

TOASTMASTER®

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JANUARY 2012

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RECLAIMS HER VOICE**

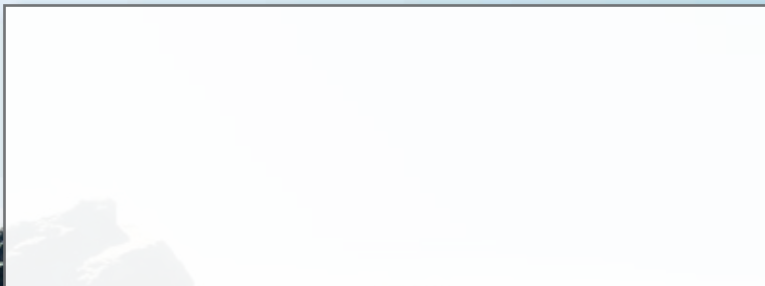
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SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TOASTMASTERS



Aristotle once said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Habits are a part of life. What begins as a simple choice is repeated day after day, month after month and year after year. Over time, our habits — whether good or bad — shape our destiny. To begin 2012, I offer you seven habits of highly effective Toastmasters!

- ▶ **Be early.** Great things happen when you are early for a Toastmasters meeting. You can greet a guest, finalize the agenda, hand your manual to your evaluator or help with room preparations. Best of all, you will be relaxed and seated when the meeting starts.
- ▶ **Be prepared.** Preparation is vital to a successful Toastmasters meeting. Prior preparation prevents poor performance. When things are done at the last minute, or not done at all, the meeting quality suffers and members stay home.
- ▶ **Be positive.** Attitude is contagious. Members join to learn, grow and have fun! Project a positive attitude of fun and enjoyment. Encourage new members to sign up for speaking and leadership roles early and often.
- ▶ **Be supportive.** When members show interest and support each other, everyone succeeds. Encouragement is like a mental vitamin, and it begins with you. Nurture a supportive, encouraging club culture and watch your club thrive.
- ▶ **Be courteous.** Toastmasters is a people business and all people have feelings. Some members are sensitive, while others are thick-skinned, but all expect courteous treatment. Say "thank you" and "please," and apologize when appropriate. Treat your clubmates kindly and watch them reciprocate.
- ▶ **Be a goal-setter.** Effective Toastmasters stretch themselves and encourage others to stretch, as well. If you are new, reach for your Competent Communicator award. If you have a CC, reach for CL, AC or DTM awards. If you have a DTM, earn another one (like I did). You will grow, and others will catch the excitement and grow along with you.

▶ **Be ready for anything!** Toastmasters is a learning experience and anything can happen at any time — from fire alarms to power outages to speaker no-shows. Be flexible and seize your opportunity to grow. If a prepared speaker cancels at the last minute, try a five- to seven-minute impromptu speech. You might be surprised at how well you do, and you may inspire your clubmates. **T**

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WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their *competence* in communication so they can gain the *confidence* to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback — and accept it. They find their path to leadership.

Toastmasters International. Where Leaders Are Made.



"I have been a Toastmaster for several years and this is the best issue of the magazine I have seen."

— Al Wilmer, ACB

Audience **Connection**

I was very pleased to see the article "The Strategies of Silence" (October) because it reminded me of the most prescient comment on the power of the pause I have ever seen, which appeared in the article "The Glory of the Story," published in the *Toastmaster* in March 2010. Professional speaker and storyteller Lou Heckler was quoted as saying:

The main reason I love to use pauses is that they turn the monologue of the speech into a dialogue with the audience ... While the audience is not really speaking, the pause allows them time to consider what's going on in the story and makes them guess what comes next. Right or wrong, they've had a feeling of being on stage with you and it really links them to the rest of the presentation.

As Toastmasters, we are keenly aware that the success of a speech is strongly influenced by our ability to connect with the audience. Inducing them to virtually join you on the podium — how much more connected could you possibly get?

Philip Yaffe, ACB, CL
Claddagh Toastmasters
Brussels, Belgium

Picture This

You've asked for feedback on the new look of the *Toastmaster* magazine. I find the contents of the September issue of a very high standard, with the articles covering a range of topics that show how Toastmasters is a global organization.

There are also some lovely photos of real people in action. Why not put them on the front cover? As you're asking readers to meet International President Michael Notaro, it would be great to see him on the front cover. Scott Plowman or Sumitra Manamohan would have also made great covers. The articles on them were really interesting too, and I am looking forward to more articles like these.

Denise Stephens, ATMS, CL
Capital Breakfast Toastmasters
Wellington, New Zealand

Cheers to More Success!

What a clever, relevant column by Michael Notaro, "Build a Better Brand" (September)! I have been a Toastmaster for several years and this is the best issue of the magazine I have seen. I could not put it down until I literally read it from cover to cover — all interesting and illuminating articles. Congratulations! May there be many more such successes!

Al Wilmer, ACB
Valley Easy Speakers
Roanoke, Virginia

Uplifting 'Elevator' Article

Thank you for Christine Clapp's excellent article "The Elevator Speech" (October). I am a longtime Toastmaster and the host of Branch Out, a weekly networking meeting for the Chamber of Commerce in Farmers Branch, Texas; a number of our members belong to local Toastmasters clubs. At each weekly meeting, chamber members give

"commercials" about their business or organization, and I stress the importance of getting their messages out in less than two minutes.

Ms. Clapp's article promotes the benefits of Toastmasters and offers exceptional advice on how to give an elevator speech.

Richard Brown, DTM
Metrocrest Toastmasters
Addison, Texas

Marketing During Silly Season

As a former journalist, I enjoyed and agree with Jeff Crilley's excellent article "Marketing Without Money" (October). For VPPRs in Ireland and the United Kingdom, it's worth adding that the "silly season" in August, when local authority meetings and courts are in recess, is an excellent opportunity to fill the pages of your local paper with Toastmasters articles and photographs.

Develop a good working relationship with a journalist at your local newspaper or radio and TV stations, and don't forget to say thank-you when your news item or interview is published or broadcast. It will make you stand out from other correspondents, and make your job easier in the future!

Christina Hession, CC, CL
Phoenix-Tara Toastmasters
Dunboyne, County Meath, Ireland

Bravo, Julie!

Thank you to Julie Bawden-Davis for the extraordinary article she wrote about David Cruz ("Bilingual Broadcaster Lends Powerful Voice," October). The photo is most impressive and every word of the article held my interest. Thank you, Julie, for capturing the essence of David Cruz's life work.

Gloria Davidson, ACG, ALB
Los Amigos Club
Oxnard, California

THE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

Pushing the limits of body and mind.

By Hari Kalymnios

I've been told I talk a lot, so what better place to take advantage of that trait than in Toastmasters? Following visits to different clubs, I attended a meeting of the Bloomsbury Speakers, in London, England. Impressed with the enthusiasm, skills and warmth displayed by members of this year-old club, I immediately signed up.

"In June 2011, I undertook a challenge to hike the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales within a 24-hour period."

I wanted to improve my speaking skills because I realized they are crucial in so many areas: giving business presentations, running meetings, performing well in interviews, pitching ideas and communicating effectively in my personal life.

Toastmasters helps me run my business, The Thought Gym, where I help others achieve their weight management goals using psychology, not just physiology. I deliver presentations about my business and talk about it at networking events; Toastmasters gives me abundant opportunities to practice so I can gain confidence.

I decided to spread the word about Toastmasters during a recent adventure. In June 2011, I undertook a challenge to hike the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales within a 24-hour period. The aptly named Three Peaks Challenge is well-known

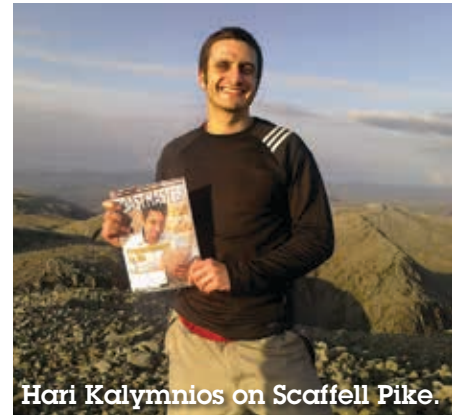
in the United Kingdom (UK). In addition to hiking the peaks, we also had to get between them by driving on the UK's congested motorways!

Our challenge started at 6:15 a.m. on a Friday. After little sleep the night before, we stood at the base of Ben Nevis in Scotland; at 1,344 meters (4,409 feet) it is the highest mountain in the British Isles. Luckily we were

greeted with glorious weather, which helped with visibility as we climbed by sheer drops near the summit. The whole team made it up and down the peak in five hours, and with no time to spare — even for a bit of soup — we jumped into the van and began the six-and-a-half-hour journey toward Scafell Pike in northwestern England.

Setting off for the 978-meter (3,209-foot) summit around 6 p.m., we wanted to make it up and down before sunset, because Scafell Pike is notorious for sending people wayward. Fatigue had set in by this stage, and with injuries plaguing the team, we missed our four-hour target but still managed to be on the road to Snowdon by 10:30 p.m.

