

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JANUARY 2017

TOASTMASTER®

VICTORY!

Olympian Lauryn Williams, CC,
on setting goals and winning gold

**How Daily Habits Shape
Your Achievements**

**Two New Accredited Speakers
Share Their Journeys**



The Virtues of Evaluations

As you start the new calendar year, hopefully full of enthusiasm and eager to maximize the benefits of your Toastmasters journey, I ask you to think about the fourth commitment in the Toastmaster's Promise and the vital issue it addresses: *"to provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations."* This is the cornerstone of our Toastmasters program—the major difference between Toastmasters and other like-minded organizations. Yet, unfortunately, it is a skill that many of us lack. So often effective evaluations are missing in our clubs, family lives, businesses and communities.

In our clubs, we often hear the term "whitewash," which refers to glossing over any problems. When we do this in an evaluation, we don't give the presenter any points for improvement. It could lead the presenter to think he gave a perfect presentation when nothing could be further from the truth. On the other end of the spectrum is the severe criticism that masquerades as an evaluation, which can result in the presenter feeling so discouraged that he leaves the club, never to return. Both of these evaluation styles are equally unacceptable and have no place in our club meetings. The responsibility of every member is to provide a helpful and constructive evaluation that will enhance the speaker's ability and encourage them to return and speak again.

If you truly want to become a better speaker, become a good evaluator.

I will remember my club mentor admonishing me for avoiding the opportunity to evaluate whenever possible. "Until you learn to evaluate, you will never become a better speaker, and without being able to give meaningful and constructive evaluations, you will find being an effective leader a difficult task." How right she was.

So what are the major benefits of a good evaluation for you, the evaluator? First, if you truly want to become a better speaker, become a good evaluator. By observing other speakers' habits, both good and bad, you will often identify similar habits in your own presentations. But the greatest benefits by far are found outside the club. The ability to constructively analyze and give positive feedback to your family or in your business or community is a skill that is greatly needed. The ability to give praise in recognition of a job well done and to provide useful advice where help is needed is an all-too-rare commodity. Conflict resolution is fast becoming a catch phrase in modern society and much of the blame for this is the inability of individuals to productively evaluate themselves and others.

I urge you to practice constructive evaluation in your club at every opportunity and reap the rewards this skill can provide. Become a helpful and effective evaluator, and remember to *"Remember the Member."* **T**

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International President

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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL®

P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.
+1 949-858-8255 • Fax: +1 949-858-1207
Voicemail: +1 949-835-1300

www.toastmasters.org

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“The HPL program is a remarkable opportunity for any Toastmaster, regardless of skill level, to discover and develop their leadership potential.”

— Noj Zachariah, CTM
Framingham-Natick Toastmasters
Natick, Massachusetts

High Performance Leadership

I loved the article in the September 2016 issue about advancing your skills with a High Performance Leadership project. District 31 recently created an HPL committee to raise awareness of, and provide support for, HPL projects at the club, area, division and district levels as well as in the broader community. The HPL program is a remarkable opportunity for any Toastmaster, regardless of skill level, to discover and develop their leadership potential, to receive supportive feedback and encouragement, and to bring together a team to make a valuable contribution to the community. Toastmasters is “Where Leaders Are Made,” and we are eager to fulfill on that promise by partnering with other districts and members, so please reach out to us!

Noj Zachariah, CTM
Framingham-Natick Toastmasters
Natick, Massachusetts

Beyond The Meeting

If you are attending Toastmasters meetings just to attend Toastmasters meetings, you are missing the point. As one of our members says, “You don’t come to Toastmasters

meetings to be better Toastmasters. You come to Toastmasters meetings to be better *at something else.*” Your “something else” is specific to you—and you can apply it to your world outside of Toastmasters.

Each club leadership position provides us an opportunity to learn how to be, for example, a president of a company or a human resources employee. Each functional role (grammarian, Ah-Counter, timer, etc.) gives us the opportunity to learn what words to use and what words *not* to use, how to schedule meetings, and more. At your next meeting, watch everyone’s behavior and decide who you would want working for your company. Hopefully one of them is *you.*

Richard Erschik, ACB, CL
Homestead Toastmasters
Homestead, Florida

I Object!

As a student of Robert’s Rules, I object to John Cadley’s allegedly humorous article (“Robert’s Rules,” September) regarding the portrayal of RONR [*Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*] and the importance of its role in the conducting of business within deliberative assemblies. For a reader not otherwise familiar with the “rules,” he did a great deal to scare that individual away from wanting to study more about RONR and/or how it can benefit them in the organizations they belong to.

Instead of promoting the overridingly positive aspects of Gen. Robert’s tome, and the use of these rules by people within democratic organizations, Mr. Cadley’s sardonic stance perpetuates the perspective that rules of order (such as Robert’s, Mason’s, Demeter’s et al.) are something to be laughed at, mocked, ridiculed and avoided at all costs.

Let’s hope the meetings Mr. Cadley attends are as cacophonous, confusing and confrontational as his condescending attitude toward order and discipline appears to be. The rest of us will continue to behave in a civil manner.

David Meigel, ACB, ALB
Foothill Toastmasters
Roseville, California

What’s in a Word?

Depending on your preferred source, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw or Winston Churchill spoke of division by a common language. Sometimes, however, one single word, rather than a whole language, will suffice.

For instance, U.S. resident Ravikanth Ponnappalli (“Get Your CC Before the Final Countdown,” September) advises us to envision ourselves as “*glib* and fluent” speakers. Here in England, being “*glib*” is not a virtue—it connotes someone who is smooth-talking but insincere, shallow and even likely to be dishonest.

What’s in a word? Rather a lot!

Gordon Thompson, CC, CL
Purley Speakers
Purley, United Kingdom

A Fresh Approach

I read Craig Harrison’s article on brainstorming in the April edition with great interest. You see, when I was in college I was able to hear a lecture by one of brainstorming’s conceptual founders. I am glad to see the concept is still being used. One thing Mr. Harrison did not mention is that brainstorming sessions must be kept short. The maximum time for a brainstorming session is between 15 to 20 minutes. Anything longer and it can turn into mental torture. Also, expect that most of the ideas will come within the first 10 minutes—after that, the frequency of ideas will diminish.

Otherwise, it was an excellent article, and the sidebar on more brainstorming techniques presented fresh ways to approach it. Nice job, Mr. Harrison. I hope to see more on this subject in the future.

L. Cooke, CC
Professional Women Toastmasters
Playa Vista, California

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Write it in 200 words or less. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to letters@toastmasters.org. Please note: Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity, and may be published in both the print and electronic editions.

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Reach the Finish Line!

Olympic silver and gold medalist Lauryn Williams talks about goal-setting and success.

By Missy Sheehan

PHOTO: AP Photo/David Goldman

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We Are What We Do

Habits and goals go hand in hand.

By Maureen Zappala, DTM

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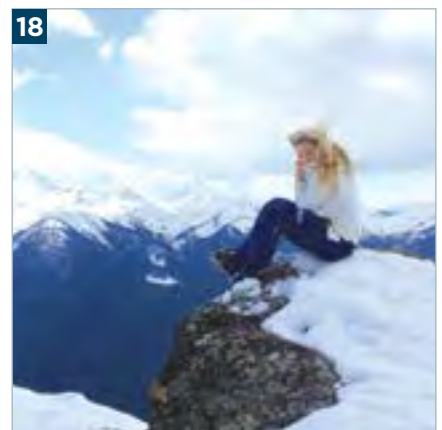
GOAL-SETTING

ELITE WOMEN ATHLETES SHOW THEIR STRENGTH

Skier and Spartan racer push past setbacks to score new goals.

By Missy Sheehan

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COVER PHOTO: AP Photo/David Goldman

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▶ MEMBER MOMENT 

Social Mobile App Creator Makes Her Mark

BY SHANNON DEWEY

Galya Westler spent her childhood in Israel focusing on her education before returning to her birthplace of Canada in 2008. When she settled in Vancouver, where she knew no one, she found the most effective way to integrate into a new city was to join a club that shared the same interests.

Westler, ACB, says she fell in love with the Vancouver Entrepreneurs Toastmasters club (VETC) the moment she walked in and was exposed to Table Topics. She thought, Wow, I wish I knew how to do that! That was six years ago.

She is the CEO and founder of Plazus Technologies Inc., which creates a communication app tool for businesses to reach their own community. In 2016 she gave a talk at TEDxStanleyPark in Vancouver, in front of 3,000 people, where she presented her take on social media addiction and how to overcome it. Westler's career, volunteer work and personal drive are based on her desire to connect people through technology.

How did you become an entrepreneur?

In my career as a senior product manager and a software engineer, I had advanced quickly to senior-level jobs only to discover the glass ceiling was crushing my creativity and wealth of ideas. When I was 30 years old I started my own company, 2Galvanize Web Solutions Ltd, to become my own boss while still having a secure job. I would work for companies, and in my spare time invest and grow my own business. I then started my second company, Plazus, received some investment and focused on one product—a platform for anyone to create their own communication mobile app for their community.

