bright lights, parked on a slope leading to a busy street. [PD] [SM]

Mr. Contest Chair... Toastmasters and Guests... [R3] [SM]

Have you ever done something stupid? [Q] [R3]

I broke the first rule of changing a tire: choose a level spot. [SM]

Friends, in Chicago there aren't that many slopes. But that night, I found one! [SM]

Why do flat tires always happen when you're dressed up? [Q] [PD] [SM]

Opened the trunk, excavated the jack—unused for centuries—rusty piece of metal. I thought, "I can handle it!" [PD]

Loosened the nuts, placed the jack down. [PD] [SM]

[SOUND EFFECTS FOR JACK] [R3]

Half hour to remove the tire. The only support in front, the rusty jack. [TT] [PD]

Back at the trunk, I pulled out the spare tire, shook the entire car. I saw the car going downhill...BAM! [PD] [SM]

The jack collapsed, the car collapsed, my lungs collapsed! [PD] [R3]

An inner voice said, "You are an idiot!" Then another voice, "Reach out!"

Reach out? I can handle it! [CB]

[SOUND EFFECTS FOR JACK] [R3] [CB]

Lifted the car almost enough, BAM! [PD]

If at first you don't succeed...

[SOUND EFFECTS FOR JACK] [R3] [CB]

...almost enough. BAM!

The car had moved to a steeper slope. I grasped the gravity of the situation. [PD]

The people at the bus stop across the street were lookin' at me. I was giving a demonstration how not to change a tire. [PD] [SM]

Then that voice again, "Reach out!" [CB]

Reach out? Should I involve them? Of course not! "Ha, uh, that's not my car." [SM]

In the gas station behind the counter stood a big man with a big smile. Badge read, "Jessie." [PD]

He said, "My friend, was your car doing pushups?" I told him I did something stupid; I ask him for help, we got out, Jessie looked at the car and said, "you were right, that's stupid." [CB] [SM]

"Let me show you..."

[SOUND EFFECTS FOR JACK] [CB]

You never know who **you're gonna find when you reach out**. **I** found a DJM: **Distinguished Jack Master**. [SM]

Jessie helped **me** lift the car up. Rusty foolish hand shook rusty helping hand. **That night I** stopped to change a tire, instead the tire changed **me**. [CB] [PD] [SM]

I used to believe that to **reach out** was weakness. **I** discovered **my** weakness was refusing to **reach out**.

When **you reach out you** attract ideas that lift **you** up. When **you reach out you** attract solutions that lift **you** up. When **you reach out you** attract friendships that lift **you** up. [R3]x2 [SM]x3

Maybe **you** want a better voice. **Reach out** to a singer. Maybe **you** want better writing. **Reach out** to a writer. Maybe **you** want better **tire changing skills**. **Reach out to me**. I'll give **you Jessie's number**. [R3] [CB] [SM]

Is there something collapsed in **your** life? [Q] [CB] [SM]

Your knowledge may be limited. **Your** skills may be rusty. But no doubt, **you'll** be changed when **you reach out**. [R3] [CB] [SM]

Mr. Chair...

SPEECH STATS:

Word Count: 473

Speech Length: 6:12

Title: Changed By A Tire

Click [here](#) to watch the speech

COLOR KEY

- **Humor [H] - x 28**

This includes only parts that received genuine laughter from the audience. Laughter varies in intensity.

This speech averaged **4.52 LPMs** (Laughs Per Minute) and **16.89 WPL** (Words Per Laugh).

First laugh came at **00:28** of the speech.

Humor Note: Presiyan used a humor technique called Tag lines when making the business card joke (“*I have Jessie’s number*”). Tags are used by comedians to extract even more humor out of an already delivered joke.

Here is the example of it in use:

Main Joke: “*Maybe you want better tire changing skills. **Reach out to me.***”

Tag: “*I’ll give you Jessie’s number.*”

- **Foundational Phrase [FP] - x 13**

Foundational Phrase for this speech: “**Reach Out**”

Other notable and related phrases:

- “*...a tire changed me.*” A variation of this was used 3 times in the speech and it’s also in the title of the speech.

- The sound effect he used for the jack noise – Used 4 times.

- **“You”; “Your”; “We”; “Us”; “Our” - x 24**

I included these words that were directly aimed at the audience, dialogue excluded (character and internal). Talking *to* the audience will be more “you/your” focused. This could mean abstract ideas, “imagine this...” hypotheticals, concepts that describe how something works, etc. Those will naturally use more “you/your” words.

- **“I” or “Me” or “My” or “Myself” - x 26**

The original reason for tracking this stat was the thought that it might be useful to compare with the amount of “You” focused words. Turns out, it is. Just not in the way I originally thought.

