

# ENGLISH SPEECHES

## WITH BIG SUBTITLES



## JENNIFER ANISTON

### FIND YOUR VOICE

<https://youtu.be/dKe3WbGR7Xs>

Thank you Awkwafina, for taking that beautiful bullet for all of us, and thank God I wrote my speech down. Hi! Ellen, we got to keep the best friend stuff going on the deal okay, because a lot of my best friends are here.

Okay, I mean, you would think after 30 years of being in this industry, getting up here would be easy, and it's not. It's terrifying. It's not that often we're surrounded by people who found their voice and are using it, and using it to hold people up and bring people together and that to me is true power.

I mean, it's funny because I've never, you know, I've never actually thought about myself as powerful. I mean, strong? Yes, but powerful, not mm-hmm. It's a distinction I've actually been thinking a lot about lately because the word power and its counterpart, abuse of power keep coming up in light of what is happening in our country and in our industry, a rebalancing of the scales, I guess you could say. I've been thinking about my own relationship with that word, with the word power, which got me thinking about my early associations, from my early associations with my own sense of power. It is something I believe comes from using our voice. And I remembered a parental figure saying to me around the rather critical age of about 11. After a dinner party that I was excused from the table because I didn't have anything interesting to add to the conversation.

Ouch, and it's stuck with me like painfully worded sentences can, and if I'm being honest, and I'm being honest because I'm 58 and, you know, that comes with the territory. That's right, so I carried that sentence with me into adulthood. I always felt incredibly comfortable giving you know a voice to the words of others but put me at a dinner table with strangers or at a podium like this, and I go right back to being 11 years old.

The last two years have made me think a lot about the messages that we send young kids, little girls, especially how the things that we say and do can either build them up, or it can tear them down and make them feel like maybe their voices don't matter. And it wasn't until Friends took off that I started seeing myself in a different light. I started meeting all of these people who expressed to me how much the show meant to them, how it lifted their spirits during a bad breakup or got them through an illness,

and I was just so incredibly moved by that. I began to change the way I thought about my own voice and what it meant to have a platform to use it. Still no prompter.

And then enter Marlo Thomas. Marlo Thomas, as some of you might remember, she was my mama on friends, and I remember one day we were on set, and she said to me I'm going to this St. Jude Gala tonight would you like to be my date. I said yeah, I'd love to be your date and go to that so there we are at this big elaborate gala there's tuxes and gowns and tiny little food on toothpicks that you can't eat in any dignified manner.

I sat down at the table, and they started to roll this tape of the hospital, and I sat there watching it moved to tears, and that was it for me. I wanted to be a part of this extraordinary organization, and that was 25 years ago. I am very honored to be a part of St. Jude, and I've been in love with him ever since.

And right around this time every fall, we shoot the PSA for a holiday PSA, and I get to spend a day with a family of St. Jude, and I always say it's the best day of the year and the hardest day of the year, and a few years back, I met a little girl named Sawyer, who I still think about to this day. She was seven at the time, and I remember she had this little pink dress on in these big angelic eyeballs. The chemo had taken all of her hair. She had these tiny little tumors on her body that she called her bumps, her alleys. She just sat on my lap and smiling and cuddling with me the whole time as we ran through the script again and again and again. After hearing this word, at the end of the day, after hearing the word repeated over and over again, she looked up at me with this, those big blue eyeballs, and she asked me what is cancer?

I just looked at her, and I was like, "Oh god, I'm not equipped to answer this question: birds and the bees." Oh, you're too young for that, but so I never... sorry, but seriously I never forgot about that moment here was this little girl who was fighting this deadly disease every single day. She didn't even know what the word was for it, and it was just part of her reality. She was just making the absolute best of it, and that's what's unbelievable about these children despite everything that they are up against and as much pain as they are often in they are vibrant, they're joyful they are fearless, and that's part of the magic of St. Jude and why I'm so honored to support their work because they are giving children the best care on the planet so that they can reclaim their childhood so that they can find their little inner superhero. They're doing it at no cost so that the families can focus on their little ones live without worrying about crippling hospital bills and their pioneering treatment cutting-edge treatments that will soon one day find a cure.

And that is what every child deserves to know that they are seen, they are powerful, and they are loved and that they deserve a seat at the table and that anything they have to say or any question they have to ask is of value even if we don't have all the answers for it. So, thank you very much for recognizing the work of this remarkable organization and for celebrating the power in each and every one of us.

Thank you.

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