Being creative and a master in my domain, I know that achieving success is what drives any individual. I have set goals for myself since I was very young, which included being independent, educated and fulfilled in my career.

How has Toastmasters played a role in your career?

Our club is geared toward entrepreneurs and we encourage members to share different topics on their businesses. At Toastmasters you're given a stage, but it is your duty to serve others and share your knowledge while there. If you do it right, there may be business opportunities along the way when you present yourself as an expert in your field.

Our club communication app, which was created by my company, Plazus, is for members to communicate before, during and after each meeting. Real-time notifications alert the members if we need volunteers for roles. We interact by posting pictures and videos, and each member has a profile page to showcase their



Galya Westler

Toastmasters experience and their business, allowing others to get to know one another.

What was your main message at TEDxStanleyPark?

I talked about how existing social media can cause addiction and isolation. My message was that human beings long to belong in a place that will support and nourish them. Whether they find it at their Toastmasters club, or through work or religion, I found that the existing social networks are simply too big and people connect better in smaller groups. This talk was aligned with my startup, Plazus, which gives these small groups a tool to connect privately and with a purpose.

Where else have you presented?

I've spoken to Lean In groups, the Google offices in Tel-Aviv, Israel, and to high school and university students on the need for education to progress in life. I think it is particularly important to support young women to help them see their potential and encourage them to take on roles in professions such as engineering, medicine and politics.

What is your advice to someone who is considering becoming an entrepreneur?

Put all your fears and doubts aside and jump in the water—even if you are not sure how to swim. We have incredible abilities when we are faced with survival mode and a true entrepreneur is a survivor every day. I encourage you to follow your dreams in calculated steps. Educate yourself; work for others and learn; gain experience; and when that brilliant idea hits you, go at it with full force and never doubt yourself. The trick is to dare to do it and to be consistent at it.

Shannon Dewey is the editorial coordinator for the Toastmaster magazine.

▶ SNAPSHOT



Efforts in East Africa

Members of 1 Rwanda Toastmasters and four clubs in Kenya—Early Birds Toastmasters, Downtown Toastmasters, Nairobi Toastmasters and K-Toastmasters—pose in front of the Kigali Convention Center in September. The group, called The Roadmasters, travel around the region starting new clubs, supporting prospective clubs and creating momentum toward the formation of a Toastmasters district in East Africa. They are shown here after attending Rwanda’s first national speech contest organized by seven chartered and prospective clubs in Rwanda.

▶ NEWS FROM TI

Updating a Promise

To make your member experience the best it can be, make a commitment to yourself and your fellow members. That commitment is what the Toastmaster’s Promise is all about. It outlines the 10 key tenets at the heart of the Toastmasters journey.

International President Mike Storkey feels so strongly about the promise that he has made it the linchpin of his monthly Viewpoint column. He is devoting each Viewpoint to one of the 10 commitments in the Toastmaster’s Promise.

As he wrote in his first Viewpoint, in the September issue, “Imagine how your club would look if we all made the commitment to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the simple 10-point promise.”

Today the Toastmaster’s Promise—which is listed on page 2 of the *Competent Communication* and *Competent Leader* manuals—looks a little different than it did when President Storkey first began writing about it. In October the Toastmasters Board of Directors revised the wording in two of the 10 points.

The second commitment is now “to prepare all of my projects to the best of my ability, basing them on the Toastmasters education program.” The 10th one is “to act within Toastmasters’ core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.”

Here is the complete Toastmaster’s Promise.

*As a member of Toastmasters International and my club,
I promise*

- ▶ *To attend club meetings regularly*
- ▶ *To prepare all of my projects to the best of my ability, basing them on the Toastmasters education program*
- ▶ *To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments*
- ▶ *To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations*
- ▶ *To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow*
- ▶ *To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so*
- ▶ *To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy*
- ▶ *To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers*
- ▶ *To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters education and recognition programs*
- ▶ *To act within Toastmasters’ core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities*

▶ MEET MY MENTOR 

Donna Lile, CC, ALB

BY MARY NESFIELD



FROM LEFT: Donna Lile, CC, ALB, Caroline Lyngstad, ACB, ALB

Donna Lile is a member of two clubs in Minnesota. She works as an account manager helping clients develop and implement relocation benefits for staff members and credits Toastmasters with her ability to confidently deliver presentations to her company and clients. When Caroline Lyngstad visited the TicTalkers club in Plymouth, Minnesota, she was welcomed by Donna. The mentoring relationship began as Donna helped Caroline gain the confidence to prepare to re-enter the workforce after raising small children.

What was it like to visit the club?

When I first contacted the club about visiting, I hoped I wouldn't receive an answer—the idea of a public speaking club was terrifying! But with Donna's warm, personal welcome, I walked through the doors to my first meeting and was struck by how supportive, talented, intelligent and articulate the members were. That gave me the courage to join.

What did you want to accomplish?

I once was crippled by self-doubt. I couldn't speak about my past, but the confidence I've gained allows me to wield the power of my voice. I am learning to communicate and connect through stories and I hope to inspire others to do the same.

What have you learned?

I have learned to hold on to hope to get through doubt, pain and fear to a place of peace, forgiveness, self-awareness and strength. I share my story to inspire, uplift and empower others. And if that helps them recognize and overcome the darkest moments of their lives, I accept the opportunity, privilege and honor.

What do you value most about Donna's mentoring?

Donna is approachable, dedicated and passionate about helping others. She cares. She helped me become an active member, a club officer and a mentor. She addresses all my concerns, not just about speeches but about what it takes to be successful—not just in Toastmasters, but in life. I am now employed by my children's school district. I believe Toastmasters made it possible for me to pursue and gain this wonderful opportunity, and I love what I do.

NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

Do you know an exceptional mentor who has positively influenced you? Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) of you and your mentor to MentorMoment@toastmasters.org.

▶ THE CLUB EXPERIENCE

Nadine Mbikina, ACB, ALS, president of Yaoundé Toastmasters club in Cameroon, Africa, visited three clubs while on vacation in Montreal. "I was welcomed in all the clubs I visited with great enthusiasm and friendliness," she says. "I met very nice people and participated in meetings like I was in my own club." Here she poses with members of the McGill club, in Montreal, Canada. "I encourage everyone to do the same during a vacation," she says. "It was very rewarding and inspiring."



Nadine Mbikina (center, orange dress)

The Magic of Paris

I celebrated the City of Light by visiting a Toastmasters club.

BY LINDA COHEN, ACB, ALB

This will be my 10th year as a Toastmaster. I learned about the organization by accident when a stranger overheard me giving a sales presentation at a Starbucks coffee shop and recommended that I check it out. I've stayed all these years because I believe it's one of the best personal-growth organizations in existence.

Last year, while serving as president of my club, I volunteered to be the target speaker for several Speech Evaluation contests at other area clubs. It was valuable for me to receive a variety of speech evaluations from members of different clubs. Visiting multiple clubs was so enlightening that when our family planned a vacation to Paris in the spring of 2016, I decided to visit a club there.

Paris has several English-speaking clubs. I contacted two and realized one was within walking distance of the apartment we had rented near the Pompidou Center. The meeting of the Paris Speech Masters took place at a lovely French restaurant in Le Marais, a historic district in Paris. At the request of the club's vice president education, I served as general evaluator. We met on an upper floor in a cozily lit room, and it was a leisurely meeting, lasting almost 2 1/2 hours with a break in the middle for dinner and wonderful red wine. This was France, after all.

The 15 or so members in attendance, who spoke excellent English and came from a variety of other countries, created a highly interactive and inclusive meeting, punctuated by laughter and camaraderie. When I delivered my general evaluator report, I shared a story. While in Paris, I'd had two experiences related to turning on the sink water in the bathroom. (Many sinks there have foot pedals to do this.) The first time, while I was struggling to figure out how to get the water on, a stranger kindly showed me where to step. The second time, in the bathroom during the break at the Toastmasters meeting, I



The author (shown holding the Toastmaster magazine) visits the Paris Speech Masters club where she met and became inspired by 91-year-old member Peter Kenton (in the red sweater).

was able to help someone else who apparently was as clueless as I'd been. While I playfully demonstrated my story for the group, including hand and foot motions, I shared my own sense of humor.

Peter is an amazing example of what's possible if we decide that age doesn't determine our opportunities.

I offered my compliments to the club. The members had made me feel so welcome; many had even given me advice about activities our family could enjoy while in Paris. I also offered the group a few suggestions for improvement. All feedback was warmly received.

One of the highlights for me was meeting club member Peter Kenton—a 91-year-old DTM. Peter grew up in New York and joined Toastmasters after a visit to California, where his brother invited him to attend a Toastmasters meeting. The chemical engineering company Peter worked for sent him to Paris in 1959, and he loved the city so much he never left.

