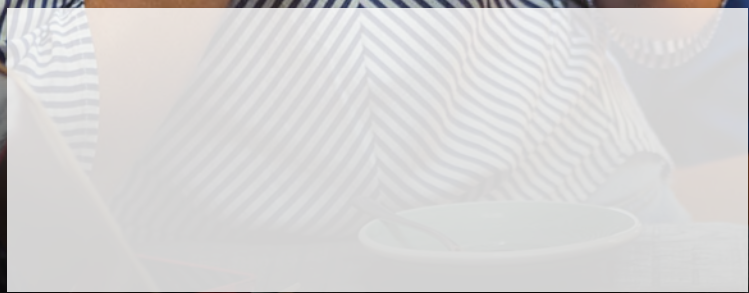


THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | DECEMBER 2017

# TOASTMASTER®

Become a Better  
*Conversationalist*

How to talk to  
anyone any time



**How to Shine as  
an Area Director**

**Tips for  
Great Toasts**

# Make an Impact with What You Learn

**H**ow long should you stay in Toastmasters? The answer depends on many factors. But many members leave way too soon. Some leave before completing even the simplest of goals, others after achieving a specific goal. What concerns me the most is when members reach a significant goal in communication and leadership and then move on without ever putting these skills to good use.

To paraphrase Mark Twain and others, “A person who won’t read has no advantage over one who can’t read.” Likewise, a Toastmaster who won’t lead has no advantage over one who can’t lead. Think about it. Some Toastmasters complete all phases of the program, earning the coveted Distinguished Toastmaster award, and then do nothing with it. Don’t let this happen—keep moving forward! As you near completion of your current goal, set a new one.

Scientific studies show that lifelong learning stimulates the brain and may be the key to a vibrant later life. Many years ago, I met a Toastmaster from District 31 named Charlie Keane, DTM, when he was 101 years old. I learned that he was district governor when he was 98! A member from 1953 until he died in 2008, he lived and breathed Toastmasters and wanted to share his experiences with others. Charlie personified lifelong learning.

## A Toastmaster who won’t lead has no advantage over one who can’t lead.

Lifelong learning helps us adapt to change. The world is changing fast, and we need to accept that. Toastmasters is an ever-changing program, with new educational paths, new opportunities and new ways of doing old things. As Toastmasters, we learn to deal with change.

And finally, lifelong learning helps us increase our knowledge. We join Toastmasters to be more than what we are. We learn a great deal: goal-setting, team-building, how to run a special event, how to evaluate and mentor, and so much more. And, of course, we greatly improve our communication and leadership skills.

Don’t fail to put all this knowledge and these skills to good use. Run for office, volunteer for other organizations that need leaders, mentor a young person, sit on a board, teach a class, start a business or volunteer for a group that needs your kind of expertise. Don’t be that person who knows how to lead, but doesn’t. Don’t be that person who knows how to communicate, but fails to do so.

Tens of thousands of Toastmasters have changed the world in some small way. Join them. Make an impact in your world with what you learn in Toastmasters. You will experience the joy of knowing that you have made a difference!

### Balraj Arunasalam, DTM

International President



# TOASTMASTER®

#### Publisher

Daniel Rex

#### Managing Editor

Suzanne Frey

#### Senior Editor

Paul Sterman

#### Associate Editor

Mary Nesfield

#### Digital Content Editor

Shannon Dewey

#### Editorial Assistant

Mariam Jehangir

#### Graphic Design

Susan Campbell

#### 2017-2018 OFFICERS

##### International President

Balraj Arunasalam, DTM

##### International President-Elect

Lark Doley, DTM

##### First Vice President

Deepak Menon, DTM

##### Second Vice President

Richard Peck, DTM

##### Immediate Past President

Mike Storkey, DTM

##### Chief Executive Officer

Daniel Rex

##### Secretary-Treasurer

Jennifer Quinn

#### 2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Morrison, DTM

Region 1

Jim Kohli, DTM

Region 2

Tracy M. Thomason, DTM

Region 3

Monique Levesque-Pharoah, DTM

Region 4

Donald F. Bittick, DTM

Region 5

Vera Johnson, DTM

Region 6

Reginald Darnell Ford, DTM

Region 7

Matt Kinsey, DTM

Region 8

Radhi Spear, DTM

Region 9

Michael Osur, DTM

Region 10

Morag Mathieson, DTM

Region 11

David Fisher, DTM

Region 12

Derek Wong, DTM

Region 13

Elisa W. Tay, DTM

Region 14

#### 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](http://www.toastmasters.org)

#### CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining

or building a club, visit:

[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

Article submission:

[submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org)

Letters to the Editor:

[letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org)

To change address,

log in to:

[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

#### Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



#### WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

The *Toastmaster* magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 23182 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688, U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Mission Viejo, CA and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address change to the *Toastmaster* magazine, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690, U.S.A.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership. Members' subscriptions are included in the \$45 semi-annual dues.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. The *Toastmaster* magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises.