With some efficient driving by our designated driver, and some attempted shut-eye, we reached the base of Snowdon in North Wales at



Hari Kalymnios on Scafell Pike.

2:30 a.m. At 1,085 meters (3,560 feet), Snowdon is the easiest of the three peaks, but we would be worn out, sleep-deprived and climbing in the dark. The target was to reach the summit in less than two hours, which would give us an hour and a half to descend.

After an hour, it became evident that despite my efforts to keep the team together, we had to split up in order to allow some of us to complete the challenge in time. Four of us set off to reach the summit and we managed to make it back to the foot of Snowdon within the 24-hour deadline — with 30 minutes to spare! All in all, we had traveled 765 kilometers (475 miles) and climbed 42 kilometers (26 miles) up and down three mountains.

Completing the Three Peaks Challenge was a difficult and hugely rewarding experience that tested me in new ways, much like Toastmasters has. Because of my passion for Toastmasters and how it has aided my personal development, I took the *Toastmaster* magazine with me on this mountain-climbing journey. When I asked my teammates to photograph me with it, they all expressed interest in joining and have since attended my club meetings. 📍

Hari Kalymnios is vice president membership for the Bloomsbury Speakers Toastmasters in London, England. Contact him at info@thethoughtgym.com.

AROUND THE GLOBE

▶ INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

A RESPECTFUL INDIAN GREETING



The traditional Indian greeting and parting gesture is the *namaste* [nuhm-uh-stey], which literally means “I bow to you.” This peaceful expression can be accompanied by a bowing gesture and is appropriate for individuals or large meetings. Namaste is useful for foreigners in any situation where a handshake might not be acceptable.

To perform the namaste, press together the palms of your hands (as if praying) below the chin, near the heart and gently nod or bow slightly while saying “namaste.” This can be a formal or an informal greeting to anyone, regardless of age. In India, this gesture is often done without actually saying the word — it still symbolizes the same respect and gratitude.

▶ SNAPSHOT

Enjoying a meal in Penang, Malaysia, are: Kadijah, Kong Hooi Li, CC, CL; Koh Kai Hong, CC; Seah Yeow Ngee, CC, ALB; Evelyn Chuah, ACB; Lam Wooi Fun, CC; and Angie Ng.



▶ WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN... YOU ARE MOTIVATING YOUR TEAM?

Toastmasters from Assiniboine Club, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, respond:

“Great job everyone! By working together and demonstrating respect and appreciation for each other, we will be stronger and our results will far exceed expectations. Let’s keep moving forward to achieve our goals and if there is anything you need from me, do not hesitate to ask. I am here to help you, and our team, succeed!”

— **GISÈLE MARKS, CLUB PRESIDENT, CC**

“As a leader you are to empower your members by taking away uncertainty. Enable them to meet their goals by leading through example.” — **YVONNE HALDEN, CC, CL**

“I still encourage members to dare to accept fight over flight. I also encourage them to accept responsibility by seeking higher goals within the club, their workplaces and the community. I thank my dedicated Toastmasters members who helped me through my earlier years.” — **BOB TAYLOR, DTM**

Congratulations to Assiniboine Club on its 65-year anniversary!

BOTTOM LINE

Last Call for Presenters

Dynamic speakers are invited to present an education session at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention. Apply by January 30 at www.toastmasters.org/CallforPresenters.

Corporate Sponsors

Toastmasters is the answer to your organization’s communication and leadership needs! Find out how to bring Toastmasters to your workplace at www.toastmasters.org/CorpSponsors.

Looking Back

The advanced communication and leadership manuals were first introduced 33 years ago. See the updated Toastmasters timeline at www.toastmasters.org/Timeline for the organization’s milestones.

► COMMUNICATION TIP

LISTENING TAKES PRACTICE

Traditionally, listening has been viewed as a passive activity. In reality, listening well takes focus, patience and practice — often requiring more mental effort than speaking. Improve your listening with these tips:

- **WATCH A PERSON'S BODY LANGUAGE.** Unspoken cues can say more than words.
- **MAKE EYE CONTACT.** This indicates you are paying attention and decreases external distractions.
- **DON'T INTERRUPT.** Period.
- **LISTEN TO EVERY. LAST. WORD.** Focus on what the speaker is saying. Planning what you will say once the speaker stops talking is not listening.
- **PAUSE TO PROCESS.** Take a moment to absorb what you just heard and formulate an appropriate response. Just like in a superior speech, pauses are a great addition to every conversation.
- **ASK QUESTIONS.** Clarify information you are unsure about and show the speaker support. You will be surprised at what you can learn if you are truly listening.

MEMBER MOMENT

“SEOUL TOASTMASTERS ROCKS!”

Erika Kim lives in Seoul, Korea, and enjoys the 600-year-old city's combination of rich history and contemporary culture — including conveniences such as one of the world's best subway systems. Kim works at an asset management company where she oversees web-site content and regularly provides industry updates to employees and clients.



Where have you traveled?

To the U.S., Australia, Japan, Taiwan and Thailand, and I spent one year studying abroad at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. It is my most memorable period: I made close friends and took part in extracurricular activities such as English drama performances and Toastmasters meetings [with Lingnan University Toastmasters].

What did you do after college?

After returning from Hong Kong, I wanted to deliver speeches and continue meeting new people — so I joined Seoul Toastmasters. Although most members attend meetings after work, they are full of energy and passion. I'm the youngest member in my club, so I get much advice.

As the youngest member, why did you take on Toastmasters leadership roles?

I was impressed by how the club officers are dedicated to helping members in a spirit of sharing and enjoyment. I wanted to take part in my club's fundamental matters, so I became club treasurer to take care of our budget and ensure every meeting and outing runs smoothly.

In August, Seoul Toastmasters celebrated its 10th anniversary. I wish our club runs successfully forever. Seoul Toastmasters rocks!

Reach Erika Kim at eekyung85@gmail.com.

Traveling Toastmaster on Facebook!

Traveling Toastmaster pictures are available for comments and “liking” at [facebook.com/ToastmastersInternational](https://www.facebook.com/ToastmastersInternational) Official FanPage. New photos will be posted monthly, so check back often!

Watch Videos

Views on the Toastmasters YouTube channel increased 205% since January 2011.



2011 Article Index

Looking for an article from a past *Toastmaster* magazine? The 2011 article index, now available at www.toastmasters.org/ArticleIndex, will make your search easy.



CAREER BOOST!

Membership benefits lead to professional opportunities.

By Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM

Are you maximizing your Toastmasters experience? Are you helping other members recognize and experience all the benefits they can enjoy from Toastmasters? Do you promote the full range of benefits when advertising your club or talking with guests?

The Toastmasters experience can be one of your best career development tools, but all too often people fail to recognize or promote this fact.

“The ability to work with diverse people is one’s passport to success.” – Thomas Halasz

This year, establish a goal for yourself or your club to take full advantage of what Toastmasters has to offer. You will soon see the results in your professional and personal life.

Developing and Demonstrating Skills

Public Speaking and Leadership

For most of us, Toastmasters is a way to strengthen our public speaking and leadership skills. That is an obvious benefit from membership in our organization and one that clubs successfully publicize. But most people miss the next step when talking about Toastmasters: We are also *demonstrating* our speaking and leadership skills. That makes an important difference when you are in-

terviewing for a job, networking for other potential opportunities or even talking with your supervisor about your professional development and accomplishments. Toastmasters helps members develop *and* demonstrate the key skills valued by employers throughout the world.

Matt Peterworth knows firsthand the dramatic impact of Toastmasters on his career path. He recalls being terrified of public speaking when

he joined as a college student at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. As a former member of the university’s Powercat Masters Toastmasters, Peterworth says he was constantly tripping up on filler words. “I was averaging an ‘ah’ or ‘um’ every six seconds.”

But he practiced, persisted and improved. After graduating from Kansas State, he volunteered to speak at national conferences related to his field of interest: the information technology systems industry. Eventually Peterworth spoke in front of audiences as large as 1,500 people. All that experience paid off. He is now project manager for information technology services at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin, Texas.

“I recently learned that when my current boss considered hiring me, he saw that I had spoken at these conferences, which helped distinguish me from the candidates,” says Peterworth, now a member of the UT Staff Toastmasters. “Had I not been a part of Toastmasters in college, I would not have challenged myself to be the public speaker that I am today. And I might not have my dream job.”

Volunteer Activities Offer High Value

People who wish to change careers or re-enter the workforce often obtain their most relevant skills, experiences and accomplishments from their volunteer activities. For example, would you like to gain supervisory experience but haven’t had the opportunity? You could lead a team by serving as president of your Toastmasters club or by chairing a speech contest committee. A volunteer group like Toastmasters is ideal for adding skills and accomplishments to your portfolio.