Peter eventually joined a Toastmasters club in Paris when he was in his 60s and earned his DTM when he was 73. He belongs to three clubs in the city and has given speeches in English, French, German and Hungarian. Peter is an amazing example of what's possible if we decide that age doesn't determine our opportunities.

No matter where we go in the world, when we are with other Toastmasters we are part of the same family. I encourage you to find a club on your next travel adventure, and if that happens to bring you to the Portland, Oregon, area, we'd be delighted to welcome you to our club, Toastmasters for Speaking Professionals. Don't let the name scare you: All visitors are welcome, speaking professionals or not, and we have as much fun and as many laughs as any club I know! **T**

LINDA COHEN, ACB, ALB, is a member of Toastmasters for Speaking Professionals in Tigard, Oregon. The author of 1,000 Mitzvahs: How Small Acts of Kindness Can Heal, Inspire and Change Your Life, she speaks to associations and businesses on how to cultivate a culture of kindness. Learn more at www.lindacohenconsulting.com.

TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



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1 | GRACE MORAN, from Doha, Qatar, visits Logan Pass at Glacier National Park in Montana, United States.

2 | BILL JONES, ACB, CL, from Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, helms the boat during the Vic-Maui International Yacht Race from British Columbia to Maui, Hawaii.

3 | TERESA JOSEPHSON, DTM, from Richland, Washington, poses in Petra, Jordan.

4 | JAMES HAMILTON, from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, dives into the Sea of Cortez near Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.



2



3



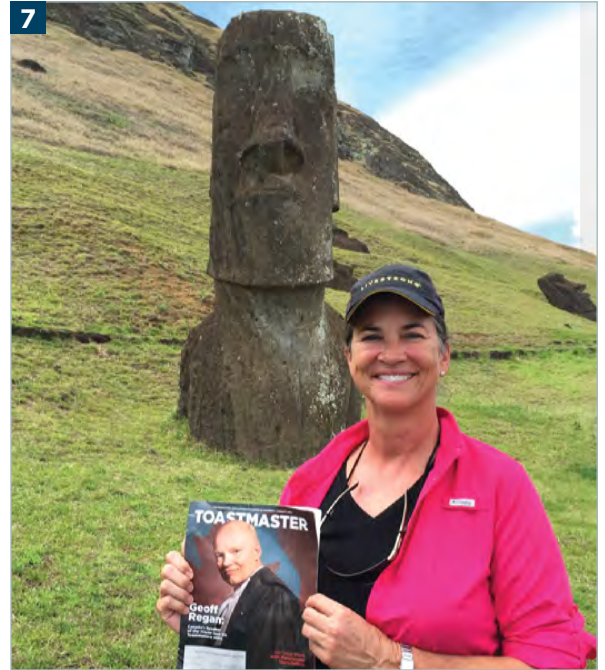
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5 | GLENN LIM, DTM, from Singapore, takes in the sights near the Tower of Pisa in Italy.

6 | SETHURAMAN KUMARASWAMY, CC, from Kingston, Jamaica, enjoys the view in Banff National Park in the Canadian Rockies.

7 | MONA PITTENGER, CC, from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, visits the Moai on Easter Island, Chile.

8 | DEBORAH BROWN, from Long Island, New York, poses near Langjökull—the second largest glacier in Iceland.

Member Achievements

Four members share their stories of transformation and lessons learned.

Thibaut Mourgues, CC

Milan, Italy

A Global Family

In 2013, I traveled to Libreville, Gabon (a French-speaking country on the west coast of Central Africa) for a business conference, where a participant spoke about how he had created a Toastmasters club months earlier. While there I visited his club—an unbelievable experience.

The meeting took place in a schoolroom that looked like it could have existed in pre-World War II Europe. The temperature was about 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). The business portion started with the payment of fees—the average income in this country is low, but nearly all participants were ready to sacrifice quite a lot to join. Among the participants were two businessmen, army officers, half a dozen students and even a nun.

Introducing myself, I explained that I was French but that my journey with Toastmasters had started in Jordan. Then the meeting began with the “joke master,” who succeeded in making us all laugh. He was followed by two speakers. Both speeches were extremely moving. In one, a young girl spoke about her 13 brothers and sisters and how, despite the death of both of her parents, she managed to study at a university. The second speech was by a bright student who presented quotes from difficult French authors. The grammarian was particularly draconian with respect to the rules of the French language. In the end, they asked me to evaluate the meeting and the speeches.

I had experienced the Toastmasters spirit in Jordan, which enriched my life in so many aspects, not only by developing my communication and leadership skills but, most importantly, by enabling me to meet wonderful friends. To discover that this wonderful spirit is alive in West-Central Africa is a heart opener. Thank you, Toastmasters, for connecting and bonding people and bridging differences among members regardless of their race, background, culture or religion, turning us all into one great global family.



Thibaut Mourgues



Rebecca Now

Rebecca Now, ACG, ALB

Webster Groves Toastmasters club • St. Louis, Missouri

A Step Into History

Toastmasters introduced me to a woman who changed my life. In 2013, I was searching for a speech for the Interpretive Reading project in the Advanced Communication Series when I stumbled on a speech given by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York.

In Stanton’s speech, “A Declaration of Rights and Sentiments,” she called for the right of women to vote. Her words contained such passion and intellect, and she had a delightfully bombastic oratorical style. I edited her speech to the required time limit for the project and delivered my interpretation of it to my club. The evaluator remarked, “Rebecca, you just need a costume.” Inspired by his comment, I had a historical costume made and began giving Stanton’s speech to friends and to clubs.

This speech was only the beginning of my journey. I wanted to know more about the history of women’s right to vote in the United States. Like peeling an onion, I found that one book led to another. I read every book I could find about Stanton, then moved on to read about Susan B.

Anthony, Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt and others who advanced the cause toward women’s equality and gave speeches about this fascinating part of American history.

I have now given presentations at the Missouri History Museum, re-creating the famous speech by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and speaking on the history of the women’s suffrage movement. I also spoke at the Celebrate the Vote Festival. I am working on a St. Louis Suffrage Centennial event, as well as other projects.

Finding that speech has been the springboard to my passion and joy, and the skills I learned in Toastmasters have enabled me to share history with a wider audience.

Jesse Good, ACB, ALB

Olympic Orators • American Fort, Utah

The Three Lessons I've Learned

In high school I competed on the speech team and never did really well. I only made it to the final round of a speech tournament one time and it was at the smallest meet of the year, where I placed 7th. Despite that, I still felt confident about speaking in front of a crowd.

Then, during my second year in college, I decided to get my public speaking course out of the way. The instructor was pleasant, the topics were fun and I started to get really good with PowerPoint. I finished the class with very high marks.

Then, about two years ago, I found myself giving a presentation at work. The speaker before me and the speaker after me were both fantastic. I paled in comparison. I knew I had a lot of room for improvement, and when I spoke with my manager about this concern, he suggested I join Toastmasters as part of my professional development.

After two years in a Toastmasters club, here are some new things I didn't expect to learn:

Leadership. When I began exploring Toastmasters, I had no idea about the leadership track. I've served as vice president public relations, president and vice president education. I've learned how to build interest in the club, keep a meeting running on time and schedule an event with several moving pieces.

Preparation. As a newly appointed area director, I understand the timing, planning and preparation that goes into meetings and contests. I've learned that a simple one-hour meeting takes participation from several people, and everyone must do their part to be effective. Additionally, I learned that where I lacked wasn't in my presentation skills, but in my preparation skills.

Writing. While teaching young adults about speeches recently, one of my fellow Toastmasters spoke about the importance of every word. When you have only five to seven minutes to speak, you have to make every word count. I have not only improved my writing skills but discovered that I have a passion for it—a discovery I would have never have made without Toastmasters.



Jesse Good



Theresa "Terri" Banks

Theresa "Terri" Banks, DTM

New Faith Toastmasters/South Suburban Toastmasters
Matteson/South Holland, Illinois

I Have Transformed

In February 1999, my manager, Renee Buckhanan, asked me to read a poem before a large group of people during a special event in downtown Chicago. As I spoke, my voice was quivering, my posture was slouched and I thought I'd knock over the lectern at any given moment. Once I finished, co-workers told me I sounded fine, but I lacked the confidence to believe them.

In April of the same year, I joined Toastmasters. I'd heard of the organization and wanted to see if it could help me. I read through the manuals and presented every lesson as instructed. I was afraid at first, and often hyperventilated while walking to the lectern. However, after I delivered speech number six from the Communication and Leadership Program manual

(now called Competent Communication), something clicked!

Up until that point, every evaluation had boosted my confidence. After the sixth speech, I finally started to believe I could overcome my fear of public speaking. I continued executing lessons from my manual, and was encouraged along the way by seasoned members like Charles Brooks, DTM, PDG. Now I'm a DTM! I can comfortably speak before an audience of any size, and I'm excited to take on leadership roles.

Toastmasters will work for any member that puts forth the effort to change, and that member will work alongside some of the best people they'll ever meet in their life. I've transformed from an introvert to an extrovert. I've developed into my authentic self. I'll always remain a member of Toastmasters. I'm still learning, growing and helping others. 📌

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Write it in 300 words or less and send with a high-resolution photo to submissions@toastmasters.org.