Copyright 2017 Toastmasters International, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

Toastmasters International, the *Toastmaster* logo and the Toastmaster International Emblem are trademarks of Toastmasters International registered in the United States, Canada and many other countries. Marca registrada en Mexico.

Printed in U.S.A.

Congratulations to the clubs around the world celebrating anniversaries and other milestones.



District 102 leaders and members of the Super Speakers Toastmasters club in Puchong, Malaysia, celebrate the club's 200th meeting and installation of the club executive committee for the 2017-2018 term.



The Markham Toastmasters club in Markham, Ontario, Canada, celebrates its 35th anniversary, as well as the 15th consecutive year of achieving President's Distinguished.



Baxter Toastmasters club in Round Lake, Illinois, celebrates its 60th anniversary.



**Send your fun club photos to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org).** Include a description and your club name, number and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) or 1 MB (megabyte). Out-of-focus images cannot be accepted. It is not necessary to include the Toastmaster magazine or other branded materials in your photos, but if Toastmasters materials are displayed, they must reflect the current brand.

## Features



16

LEADERSHIP

### Shine as an Area Director

Improve your skills while nurturing the clubs you serve.

*By Maureen Zappala, DTM*



22

COMMUNICATION

### Become a Better Conversationalist

How to talk to anyone any time.

*By Patricia Fry*

## Articles

12

PRESENTATION SKILLS  
GET TO THE POINT

The difference between a meaningful presentation and a forgettable collection of words may not be what you think.

*By Joel Schwartzberg, CL*

14

EDUCATION PROGRAM  
SAYING YES TO PATHWAYS

Enthusiasm spreads as new program arrives in more regions.

*By Paul Sterman*

20

PRESENTATION SKILLS  
HERE'S TO TOASTING!

Keeping the ancient art of toasting alive.

*By Missy Sheehan*



# Toastmaster Magazine Online

See more photos, videos and links online at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine).

## December Online Extras:

- **Saying Yes to Pathways**—Discover how Pathways is gaining momentum through additional photos and a video. ▶ 📺
- **Here's to Toasting!**—Learn how to toast for any occasion by watching an exclusive Toastmasters video. ▶
- **Become a Better Conversationalist**—Watch extra videos to learn how you can improve your interpersonal communication skills. ▶



## Articles

26

**SUCCESS STORIES**  
**MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS**  
Four tales of transformed lives.



28

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**IT'S NO SECRET:**  
**HOW TOASTMASTERS SKILLS**  
**CAN BOOST YOUR CAREER**  
Use your new skills to communicate and lead in the workplace.  
*By Nina John, DTM*



## Columns

2 **VIEWPOINT**

Make an Impact with What You Learn  
*By Balraj Arunasalam, DTM*  
*International President*

11 **MY TURN**

We Rise  
*By Elbia Quiñones, DTM*

15 **TOASTMASTERS TOOLBOX**

Your First Time as Toastmaster of the Meeting  
*By Bill Brown, DTM*

30 **FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT**

Love Letters  
*By John Cadley*

## Departments

3 **MEMBERS' FORUM**

6 **QUICK TAKES**

10 **TRAVELING TOASTMASTER**

▶ MEMBER MOMENT 

## Believe in the Power of Your Voice

BY CHERYL ANDRICHUK, ACB

Sherry Benson Podolchuk looked at the bottle of sleeping pills in her hand. All she wanted was to fall asleep and feel nothing—ever again. Then she glimpsed her daughter’s school picture and in that instant knew she couldn’t do such a terrible thing to her little girl.

That desperate night was a long way from where Sherry started as a new recruit in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) 20 years earlier. A new mom who wanted to make a better life for her daughter and a positive impact on the world, Sherry relished her initial training and looked forward to the promised camaraderie with her colleagues. Instead, she says, she found herself bullied and isolated. But she refused to suffer in silence, and those listening to Sherry now speak against harassment and bullying can hear her fighting spirit. A member of the Toastmasters in the Arts club in Manitoba, Canada, since 2013, she has used her Toastmasters skills to write books, answer questions for committees and speak out within her community.

Shy and private by nature, Sherry, ACB, says she tried to ignore what started as graphic nicknames at work. “It knocked my socks off. No one had ever spoken to me like that before,” she says. When that didn’t work, she spoke to each individual. Finally, in frustration she went to her boss, but the bullying escalated beyond name-calling, she says.

