



Sandi Toksvig

AUTHOR · TED SPEAKER

Gender representation at senior levels has barely shifted in a decade, despite most organisations having the data, the stated commitments, and the formal policies. The problem is not information. It is that the conversations designed to move the needle rarely do, because they lack the wit, moral authority, and conviction to make resistance feel untenable rather than defensible. The distance between formal agreement and actual cultural change is closed not by reports but by how the argument is held in a room.

Where organisational commitments to gender equity stall at the level of policy rather than practice, Sandi Toksvig, broadcaster, author, and co-founder of the UK Women's Equality Party, brings the moral authority and rhetorical precision to make the argument move in a room.

Sandi Toksvig's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Sandi Toksvig

- She did not simply comment on gender equity: in 2015 she resigned one of the most prominent chairs in British broadcasting to co-found a political party around it. That choice gives her a credibility in the room that no consultant or commentator can acquire.
- Forty years in live, contested broadcast formats, chairing political satire, hosting mass-audience television, moderating fast-moving intellectual debate, represent a specific and rare capability: keeping a complex, high-stakes conversation moving with precision and warmth.
- Her TED Talk on structural gender representation and her play *Bully Boy* (Nuffield Theatre; West End, 2012), which examines moral ambiguity and institutional culture, demonstrate that her engagement with social complexity goes well beyond commentary.
- As President of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and a Cambridge-educated author of 20-plus books across fiction, non-fiction, and drama, she brings genuine intellectual depth to conversations about communication, culture, and representation, not just platform authority.
- She has held the room at every level, from broadcast audiences of millions to TED stages, making serious arguments about inclusion, accountability, and change both rigorous and accessible to a leadership audience.

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Awards Hosting
- Entertainment
- Guest Appearance
- Moderating and Emcee
- TV and Media

SANDI'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Creativity
- Cultural Intelligence
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Inclusive Leadership
- Political Risk & Policy
- Storytelling & Business Communication

LANGUAGES: English

Biography highlights

- First-class degree in archaeology and anthropology, Girton College,

Cambridge; received two academic prizes; performed in the first all-woman Cambridge Footlights show, alongside Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, and Emma Thompson

- Co-founder, Women's Equality Party (2015), with journalist Catherine Mayer; left BBC Radio 4's *The News Quiz* – a role she held for ten years – specifically to do so; covered by the *New York Times*; TED Talk on gender representation and political mobilisation
- Host, BBC Two's *QI* (from 2016, succeeding Stephen Fry); co-presenter, Channel 4's *The Great British Bake Off* (2017-2020); chair, BBC Radio 4's *The News Quiz* (2006-2015)
- Playwright: *Bully Boy* premiered at Nuffield Theatre, Southampton (2011); transferred to launch the debut West End season of St James Theatre, London (2012) – the first new West End theatre in 30 years
- OBE for services to broadcasting (2014 New Year Honours); Chancellor, University of Portsmouth; Honorary Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge
- President, Writers' Guild of Great Britain (from 2019); author of more than twenty books for adults and children

Biography

The gap between organisations that declare commitment to gender equity and those that actually change their leadership pipelines is well documented. Sandi Toksvig entered this conversation at measurable personal cost – resigning as chair of BBC Radio 4's *The News Quiz* in 2015 to co-found the Women's Equality Party with journalist Catherine Mayer. A TED Talk on gender representation and political mobilisation followed. The decision established Toksvig's standing not as a commentator on inclusion but as someone who had tested her convictions against institutional consequence.

Her broadcast career provides a different order of evidence. Four decades in live, contested formats – hosting BBC Two's *QI*, co-presenting Channel 4's *The Great British Bake Off*, chairing political satire on Radio 4 – demonstrate a specific capability: keeping complex, high-stakes conversation moving with precision, wit, and authority. She holds a first-class degree from Girton College, Cambridge, where she also performed in the first all-woman Cambridge Footlights show.

Her range extends beyond broadcasting. As a playwright, her *Bully Boy* – a work on moral ambiguity, institutional authority, and the human cost of political decision-making – premiered at the Nuffield Theatre and transferred to launch St James Theatre's debut West End season. She has served as President of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth, and has published more than twenty books across fiction, non-fiction, and children's literature.

For organisations working to close the distance between stated values and visible change on inclusion and representation, Toksvig brings something precise: four decades of live broadcast authority, the civic credibility of having acted on her convictions, and the capacity to hold a difficult room without losing it.

Key speaking topics

- Gender equity and leadership representation
- Storytelling and political communication
- Cultural intelligence and cross-cultural perspective
- Civic activism and democratic accountability

- Satire, comedy, and public discourse
- Inclusive organisational culture
- Writing, publishing, and creative practice

Ideal for

- CHROs and People & Culture leaders hosting executive summits or leadership conferences on inclusion, representation, and cultural change
- Boards and senior leadership teams working to move DEI commitments from policy to practice
- Awards ceremonies, after-dinner engagements, and conference programmes requiring an anchor voice combining intellectual authority with wit
- Professional associations in media, publishing, law, or higher education seeking a credible voice on representation, communication, and civic responsibility

Audience outcomes

- A clear frame for why gender equity stalls despite broad agreement – and what it takes to make the argument land in a room
- Understanding of how communication style and conviction, not data alone, drive cultural change in organisations
- Perspective on the relationship between satire, public discourse, and institutional accountability
- A model of what sustained, costly commitment to inclusion looks like – beyond declarations and frameworks
- Confidence in approaching contested conversations about representation with authority and without defensiveness

Sandi Toksvig's Videos



What Sandi Toksvig's clients say

Testimonial for Valentine Grey: Toksvig's warm characterisation drives the narrative, especially when set against her droll yet richly detailed evocation of an unedifying period of modern history. It's a novel not just about the Boer War, but about a more subtle war against people who used to think it acceptable to treat women and blacks and gays abysmally. Fighting on both fronts is Toksvig's shining creation, Valentine Grey, a courageous and captivating character just begging for a sequel.

Lucy Beresford

Sunday Telegraph

Testimonial for Valentine Grey: Toksvig's seemingly effortless ability to entertain shines through Lucy Scholes.

The Independent