Lauryn Williams competes in the women's 4-X-100 meter relay at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

Photo by Johannes Eisele/
Agence France-Presse

“Those medals represent so much more than just what they are materially. They are for the community, for my family and for my friends and coach. I received so many different levels of support that helped me get to that point that I really understood in that moment what it means when people say it takes a village to accomplish something great.”

— LAURYN WILLIAMS, CC

REACH THE FINISH LINE!

Olympic silver and gold medalist Lauryn Williams talks about goal-setting and success.

BY MISSY SHEEHAN

For many Toastmasters, a new year means a whole new set of goals. Will 2017 be the year you run for a club officer role, lead a committee at work or earn a new education award?

Whatever your personal and professional goals, consider taking some cues from history-making athlete Lauryn Williams, a Toastmaster from Texas. Not only did Williams win an Olympic gold medal as a sprinter in 2012, she later won a silver medal in an entirely different Olympic sport: bobsledding. She became just the second American (and first American woman) ever to win medals in both the Summer and Winter Olympics. Only five athletes in all have accomplished this remarkable feat.

To excel at the highest levels of two sports, Williams made goal-setting a key part of her routine, and she continues the habit today. She writes her goals on a chalkboard wall in her house to hold herself accountable.

"I'm very task-oriented, so goals fit into my task category the same way I'd write down a task like getting my oil changed," says Williams, a four-time Olympian and three-time medal winner. "It's a way of reminding myself that something is on my list. Then I ask myself what I'm doing to get it done."

A Fast Start

Williams, CC, started running track when she was 9. She was always education-oriented, and in high school she realized her success as a sprinter could help her get a free college education. She made that a goal—and achieved it when she earned a full athletic scholarship to the University of Miami.

During her college career, she won many national honors and broke a series of sprint records. After her junior season, she began training for the Olympics—three hours a day, six days a

week. Training included physical therapy, stretching, a proper diet and getting enough rest. "It really does make it a full-time job," says Williams, a member of the TNT Toastmasters club in Addison, Texas.

The work paid off. In the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece, she ran the 100-meter dash in 10.96 seconds and won the silver medal. "It was a really gratifying moment," recalls the 33-year-old. "Those medals represent so much more than just what they are materially. They are for the community, for my family and for my friends and coach. I received so many different levels of support that helped me get to that point that I really understood in that moment what it means when people say it takes a village to accomplish something great."

Over the next two years, Williams won several gold and silver medals while competing on the national and international levels. However, her 2006 season was cut short due to a hamstring injury. Coping with injuries is part of being a professional athlete, and Williams' way of staying motivated during her recovery was to set small, manageable goals for herself. This applies to all aspects of life, she notes. Breaking a large goal into several smaller goals boosts your chance of success.

For example, for a top track athlete "there are practice-sized goals, competition-sized goals and championship-sized goals," says Williams. "You want to have a good practice, then you want to have a good competition and then you want to have good championships. You just have to keep moving up through all the different levels of smaller goals to help you achieve those bigger goals."

More Success

Williams recovered from the injury and continued her Olympics success. In the 2008 Games in Beijing, she came in fourth in the 100-meter dash, and in the 2012 Games in London, Williams and her three teammates won gold in the 100-meter relay race. Subsequently, she retired from track and field, but that wasn't the end



Photo by Elton Anderson

GOAL-SETTING

of her Olympic journey. In 2013, inspired by a fellow Olympic track athlete who became a bobsledder—hurdler Lolo Jones—Williams decided to try the sport herself. But she had to travel far from her home in Texas to do her bobsled training. “You have to go to where the bobsled tracks are: Calgary, Canada; Park City, Utah; and Lake Placid, New York.”

A post that year from Williams’ blog shows how much joy she found in the sport. “Running downhill on ice pushing a 400-pound sled may sound crazy to some, but I am having SO MUCH FUN!” she wrote.

“I think the biggest challenge transitioning from an athlete to the business world was having confidence in myself.”

— LAURYN WILLIAMS

She was selected to join the U.S. Olympic bobsled team and competed in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Williams and her bobsled partner, Elana Meyers Taylor, took home a silver medal.

Now retired from professional athletics, Williams is focused on achieving goals in other areas of her life. Her main aspiration is to keep building her financial planning business, which serves professional athletes and young professionals. Williams was a

finance major in college and later earned an MBA. She felt there was a need for her business, which is called Worth Winning. Williams says she met many athletes who didn’t have their finances in order, adding that she was “not treated very well” in her own experience reaching out to different financial advisers.

“I think the biggest challenge transitioning from an athlete to the business world was having confidence in myself,” adds Williams. “Financial planning is a topic I had lots of education on but not a lot of hands-on experience with, so speaking eloquently in front of people made me very nervous even though I knew the topic.”

Gaining Confidence

Williams joined the TNT Toastmasters club in 2014 to improve her speaking skills. She says the experience has been highly valuable. “Toastmasters has helped in my finance career because I’m constantly pitching people and sharing my elevator speech,” she says. “The hardest part when you’re starting a new company is trying to market it to people and not sound too sales-y but also sound passionate about what you do, and not being afraid to talk about it as much as you can and garner interest.”

TNT club president Shelley Cramm, CC, CL, says Williams has refined her delivery, including her ability to give a speech within a time limit. “There’s an art to getting your message across on time and being able to train yourself to save time at the beginning for that powerful ending,” Cramm says. “Lauryn has definitely grown in that area.”



Williams, right, and her partner, Elana Meyers Taylor, compete during the Two-Woman Bobsleigh event at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia.

Photo by Bob Martin

In addition, Toastmasters has boosted her confidence in social situations, says Williams. “It’s helped me a lot in terms of interacting with others and really connecting with the person that I’m speaking to.... Being more confident in speaking has allowed me to really engage in a conversation.”

“You just have to keep moving up through all the different levels of smaller goals to help you achieve those bigger goals.”

— LAURYN WILLIAMS

Toastmasters training has definite value for professional athletes, she adds. “I think athletes are put in positions where they’re talking in front of people quite frequently, even if it’s not a formal

speaking engagement, and Toastmasters for them would be great for helping them prepare speeches as well as speak to the media.”

Besides leading financial-planning seminars for her business, Williams gives motivational speeches at conferences, schools and athletic clubs. She talks to children as well as to employees of corporations.

And the former Olympian has a new goal.

“I am looking to join some speakers bureaus now that I am feeling more confident about my speaking.” **T**

Missy Sheehan is a freelance writer, copy editor and proofreader. For more information, visit her website at www.sheehanwriting.com.

SPEAKING OUT TO CLEAN UP SPORTS

Olympic gold medalist and Toastmaster Lauryn Williams is combining her speaking and communication skills with her athletic expertise to serve as a volunteer for the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Doping—athletes taking illegal substances to improve their performances—has cast a shadow over the Olympics, as well as other sports, over the years. Williams is one of many athletes trying to improve the situation. As a volunteer for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), she helps with outreach programs.

“Generally, our job is to be advocates for athletes worldwide who are competing in Olympic sports and being tested under the WADA umbrella,” she says.

Williams also spoke on TV about the doping issue. Shortly before the 2016 Olympics began, Russia’s track and field team was barred by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) from competing in the 2016 Games. The organization alleged widespread doping among Russia’s track and field athletes. On

the heels of that ruling, Williams sat down for a one-on-one interview in a news segment aired on the NBC TV network. She praised the IAAF’s decision and spoke of how more steps need to be taken in the anti-doping campaign so that all athletes can compete fairly against each other. “We need to work together to level the playing field,” she said in the TV interview.

The 2016 Olympics, held last summer in Rio de Janeiro, was a prime opportunity to make an impact on athletes around the world, and Williams did her part.

“There was a big booth set up in the cafeteria, in the Olympic village, and we were educating people on cleaning up the sport, about morals and values as they pertain to sports and what [substances] you can and can’t take,” she says.

“We talked about the processes there are if you need to see a doctor and take something, and how to let people know in the appropriate way so it doesn’t affect your competition.”

Williams says she went to a bobsledding event recently



Williams speaks at the 29th Annual Great Sports Legends Dinner in September 2014, at The Waldorf Astoria, New York City.

Photo by Bryan Bedder

and did similar work, spreading the word about staying clean in sports.

“These aren’t really speaking engagements as much as they are outreach events where we talk and try to share the message of clean sports with people who are currently competing, and then with young children who are competing who could end up becoming Olympic athletes one day.”



Elite Women Athletes Show Their Strength

Skier and Spartan racer push past setbacks to score new goals.

BY MISSY SHEEHAN

Olympic medal winner Lauryn Williams isn't the only Toastmaster who has flourished in the athletic arena. A number of other Toastmasters have achieved success in sports, including Jamie Crane-Mauzy, a former professional skier, and Eléa Faucheron, a competitor on a popular sports-oriented television program called *Spartan: Ultimate Team Challenge*.