Initiative

Toastmasters is also a great way to show that you take initiative and are willing to work on your skills on your own time. Even if your club meets during work hours and your company supports your membership, you work on other Toastmasters activities outside of work hours such as developing and practicing your speeches and executing leadership activities. Whether you describe people with

this characteristic as “self-starters,” “exhibiting drive” or having “self-reliance,” employers value people who have ideas, are resourceful and make things happen. “Employers tell me frequently that they hire individuals who can demonstrate that they possess initiative,” says Thomas Halasz, career center director at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina.

Ability to Lead or Work on Teams

Very few people work in isolation. Most jobs require you to work with others and some even involve a group or committee format. “Teamwork — that’s how things get done,” says Linda Pfaff, career services coordinator at Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, in Cleveland, Ohio.

“Networking is not enough in today’s competitive market — you also have to nurture and maintain your connections.” — Marja Harmer

Toastmasters provides ample experience to lead and work on teams. You can hone leadership and teamwork skills through club-officer positions — there are seven of them — and additional opportunities exist at the area, division, district and even international levels. Speech contests, special committees and other roles from the club to the district level also allow you to demonstrate your skills.

And don’t forget, as Toastmaster of the day, you also lead a team to achieve the mission of the education program. As general evaluator, you lead the evaluation team. Each meeting offers different teams and new challenges to achieve a successful meeting.

Working with Diverse People

Most Toastmasters clubs are open to anyone, which exposes you to a range of people. That, too, enriches the

Toastmasters experience. Even if you belong to a corporate or closed club, you can still interact with people unlike yourself, whether in background, job title, experience, age or other areas. In today’s global economy, it is even more important that we be able to work and communicate cross-culturally.

“The ability to work with diverse people is one’s passport to success,” says Halasz. “Without that ability, individuals are relegated to an ever-shrinking world of opportunities.”

Build and Use Your Network

For many people, the idea of networking is intimidating or negative. Too often, people think of it as a superficial interaction that is about one person who wants something from another person. But true networking

is not about that — it is about connecting with and helping people.

Whether you are a member of an open or closed club, Toastmasters expands your network. You have shared experiences and common ground with more than 270,000 people in 116 countries. There aren’t many activities that offer that kind of connection.

It is not just about building your network, though. Marja Harmer, manager, MBA career programs at the Sauder School of Business, Vancouver, Canada, says, “Networking is not enough in today’s competitive market — you also have to nurture and maintain your connections.”

This means changing your perspective of networking from something that only benefits you to something that is a two-way relationship geared to the long term.

Harmer says, “Nurturing your network requires three steps:

- ▶ Demonstrating integrity and trust.
- ▶ Keeping in touch and sharing your updates even when your career path changes.
- ▶ Adding value to your network (giving referrals, sharing knowledge and links or even ‘liking’ somebody’s blog).”

Many people are familiar with Toastmasters clubs’ safe, supportive atmosphere where they can develop and test speaking and leadership skills. Clubs also offer a similar environment to connect with people — but the network doesn’t stop at the club level. Clubs are part of areas, which are part of divisions, which are part of districts. Participate in or attend contests and conferences. Volunteer at events or for leadership roles. Start with that common ground to build your network and make real connections with people.

Practice Quick Responses

During business meetings, job interviews or classes, you are often asked to provide an articulate answer on the spot or reply to a question you were not expecting.

Toastmasters meetings are an excellent venue to fine-tune your ability to think on your feet. Table Topics, for example, is a great opportunity to gain experience in this area. Just like any other type of speech, you will improve with practice.

“In the world of work — and outside work for that matter — supervisors, peers, clients, classmates and other individuals are subconsciously forming impressions,” notes Amanda Dumsch, director of career and alumni services for the Georgetown Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. “People are constantly forming new opinions based on new interactions. So, even if you have succeeded in landing your

RESUME TIPS

By Jennifer Blanck, DTM

dream job, you will need to continue proving yourself as a go-to resource deserving of your dream opportunity. Thinking on your feet is more than articulating well in the moment; you have to prepare for that moment.”

The evaluator role is also particularly relevant in helping you speak clearly on moments’ notice. As an evaluator, you don’t have much time to think through a response to a speaker, and yet your speech has serious implications — you are helping to support and challenge another person.

Market the Benefits for Recruiting

Even if *you* understand all the benefits you are reaping from your membership, other current or prospective members might not. People make decisions based on how the results will benefit them. When marketing your club and recruiting new members, be sure to communicate the full range of opportunities and benefits available. That way, you have a better chance to address each person’s WIIFM (What’s In It For Me?). It is much easier to get guests in the door, turn guests into members, and then keep those members once they understand and appreciate how Toastmasters meets their needs.

Action Items to Consider

This is the time of year that many people establish new resolutions or goals. Maybe you are taking time to reflect on your life, thinking about a job or career change, or simply wondering what else you can achieve in Toastmasters. Whatever stage you are in, here are a few Toastmasters-related goals to consider:

For Yourself

- ▶ Continue to complete projects from both the communication and leadership manuals.
- ▶ Perform a role as often as possible during club meetings.
- ▶ Volunteer for other Toastmasters responsibilities: serve as a club or

district officer, help with a contest, or present a Toastmasters Leadership Institute training module.

- ▶ Be open to other opportunities within or beyond Toastmasters.
- ▶ List your Toastmasters experience on your resume.
- ▶ Share your Toastmasters activities and achievements with your supervisor at work.

For Your Club

- ▶ Share and celebrate members’ professional and personal successes at club meetings.
- ▶ Provide opportunities at meetings for members to explain how their Toastmasters experience has helped them.

Be sure to cite your participation in Toastmasters on your resume. You can list it under categories such as “Leadership,” “Volunteer Experience,” “Affiliations” or others. If you can include a description, make sure to use meaningful language and detail your experience and accomplishments.

At the very least, members can note something like this on their resume: *“Delivered prepared and extemporaneous speeches as well as evaluations of other speakers.”*

But don’t stop there. List the different roles you have performed in Toastmasters, in your club or beyond. Some of the details will change, but here are sample descriptions for you to consider incorporating into your resume.

If you taught a workshop at a Toastmasters Leadership Institute:

- ▶ Trained groups of 15–50 district officers and members on leadership roles and public speaking skills.

If you are the vice president education:

- ▶ Led educational programming for 23 members, planned biweekly meetings and oriented new members.

If you served as an area governor:

- ▶ Oversaw international program requirements for five local public speaking and leadership clubs.


If you have been a mentor:

- ▶ Mentored five members in public speaking and leadership skills development.

If you started a club:

- ▶ Initiated and chartered new Toastmasters club offering education in public speaking and leadership.

▶ Include success stories on the club’s website and in other promotional materials to spread the word and help with recruiting.

Consider these actions and make your Toastmasters experience the best it can be. Help others have their best experience, too. Your career and your club will thank you! 

Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM, is Assistant Dean of Career and Alumni Services for the Georgetown Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C. A Toastmaster since 1995, she is the founder and current vice president education of the Georgetown Toastmasters.

Annemarie du LeBohn: IRON WOMAN

Assault survivor reclaims her voice.

By Julie Bawden-Davis

When Annemarie du LeBohn peddled the 112-mile cycling portion of an Ironman triathlon, straining through 30-mile-per-hour winds, the Toastmaster's primary thoughts were not how her legs hurt or her lungs heaved. Instead, she entertained only positive thoughts and treasured every second of the 17-hour, 140-mile event.

"When we have negative thoughts, we're usually casting ourselves in the victim role."

That du LeBohn even participated in the 2010 endurance competition was in many ways a miracle. In 1996, she survived an accident in which her car was lodged under an 18-wheeler truck's bed, and as a teen she suffered a violent assault that left her with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Yet at the Ironman triathlon in Tempe, Arizona, she triumphed. An Ironman race starts with a 2.4-mile swim, continues with a 112-mile bike ride and ends with a 26.2-mile run (the length of a marathon) — with no breaks in between each segment. The ability to push past the discomfort of this daunting physical challenge and focus on the positives is a hard-won skill that du LeBohn credits Toastmasters with helping her acquire. In

motivational speeches, she talks about surviving a brutal rape — and subsequent stalking — at the age of 19, and how she overcame years of anguish and self-doubt.

"For years I was uncomfortable with being seen, and I lacked confidence in expressing my voice," says du LeBohn. "Instead of seeking justice for the attack, I clammed

up and consequently became uncomfortable appearing in front of people — until Toastmasters."

By participating in local speech contests and becoming president of her club, the Mitsubishi Motor Mouths in Cypress, California, she gained the confidence to effectively express herself.

"Toastmasters gave me a secure, peaceful environment in which to learn to share my story," says du LeBohn, a real estate journalist, educator and corporate social-responsibility specialist who assists companies in embracing charitable causes.

A Winning Message

While her motivational speeches acknowledge her brush with death in the truck accident and the attack years

earlier, du LeBohn's message is also laced with hope, purpose and resolve. In talking about the attack, she focuses on how she eventually worked through what could have been an emotionally crippling experience and instead emerged a champion.

