

It all began with a simple tweet:

“What is one thing you wish you had known as a First Time WordCamp speaker?”

36+ comments later I find myself here at my desk preparing to share with you a wealth of WordCamp Speaker Wisdom.

But then as a member of the WordPress Community for over 11 years now, and asking for tips from those who love to speak, I was not all that surprised by the great response.

For many, especially the first time, speaking is downright terrifying!

In fact, I often wondered how many brilliant minds stay unseen because of this fear.

But here is the thing: You’ve got this.

The WordPress Community is an amazing place to safely dip your toe in the speaking water and see if you like it.

But you don’t have to take my word for it.

“I was so nervous my first talk, I was literally shaking. So I would say: WordPress is not cool. People who go to WordCamps are not cool. We are all a bunch of dorky nerds so don’t worry so much. It’s not TED.” ~ [Angela Bowman](#)

“Before my first talk, I was nervous. When I was emceeding WordCamp Europe, I was anxious! And then somebody told me the words that would change forever how I go on stage: “It’s the WordPress community, everybody wants you to succeed!” ~ [Carole Olinger](#)

“It’s okay to be nervous when you’re about to go up to present. You got this! You know your stuff. My dad always told me that being nervous means that you care. Mistakes will happen, but again, you’ve got this!” ~ [Nile Flores](#)

“The other speakers are so supportive! You’ll have a great time and you are NOT an imposter.” ~ [Georgia Mountford](#)

“I already knew this, but I wish I had really believed it. It’s okay to be a terrible speaker. Everyone has to start from somewhere, but over time you will get better, and it’s okay to not be the perfect speaker you aspire to be your very first time. ~ [Sophia DeRosia](#)”

“Everyone spoke the first time at some point, and we weren’t great (or we/I were terrible). But the only way to get good at something is to do it and then do it again. So just do it, and it will be fine. Also, WP peeps are so nice they’ll love you matter how it goes.” ~ [Miriam Schwab](#)

See, it’s going to be okay.

So now that I have you convinced that you want to speak, let’s see what pearls of wisdom the WordPress Community has for getting your applications accepted.

“The biggest tip I offer is for speakers to talk on a subject or area of passion whenever possible. You are always prepared. Your talk will be more organic and you’ll be less nervous as you know the material best.” ~ [Robert Nissenbaum](#)

“It’s okay to talk about something you just learned. It’s probably freshest in your mind and your slides probably have more current/updated info. I had to break out of a comfort zone to get through that.” ~ [Anthony Burchell](#)

“Look carefully through the call for speakers page to see if they have any topic suggestions. If the organizers are telling you what they’re looking for, you should definitely use that to your advantage when pitching a talk. This is how I became a WCUS speaker.” ~ [Maddy Osman](#)

“Submit multiple talk ideas. You’ll have a better chance of getting selected if the organizers can choose what fits the lineup.” ~ [Sara Dunn](#)

“You don’t have to write a new talk for every WordCamp. You can recycle a talk by adjusting and perfecting them.” ~ [Rian Rietveld](#)

Congratulations! You’ve been accepted. Now what?

Well, time to write that talk. Here are some tips on preparing for the big day.

“Just because “everybody does it” doesn’t mean preparing your slides the night before is a good idea. Build them early. Revise them several times, and if you’re a visiting speaker, cater them to the city you’re visiting, using local resources.” ~ [Adam Soucie](#)

“I wish I had known how important my slide visuals were. My first WordCamp talk (in 2016) had crappy slides.” ~ [Miriam Goldman](#)

“I’d be such a mess if my slides weren’t finished at least a week before a talk. You can’t really practice if you don’t have all the pieces in place!” ~ [Maddy Orsman](#)

“Give your talk out loud before your presentation. Even if it’s just for your pet. Greatly helps with finding a good cadence, and catching mistakes / repetitive information.” ~ [Ryan Kanner](#)

“Cadence was the biggest thing for me. Understanding that I needed to slow down so people could understand, people can transcribe. Forces you to focus on the quality of your words.” ~ [Victor Santoyo](#)

“A great way to add more notes to your slides is duplicating your slide, several times if needed. Won’t work for dynamic slides. Learned that from [@zetaraffix](#)” ~ [Yvette Sonneveld](#)

“Give your attendees something to take away with them for later when they’re back in front of their computer— tweets, slides, a google doc, whatever.” ~ [Pattie Reaves](#)

Time to rock your talk.

Here are a few tips to ensure a smooth delivery.

“How the timing works!! When the moderator gives you the 10 and 5 minute mark, is that before the separate Q&A time OR from the entire allotment?” ~ [Rene Morozowich](#)

“Before making a public presentation, I never miss looking twice at [Ted’s Talk](#) of [@juliantreasure](#)” ~ [Cyrille Sanson](#)

“Look at a familiar face in the crowd and speak to them. Look sideways at times but keep that person in mind.” ~ [Laurence Uchiha](#)

“Add some questions for your audience so they can participate.” ~ [Claire Brotherton](#)

“People are encouraged to walk out of a talk if they discover it’s not suited to them. Don’t take this personally. If your talk really isn’t for them then they need to not waste that time wishing they were in another talk.” ~ [topher1kenobe](#)

“If speaking wear an outfit that will work with a mic pack” ~ [Dan Beil](#)

And a few more WordCamp tips

“That you’ll get a free ticket to the camp, and usually a speakers’ dinner/event the night before. The first WordCamp I spoke at, I literally had no idea about either.” ~ [Tracy F. Rotton](#)

“Don’t ever try to speak at and organize a camp especially if you’re new to both.” ~ [Lisa Melegari](#)

So how are you feeling?

Speaking at a WordCamp seeming a bit less intimidating?

I hope so. If nothing else, this wisdom-filled post has shown you just how friendly and dedicated to your success the WordCamp Community is.

Now go start submitting those WordCamp Applications!

And if you have any questions at all I encourage you to [join the conversation](#) or [reach out to me directly](#).

PS: Attending a WordCamp soon?

- Check out my [Tips for Avoiding Conference “Flu”](#)



Additional Post on Speaking at WordCamps

- [Resources for new and veteran WordCamp speakers](#)
- [MyCamp.Rocks](#)
- [What To Expect When Giving Your First WordCamp Talk](#)
- [A First Time Speaker's Experience At WordCamp London 2016](#)

BTW - Here is my 1st EVER WordCamp talk