Both women have been driven by goals, and their stories are inspirational examples of skill, ambition and perseverance.

Jamie Crane-Mauzy

For this 24-year-old, becoming a professional athlete was more than just a childhood dream. It was a goal she worked hard to accomplish. She achieved it in 2008, when she was recruited at age 16 to join the United States Ski Team's Elite Aerial Development Program.

Crane-Mauzy learned to ski when she was only a year old and spent years striving to master her sport even after she started competing in slopestyle and halfpipe competitions all over the world. "As a professional skier, life is always about setting goals," she says. "Every day you want to push the boundaries a little bit, try a new grab, clean up your spin, do another 180."

Fittingly, Crane-Mauzy is a member of a Toastmasters club in one of the skiing capitals of the world: Park City, Utah.

When it comes to a goal-setting strategy, Crane-Mauzy believes in breaking large goals into smaller ones. "If you take baby steps in the direction of your dream, you can accomplish whatever



Jamie Crane-Mauzy

er you want," she says. This mentality helped her achieve some impressive feats: In 2010, she became the first female freeski slopestyle world champion at the Junior Snowboard & Freestyle World Championships in New Zealand. Three years later, she became the first female freeski skier to land a double backflip in competition as well as the first female skier to flip off a rail in competition.

Crane-Mauzy constantly pushed herself to perform bigger and better tricks. On April 11, 2015, though, her skiing career ended abruptly when she crashed during an international competition in Canada while attempting to become the first woman to complete an off-axis double backflip. The accident left her with a traumatic brain injury that caused paralysis in the right side of her body. She was in a coma for eight days after being airlifted to the hospital. Doctors weren't sure whether she would survive, she says.

Traumatic Time

It took a long time for Crane-Mauzy to heal. Her brain injury caused her to have severe memory loss for nearly two months after the crash. While eventually her memory returned, she had to relearn how to do everything, including walking and talking.

To stay motivated during her recovery, Crane-Mauzy tried to focus on the present moment and take small steps to rebuild her



Eléa Faucheron



life. “I didn’t worry too much about the future or compare myself to the past,” she says. “I just set short-term goals that I knew I could accomplish.”

This approach has served Crane-Mauzy well during her transition from professional skier to full-time college student and blossoming motivational speaker. She joined the Park City Toastmasters in February 2016 to improve her presentation skills. Since then, she’s given speeches during televised media events, at conferences and at Rotary Club and ski club meetings.

“If you take baby steps in the direction of your dream, you can accomplish whatever you want.”

— JAMIE CRANE-MAUZY

“Toastmasters definitely helps me use less filler words, like *uh* and *um* and *like*. It helps me be more concise and to the point in my speaking,” she says.

Crane-Mauzy says the Toastmasters training also helps her slow down and pause at important points of a presentation. Just like in skiing, she loves the chance to improve. “With the group of people in my Toastmasters club and the environment to practice in, I can create my speech to be perfect.”

Jude Robinson, ACB, CL, vice president public relations of the Park City Toastmasters, says Crane-Mauzy has become a valuable member of the club and an inspiration. “She has an amazing story to tell,” Robinson says.

Eléa Faucheron

When Eléa Faucheron, CC, CL, and her husband were invited to join a four-person team and apply to compete on *Spartan: Ultimate Team Challenge* in 2015, they decided to go for it. Their team, the Charleston Warriors, was selected to compete against 35 other teams of elite athletes for the \$250,000 grand prize. The American show aired over the summer on the NBC network.

Spartan Races are timed obstacle events where competitors must climb ropes, scale walls, leap over fire and perform other daunting feats. One of the most brutal activities is called a “bucket carry.” It involves carrying a bucket of approximately 50 pounds of gravel for about 250 yards up and down a hilly area—sometimes while also trudging through a pool of water.

As difficult as these various tasks are, Faucheron says Spartan racing also makes her feel like a kid again. “I grew up in the mountains and entertained myself by playing outside,” she says. “I climbed trees, stomped through creeks and dirt, and scaled rocks. For me, this brings back a childlike resilience that many of us have long lost in adulthood.”

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 29)

My 5 Goal-Setting Strategies

How I became an Accredited Speaker.

BY ELDONNA LEWIS-FERNANDEZ, ACS, ALB, AS

In September 2015, I submitted my application to become an Accredited Speaker (AS). Almost a year later, I became the 68th Accredited Speaker—only the 15th woman to earn the designation—at the 85th Annual Toastmasters International Convention in August 2016. How did I accomplish this?

My Toastmasters journey began in 2006, when I joined the Air LA Club in El Segundo, California. In 2007, I started speaking on behalf of a nonprofit to help women in crisis. I also participated in Toastmasters speech contests and benefited from some coaching. I positioned myself with my negotiation expertise and started to get paid for speaking. When I decided to go for the AS designation, I had already met most of the requirements laid out in the application—25 speaking gigs, 15 of which are paid, to non-Toastmasters audiences of 20 or more. But I still needed to submit a 25- to 45-minute unedited video of a speech delivered to a non-Toastmasters audience of 20 or more. In November 2015, I recorded a presentation that I delivered to about 80 people.

I took the following steps to achieve my goal, and you can too!

1 Set big goals and visualize success.

I set my goal, made a statement of achievement (*It is now August 19, 2016, and I am Toastmasters Accredited Speaker number 68*), and visualized myself doing the talk and receiving the award. Visualizing it made it real to me.

2 Enlist the help of coaches.

I sought advice from Accredited Speaker Sheryl Roush, DTM. She reviewed my video and application and helped me brainstorm some of the accomplishments that I didn't think to include. I also reached out to five organizers of my paid speaking engagements and asked them to submit a form with information about my performance directly to World

Headquarters, as required. Knowing that the application is due between January 1st and February 1st every year, it came down to the wire when the last letter arrived a couple of days before the deadline.

In February, my application was accepted and I moved to Level 1, where five judges reviewed my video and application. It's a pass or fail to Level 2, which entails speaking for 20 minutes at the convention with five anonymous judges in the audience. I passed!

3 Feedback: Take what you like and leave the rest. I began preparing for my Level 2 speech by shrinking down a previously delivered hour-long talk into 20 minutes and began delivering it in front of as many groups as I could. When I delivered it at my club, they shredded it! The feedback was longer than my talk! I went home wondering if I was ready for the AS accreditation. After watching each recording of my speech, and the feedback, I realized that I needed to write a new one.

Armed with a new speech, I started working with a coach on slides and everything from gestures to vocal variety. I began presenting at various clubs and organizations and reached out to at least a dozen other Accredited Speakers for advice. I also watched videos from last year's three speakers.

4 Prepare. I practiced my presentation at least 200 times. I went over it every day—at home, in the car, on the beach—until it became a part of my DNA, and I visualized speaking and receiving the award.

5 Enjoy the process and celebrate your success! Before the convention, I walked the stage to plan my position. For the next two days, I watched where other speakers stood to determine what looked best to the audience.

I was to speak first. Music was playing as I was introduced. The audience was



Eldonna Lewis-Fernandez

I went over the presentation every day—at home, in the car, on the beach—until it became a part of my DNA.

engaged; there was laughter and applause. I felt great! After I spoke, I watched four others give their presentations. Then we waited to be notified by phone. I made it! Wow! Goal accomplished. Fellow Toastmaster and 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking Darren LaCroix also earned the designation.

Toastmasters is a great organization. I met many amazing people at the convention—it was so much fun. Afterward, I celebrated by hosting a dinner at home. The entire experience changed my life.

Use these strategies to set your next goal. Do the work and you will have the power to succeed! 📌

Eldonna Lewis-Fernandez, ACS, ALB, AS, CEO of *Dynamic Vision International*, is a veteran negotiation and contracts expert and author of *Think Like a Negotiator*. She is a keynote speaker, session leader and panelist on the art of negotiation, and is a trainer of negotiation. Reach her at www.ThinkLikeANegotiator.com.

Game On!

Why I became an Accredited Speaker.

BY DARREN LACROIX, ATM, AS

If you aspire to become a professional speaker, this could be the most important article you read this year. What is the Toastmasters Accredited Speaker (AS) Program, and why seek the accreditation? Why not? You might ask why I reached for that accreditation after being a Toastmaster since 1995.

Two years ago I was challenged by a professional speaker to become an Accredited Speaker. Game on! I went for it in 2015 but did not make it to the final round. In 2016, I tried again. This time I passed to the final round and gave a live presentation at the Toastmasters International Convention in front of 1,000 people. The most common question I received afterward was, “Why?” That was usually followed by, “I thought you already were accredited.” No, I was not.

Any profession has designations and accreditations that are recognized in that industry. The AS separates you from the hobbyist speakers, not that there is anything wrong with speaking as a hobby. The accreditation requires effort and direction, but it shows determination. Find out how to get there.

The Most Exciting Part

When I competed in the International Speech Contest back in 2001, I did it for a different reason from when I competed in 1998, when I did it for ego and a trophy. In 2001, I had the intention of making one of my stories so good that someone would pay to hear it.