"When something traumatic happens to you by someone else's hand and you're forced to carry the burden of their issues, you tend to question who you're supposed to be," says du LeBohn.

Her journey to the Ironman started in 1998, two years after the accident. Seeking a way to ease the pain from the muscular and skeletal damage caused by the incident, du LeBohn took up swimming and began competing in ocean swim competitions. In 2001, she participated in the AIDS/LifeCycle charity bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles. She even considered the Ironman at that time, but shelved the idea because she had never been a good runner. At the end of 2009 — the same year she joined Toastmasters — du LeBohn read about Ironman contestants who competed despite great challenges, and decided that she wanted to enter the Ironman as a way to banish lingering negative thought processes that had plagued her for years.

"The Ironman is more of a mental game than a physical one, and I decided to discipline my mind and body to



Annemarie du LeBohn

enjoy every moment of the competition, no matter how harsh the conditions became,” she says. “The triathlon ended up being the best day of my life. Once I jumped into the water, I was more relaxed than I’d ever been.”

For a year prior to the event, du LeBohn trained with triathlete Angela Schatz, who also finished the Ironman. Schatz praises her training partner for her commitment and positive spirit. “Annemarie and I would be out there for hours on Saturdays cycling 100 miles, and we kept each other motivated,” Schatz says.

Telling Her Story

After du LeBohn won her Ironman medal, *USA Triathlon* magazine featured her as an inspirational athlete in its Spring 2011 issue. In the wake of that positive publicity, she was asked to be the motivational speaker for the Women in Default Services National Conference in June 2011. Before then, she had not yet spoken of her attack in a speech. But with her confidence bolstered by completing the Ironman, du LeBohn decided it was time to finally tell her story.

“I was really nervous about giving the speech, because I wasn’t sure if people wanted to hear about what happened to me,” she says. “I practiced my speech twice with my

club, and all of the members were so encouraging and helpful. Everyone, including the men, said that it was a story that needed to be told.”

Du LeBohn was heartened at the response to her speech at the conference. “Afterward, women came up to me crying, thanking me and sharing their stories,” she says.

Rae-Ann Ruszkowski, a member of the Mitsubishi Motor Mouths, says she has been especially inspired by du LeBohn and her speeches. “Annemarie leads by example and with a quiet strength,” she notes. “I owe much of my commitment and growth in Toastmasters to her.”

“Her speeches pull you in, and you always come out learning something,” Ruszkowski adds. “My favorite is her ‘life story/Ironman’ speech because of how uniquely motivational it is.”

In the speech Ruszkowski refers to, du LeBohn reveals her seven training tools for accomplishing your goals, including the importance of taking risks. “Giving my speech about what happened to me is the riskiest thing I do, but it’s important if it helps just one person,” she says. “Competing in the Ironman also involved risk, but participating in the race vastly improved my life.”

Du LeBohn stresses to her audiences the benefits of staying positive. “When

we have negative thoughts, we’re usually casting ourselves in the victim role,” she says. “The only way to experience a better life is to focus on the fact that we have control of our life.”

Milton Shaw Jr. has worked with du LeBohn since 2008 in the area of corporate social responsibility. “In her writing, speaking to audiences and everyday communication, Annemarie always puts a positive spin on things,” says Shaw, senior vice president of strategic relationship management at Lender Processing Services, Inc. in Westminster, Colorado. “She possesses a great sense of humor and a zest for life.”

It is a zest for life, regardless of one’s circumstances, that du LeBohn seeks to convey to her audiences. “I share with people when I speak that it’s never too late to become who you were meant to be, no matter what has been thrown in your path,” she says. “It is possible to be peaceful and powerful at the same time and to follow your dreams. And the sooner you set out after those dreams, the better.” **T**

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MILESTONES ON THE PATH TO CC

From Ice Breaker to Project 10, which speech projects are most memorable?

By Beth Black, CC

If you ask a group of Toastmasters about their milestone speeches on the way to the Competent Communicator award, the first thing you'll hear is a discussion of what constitutes a milestone speech. For some, it's a simple matter of division: With 10 projects to complete in the *Competent Communication* manual, the first, last and middle speeches could be considered high points. Others reject math as a gauge of speaking significance and prefer to celebrate exceptional skill-building assignments. Regardless of how it's determined, the

she lacked was the time to sit back and reflect on her many memories. Her membership in two clubs, Stafford Heights Toastmasters and SeeChange Toastmasters, both in Queensland, Australia, helped her find the time and an audience. "Writing and delivering my Ice Breaker showed me the value of Toastmasters as a means of remembering and verbalizing thoughts and feelings suppressed for lack of time or willing listeners," she says.

For Colene Cobb, of Diablo Toastmasters club in Concord, California, the Ice Breaker presented a similar oppor-

really think about before writing. "It's your first impression," says Cobb. "It's scary to open yourself up like that and tell a room full of strangers what matters the most to you."

Project 5: Halfway There

The question of "CC math" has the power to spark an earnest discussion among members: Which speech constitutes a *middle* of 10 speeches? According to some, that point is Project 5, "Your Body Speaks," not only because five is half of 10, but because it comes before the self-evaluation in the manual. This moment of reflection is a strong contender for a midpoint along the path — an opportunity to note where personal growth has occurred.

For some, the biggest leap in understanding takes place during this speech. Glen Long of the Bloomsbury Speakers club and Holborn Speakers club, both in London, England, considers the fifth speech an important personal milestone. It took him to a new level of understanding what goes into a good speech. "The fifth speech was a milestone for me because it was the first time I really started to think about speaking as a *performance*," says Long. "It helped me understand that having good content is just one part of a bigger puzzle. Delivery is just as important as content, if not more so."

"No matter where your milestones lie along the CC path, it is important to keep moving forward."

completion of any milestone speech reflects an important step in a Toastmaster's journey. Listed here are the most popular speeches, according to interviews and recent LinkedIn discussions among members. Have you reached some of these notable speech projects in your quest for competent communication?

Project 1: The Ice Breaker

When Asoki Jayawardhana joined Toastmasters, she had already raised six sons, retired from her job and emigrated from her birth country. What

tunity to connect with experiences from the past. While determining her Ice Breaker topic, Cobb wanted to avoid speaking too much about her own personal challenges and triumphs. Instead, she chose to talk about her mother, who is now fighting Alzheimer's disease. In a heartfelt speech, she described their shared love of musical theater and how, years later, playing the same music helped her mother fight off dementia's grip for a brief time.

Cobb was able to speak on other personal topics in later speeches, but the Ice Breaker was the one she had to



Project 6: Another Turning Point

Some Toastmasters argue that the sixth project is the midpoint, because it is the first step toward completing the manual *after* your self-evaluation. Also, “Project 6: Vocal Variety,” is the last project to focus on a speaker’s body as an instrument — in this case, the voice. The rest of the projects are about using equipment, such as visual aids, and adjusting a speech’s purpose for particular audiences. Before you can focus on those skills, you must meet the sixth-speech milestone.

In a discussion among members in the Official LinkedIn Toastmasters Members group, Julie Kertesz of three Toastmasters clubs in London, England, writes that Project 6 was her midway milestone because body language and vocal variety were connected. Kertesz explains that body language and vocal control did not synchronize immediately for her. When she spoke about body language (instead of demonstrating it), she was able to use good vocal variety. By the time the sixth speech

came along, she used great body language, but it interfered with her vocal skills. She stresses the importance of becoming aware of both body language and vocal variety and learning how to manage both together.

Another aspect of the sixth project is that its completion qualifies a member to participate in the annual International Speech Contest. This contest culminates in the World Championship of Public Speaking held at the Toastmasters International Convention. Now, *that’s* a milestone!

Project 10: The Grand Finale

Many Toastmasters see the tenth speech, “Inspire Your Audience,” as the greatest milestone of the CC journey. Jayawardhana considers it to be one of the two top milestones. She pairs it with the Ice Breaker as a beginning and an end to the process of learning the basics of public speaking. “I believe that the *Competent Communication* manual is a masterpiece of engineering,” says Jayawardhana. “Without a speaker being

aware of it, he or she gains skills in both communication and leadership in preparing and presenting every one [of the 10 speeches].”

Sometimes, Toastmasters aren’t sure how to inspire their audiences. Marilyn Jess of the Last Word club in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, recommends that you share stories about someone who has inspired you personally. “It’s important to choose someone who stirs strong emotion in you,” says Jess. “That will come through as you speak.”

Other Path Markers

For many Toastmasters, the term “milestone” is about strengthening a particularly challenging skill rather than completing a random number in the manual. They find different speeches from the *Competent Communication* manual to be equally or more important than those previously mentioned. For example, if you struggle with motivating others to action, then “Project 9: Persuade with Power” will certainly mean the most to you.

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HOW FAR HAS YOUR BOTTLE GONE?

Ask the right questions when reviewing your life's achievements.

