

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

YOU ARE PREPARING FOR A SPEECH, WHOSE APPROVAL ARE YOU SEEKING?

That's a strong, philosophical question—very apt for a speech. Here are a few ways to frame it, depending on the direction and tone you want:

Core idea

When we prepare a speech, we often think we're seeking *the audience's* approval—but more often, we're negotiating between several judges.

Possible “approvals” we seek

- 1. The audience's approval**
We want to be liked, understood, applauded, or at least not rejected. This can lead us to soften ideas, simplify truths, or perform rather than speak.
- 2. Authority's approval**
An institution, tradition, employer, church, school, or culture may silently shape what is “acceptable.” Even when no one is watching, internalised rules are.
- 3. Peer approval**
Colleagues, friends, or our imagined equals: *Will they think I'm naïve? Too radical? Too safe?* This often polices tone more than content.
- 4. Our own approval**
The most uncomfortable judge. After the applause fades, can we live with what we said—or what we avoided saying?
- 5. The truth's approval**
Not approval in the emotional sense, but alignment. Did the speech serve the truth as we understand it, or merely convenience?

A strong pivot line you could use

“Every speech is a negotiation. The question is not *whether* we seek approval, but *whose* approval we value most.”

A closing challenge

You might end by turning it back on the audience:

“If we speak only for approval, we may be praised and still be silent. But if we speak for truth and conscience, approval—if it comes at all—arrives as a consequence, not a goal.”

What think you?

Source: ChatGPT