The theory was, if this number was much greater than “You” focused words, it would show that the speaker was more “*me, me, me*” focused and not tailoring the message to the audience.

While that is a possibility, what I’ve found thus far is that it tells more about the content of the speech. More specifically, it tells us that there are personal stories being told.

**The total number counted does not include in-story character dialogue.

- **“Ladies and Gentlemen” or “My Friends” [MF] - x 3**

The speaker used “*Toastmasters*,” “*Guests*” and “*Friends*” to address the audience.

One interesting note is that in the story he also used “My friend” during some dialogue between Jessie and him. It was Jessie who asked Presiyan, “*My friend, was your car doing pushups?*” This wasn’t included in this total since it was in-story dialogue, but worth mentioning.

- **Physical Descriptions or VAKS [PD] - x 13**

Descriptive physical characteristics of people, things, and locations. The ones I included were any overt words that described the setting for where the speaker was at during the story, where the speaker wanted to take the audience, or descriptions of people in the scene.

Describing complex processes may also be included since they are intended to make it easier for the audience to imagine.

Physical in this case is what was heard, smelled, and what was seen. It also means that “*We were at my house*” is not enough—this requires specifics that are intended to paint a picture in the minds of the audience. I intentionally left out what was felt emotionally or metaphorically.

Although not included in this total, the sound effects he made when jacking up the car were very descriptive. They were visual, you heard them, and thus they painted a picture of what was going on in the scene.

- **Callbacks [CB] - x 10**

Humorous and other. It’s common for speakers to derive humor from callbacks to *something* or *someone* from the speech journey. Foundational Phrases after the first one are essentially callbacks as well.

The idea of a callback is to move on from “it” (the eventual callback) so the audience is no

longer thinking about it, and then call it back later so it's an "A HA!" moment of familiarity. For that reason, only *some* of the Foundational Phrases may be included, and some may not. Normally the Foundational Phrase (subsequent ones after the first) get counted in the Callback section, but in this speech, only the ones that had a recognizable phrase were included.

In this speech, only some of the Foundation Phrases were callbacks. Some of them were not. The ones at the end weren't necessarily Callbacks for a couple of reasons. For one, they were bunched together so the thought never really went away in order to be called back. And secondly, they felt more like part of the conversation rather than how it was first introduced during the story when he heard the voice say, "Reach out." Because of this, only some of them were counted as Callbacks.

- **Rule of Three [R3] - x 11**

The [rule of three](#) is all inclusive. Whether used for [comedic](#) effect or not.

It's common to see the Rule of Three used all at once in a single sentence such as, "*He was tall, strong, and mean.*" In this speech it was used in a variety of different ways. From asking 3 questions throughout the speech, from the jack sound effect he used that squeaked 3 times, and even from the speech beginning on 3 short sentences. He used this technique meticulously.

- **Questions [Q] - x 3**

Questions directly aimed at the audience (rhetorical or not).

The original intent of the Questions category was to include only thoughtful questions—things that made the audience reflect on their lives. However, even benign or rhetorical questions aimed at the audience can help build a connection to the speaker, just as addressing the audience as "My Friends" or "Ladies and Gentlemen" does. Because of that, those types of questions were included as well.

- **Time Transitions [TT] - x 3**

Transition words that indicated that there was a time change from the speaker's point of view. The idea is to show progression from one point in the speaker's life to another. So, if there are multiple time transitions within the same story, they may or may not be counted. These help to prepare the audience for a change in the story in order to prevent confusion.

- **Stories [ST] - x 1**

This includes all stories told throughout the entire speech. Some stories may be slightly exaggerated, but the idea is that the speaker is telling the audience a story that happened, either in their life or somebody else's. This does not include metaphorical stories, intentionally exaggerated tales or things like "Imagine you are..."

In this speech there was 1 core story about the flat tire.

- **Stage Movement [SM] - x 18**

This section covers how many times the speaker moved to a different place on the stage during the speech. Minor movements for in-story character changes (for dialogue) or for small side steps for illustrating points or addressing different parts of the audience will not be counted. I'll also keep track of anything else that's notable about the speaker's stage movements.

***Initials were put at end of sentence if multiple Color Key elements were in the same sentence.

Observations:

- **Technical Showmanship:** He used the politician's handshake when shaking the hand of the contest chair. It's intended to show warmth and sincerity to the one you're shaking hands with, but I'd say it's more of a play to the audience than anything else. The audience sees the handshake on the big screen and thinks "Awe, what a nice fellow! I like him." Or *something* like that. Don't just take my word for it, though, the [2003](#), [2005](#), [2014](#), [2016](#) and [2017](#) champions did this as well.
- **Props:** He used his suit jacket as a prop as well as a business card with Jessie's number.
- **Purposeful Line:** When he took his suit jacket off, he asked this: "Why do flat tires always happen when you're dressed up?" I've never been dressed up when this has happened and I'm not sure if it's common or not. The audience laughter was minimal so that may be an indication that it's not overly common. But besides that, I first thought that this was a throwaway line which *wasn't* necessary, but after giving it some more thought, I believe it was a good transitional line to use just before taking the jacket off. It certainly answers any possible questions that the audience may have had as to *why* he took off the jacket.
- **Language Note:** He spoke with an accent which I believe overall is helpful to engage the audience since they'll have to listen more attentively in order to understand the speaker.