By Ernest R. Stair

One day in the middle of your life, you suddenly wake up and wonder, *Where did I go wrong?* Not that you are in any kind of trouble. You are a law-abiding citizen. You pay your taxes; you are two months ahead on mortgage payments and your kids' school grades are above average. So what's wrong with the present picture of your life?

With apologies to Edward Gibbon and Charles Dickens for splicing together the titles of their literary

achievement often returns to haunt us when we measure our progress from those starting points of earlier times. Not much ground has been covered, it seems, and time is running out.

A Pivotal Point

If you feel yourself in the early stages of a decline and fall of your great expectations, you are standing directly on top of one of life's decisive moments. What's it going to be? Do you settle for less? Or do you find a better

all the exotic places that bottle with his name inside might travel.

One day, two people walking on a beach found the bottle. They opened it, read Burrows' note and located him with the help of a computer database. Burrows was amused to learn that the bottle he had tossed into the sea more than 45 years earlier was found—where? Only a *few hundred yards* from the spot where it set sail!

A Life in Three Acts

Sooner or later, a moment of truth like that is bound to show up on everybody's doorstep. Once it does, it is in no hurry to go away. Then you must ask yourself, "What happened to the big plans I made for myself?" If you are like most people, your life can be divided into three acts:

- ▶ **Act One: The Launch and the Dream**
- ▶ **Act Two: Facing the Truth that My Bottle Didn't Go Very Far**
- ▶ **Act Three: All the Time After That**

When the curtain goes up on Act Two of your life, don't get discouraged. Just like most plays, your life will go on. You will doubt your achievements. You will recall only the mistakes, the regrets, the mountains not climbed, the horizons not crossed, the adventures not tried. And once you do that, questioning the worth of your life won't be far behind. The most important question for Act Two

"That hunger for achievement often returns to haunt us when we measure our progress from those starting points of earlier times."

classics, call it: *The Decline and Fall of Great Expectations*. "I haven't done much with my life," you say. "I had greater things in mind for myself when I started out."

You're not the only one to suffer mid-life disillusionment. Sooner or later it happens to nearly everybody, even to those rich and famous celebrities who parade across the big and little screens of our lives.

Achievement is the culprit. Early on, we plan to make something of ourselves, to leave our mark on the world, to climb some ladder of success all the way to the top — two rungs at a time. That hunger for

way to pass life's achievement test? To help make up your mind, try seeing your life as if it were a bottle tossed into the sea.

One day, Bill Burrows of Massachusetts searched his house for a seaworthy bottle that could carry the note he had just written to the far corners of the world. The note said, "Will the person who finds this let me know where and when it was picked up?" He added his address, then stuffed the note into a glass bottle, sealed it with wax to keep out the water and tossed it into the sea from the Massachusetts coastline. Then he went back to his house, dreaming of

of your life is: *Now what?* What will I do with the rest of my life, now that I have faced the truth that my bottle didn't go very far? Everyone has an Act Two. Not everyone moves successfully from Act Two to Act Three.

In the theater of life, all the action is in Act Three. Anybody can be happy in Act One, dreaming of all the wonderful possibilities that lie ahead. Anybody can be miserable mired in Act Two, mourning all the great expectations of the past that show no signs of ever being achieved. But Act Three — all the time after you face up to that feeling that your bottle didn't go very far — Act Three is where the courage is. Act Three is where the

“Real achievement cannot be condensed into resumes or statements of net worth.”

wisdom is. Act Three is where the greatness is.

You will never pass life's achievement test if you ask the *wrong* questions. Those questions are:

- ▶ How much money do I make?
- ▶ How many square feet does my house contain?
- ▶ How will my job title sound at a high school reunion?
- ▶ Do I get dizzy thinking about my rung on the ladder of success?
- ▶ How many people report to me?
- ▶ How many walls are needed to display my degrees, awards, honors, trophies and tributes?

These questions have one thing in common: The answers determine your grade on your life's achievement test based on *other people's* definitions of success. Other people drive by your property and estimate your net worth. Other people measure your success by your job title. Other people put

weight on whether you give orders or take them. Other people size up your achievements by counting the awards and recognitions bestowed upon you with a pinch of pomp and circumstance. If you are asking yourself these questions, you care more about what *they* think about you than what you think about yourself. You trust your precious self-esteem and happiness to everybody else.

To really pass life's achievement test, you need to start asking the *right* questions:

▶ **How many times did I refuse to quit?** Anybody can be promoted to bigger and better things, but it

takes true grit to stay put and see things through when you are not being recognized. Anybody can write somebody off, but it takes exceptional determination to stay beside someone who is making major mistakes in life. Count all the times that you didn't give up on someone or something.

▶ **How many times did I learn from my mistakes?** A concert pianist will tell you there is no such thing as a flawless performance. Learning how to handle mistakes is as much an art as knowing the right keys to press. Everybody makes mistakes, but not everybody takes the time to examine those mistakes and, without fixing blame, look for ways to chart a new course for the future. Count all the times in your life that you learned from your mistakes.

▶ **How many times did I make a comeback?** The only normal thing

about life is its alternating current of highs and lows, brought about by the whims of fortune. To find the secret of success in others, look not at their highs, but at their lows — how they meet the heartaches, disappointments and tragedies of their lives.

A crowning achievement in your life may not be in your building a way to the top, but in rebuilding after a fall. Count all the times in your life that you made a comeback.

▶ **How many times did I let somebody else have all the glory?** In soccer, an individual's season score includes assists as well as goals. Throughout life, you have opportunities to help other people get the credit they deserve, then enjoy the applause they receive when standing in the spotlight. It is nice to receive an award, but there is a deeper satisfaction in opening a door for somebody else to get one. From that, you will receive the kind of trophy that does not gather dust. Count all the times in your life that you let somebody else have all the glory.

▶ **How many times did I take criticism gracefully?** Criticism is the acid test of character. It brings out the best in us and it brings out the worst. Whether it comes from a supervisor's cutting evaluation at work or an adolescent's whining complaint at home, criticism typically provokes one of two classic responses: the counter-attack (criticizing the critic) or the retreat (wallowing in your own misery). But there is a *third way*. Some rise above the anger and hurt of the moment to hear every nuance of the criticism. These individuals are capable of saving what's useful and deleting what isn't. That way, criticism, fair or not, only adds to the stature of the one who's criticized. Count the times in your life that you took criticism gracefully.

► **How many times did I make somebody's day?** A sixth grader basks in your attentiveness as she tells you every detail of the demanding practice it takes to be a champion cheerleader. A friend's posture straightens when you say, "I've seen you come through tough times before, and I know you will do it again." The worried face of a boy struggling with a math problem breaks into a smile when you say, "You try so hard, I like that." You know your carefully crafted compliments offered to colleagues, neighbors and even strangers hit the mark when you're told, "You just made my day." Count all the times in your life that you made somebody's day.

These are the right questions to gauge how you are doing on life's achievement test. Instead of sizing yourself up by computing the sum of your property, position and credentials, use these questions to probe deep into the heart of your character. They measure what you are made of — courage, compassion and humility.

Sure, these questions might prompt you to think about some of your imperfections. But they also succeed in highlighting the true you, as you rise to great heights turning ordinary moments of your everyday life into events of extraordinary significance. That's Achievement with a capital A. Real Achievement

cannot be condensed into resumes or statements of net worth. Real Achievement is always an inside job.

When you ask yourself the right questions, you may be surprised to find that your bottle went much farther than you imagined. It is just possible that you pass life's achievement test with flying colors. **T**

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CC SURVIVAL GUIDE

By Beth Black

Wherever your milestones may lie, here are a few ideas to help you succeed along the way to your Competent Communicator award.

► **Be brave and begin.** Good news: The time requirement for the first speech — the Ice Breaker — is shorter (4–6 minutes) than any of the other speeches. If you stand up to speak, you are building courage. If you say a few words, you are controlling your fear. And if you tell the audience a little about yourself, you are conquering it!

► **Try the self-evaluation after Project 5:** It is a test you cannot fail and you will be able to move forward with the confidence that comes from knowledge.

► **Don't stop.** You can reach the tenth project! You learn the basics with the first few manual speeches, but the later projects help you put everything together in a meaningful way. Then, when you give your final speech-to-inspire you will be inspired, too.

Along the same lines, John Lesko of 1500 Speakers club in Crystal City, Virginia, says "Project 8: Get Comfortable with Visual Aids," fills a vital role for many Toastmasters. "I've seen many members go overboard with slides, thinking that their *entire* speech now must be covered with audio-visual aids," he notes. "On the other hand, this project — particularly within the corporate environment — is critical for oh-so-many organizations."

The truth is, if you are working to overcome a particularly troublesome aspect of public speaking, any project that helps you improve will be your biggest milestone. Ultimately, no matter where your milestones lie along the CC path, it is important to keep moving forward, tackling each challenge and relishing each opportunity for success in reaching your public speaking goals. **T**

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BUILDING CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Tips to attract new members to your club.