“If anyone had spoken in my defense, the bullying would have stopped. It just takes one person to ruin a workplace if there is ineffectual leadership.”

In the years that followed, Sherry battled to be free of harassment and discrimination in the workplace—and had to deal with retribution for her efforts. Her physical and emotional health declined, but she didn’t stop fighting back. It turns out that Sherry was far from alone in what she endured. In October 2016, the head of the RCMP publicly apologized to hundreds of women who had been bullied, sexually harassed or discriminated against as officers or employees of the force.

Throughout the years, Sherry documented her ordeal and began journaling as part of her recovery. It dawned on her that she could write a book that might encourage others to speak up, to hold bullies accountable and lead to changes. *Women Not Wanted* was published in 2007 and a second book soon followed that shares tools and strategies for dealing with workplace bullying. Her upcoming book is about her insight into post-traumatic stress disorder—a



Sherry Benson Podolchuk



topic she says she lives with daily. It took almost a year after her retirement from the RCMP in 2009 to recognize she was finally free of the harassment.

Knowing it was important to get her message out, Sherry struggled when expressing herself. She joined the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers to meet other speakers and see how they trained. Then in 2013 she heard about a new Toastmasters club starting up. “Today, part of my self-care is going to the weekly meetings. I’m surrounded by positive people in a fun, relaxed group,” she says. She

particularly values the constructive feedback she receives. “I learn something at Toastmasters every week.”

Sherry continued to gain confidence in her speaking skills and jumped at the chance to give a talk at TEDxWinnipeg. Her presentation was called “How I Survived Workplace Bullying.” Not only was it a way to connect with a live audience, but it gave her a chance to spread her message virtually throughout the world.

Most recently her input was sought by Canada’s Department of National Defense and Security Senate Committee regarding how to move the RCMP forward as an organization by implementing work culture changes—something she believes is possible because “there are good officers in a bad system.” Her Toastmasters skills came in handy. “We each had a minute or two to respond to questions from the committee. As I listened to some of the others, I recognized how much I had improved.”

Sherry originally became a police officer to make the world a better place. Although it didn’t happen exactly as she thought it would, she’s achieving her goal as she continues to spread her message of empowerment: *You can get through this*. Believe in the power of *your* voice.

**Cheryl Andrichuk, ACB, CL**, is the president and a charter member of Off the Page Toastmasters, an advanced writers’ club in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada.

▶ SNAPSHOT



Division S council members from District 89 meet in Software Park, Nanshan District, in Shenzhen, China, during their first official day as a team. “Our Division S team’s slogan is ‘Serve to Success,’ and we want to serve our members’ basic needs and help all of them to achieve success,” says Nancy Huang, DTM, Division S director. “All of my team members hope to learn and practice more about communication and leadership through serving our members.”

▶ LOOKING BACK IN HISTORY

## These Are The Gifts

BY RALPH C. SMEDLEY

*The following is an excerpt from a December 1957 article written by Toastmasters International founder Ralph C. Smedley.*

Not only at Christmas, but throughout the year, we are the recipients of gifts of incalculable value. Because they are so freely given, so constantly available, we tend to lose our appreciation for them. They become commonplace. We need to realize their value.

For example, there is the gift of speech—the power to communicate with others. We accept it as a matter of course, and all too often, we abuse it, or fail to make good use of it.

In your Toastmasters club, you are working to improve your ability to communicate, share your ideas with others and create bet-

ter understanding. The gift of speech is given to you, in principle, for you to use as you will. If you truly appreciate it, you will wish to make the best possible use of it. That is why we practice speaking and listen to evaluations. We gain skill by practice, and we improve by heeding our evaluators.

Try to think of a world in which there is no communication. Can you imagine what life would be like if you were unable to speak to others, or to listen when they speak to you? There would be no sharing of ideas, no way to gain cooperation. There would be no civilization. If we could not communicate our ideas with each other, there could be no understanding, and no working together.



In your Toastmasters club, you are making use of this greatest of gifts, and as you use it, you discover another priceless gift, the gift of *opportunity*.

Opportunity awaits you in your own club—opportunity to prepare yourself to take advantage of other opportunities which are all around you in your daily life. These are the gifts which last. Accept them with gratitude, and use them with diligence, to make your own life better, fuller and more worthy in its production.

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



## Astarte, DTM

BY MARY NESFIELD

Former Division Governor Astarte, DTM, is a longtime member who belongs to two clubs in the North Island of New Zealand. She was a secondary school teacher for 15 years before becoming a massage therapist and life coach. Astarte (who only uses one name) is also licensed to perform marriages and civil unions. Her mentee Carol Johnson, ACG, ALB, is a librarian at Massey University, Palmerston North, who joined Toastmasters after attending a Speechcraft program. She later joined the Palmerston North Club, where she met Astarte. Johnson had initially felt intimidated by Astarte's dynamic, exuberant style, she says, but then sought her out as a mentor after she reached a plateau in her skill development.