Another thing, although I haven't seen any data on this, I feel there is something to a foreign accent that makes humorous lines funnier than they otherwise would have been had they been said in the native language (in this case American English). And in this speech, he also had a way of saying phrases like he was delivering a punchline even though it wasn't the punchline. [Here's](#) an

example. The line was “*I was giving a **demonstration** ...how NOT to change a tire.*” The audience laughed at “demonstration” but that wasn’t the punchline. The intended punchline was “*how NOT to change a tire*” which also received laughter (rightly so).

- **Affinity:** He made use of the affinity he had with his audience. The “D.J.M.” reference (Distinguished Jack Master) was a play on a “DTM” which in Toastmasters is a *Distinguished Toastmaster*. The good news is that it also stands on its own because it makes sense regardless of whether you know what a DTM is or not, and the way he says it gives it the aura of humor.
- **New Funniest Champion:** Presiyan had the most humor of all winners I have broken down thus far. He didn’t have the most *total* laugh moments, but overall his speech had the highest LPM and most efficient WPL (less is better). Here is a quick top 3 for the champs I’ve analyzed:
 1. Presiyan Vasilev (2013) - 28 laugh moments (4.52 LPM / 16.89 WPL)
 2. [Darren LaCroix](#) (2001) - 30 laugh moments (3.81 LPM / 32.37 WPL)
 3. [Randy Harvey](#) (2004) - 28 laugh moments (3.76 LPM / 28.89 WPL)
- **Additional NEW Milestones:** Not only did he have the most humor, he also changed the game in a couple of other places when comparing the champs. He had the SHORTEST speech time at 6:12 (previous holder for this was the 1995 Champ, [Mark Brown](#) at 6:44) and he also had the fewest words at only 473 (previous was 2018 Champ, [Ramona J. Smith](#) with 563 words). This is merely an observation and by no means does having the shortest or least amount of words make one a champion. For reference, the average word count thus far in my mission to dissect all the previous championship speeches is **803.85 words**, and the average speech time is **7:11**.
- **Self-Deprecation:** A top-tier example of how self-deprecating humor is one of the best methods of humor to use. His whole speech was self-deprecating, and he matched his facial expressions to that of a “doofus.” The audience approved.
- **Voice Effects:** The jack sound effect was an integral part of this speech. It was funny. It was unique. It was memorable.
- **Facial Expressions/Non-verbal Communication:** He used a lot of gesturing for descriptive purpose. Opened with him steering a car, getting out the jack, etc. Throughout the entire speech he used deliberate gestures and facial expressions to reinforce his words. He truly maximized this relatively short speech, and one of the ways was with his commitment to gestures and facial expressions.
- **Congruency:** When referring to Jessie as a “big man” he followed those words up by looking up toward the sky as if he were looking at a tall man. Good congruency.
- **Foundational Phrase Finale:** This speech was about as simplistically structured as you could get. And that’s a compliment. It was short but had all the ingredients. The result was a clear message. To put an exclamation point on the speech, his very last words of the speech before signaling to the Contest Chair were “*Reach out.*”
- **Foundational Gesture:** He did the same gesture when he delivered his Foundational Phrase, “Reach out.” It’s a clever way to make it more memorable.