By Howard Scott, ACB

A good Toastmasters club constantly tries to build membership. Every new member is like a breath of fresh air, bringing enthusiasm and diverse talents to the meetings. A growing membership provides everyone in the club with a sense of prosperity.

Using all the great communication skills you've learned, here's how to connect with potential members and win their interest in your club.

Follow Up with Guests. Most clubs try to make guests feel welcome. But

if visitors rarely join, what can you do? Guests come because they are interested in joining, but when they don't return, it's because something caused them to change their minds. Your best solution is to follow up by calling all guests, which means you need their contact information. So remember to have all guests enter their names and phone numbers in the club guestbook. When you call, your goal is to discover their objection and resolve it, if possible.

If the objection is that evaluators' comments seemed harsh, explain

that constructive criticism from experienced speakers is the pathway to improvement. Make it clear that novices are treated gently and encouraged to keep speaking. If an Ice Breaker speech is coming up, notify that guest about it. This is your club's opportunity to demonstrate its softer approach for beginners. Make sure the evaluator for the Ice Breaker is clear on this, too, as it is important to instill this value in the club to attract and keep new members.

If the objection is that the speakers weren't skillful, and that the guest



felt too advanced for your group, you can explain that the club's most skillful speakers weren't scheduled to give prepared speeches at that meeting. Explain that plenty of challenges are available in contests, where club winners progress to compete at the local, national and even international levels.

If the guest thought your club lacked experienced speakers as role models, you can accentuate that everyone in the group is working to *improve together*. Stress that area and district leaders are available to mentor the club and its members.

If the objection is time commitment, suggest that the person visit once more to see how it might be a valuable use of time. Erik Haahr, president of Copenhagen Toastmasters club in Copenhagen, Denmark, says the club signs up 50

percent of guests when they attend their first meeting and another 25 percent shortly after their second meeting, which results in 20 to 30 new members each year.

Create a compelling website.

Many prospects begin by searching "Toastmasters" online and attending local clubs. So tout your offerings. Mention how members' lives have changed for the better as a result of joining your club and add their photos (with their permission). Insert comments from new members

be shy about contacting these people. You're not selling anything; you're showing the potential membership benefits that can take them even closer to their goals.

Give talks at other organizations.

Most community clubs are looking for speakers. Your speech about Toastmasters probably won't fit a group's particular focus, but talking about skill enhancement could still help some of its members. Local garden clubs, Rotary clubs and chambers of commerce typically

"Prospects can be spotted in newspapers or heard on local radio stations."

talking about your club's safe and happy learning environment.

"I examined the different clubs' websites, and most had a sameness to them," says Wayne Braverman of Bedford, Massachusetts. "But one, Last Word Toastmasters, stood out. It gave a lot of information. It had champion speakers. Since I wanted to learn from the best, I am now a Last Word Toastmaster."

Scour the media for potential members.

When you discover an individual on the rise — someone who has been in the local business news and who might benefit from Toastmasters — call that person and describe your club. This might be a person who was just promoted to an executive position, someone who recently spoke before an organization, an officer of a civic club or even an individual who wrote a letter to the editor. Prospects can be spotted in newspapers or heard on local radio stations. Don't

feature a schedule of speakers. Other possibilities include parent-teacher organizations, service clubs such as Kiwanis and Lions, as well as specialized interest groups. Even churches might welcome your presence. Make the point that every group should have at least one excellent member who can speak eloquently about the organization's mission — and Toastmasters could help develop such a spokesperson.

Speaking in the community can even extend to reaching neighborhood employers with the help of technology. Top Shelf Toastmasters, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is preparing a video presentation for potential members at a local company. "We will present the video of our club meetings at the company's benefits fair and possibly at a department meeting," says club member Ken Flack.

Schedule a "bring a friend" meeting. Encourage members to

actually bring a friend. Conduct an abbreviated demonstration meeting so that each guest can be invited to stand up for introductions. Don't forget to follow up with these guests to see if they'd like to increase their number of friends.

invite a reporter or blogger to attend a meeting, take pictures and write about it in a newspaper or blog post. The resulting article will explain the program to a larger local audience and may remind some that they had considered joining in the

materials free to download at www.toastmasters.org/MarketingMaterials. Simply print and post!

And don't forget the *Toastmaster* magazine. Many members have joined after seeing a copy of this magazine in a waiting room or coffee house. Barnum Square club leaves old copies of the *Toastmaster* magazine at local coffee houses.

"Our biggest problem is that we are growing out of our usual meeting location." – Erik Haahr

Barnum Square Toastmasters, in Southbury, Connecticut, sponsors an open house twice a year. The club uses these events as an opportunity to show friends and acquaintances what Toastmasters is about.

past. Reading about your club may be the nudge many people need to move forward.

Copenhagen Toastmasters club's Erik Haahr says, "Our biggest problem is that we are growing out of our usual meeting location." Try some of the above suggestions, and your club will find itself in the same predicament. **T**

Obtain free publicity. The club's vice president public relations can

Display club marketing material in coffee shops, libraries and bookstores. There is no need to create your own fliers from scratch. You can find marketing

Howard Scott, ACB, is a member of South Shore Soliloquy Toastmasters, in Marshfield, Massachusetts. Reach him at dcancinghill@gmail.com.

Read it online @ www.toastmasters.org/magazine.

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COMMUNICATION RESOLUTIONS

Ring in 2012 with better sentences.

By Jenny Baranick

Every December 31, many of us make New Year's resolutions. We promise that in the coming year we will say hello to the treadmill, spinach and family time, and goodbye to cheesecake, cigarettes and wasted hours of reality TV shows. But what about those non-smokers who already possess the willpower to limit their dessert intake, eat their veggies and make time for themselves and loved ones? They

"While other people are working on shedding pounds, you can focus on shedding words."

must feel left out when questioned about their New Year's resolutions. If you are one of those aberrations, I have an idea for you.

As Toastmasters, you are already working on improving your verbal communication skills. Why not spend 2012 fine-tuning your writing skills too? Studies show that employers repeatedly cite the ability to write and speak effectively as their most sought-after skill. Adding clarity to *all* your communication could turn 2012 into your year for career advancement.

While other people are working on shedding pounds, you can focus on shedding words. According to William Strunk Jr., co-author of *The Elements of Style*, "Vigorous writing is concise." Strunk explains that concise writing doesn't mean that we must make our sentences short or avoid detail; he means we should cut all unnecessary words. We should, for example, avoid using the intensifiers *really*, *very*, *quite*

and *extremely* to modify words that, by definition, are already intense such as *spectacular*, *repulsive*, *stunning* and *scrumptious*.

Another way to make your writing more concise is to use a single word to replace clunky phrases wherever possible. For example, you can replace *the cheesecake that tasted so good* with *the delicious cheesecake*. Furthermore, avoid common redundant phrases such as *true facts*, *end result* and *twelve*

o'clock noon. Facts, by definition, are true; a result comes at the end; and noon always occurs at twelve p.m.

If you already use your time wisely, you can resolve to use words more wisely. Many of us forget about all the wonderful words at our disposal and, consequently, lose our audience's interest by using the same old, boring language. For example, according to a study, the top five words used in press releases are *leading*, *solution*, *best*, *innovative* and *leader*. Even though all these words are strong, such words tend to lose power when overused. To make your presentations shine, challenge yourself to vary your language. For example, replace *leading* and *best* with: *preeminent*, *incomparable* or *unrivaled*. Then replace the word *innovative* — because there's really nothing less innovative than using the same word as everyone else.

The most popular New Year's resolution is to spend more time with

family, but to improve your communication skills, you should resolve to spend time with other families, in addition to your own. For example, why not catch up with the March sisters from Louise May Alcott's novel *Little Women* or Uncle Tom from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? How about dropping in on Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*? Studies show that extensive reading — particularly voluntary reading — improves our writing skills.

"If you read a lot of sentences," says U.S. author and professor Louis Menand, "then you start to think in sentences, and if you think in sentences, then you can write sentences, because you know what a sentence sounds like." Plus, reading is an excellent way to improve your vocabulary. Thanks to the aforementioned books, I was introduced to my favorite new words: *blithely*, *hosanna* and *physiognomy*. Now, I just have to look them up to see what they mean.

"Last year's words belong to last year's language / And next year's words await another voice," said author T.S. Eliot. May your 2012 voice be vigorous, distinctive and diverse! May you cut all unnecessary words, use exciting ones and learn new ones! May new books fill your shelves! May you successfully use the words *blithely*, *hosanna* and *physiognomy* in a sentence — and then let me know how. **T**

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THE MAGIC OF SENSE APPEAL

Reach your audience through sight, smell, touch, sound and taste.

By Colleen Plimpton, ACB

Three hours after the World Trade Center towers fell in New York on September 11, 2001, the telephone rang in my suburban Connecticut home. My husband, a self-employed construction worker, had been requested by fellow tradesmen to report to Ground Zero to aid in the search-and-rescue operation.