FROM LEFT: Astarte and her mentee Carol Johnson

### Tell us about Astarte.

Astarte is a generous, talented Toastmaster who can put together a creditable speech within five minutes. She's warm-hearted and empathic, but she won't shirk from addressing sensitive issues such as helping members overcome awkward mannerisms. She has a tremendous, infectious sense of fun and adventure, and she loves trying new things, such as learning to play the didgeridoo [a musical wind instrument developed by Aboriginal Australians].

### What have you accomplished as a member?

When I joined, I thought the learning would be all about giving speeches, but some of the biggest lessons have come through the leadership track. Astarte encouraged me to take on club leadership roles and I was named 2015/2016 Area Director of the Year for District 72. Astarte persuaded me to create outlines and speak

off the cuff rather than memorize my speeches. Early in our mentoring relationship, Astarte helped me with a speech for our club's International Speech Contest. The content was good, but my delivery needed work. Astarte taught me specific techniques to help me speak and move more naturally to create a stronger audience connection. I placed second in that contest. With Astarte's help, I continued to improve the speech and I won the area contest, and then placed second at the division level—thrilling moments!

Mary Nesfield is associate editor of *Toastmaster magazine*.

### 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](mailto:MentorMoment@toastmasters.org).

▶ PATHWAYS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

## Pathways Translations

Pathways educational materials in French became available to members in regions 6 and 7 when those two regions rolled out the Pathways learning experience in late October. The regions are in the United States and Canada.

All materials in Toastmasters' new education program are being translated into the organization's non-English languages: Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tamil and Traditional Chinese. Pathways materials translated into Simplified Chinese were

released earlier this year.

Members around the world volunteer their time and effort to ensure that all Pathways translations are accurate and authentic to the local culture. Thank you to members of the French Translation Review Team: Chief Reviewer Gaétane Ferland, lead reviewers Stéphane Parent and Corinne Simonet, and reviewers Marc-André Poirier, Patricia Sadoun, Stéphane Gantzer, Nina Carrasco, John Prosper Seka, Philippe-Olivier Combey, Bernadette Boly and Danaé Margerit. In

addition, past reviewers who served on the team are: Alain Cliché, Kateri Saurmure, Therese Bouchez, Maria Aghakian, Matthieu Balay, Marie-Anne Assanvo-N'Guessan and Fatime Faye.

Visit [www.toastmasters.org/Translations](http://www.toastmasters.org/Translations) to learn more about the team members. For more information, please email the Translation Team at World Headquarters at [translations@toastmasters.org](mailto:translations@toastmasters.org).



► **ADVICE FROM THE PROS**

## 5 Surprising Reasons Your Ideas Aren't Being Heard

BY KARIN HURT

Have you ever felt this way? You've got great ideas. You care deeply. *And* you're frustrated. Why is no one picking up what you're putting down? Don't give up. Take a careful look at your idea in the context of your other behaviors and interactions with your team.

**1 You're Under-Invested** – If you want your idea to gain traction, start with talking about what you're doing to help.

*"Here's what I've already done to get us started."*

*"Here are five ways I can help."*

*"Here are some additional resources I can contribute."*

**2 You've got a Track Record of Great Ideas ... For Everyone Else** – You're all ideas—no action. No one wants to listen to the guy creating a lot of extra work for *them* to implement. Build a

strong reputation of contributing to other people's ideas first.

**3 You're Apologizing for Your Idea** – Sounds crazy, right? And yet it happens all the time. "This is probably a dumb idea ..." "I'm sorry but ..."

**4 You're Too Gung Ho** – What? Did Karin Hurt the "gung ho" queen just say that? Why, yes I did. Don't shoot yourself in the foot by being overly emotional or so passionate people wonder what you put in your oatmeal that morning.

**5 You've Under-Invested in Peer Relationships** – Boy, did I have to learn this one the hard way. In my early career, I had a few ideas that I knew were just brilliant. How do I know they were good?

A few years later when I'd built strong trusting relationships I tried something almost identical, and people were lining up to help.

If you want folks to come along, work hard to get along. Invest in prioritizing your peers and the next time you look around there will be more people by your side ready to listen. Of course, the side benefit is that if the whole gang's all in, your boss will be much more eager to listen.

Your ideas matter. Positioning them takes practice, but it's worth it.

---

**Karin Hurt** is a keynote speaker, top leadership consultant and CEO of Let's Grow Leaders. Learn more about her at [letsgrowleaders.com](http://letsgrowleaders.com).