- **Chunks:** He spoke almost entirely in small chunks. He used short sentences and even in those instances he delivered them in small pieces. Barack Obama would be a good example of someone that speaks in chunks. It's good because it's easy for the listener to keep up with the words as well as give them time to process information.
- **Pauses:** His pausing was perfectly executed, especially after his laugh lines where he avoided stepping on the audience's laughter ([here's](#) a good example showing his ability to not talk over the audience during a laugh moment).
- **Chiasmus:** He used a rhetorical device known as a Chiasmus. One famous example is JFK's "*Ask not what your country can do for you, ask you what you can do for your country*" Examples from Presiyan in this speech are: "*That night I stopped to change a tire, instead the tire changed me.*" and "*I used to believe that to reach out was weakness. I discovered my weakness was refusing to reach out.*"
- **Scene Placement:** He was conscious of where his scene was at on the stage. The placement of his suit jacket on the floor I believe was intended to be his marker so that he knew roughly what part of the car was what. This helped prevent the scenes from getting crossed up during the speech.
- **Gurus and Side Characters:**
 - **Gurus:** The "Inner voice" for solving his stubbornness to ask for help, and Jessie for solving the actual problem as well as proving the Inner voice's point.
 - **Side Characters:** Presiyan and the *people across the street* were all side characters. Side characters are part of the stories but don't directly contribute to a learning moment. This isn't a problem, just an observation. Side characters help give depth to a story.
 - A Guru is someone or something in the speech that teaches the speaker (and ultimately the audience) something meaningful. As a speaker, you don't want to be the wise Guru. You want to be the dolt who learns from the guru(s), and that's who end up teaching the audience as well. **Tip:** Self-deprecation can be an important element in allowing the guru to shine.
- **Clever Callback:** The use of Callbacks in this speech was integral. One not-so-obvious Callback was when he asked the audience a question toward the end of the speech: "*Is there something collapsed in your life?*" It was a reference to an earlier line in the speech when he said this, "*The jack collapsed, the car collapsed, my lungs collapsed!*" In fact, as he asked that question, he even referred to the spot on the stage where that story was taking place.

Using the adjective "Rusty" a couple of times at the end was a callback as well, since he used that word to describe the jack earlier in the speech. He said the following, "*Rusty foolish hand shook rusty helping hand*" and "*Your skills may be rusty...*" His speech was short and everything he said had a familiar feel, a feeling that it belonged in the speech.

- **"Lift You Up":** The use of this phrase at the end was a nice transition from when he mentioned that Jessie helped him "*lift the car up.*" Clever.
- **Word Count:** The total word count was 473 words. It did include the sound effects used for the car smashing down ("BAM") since that is a common sound effect that typically gets spelled out when written. However, the more unique sound effect of him jacking up the car was not added to the

total word count. I didn't add it simply because it's a noise. But, because it did take up the same amount of time that an audible word would have, it wouldn't be a terrible idea to get a total with it as well. So, for those extreme analytical people, if we add those noises to the total word count, it becomes 477. You happy now??

- **Walk of Victory:** After his speech [he nodded](#) his head to the audience to acknowledge their praise and gave a wave as he walked off the stage.
- **Attention To Detail:** This speech was well-crafted and had layer upon layer of, well, layers. One story, Rule of Three, 3 Questions to the audience, Foundational Phrase coupled with a Foundational Gesture, a Callback anchor (the jack noise and the subsequence phrase "*Reach out? I can handle it*"), there was a Guru, Self-deprecation, Humor, and it was short and sweet.

In case you haven't guessed it yet, this is a fantastic speech to cross reference your next speech with.

- **"You" Focused Ending:** At the end of the speech he re-focused his attention on the audience. He did this by using the word "You." His speech consisted mainly of a personal story which used "me" and "I" focused words, but then when it came down to the lesson of the story, he tailored it to the audience. 21 out of the total 24 uses of the word "You" came after the resolution of his speech (after Jessie came out and helped him jack up the car and change the tire).
- **Tie Up Loose Ends:** He began with this: "*That night in Chicago, a flat tire changed me.*"

Following his core story, he said: "*That night I stopped to change a tire, instead the tire changed me.*"

Then, his final line was another reiteration of this thought: "*Your knowledge may be limited. Your skills may be rusty. But no doubt, you'll be changed when you reach out.*"

Feedback / Criticism:

- **Too Many Chunks:** As easy as it was to follow along, I felt there weren't enough places where he spoke fluidly. It's not the worst thing since it holds attention as people wait in anticipation for his next words; however, it could become a distraction if it draws attention due to repetitiveness.
- **Thin Dialogue:** Not that this is a pre-requisite for a successful speech, and in fact, this is one of my favorite speeches, but this story consisted mainly of Presiyan's own inner-dialogue, and the dialogue between him and the only other character in the story (Jessie) felt rushed. For a good example of contrasting dialogue, check out [Randy Harvey's speech breakdown](#) (2004 Champion).

- **The Voice:** The concept of him hearing a voice saying “Reach Out” sounds like fiction. Now, us humans are pretty smart. We have the ability to form alternate realities on behalf of somebody else’s words. *“Well, maybe he meant he was thinking that it would be a good idea to ask for some help, but his stubbornness kept fighting against it?”* Yes, that sounds about right. Apart from that, the phrase “Reach Out” does not sound like something an inner thought would say, at least not mine. Maybe *“Ask someone for help”* would be more accurate. Who knows, maybe it happened exactly as he said.
- **Perfection:** Normally this is where I point out a spot in the speech where the speaker misspoke or did something that appeared to be a “mistake.” I can’t say that I caught anything of the sort. So, this is as about as perfect as you can get. What a show off!