He spent a haunting two and a half days in lower Manhattan, amid the rubble, tears, fire and fear. He slept

“Whether the topic is apps, appeals or appraisals, speakers must try to create an unforgettable audience experience.”

on a bed in an abandoned hotel and survived on sandwiches provided by kind-hearted citizens. When mass transit was running again he returned home, still wearing his ash-covered hard hat, smoke-stained clothes and ruined work boots.

I saved those boots, and, as a professional gardener, planted them with flowers. When I lecture on garden design, garden memories or garden ornamentation, I bring out those boots, and the room grows silent when I explain what the battered pair of footwear represents.

I make sure the audience can see the boots, the leather worn and discolored. Frequently, after the lecture concludes, people come forward to touch the tattered pair, while relating their own

9/11 stories. Aided by the senses of sight, smell and touch, I reach my audience in a meaningful way.

Not all sensory details in speeches need to be this intense. But all speeches need to be accessible to your listeners through the implied magic of sight, smell, touch, sound and taste.

Whether the topic is apps, appeals or appraisals, speakers must try to create an unforgettable audience experience. Emphasizing sensory quali-

ties will draw your listeners closer to the message, rendering it stronger and richer. And it's not that difficult to do. Immediate Past President Pat Johnson, DTM, gave an impromptu speech a few years ago about a walk to an early-morning Toastmasters meeting. She depicted the feel of the breeze and the warmth of the sun, the different birds' voices interrupting one another, and the smell of the newly mowed grass that lingered long after passing by a lawn. She delivered a memorable speech by describing these sensory elements.

Tushar Deshpande, a member of Wall Street Toastmasters in New York City and a division governor in District 46, said he observed and recorded the manner in which salesmen

persuaded customers — including him — to buy consumer electronics. These salesmen pointed out the dazzling colors, smooth contours and even that “new-car smell” that purchasers could enjoy. His subsequent speech on the subject elaborated on these sensory details and was so successful that a member approached him afterward to make a purchase!

You can do the same by observing what's around you, making notes and incorporating these ideas into your next speech to make it more memorable and heighten your persuasiveness. Let's examine, sense by sense, how this can be accomplished:

Sight. Ensure that your audience can *visualize* what you are saying, and that they are not simply hearing your words. Use visual aids. Ruby Parker, a member of West-Conn Toastmasters in Danbury, Connecticut, and an immediate past area governor, used a *Star Wars* theme in all her club presentations last year. From the flowing brown Jedi Knight robes to a bright blue light saber, she not only captured and held her audience's attention, but her attire transformed what would ordinarily be another “You Can Do It” speech into an intergalactic promise of Toastmasters adventures.

Smell. Our most primitive sense, smell is often connoted by a single word. What does “gasoline” evoke,

HELP YOUR AUDIENCE REMEMBER YOU

By Michelle Tyler

When people learn something new, they are forming memories. Because people learn in different ways, speakers need to be aware of the most common learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. To ensure that your audience remembers you and your message, incorporate a range of techniques to connect with people of all learning styles.

Visual Learners use images, words, pictures, graphs and diagrams to form memories. These people need to stay connected to the information in front of them because they cannot manage distractions well. To connect with visual learners:

- ▶ Use PowerPoint, a projector or handouts to incorporate illustrations about your topic.
- ▶ Offer a notepad and pen to all attendees who want to take notes.
- ▶ Make eye contact with as many individuals as possible to keep their focus on you.

Auditory Learners absorb information through speaking and listening. Listening to lectures, reading aloud and having discussions about new information are the best ways for these people to learn. To connect with auditory learners:

- ▶ Repeat significant details and main points. Verbal repetition reinforces your ideas.
- ▶ Divide your audience into small discussion groups during your presentation so they can discuss ideas aloud in their own words.

Kinesthetic (or Tactile) Learners retain information they experience firsthand. These people do not enjoy sitting still for long. They prefer to participate, role-play, use their motor skills and take frequent breaks. To reach kinesthetic learners:

- ▶ Incorporate a hands-on activity or pass around something worth examining that pertains to your subject matter.
- ▶ Allow audience members the option of sitting or standing.
- ▶ Suggest locations such as museums or learning centers for people to attend after your speech to learn more.
- ▶ Create a game for audience members to participate in.

Regardless of your next presentation's topic, be sure to share your subject matter in a variety of ways so your listeners can retain your message. You will feel good about connecting with your audience members, and they will be excited about learning something new.

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for example, or “crayon” or “hay”? Look for and employ words that are airbrushed with memory and meaning.

Or, describe *how* something smells. Are the pages of a book “musty”? Tell your audience that — they’ll know exactly what you mean. Do you get hungry when someone talks about the “aroma of baking bread” wafting from the kitchen? These examples help your listeners grasp what sentiment you are trying to convey. Bring your listeners into the world of your speech by seeking and using vigorous words and phrases.

Touch. To engage your audience’s tactile sense, you have options. You could pass around something to touch that relates to your speech, such as a sample of embroidered cloth if your topic is needlecraft. If sharing a sample isn’t feasible, it’s time to employ carefully worded descriptions that evoke your audience’s sense memories for touch, such as an icy wind that chills your face or a soft puppy with a cool, damp nose.

Sound. Sounds evoke emotions. Who among us has not been thrilled by the thunder of a brass band or had the hair on the back of our necks raised by the nighttime call of a coyote or trill of a screech owl? Use sounds like these in your speeches. Research them on the Internet and practice making the sounds with a tape recorder, if necessary. You can also clap your hands, whistle, snap your fingers or tap dance — anything to grab your listeners’ attention. Here’s where vocal variety, one of Toastmasters’ basic tenets, comes in handy. Raise your voice to indicate fear or haste and lower it for suspense, sorrow or love. And remember to incorporate pauses into your speech: Silence is as powerful as sound.

Taste. One of the most memorable speeches I ever heard about food was from a fellow Toastmaster who spoke of his mom’s apple pie recipe, which

he tried (and failed) to re-create. With his words and actions, Chris Baliko of Barnum Square Toastmasters in Bethel, Connecticut, helped us savor the flaky pie crust and taste the sweet cinnamon tang of his elusive dessert. How did he do this? In several ways: His timing was spot-on — he delivered the speech two days before Thanksgiving when the audience was primed for delicious desserts. As he

At the top of your first draft, record the five senses. After each, note what's been included. For instance, in a speech about children's fairy gardens, next to the word sight, I wrote "butterflies"; for smell, it was "lilac." Adjacent to touch, I jotted "leaf texture" to indicate the hairy feel of the Lamb's Ear plant. Sound was "birdsong" and taste was "mint and strawberries." Or, highlight each sense

- ▶ **Be dynamic.** Amplify their significance with gestures and props.
- ▶ **Be organized.** Sprinkle sensory detail throughout your speech. Don't just dump it in the introduction, lump it in the middle or squeeze it in the conclusion.
- ▶ **Be careful.** Use enough elements to enrich your work, but be wary of overload. Make sure the detail you use is substantive to your speech, and remember that facets of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste are the seasoning, not your speech's main course.

"Look for and employ words that are airbrushed with memory and meaning."

rattled off the key components, he emphasized the words "sugar" and "butter," while miming the mixing of the ingredients. As he did so, he occasionally licked his lips and rubbed his stomach. By mentioning familiar ingredients at a festive time flavored with nostalgia, Baliko led us down the gustatory path to satiation — all without any of us actually tasting a morsel.


If after reading the above examples, you've decided to incorporate more sensory detail into your speeches, here's a simple way to be sure you've woven a fine tapestry of a speech:

in the speech with a different color, and examine the finished product for over- or under-use.

If you discover during this exercise that one of the senses was omitted, return to your draft and add an appropriate word or phrase.

Having taken these lessons to heart, as you formulate your new sensory-enhanced presentations, remember these tips:

- ▶ **Be descriptive.** Bring the audience into your speech by using powerful words that convey common meaning.

By nature, we Toastmasters are storytellers whose fondest hope is that our speeches resonate with the audience, remaining with them to enliven, enrich or enlighten their lives. Whether telling a tale of terror and sorrow, or one of security and joy, every speech is a journey. Employing sensory detail assures that you, the speaker, have companionship along the way. 

Colleen Plimpton, ACB, is a member of Barnum Square Toastmasters in Bethel, Connecticut. A professional writer, coach and lecturer on gardening, her latest book is *Mentors in the Garden of Life*. Contact her at colleenplimpton.com.

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SPEAKING ON THE RUN

From San Diego to New York, runner gives 100 speeches in 100 days.

By Jennie Harris

In 2011, Croix Sather accomplished a goal — he ran the equivalent of 100 marathons and gave 100 speeches. Even more impressive: He did it over 100 consecutive days.