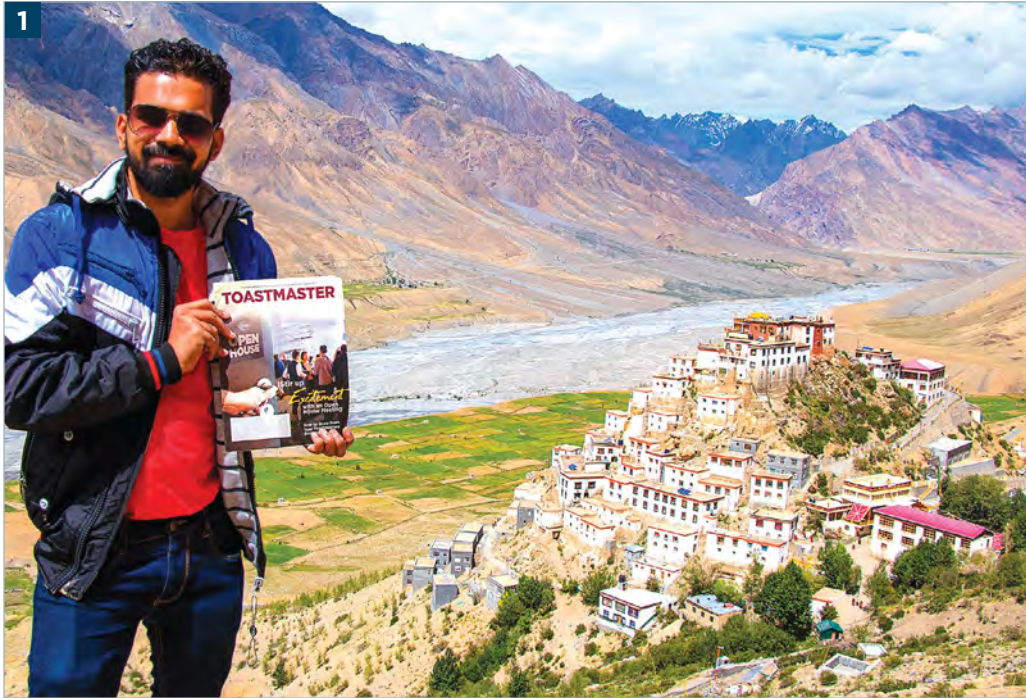
► **MEMBER CONNECTIONS**



## A Day to Celebrate

Members of Bangalore Toastmasters club in Bangalore, India, celebrate on the eve of India's Independence Day (August 15) by dressing in ethnic clothing and holding a themed meeting: "The Power of Freedom."






**1 | UTKARSH JUMLE**, from Thakurli, India, poses after trekking near the Key Monastery in Spiti Valley, India.


**2 | ELAINE CURRY, DTM**, and her husband, **LEMONT, ACB, ALB**, from Belleville, Illinois, visit Ferrari World Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

**3 | ALEXA AIKEN**, from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, visits scenic Oslo, Norway.

**4 | MARUF YUSUPOV, CC, CL**, from Aarhus, Denmark, relaxes on Iru Fushi island in the Maldives.



 **View additional photos** in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine).

 **PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine during your travels and submit your photos for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/Submissions](http://www.toastmasters.org/Submissions). Bon voyage!

# We Rise

What I learned from Hurricane María.

BY ELBIA QUIÑONES, DTM

It was a before-and-after kind of event: Hurricane María. Rubén Huertas, DTM, president of San Juan's Puerto Rico Toastmasters club now considers September 21, 2017, as his new birth date. It was the day after María hit with a merciless fury that destroyed all 78 towns that comprise the Caribbean island. As has been widely reported on the news, María hit our beautiful island as a Category 4 hurricane. It tested our resiliency. It is still testing many of us, and will for quite some time.

The days before María, Rubén and I prepared our apartment. Hurricane Irma had hit a week earlier. Irma was the jab, María, the knock out.

We love our apartment. It is secluded and lovely, hidden in the metropolitan forest. It is full of the sounds of *coqui* frogs, owls and other birds. In the distance, we see the Old San Juan skyline and lots of cruise ships. It inspires us to write stories and Toastmasters speeches.

The first signs of María's fury were winds that hit at 1:30 a.m., sounding like a chainsaw cutting through steel. A window blew out and then rain water took over the entire apartment, room by room. Hurricane María didn't even make landfall until 10 hours later, but its effects were already causing harm. I asked Rubén if we were prepared to survive this. Did we really know how to protect ourselves and make good decisions?