Similar to a speech contest, the final presentation in the AS Program is judged on several categories. But unlike a speech contest, it's a pass or fail. AS judging has nothing to do with being compared to other competitors; whether or not you make it is 100 percent dependent on *you*. While it is not easy, it is much simpler than winning five speech contests!

I remember hearing a brilliant quote by Jim Rohn, an American entrepreneur,

author and motivational speaker: “*Set a goal to become a millionaire for what it makes of you to achieve it. Do it for the skills you have to learn and the person you have to become.*”

Think about that. Don't do it for the money; do it for the person you will become.

The week before the 2016 International Convention, I spoke at Toastmasters clubs every day to strengthen my presentation. My opening question was, “Do you want to speak ... or be heard?” I wanted to explain the difference between merely speaking and actually making a difference in your audience's thinking. And then I had the idea of creating a visual to help clarify the difference.

Professional visuals are part of the judging. Without my last couple of live run-throughs, that visual would not have existed. *The process* made me better able to communicate my message.

Speech Contest vs. Accredited Speaker

Only one person wins the World Championship of Public Speaking® each year. And winning a speech contest does not equal a professional speaking career. No one has ever hired me for a large fee, or any fee, because I have a trophy. *I have* been hired because of the stories I tell. A speakers bureau doesn't care if you have a trophy. They *do* care about first-class marketing materials and a professional demonstration video showing a powerful story and audience engagement. If you compete to improve your skills, you will win every time.

What is your intention?

Going for your AS requires you to interact and build your business in the real world. You will need to present 25 profes-



sional speeches outside of Toastmasters. You will learn about the industry and how it works.

Start Now

Begin now to get the required documentation. Applications must be in between January 1st and February 1st each year. Download the forms now and start filling them out to see what you need to work on. Put pictures on your vision board and break down what you need to do into manageable tasks and goals. Even if your timeline to accomplish your goal is several years down the road, start now. If you are already a professional speaker, the process will be easier and faster.

Whether you are challenged or encouraged to speak professionally, consider pursuing the AS. Don't do it to add more letters after your name, but for the speaker and businessperson that you will become in the process. I challenge you! ■

Darren LaCroix, ATM, AS, is the 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking. He is a member of the Powerhouse Pros club in Las Vegas, Nevada. For more tips from Darren, visit www.TheTop10SpeakingMistakes.com.

Applications for Level 1 are accepted January 1 through February 1. For more information about the application process, please visit www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Accredited-Speaker.

DTM

HPL

CC

Many of us are chronic un-completers.
We don't finish what we start, we abandon
habits and give up on our goals.

WAKE
UP

WE ARE WHAT WE DO

Habits and goals go hand in hand.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

In his 1926 book, *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the World's Greatest Philosophers*, Will Durant paraphrases Aristotle's teaching on habits with these words: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit."

Excellent leaders partner their goals with consistent habits. Goal-achieving leaders have character traits like courage and persistence, but their habits pave the way to success. They practice day-to-day routines and behaviors so regularly they almost become automatic. Even mundane habits lay the groundwork for a successful journey and propel you little by little to reach your goals.

Meet Two Goal-getters

Esuna Dugarova, ACB, CL, is a past president of the International Geneva Toastmasters club in Switzerland. She holds a Ph.D. in Asian Studies from Cambridge University and is a research fellow at the United Nations in Geneva studying social dimensions of sustainable development, which is development that meets present needs without compromising future generations. In her professional role she is a "future-thinker," so goal setting and vision-casting is part of her job.

She does the same with Toastmasters. As club president, her vision was to change the club's routines and habits to enhance the members' experience. She says, "I polled members to find their needs and what changes they'd suggest for the club. From that I identified specific ways to meet those needs. We brought more variety to the club with debate and improvisation. We improved mentoring for speech contestants. I adopted a more personalized approach of writing encouraging heartfelt notes so people felt valued."

Although sometimes exhausted from her regular job, she wanted to provide an inspirational club environment for everyone. "When I was tired, I pushed myself to accomplish things. It's

hard, but always rewarding, because energy creates energy," she says. "I believe that strong will, hard work and perseverance drive success. It's not enough to tell yourself, 'You can do it!' You need to act. This trains your will to get where you want to be."

Dugarova models the power of consistent habits, both personally and within her club. When she implemented changes in club routines, or regularly chose to push through exhaustion, the results were clear. Under her leadership, the club grew consistently and became dramatically more positive. She says, "The members clearly enjoyed themselves as evidenced by happy smiles and the lovely ambiance during the meetings." For her dedication, she received the Club President Award in recognition of Dedicated Service and Outstanding Leadership, a clear indication she met her goals.

Delatorro McNeal II is a peak performance expert, best-selling author and professional motivational speaker. *And* he got his start in Toastmasters. In graduate school he originally joined Seminole Toastmasters in Tallahassee, Florida. He says, "I moved to Tampa and joined an extraordinary club, Suncoast Toastmasters." In 2003, he became a full-time professional speaker and began to travel extensively. "I'm not an active Toastmaster now," he says, "but every chance I have, in all my interviews, training material and boot camp speaker training events, I promote it. I even require my coaching clients to join."

In 2013, he wanted to create a reality TV show that featured him coaching emerging speakers to build a speaking business. The vision for *The Keynote* was born. Unfazed by his lack of TV production experience, he worked to achieve his dream. He secured a cast, crew and a location, then crowd-sourced over \$25,000 in funding. He proposed the show to major networks, but after a year of rejections, chose instead to release it directly to the internet in the spring of 2016. The second season is in



Delatorro McNeal II speaks to more than 700 faculty and staff at North Carolina Central University in August 2015.



*McNeal created a public-speaking reality TV show called *The Keynote*.*

production. In the show, he features Toastmasters clubs helping contestants improve their communication skills.

While developing *The Keynote*, McNeal used the same goal-setting techniques that he teaches in his annual transformational conference “The Full Throttle Experience.” He says, “Massive success needs 3 R’s. First, what’s the Reason you do what you do? I wanted a positive business reality show about public speaking. I wanted to help people push past their top fear because then their other fears don’t have a chance. Second, what’s the Reward at the end? I visualized myself on TV, on DVDs, in the press; I imagined what the fans would say, how the contestants would change. Third is Resources. Maximize what you have, and get what you need. Build your resources ... spiritual, financial, human (engage others to help), and emotional (determination, resilience, patience.)”

McNeal relies on consistent habits. He says, “Each night I plan my next day. While I’m sleeping, my subconscious mind works on what my conscious mind has scheduled. When I wake up, I’m ready. Then I immediately verbalize my gratitude because that’s the emotional trump that overcomes negative emotions. You can’t be simultaneously grateful and grumpy. After some cardio exercise, I attack my day with routines like tending to finances, checking on pending contracts and following up with clients.”

Personalize Your Habits

Many of us are chronic un-completers. We don’t finish what we start, we abandon habits and give up on our goals. These self-sabotaging patterns block us from the success we long for. **Mike Rayburn** is an international keynote speaker, a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), Hall of Fame speaker (CPAE), and two-time TEDx presenter who inspires his audiences to think “What if...?”

in order to achieve more than they thought possible. He says, “Success is not what you think. It’s what you do with what you think. Ideas mean nothing without execution. The measure of your success is your ability to complete things.” If your goals are not being met, it’s probably because the habits and behaviors you chose are not working in your favor.

“Success is not what you think. It’s what you do with what you think.”

—MIKE RAYBURN

The solution is in setting different habits, ones that are personalized for you, and therefore easier to maintain. **Gretchen Rubin** is a speaker and writer on the topic of habits and happiness. Her *New York Times* bestseller, *Better than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives*, describes how to develop personalized, customized habits that work for you. She writes in a January 2016 blog: *There’s a popular myth about habits that leads people astray. It makes them accuse themselves of being lazy, self-indulgent, and lacking in will-power. It causes them to fail. What is this myth? It’s the myth that there’s a magic, one-size-fits-all solution for habit change. But there’s no one ‘best’ habit. Rather, there is a one-size-fits-all-solution, which is: Follow the habits that work for you, that help make you happier, healthier, and more productive.*

So, instead of doing what everyone else does, try to choose habits that are effective for you. This will increase your odds of reaching your goals. Here are some that worked for other Toastmasters.

1 **Send personal notes.** **Ryan Avery, DTM**, is the 2012 World Champion of Public Speaking, and a member of the Compet-

itive Speakers PDX club in Portland, Oregon. He makes it a regular habit of writing handwritten letters. “It’s physical proof that you took your most precious resource (time) and thought of that person. Handwritten notes offer a human touch that is missing in most of our communication today.”