With less than a year of training, Sather ran from San Diego to New York City, beginning his journey February 26 and finishing June 4, and averaging 26.2 miles [42.2 kilometers] — the length of a marathon — per day. Each day he tapped into his Toastmasters

Sather joined Toastmasters in 2005 because, after graduating from college at age 34 with a degree in communications, he found he was unable to hold an audience's attention when he spoke. Just as he did with his cross-country venture, Sather jumped into Toastmasters with all-out determination. He joined five clubs in his first year, spoke at each meeting, earned his Competent Communicator award and became division governor. He spoke

Stage time and the positive nurturing environment gave me the confidence to go out and practice the art of public speaking. Today my phone rings with invitations to speak to audiences all over the United States.

How did you choose your goal to run 100 marathons and give 100 speeches in 100 days?

I wasn't a runner a year ago. My running experience was sporadic and slow. I chose to run across America because it was the biggest and most awe-inspiring challenge I could think of. And to make it even more amazing, I decided to add a keynote speech to at-risk groups every day because nobody in the world has ever done that.

Where did your path take you?

I followed a southerly route. I ran on frontage roads and back roads when possible. I did run on some highways when it was the only option. I ran through cities, deserts, rural neighborhoods and busy towns. I saw it all. I ran in the day and the night. One time I ran straight through the night on one of the toughest city streets in America. I took a 20-minute nap at 4:30 a.m.

"If I quit, then every person I spoke to and told not to quit on their dreams would have a reason to quit, too."

training and presented a motivational speech to at-risk audiences: juvenile detention centers, addiction programs, homeless shelters and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The New Fairfield, Connecticut, resident gave away more than 9,000 free copies of his book, *Dream Big, Act Big*, to inspire audiences to set and achieve their own goals.

A "human potential expert," Sather motivates his clients to meet their potential. In his one-on-one consultations, he uses hypnosis and other methods to help remove people's self-doubts about meeting their professional and personal goals.

at district conferences, taught Toastmasters Leadership Institute training programs and volunteered to speak in the community. Today Sather is a member of two clubs in Connecticut: West-Conn Toastmasters in Danbury and Emerging Speech Masters Advanced Toastmasters in Ridgefield.

Q. What is the best thing you gained from your Toastmasters experience?

A. Experience and confidence. I would not be able to be on stage like I am without the training and opportunities that Toastmasters provides.



Croix Sather

◀ **Croix Sather runs with students from Fabens High School in Fabens, Texas, USA.**

then went running again at 5 a.m. to meet with Back on My Feet [a running group for the homeless].

Did you get shin splints or other injuries?

I didn't get a single significant injury. I backed off and slowed when my body told me to. I pushed through when I felt I could. That said, I experienced a massive physiological transformation in the first five weeks [of my journey]. My muscles grew and changed at an amazing rate. In the process I had severe calf cramps and muscle fatigue. I expected that. About halfway through my run my body adapted and the distance became normal for me.

How did you deal with fatigue?

Physically, I dealt with fatigue by intuitively listening to my body, eating nutritiously and getting a daily therapeutic massage.

Ninety percent of success is mental and the rest is mechanics. This was true for my run. I got through the fatigue with the mental stamina of a man on a mission. In the dark moments I would push through with personal programming such as mantras and warrior chants. I would also push through by remembering why I was

doing this and those who were counting on me. If I quit, then every person I spoke to and told not to quit on their dreams would have a reason to quit, too. My goal to run across America was huge and certainly attainable. So for me to quit would be giving in to the weakness of the moment.

Now that you accomplished your goal for 2011, what's your plan for 2012?


I am running across America again — this time for a very different reason. In April I will leave San Francisco and run to New York City to break the world record for running across the United States. My goal is to run 72 miles [115.9 kilometers] a day for 42 consecutive days, beating the world record by four days. I will eat, sleep and run only (no speeches). The best runners in the world have tried to beat it for over three decades. Why am I doing this? Because we must live up to our potential.

What advice would you give members to help them set and meet their New Year's resolutions?

Your goal must do two things. First, it must inspire you. If you are not

inspired, you will not achieve it. Second, your goal needs to be a must. Not "I wish that would happen" or "It would be nice to lose a few pounds."

What is the one dream that would make the most dramatic difference in your life? Make that your one goal. If you want to lose 50 pounds, exercise every morning and eat healthy every day.

You should have no more than one goal in your career and one goal in your personal life. Anything more and you are likely to fail because of a lack of focus and energy to make it all happen. Clarity and focus create results. 

Croix Sather, CC, CL, is a member of two clubs in Connecticut: West-Conn Toastmasters in Danbury and Emerging Speech Masters Advanced Toastmasters in Ridgefield. He is the author of the book *Dream Big, Act Big: Breakthrough and Unleash the Superstar Within You*. Reach him at Croix@CroixSather.com or visit his website at LifexDesign.com.

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BATTLING BABBLE

Words that bug me, etcetera, etcetera.

By John Cadley

I am mad as heck and I am not going to take it any more. Starting in 2012 I am not going to allow people to use words and phrases that are meaningless, shopworn, pretentious or just plain wrong. For instance, the next time I hear an emcee introduce an entertainer by saying, “And now, without further *adieu* ...,” I am going to stand up and say, “No, wait, please, let’s have some further *adieu*. We haven’t had enough. The entertainment can

And don’t let me catch anyone saying *je ne sais quoi*. This mellifluous French phrase has gained a certain international caché by allowing people to admit complete ignorance in such a way that they appear to be smart (Look, she speaks French!). *Je ne sais quoi* means “I don’t know what.” Really? Then what the heck are you telling me for? Somehow I am supposed to know what the speaker doesn’t. Ostensibly, the phrase refers

purpose for etcetera I am aware of is when Nicholas II of Russia, wishing to spare himself the tedium of repeating his myriad titles every time he addressed his subjects, proclaimed himself simply “Nicholas II, Autocrat of All Russias, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.” This was especially fortuitous for the assembled masses during the bitter Russian winters when, standing outside in the palace courtyard to hear the Tsar, they could have frozen to death before he finished introducing himself.

Then there are those expressions Americans say that must make our brothers and sisters in foreign lands scratch their heads in wonder. For instance, “You can’t have your cake and eat it too.” If I were from Japan or Yugoslavia, I would wonder why Americans would want a cake they can’t eat.

A few others:

“Sleep like a baby.” New parents? Any comments on that one?

“It’s a dog-eat-dog world.” Dogs eat shoes, socks, bones and homework but they don’t eat each other.

“I’m feeling under the weather.” It’s called the biosphere. If you weren’t under the weather you would be wearing a space suit.

So my 2012 resolution is: I will fight nonsensical language wherever I find it — and that’s a promise. In fact, you can take it to the bank. **T**

“If I were from Japan or Yugoslavia, I would wonder why Americans would want a cake they can’t eat.”

wait. In fact, it’s in their contract. No entertainer can go on until they are preceded by a specified amount of *adieu*, and you are five minutes short.”

Does that emcee have any idea what the *adieu* means that he promises not to give us any more of? First of all, *adieu* is originally from the Latin meaning “until God” — as in, “Goodbye until we meet in heaven.” If the audience knew that, they’d be heading for the exits. In French, *adieu* simply means goodbye, which makes no sense, either, since we just got here.

The real spelling, of course, is “ado,” meaning to fuss, bother or delay. So the host is basically admitting he has been wasting our time for the last 15 minutes with announcements, thank-yous, and acknowledgments that are completely irrelevant to the proceedings at hand. Shakespeare wrote a play called *Much Ado About Nothing* that could just as easily have been named *A Lot of Nothing About Nothing*.

to some indefinable characteristic that makes someone or something special. Which is another way of saying, “I don’t know what I want to say and there is no better way to say it than by not saying it in a way that sounds like I said it.” (People in government have this down to an exact science — the science of being inexact — but that’s another story.)

Nor do I ever want to hear or see the word “etcetera.” Tell me what you know without trying to make me think you know more than you know. Or without assuming I know more than I know. If you say, “Pick up some apples, bananas, pears, etcetera,” don’t assume I’ll come back with all fruit. Is a tomato a fruit? What about an avocado? I don’t know. Even when people tell me, I forget. So you will end up with half fruit salad and half guacamole and I’ll be the one to blame when your guests try the dip and make funny faces. The only useful

John Cadley is an advertising copywriter in Syracuse, New York. Reach him at jcadley@mower.com.

TRAVELING **TOASTMASTER**



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“The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever.”

— French oceanographer
Jacques Cousteau

These adventurous Toastmasters bring a waterproof *Toastmaster* to the silent sea floor to teach the fish a thing or two about communication and leadership.



Michelle Yip, ACB, CL, from Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia, completes an eco reef survey in Tioman Island, Malaysia.



Ricky Mayeux, CC, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, dives 80 ft [24 m] in West End, Roatan, Honduras.



Don Mildon, ACS, from Kennewick, Washington, dives in Curaçao, Dutch Caribbean.



Linda Bower, CC, from Tracy, California, reads to a school of Tarpon in Xcalak, Mexico.



Glenn Terry, CC, ALB, from Ajax, Ontario, Canada, explores Treasure Reef, Negril, Jamaica.



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