At that moment, I felt the inadequacy of our survival plan. As a Toastmaster, how many times do you ask yourself, *Am I really prepared to present this speech? Does it need a better structure? Am I really prepared to help others as a mentor? Do I have the courage to lead my work team or my Toastmasters colleagues as an officer of the club?* We need to be prepared for every opportunity and often we are not. I learned some very useful lessons from Hurricane María:

**Listen actively and act immediately.** I judged Rubén because I didn't feel prepared. He was desperately trying to fix things in the midst of the hurricane, and what I needed to do was help, not judge.

**Improvise, if you must, to get the job done.**

Each room in our apartment had a different problem and we applied different strategies. After the first window blew out, Rubén and I sealed the opening with an inflatable mattress secured with a heavy cabinet. We even cut up Rubén's plastic real estate "For Sale" signs to seal other blown window openings from the pounding rain. Our improvisation saved our home.

**Take care of others.** We experienced the worst hurricane in almost a century in the Atlantic Ocean, but we also received the greatest love. We witnessed many unforgettable acts of kindness. Residents put out fires and assisted bedridden and elderly neighbors. There was no electricity, no water, no fuel and no access to food after supermarket shelves were emptied by hundreds of people who waited in long lines. As of the end of October, things are slowly getting better. We still need a lot of help. However, we are relearning how to be human again in a "true community" environment.

It took us a while to get together with our fellow Toastmasters, but on October



Author Elbia Quiñones holds the "We Rise" sign and Rubén Huertas grips the shovel.

18, we held our first post-hurricane meeting. Although it was difficult to travel, members showed up for what was themed "Puerto Rico Se Levanta" (We Rise). It was a display of pure gratitude and joy. We all experienced losses and yet came through stronger than ever. Toastmasters served as an oasis of hope. I am deeply touched by the indomitable spirit of our people. We have a long way to go, but we remain strong and more united than ever.

One of the particularities of leadership is that it is best displayed during trying times. To awaken the latent powers that come with leadership one often needs a struggle, a challenge. Our challenge was María. We thank Toastmasters International for giving us a space where we can grow, heal and pursue our dreams. We are forever grateful. WE RISE. **T**

**ELBIA QUIÑONES, DTM**, secretary of the Puerto Rico Toastmasters Club, is a certified coach and author of five books.

# Get to the Point

The difference between a meaningful presentation and a forgettable collection of words may not be what you think.

BY JOEL SCHWARTZBERG, CL

**W**hen I got married in 2008, my 9-year-old son stood on his chair and gave a succinct toast that, even putting aside my fatherly pride, was one of the most successful speeches I'd ever heard. He introduced himself, made the case for why my wife and I were good people who deserved each other, and wished us well.

Three years later, I was sitting in an auditorium listening to a senior vice president deliver one of the least effective speeches I'd ever heard. With nothing more than a jumble of thoughts in his head, he rambled, tossed out ideas as they occurred to him and didn't know when to stop. It was a tortuous hour for his captive audience. The critical difference between these two speakers wasn't age, experience or confidence—typical grounds for distinguishing a strong speaker from a weak one—it was a point. My son had one; my boss' boss' boss did not.

In my 11 years as a public speaking instructor, 15 years as a competitive public speaker, four years as a university speech team coach and five years as a Toastmaster, I've seen many people giving speeches, but too few making real points. Most speakers, in fact, confuse a point for a theme, a topic or a title. But a point is different: A point is a contention you can argue, defend and prove with reasoning or data. For example, the point of a speech about unsafe toys isn't "unsafe toys." It could be: "Parents need to better protect

their children from unsafe toys." Similarly, the point of a speech about animal cruelty isn't "animal cruelty." It could be: "We need stronger animal welfare laws to prevent animal cruelty." Even your Table Topic is stronger when you make a real point: "My favorite summer vacation" becomes "My summer vacation taught me the value of taking risks." Or, "The superpower I most want" becomes "I would use the power of teleportation to make me more efficient."

## A point is a contention you can argue, defend and prove with reasoning or data.

So how do you turn a non-point into a point? Start by asking yourself five questions, starting with the most important one.

### Do you believe it?

Take the "I Believe That" test: Place the words "I believe that" in front of what you think is your point and see if your statement is grammatically correct. If it is indeed a complete thought, you're well on your way to a real point. If not, rewrite the statement until it would satisfy your middle school English teacher. These three words force you to commit to a contention and make an argument for it.

The "I Believe That" test is not only helpful for speeches; it's also useful for emails,

job interviews, pitches, performance reviews—any situation in which you're trying to make an impact. Don't just take my word for it. Read these famous "I believes" and consider what makes them so powerful:

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."—Martin Luther King Jr.