2 Document everything. Margy Sneed, ACS, ALS, of Kloof Toastmasters Business Breakfast club in Durbin, South Africa, knows the connection between documenting her club involvement and reaching goals. Her habit is tracking everything. “A meeting role is for CL credit ... every PR or membership campaign is for CL credit. Each member I mentor is CL or ACG credit. These goals are as much for me as they are to help my clubs achieve Distinguished status. My personal goal is to complete my DTM by December 9, 2016. I have just three speeches to go. In addition, since achieving a Triple Crown [achieving three education awards in a single program year] in the 2nd year of my membership, I now set a goal to achieve a Triple Crown every year.”

3 Prioritize well. Chief Ambassador and past District Governor Jan Vecchio, DTM, is a member of seven clubs in New South Wales, Australia. Since her teen years, she’s been focused on setting and meeting goals. As a member, she says, “Each year I plan to achieve an education award for each of my clubs. That’s seven awards each year! In addition, I plan to complete another DTM this year. For the required HPL [High Performance Leadership] project, I am thinking of something that will benefit the community outside Toastmasters.” She finds ways to balance her Toastmasters commitments with other things, such as friends and family, reading, running and going to the opera. “I plan ahead and keep a diary,” she says. “It comes down to time management. I don’t waste time watching television. Time is a precious commodity and I handle it with care.”

4 Create habits related to your goals. Will Durant’s quote, as mentioned in the opening paragraph, is one of Josephine Lee’s favorites. Lee, the third-place winner in the 2016 World Championship of Public Speaking®, says it’s because the idea of benefiting from our daily habits “gives us hope that we may all achieve excellence through what we do every day.” A member of three clubs in Southern California, Lee says of her path in Toastmasters: “I try not to have expectations or tie myself too closely with an outcome that I have no control over. Instead, I focus on what I have control over every day.” She credits her success to daily practice, as well as to her speech coach.

5 Practice your ABC’s: Always Be Curious. Great leaders are intensely curious, and make continual learning a high priority. They ask questions, seek expert advice, read extensively and invest in training. If you have a Toastmasters leadership goal, you



Esuna Dugarova poses with the Club President Award after serving her term with the International Geneva Toastmasters club in Switzerland in 2016.

would be wise to do the same, especially since the opportunities for learning are plentiful. The Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI), for example, is the training program designed for club officers to learn their roles. Leaders from all over your district come together, providing a phenomenal networking environment and a safe forum to ask questions and share ideas. At my first TLI, I learned a creative way to conduct a demonstration meeting. That helped me to charter a new club and earn my DTM. I’ve attended many TLIs and presented at several as well. The learning never stops for the leader.

Leaders know that whether your goals are inside or outside of Toastmasters, the habits you choose will help you reach them. Habits and goals go hand in hand. Durant’s words bear repeating: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit.” Choose excellence. **T**

Maureen Zappala, DTM, is a former NASA propulsion engineer. Today she’s a professional speaker, author and presentation skills coach, as well as founder of High Altitude Strategies, a coaching and speaking service. She belongs to the Aerospace Toastmasters club in Cleveland, Ohio. Visit her website at www.MaureenZ.com.

The Toastmaster Whisperer

The best evaluators know which comments should be shared privately.

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM, PDG

Horse Whisperer: A trainer who builds trust and rapport with a horse to elicit the best performance possible

Toastmaster Whisperer: The speech evaluator who emphasizes private coaching and feedback, and encourages dialogue to supplement a public speech evaluation

Have you ever given a speech and been stung by a public comment made by your official evaluator a few minutes later? It first happened to me when, after my fourth speech, my evaluator loudly announced to the club that I had a nervous twitch with my right shoulder that occurred 11 times in my five-to-seven-minute speech. Was it accurate? Yes. Was he right to make me aware of it? Yes. Did he have to do it publicly? *No!* I would have preferred him to pull me aside afterward and let me know privately, or write his observation in a private note or on my evaluation form.

By being publicly “outed,” I felt shame. I was embarrassed and humiliated. Furthermore, I became fearful of ever speaking at that club again. Thankfully, my mentor at another club interceded when I told her about this experience. She gave me the courage and encouragement to speak again at my home club. Yet 22 years later I still remember the sting of that public remark.

The Public-Private Distinction

The role of speech evaluator is vital to the development of members giving prepared speeches. And the evaluation component of Toastmasters will be even stronger in the Pathways learning experience, which launches this year. In Pathways, evaluators will use guidelines that are more expansive and rigorous than in the current education program.

Yet not all feedback from an evaluator is best delivered publicly during a meeting’s two-to-three-minute evaluation slot.



Some conversations are best held privately, *after* the speaker has processed his or her presentation and gained some perspective.

Some feedback that’s sensitive might require a delicate and tactful delivery and might be better shared in a dialogue with the speaker or need more time for the proper context to be established—a context that can’t be achieved in a two-to-three-minute evaluation shortly after the speech.

Simply put, distinctions exist between what we say publicly about a speaker’s presentation and what we share privately. “If there’s a fear greater than public speaking, it may be public criticism,” says therapist and Toastmaster Marianne Gunther-Murphy, ACB. “Public feedback is helpful if it is received without activating shame.”

Evaluate to Motivate

Speakers in club meetings receive applause for their speeches, an official evaluation from a designated evaluator and oftentimes written feedback from club mates. Yet there are limitations to this arrangement:

- ▶ Feedback comes shortly after you give the speech.
- ▶ It’s a one-way communication from evaluator to speaker.
- ▶ It’s public!

A good evaluation serves the speaker *and* the listening audience. The evaluator’s observations should help the speaker



and audience members understand the tenets of effective speechmaking.

Yet some feedback is sensitive. Perhaps the speaker's apparel is inappropriate or there's been a wardrobe malfunction. Perhaps there is an issue of personal hygiene or the speaker is repeatedly misusing or mispronouncing a word. "Simply put, some speakers

"If there's a fear greater than public speaking, it may be public criticism."

— MARIANNE GUNTHER-MURPHY, ACB

have blind spots!" says Katherine Pratt, DTM, the 2015–2016 District 4 director in the San Francisco Bay Area.

It's embarrassing for speakers to have their blind spots pointed out publicly right after they've spoken. Better to take them aside later and *whisper*, rather than shine a spotlight on, their difficulties.

Svetlana Danilova, DTM, of San Francisco's Evening Stars club, cites a Russian proverb to explain that while we never lie in an evaluation, in the kitchen everything comes out. In a meeting format, the official speech evaluation is the living room, whereas the conversation *after* the meeting ends represents kitchen talk. Sometimes the setting provides the emotional safety to speak candidly about sensitive subjects.

The Teachable Moment

Sometimes an evaluator's comments can teach the club an important lesson. A deft evaluator can pivot from the speaker's infraction or lapse to discuss broadly how everyone can improve in a certain area.

How the evaluator addresses a speaker's problem can depend on the nature of the error. Sometimes an evaluator unwittingly uses words or phrases that could be derogatory to one or more members of the audience. Such instances usually should warrant a private conversation rather than a public one.

Consider the following list of concerns an evaluator might identify in a speech.

- ▶ Speaker's nervous tic or speech impediment
- ▶ Inappropriate language or topic
- ▶ Sexist, racist or xenophobic language
- ▶ Factually incorrect data
- ▶ Condescending or pejorative tone
- ▶ Inappropriate humor
- ▶ Selling from the lectern or proselytizing religious beliefs
- ▶ Excessive personal disclosures
- ▶ Incorrect source attribution for a quote or poem

While addressing topics such as these publicly could benefit the entire audience, you can't do so to the detriment of the speaker, who is vulnerable and would likely feel embarrassed by hearing



about such missteps in front of the entire club. A good evaluator will know the speaker, their skill level and temperament, and know how the person would take critical feedback, even delicately delivered, before sharing it right after a speech has been made.

Gunther-Murphy, the therapist and Toastmaster, says, “Often, we don’t know the speaker’s vulnerability. For example, if a speaker makes little eye contact, [pointing that out] could evoke shame if they’ve been criticized for being shy and haven’t had good experiences with that risk. Another speaker may hear [such feedback] as a great reminder, or ask for more examples and ask about the impact on the speech.”

Although an evaluator may not know these traits about a speaker, another club member might. Enter the mentor.

The Mentor-Mentee Relationship

In Toastmasters we encourage all our members, not just new ones, to have official mentors to help them as speakers and leaders. As such, an evaluator might confer with a speaker’s mentor before and/or after the meeting to discuss how best to address the types of issues listed above. Mentors have an existing relationship with the speaker, know them better and have established trust that allows for discussing sensitive situations. Especially when a speaker’s blind spots are detected, the mentor is likely the best person to broach the topic.

Gunther-Murphy, a member of Lakeview Toastmasters in Oakland, elaborates on the safety of the mentor-mentee relationship. “Private feedback is rich, because it allows for the relationship to help to hold the information. One can go slow and see how the first suggestion lands.”

In private, she notes, the mentee can ask questions. “Misunderstandings can be addressed if the receiver of the feedback feels confused or hurt,” says Gunther-Murphy. “If the intent is positive, then that can be communicated and injury can be repaired, sometimes increasing the strength of the bond.”