"I believe that, as long as there is plenty, poverty is evil." — Robert F. Kennedy

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart." — Anne Frank

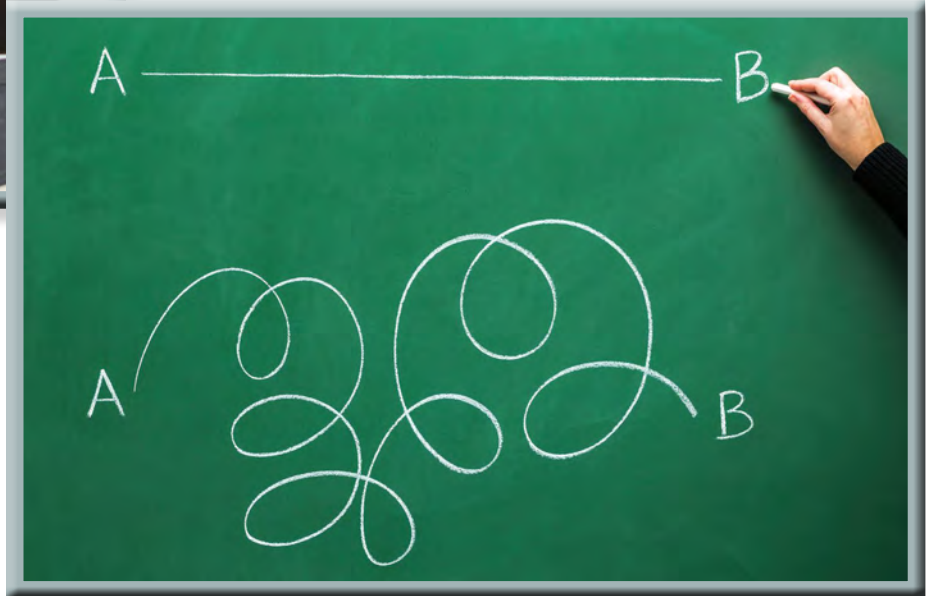
Once you've passed this test, proceed to the following questions.

### Is it a truism?

If your point is instantly true ("Ice cream is delicious."), dig deeper to find a point you can argue. ("Soft-serve ice cream is the most convenient summertime dessert.") One way to root out a truism is to follow up the point by asking yourself Why? If it's a truism, there won't be much of an answer. It answers itself. Another sign of a strong point is a feasible counterpoint. Can someone reasonably take the opposite point of view? If so, proceed.

### Am I jamming too many ideas into my point?

Most of us know "less is more," but we also need to understand "more is less." If you have multiple thoughts or adjectives to convey, don't jam them into a single



If you have multiple thoughts or adjectives to convey, don't jam them into a single point like clowns into a Volkswagen.

point like clowns into a Volkswagen. Pick the most important one, focus on it and bring up the others later, one at a time. It may seem like you add value to your point when you add new words and ideas, but when you throw multiple points at an audience in a single sentence, you actually dilute the impact of each one. The audience is not only forced to split their attention between multiple points, but is left clueless as to which idea is more relevant.

Let's test this. Which of these statements makes a stronger impact?

"This approach will improve our productivity, increase our efficiency, reduce our carbon footprint and allow us to expand operations," or "This approach will substantially improve our efficiency, enabling us to put more resources into research and development."

The statement with the singular focus clearly packs a stronger and more memorable punch.

### Am I using "badjectives"?

Badjectives are adjectives so broad that they convey no value. They're deceptive

because they seem to project a clear impression. Who wouldn't want to be connected to something "excellent," "fantastic," "terrific" or "very good"? And of course, they're very useful on Twitter.

But being so general robs your point of substance. What does it really mean to call something "great"? What makes it great? The audience has no idea. Using badjectives is like when a Little League® baseball or softball coach says, "Come on now, Johnnie!" versus "Keep your eye on the ball as it comes to you, Johnnie!" One has no value, but the other makes a substantive point.

Whether you use them in a speech, in an email, in a compliment or even in a Tweet, precise descriptors in your point have a more powerful impact on your audience. So keep digging for words that say what you truly mean.

### Can I speak about this for more than a minute?

If you can't make the minimum time for a Table Topic, chances are your response does not have much of a point.

Take this very tip, for example. I'm already done in less than a minute. The bottom line: Your point is the foundation of your speech. Without one, you have nothing to build on, and you're offering your audience little value. In essence, you're pointless. But armed with a strong point, you present to your audience an idea they can digest, take home and even benefit from. So the next time you convey a thought—whether standing on a chair or acting as a chairman—don't just describe or discuss it. Make your point, put power behind your words and champion your ideas. **T**

**Joel Schwartzberg, CC, CL**, is senior director of strategic and executive communications for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and vice president education for ASPCA Toastmasters club in New York, New York. His book, "Get to the Point! Sharpen Your Message and Make Your Words Matter," was released in October 2017.