When public goes private, a speaker’s groans of embarrassment are often replaced by growth.

Handle With Care

“Each person responds differently to life’s slings and arrows,” writes Richard J. Davidson, co-author of *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*. He adds, “Each of us is unique in our emotional makeup and this individuality determines why some people are resilient and others vulnerable, why some have high levels of well-being despite objective adversity while others decompensate rapidly in the response to the slightest setback.”

Thus, we as evaluators should tread with caution when blending criticism with congratulations in evaluating others’ speeches. It turns out that we physiologically process compliments and criticisms differently, according to research shared by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen in their book *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*. “Negative feedback and positive feedback are mediated by different parts of the brain,” they write.

Our brains have a “red alert” system to protect us from danger, including harsh words or threats to our self-image. When we experience negative feelings like fear, anxiety or disgust, the right side of our brain’s frontal cortex swings into action, warning us of the threat, the authors write.

Some conversations are best held privately, after the speaker has processed his or her presentation and gained some perspective.

Another part of our brain processes such positive feelings as amusement, hope and love, though not as urgently, note Stone and Heen. This explains why, when a speech evaluator leads off with negative comments, the subsequent positive remarks aren’t heard as clearly or powerfully by the speaker, who may dwell on the negative remarks or ignore the praise that follows the sting of negative feedback. Thus, evaluators in Toastmasters are advised to employ the sandwich approach of offering positive remarks both before and after remarks considered to be critical or negative in nature.

To best serve our speakers, complement your public evaluation with additional comments delivered privately to the speaker or discussed at length after the speaker has had time to process their performance and take in their public evaluation and written evaluation forms. Then you’ll become an evaluator par excellence ... and qualify as a Toastmaster Whisperer. ■

Craig Harrison, DTM, PDG, a charter member of Silicon Valley *ImprovMasters*, is the founder of the training firm **ExpressionsofExcellence.com**. Download free resources that Craig has created for Toastmasters at **www.SpeakandLeadWithConfidence.com**. These resources include a checklist to help you identify what you would prefer to learn about your speech publicly versus privately.

Elite Women Athletes Show Their Strength

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

A member of the Pleasant Speakers Toastmasters club in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Faucheron says succeeding in such races gives her a thrilling sense of accomplishment. “Conquering physical obstacles feels liberating, empowering, and adventurously exhilarating,” says the 40-year-old. “It supports my confidence in handling obstacles that appear in my daily life.”

The avid kiteboarder says she started competing in Spartan Races because she needed a change in her life. The former co-owner of a kiteboard, surf, skate and paddleboard store as well as a company that designed, manufactured and sold paddleboards, Faucheron was experiencing burnout. “I was working so much and got so stressed that I became physically ill,” she says.

“If we can remember to practice the tools we learn in Toastmasters, everything becomes easier.”

— ELÉA FAUCHERON

As part of her recovery plan, she became a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach through the Coaches Training Institute (CTI). She founded her life-coaching business, Move Think Smile, in 2014, the same year she and her business partner sold their store and paddleboard company.

She encourages her clients to use her Move Think Smile technique to reach their goals. The Move part has two definitions, she says: moving your body and moving forward in your life. “When you’re moving toward a goal, a lot of times you have to make a bold move,” she says. “Combining exercise with that can help you go farther because after a workout you’re feeling really good,

really confident, and that primes you for making that big change in your life.”

The Think part of Faucheron’s technique involves changing the way you think about goals. “Being willing to look at your end goal from a different perspective can help you catapult yourself forward,” she says. The Smile part represents the result. “When you’re making progress toward your goal or reaching your goal, the outcome is being happy and fulfilled.”

A New Challenge

As brave as Faucheron is when it comes to leaping fire or climbing over walls, she says the idea of speaking in public terrified her. Joining the Pleasant Speakers Toastmasters in 2013 was a challenge given to her during her coach training. “We had to talk about things we were afraid of, and I realized through that process how affected I was by public speaking. Physically I would have all sorts of anxiety reactions—sweaty palms, racing heart, dizziness, my mind going blank.”

By confronting her fear, Faucheron says, she was able to overcome it. She currently serves as the president of her club. Her Toastmasters training, especially with Table Topics, came in handy during the filming of on-camera interviews for *Spartan: Ultimate Team Challenge*, she says.

The experience has helped in many areas of her life, says Faucheron, from having a tough conversation with a client to speaking to an audience at a local gym.

“Toastmasters keeps the focus on appreciating what is working well within ourselves and others, while asking us to improve our A game,” she notes. “This is a great recipe for getting over very tall and muddy Spartan walls, or managing staff meetings, or interacting with your kids. If we can remember to practice the tools we learn in Toastmasters, everything becomes easier!” ■

Missy Sheehan is a freelance writer, copy editor and proofreader. For more information, visit her website at www.sheehanwriting.com.



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The Cruellest Month

That would be April, of course – but it starts in January.

BY JOHN CADLEY

There has been much speculation about what T. S. Eliot meant when he wrote “April is the cruellest month.” April, after all, is the harbinger of spring, the assurance that winter’s dark, frigid miseries will soon give way to summer’s sun-dappled delights. What’s cruel about that? Well, now we know. Scholars have discovered a gym-membership card among Eliot’s papers, the product of a New Year’s resolution he had made to get physically fit and thus become the only poet in England who didn’t look like he’d just spent a year in solitary confinement.

The card was designed to be punched every time it was used. January had punches for almost every day, February for every other day—a slight fall-off, perhaps, but not enough to prevent Eliot from writing in his diary on February 25, 1918, “*Looking in the mirror I couldn’t help but think to myself, ‘Yeats would kill for abs like these.’*” In March, however, the punch holes covered only a quarter of the month, and by April there were none. His diary entry for April 30 of that year tells the tale: “*Not gone to the gym once this month. Failure! Failure! Failure! Can’t I do ANYTHING right?! My New Year’s resolution sagged like my stomach. I was so close to hitting my target training heart rate zone. And what did I do instead? Sit here like a lump of bread pudding writing some stupid poem called “The Waste Land.” Oh April, you have been cruel to me.*”

I’m telling you this because it’s January and you are Toastmasters—ambitious people eager to better yourselves. You’re going to make New Year’s resolutions. I know

you are. And that’s fine. I just don’t want April to be *your* cruellest month. I don’t want you to reach that glorious month when the earth is bursting forth with new life and all you can hear is a voice in your head screaming, “*Failure! Failure! Failure! Plus I still have to do my taxes!!*”

I’m telling you this because it’s January and you are Toastmasters—ambitious people eager to better yourselves. You’re going to make New Year’s resolutions.

So pick something easy, something you absolutely cannot fail to do. Like breathing. You laugh? Phrased properly this simple act becomes a goal you can be proud to achieve: *I will inhale AND exhale every second of every day of this year—whether I want to or not. And if I get a cold and can’t breathe through my nose, I will set my face like flint against the forces of negativity and breathe through my mouth!* If you can accomplish this from January 1 to December 31, you will have done better than the 55.3 million people every year who don’t, if you know what I mean.

Another fail-safe New Year’s resolution: *I will grow one year older.* You cannot avoid this even if you try—in fact, even if you lie about your age and spend \$10,000 on miracle anti-wrinkle creams, including

(I’m sorry but it’s true) those recommended by the world’s leading dermatologists. All you have to do is sit in your Barcalounger and wait for the earth to rotate 366.242 times on its axis. The only way you can *possibly* fail at this is if you are somehow unable to keep the first resolution mentioned above, in which case New Year’s resolutions won’t really be an issue anymore, if you know what I mean.

Now, I’m no fool. I hear you out there, snickering at the mundane nature of these suggestions. Is this a joke? Before you answer that question, let me ask a few of my own. If you are determined to better yourself through some challenging activity, why haven’t you done it already? Because it’s hard. It requires commitment and persistence. You may have those qualities, but can you sustain them over 365 days? With all due respect, probably not ... or you would have done it by now. And if you do not have those qualities on December 31, what makes you think they will magically appear on January 1? I know that sounds harsh but I’m only trying to save you from the agonies of Eliot. If you take my suggestions and start right here in January, by April you will be able to say with confidence, “I have been breathing and aging for four straight months now. I can do this!”

It may not be climbing Mount Everest, but it’s a success. Failing at yet another New Year’s resolution? That’s just cruel. **T**

JOHN CADLEY, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at www.cadleys.com.

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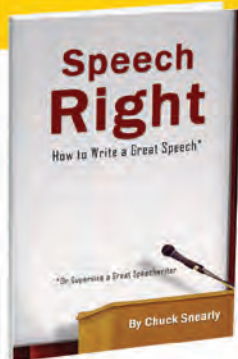
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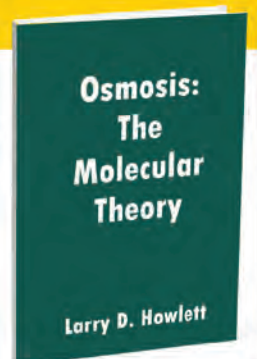
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