# Saying **Yes** to **Pathways**

Enthusiasm spreads as new program arrives in more regions.

BY PAUL STERMAN

**S**hortly after the Pathways learning experience became available to members in District 49, District Director Rose Kirland visited a meeting of the Pearl City Toastmasters in Aiea, Hawaii. She loved what she saw: Members were giving speeches from projects in the new education program. A new member delivered his Pathways Ice Breaker, and a longtime Toastmaster gave a speech from the “Researching and Presenting” project, in the Dynamic Leadership path.

“The energy in the room was high,” Kirland says, adding that Pathways has created a buzz of excitement in the district since becoming available in September. “Members are embracing this program that we’ve looked forward to for a long time, and they’re supporting one another through their individual paths.”

One reason Pathways is relevant to both new and veteran members is that it’s tailored to individual needs and goals. You can learn more than 300 competencies in the program and can choose to work online or in print. (Learn more about Pathways at [www.toastmasters.org/Pathways](http://www.toastmasters.org/Pathways).) Kirland, a Distinguished Toastmaster, says she has received consistently positive feedback, particularly about Base Camp, the online gateway to Pathways. The learning management system offers many tools and resources, including tutorials and interactive features, to help users navigate the new program.

“Members have said, ‘I feel like I have a virtual personal coach just for me,’” says Kirland. “That’s powerful.”

Four regions now have access to Pathways: 2, 6, 7 and 14. Region 2 is in the western United States (including Hawaii), 14 is in Southeast Asia; and 6 and 7 are in the United States and Canada. Region 10 (Southern California, Arizona and Mexico) and Region 12 (Australia, New

Zealand and Papua New Guinea) are expected to launch the learning experience this month. The remaining regions will follow suit in 2018.

Greg Bjorgo, ACG, ALB, a member of three clubs in Las Vegas, delivered his Pathways Ice Breaker shortly after the program became available in Region 2. Although the new Ice Breaker and the traditional one share the same basic purpose—to introduce yourself to your club—guidance on the Pathways project is more extensive and specific. In Base Camp, that includes a self-assessment, a video with tips from fellow Toastmasters, and a detailed Speech Outline Worksheet. The completeness of the project, says Bjorgo, “makes it much easier for a new Toastmaster, or someone who’s experienced, to actually structure and write out their Ice Breaker.”

**“I am excited about Pathways and how focused it is on competencies and things I want to gain and achieve.”**

— GREG BJORGO,  
DISTRICT 33 AREA DIRECTOR

An area director in District 33, Bjorgo has taught leadership and management seminars for large organizations. “I am excited about Pathways and how focused it is on competencies and things I want to gain and achieve,” he says.

Mario Lin, ACB, ALB, is a Pathways Guide in District 87 in Indonesia, where Pathways arrived in July. Pathways Guides and Ambassadors are Toastmasters who visit clubs to explain the background of the new program, how it works and the



benefits it provides. When he first started telling members about Pathways, Lin says, they were confused and had many questions. “But once Pathways rolled out, lots of members were very excited,” he says.

Lin, who is working in the Innovative Planning path, is impressed with the program’s evaluation component. In Pathways, evaluation guidelines are more rigorous and expansive. After giving a speech from his second project, Lin says, he received particularly helpful feedback from his evaluator and applied the suggestions to his third speech. “I could feel the difference in energy between the previous speech and the next speech.”

He also appreciates the program’s online component. “Less paper,” he says. “It’s very convenient.”

For districts that haven’t yet launched Pathways, it’s important to prepare members early for the program’s arrival, says Kirland, the District 49 director, who also serves as an Ambassador. She commends Pathways leaders in her district for their teamwork, positive attitude and ability to build momentum for the launch. She says the team felt a “common calling”: a desire to help members understand and embrace the innovative new program.

“Jump in, join the fun,” she urges those who have an opportunity to try it. “Join the experience!” **T**

Learn more about Pathways by visiting [www.toastmasters.org/Pathways](http://www.toastmasters.org/Pathways). The webpage includes videos, testimonials, FAQs and the Pathways rollout schedule.

**Paul Sterman** is senior editor of *Toastmaster magazine*.

**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Discover how Pathways is gaining momentum through additional photos and video.



# Your First Time as Toastmaster of the Meeting

Embrace the opportunity and take charge.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

**A**s a new Toastmaster, you will experience many “firsts”: Your first speech. Your first time as the timer. Your first time as a speech evaluator. But one of the biggest is your first time serving as Toastmaster.

Why? Because this is perhaps the most important role in a club meeting. All of the others contribute to the educational experience of the individual members performing the role, but the Toastmaster is responsible for the success of the meeting as a whole. I am sure you will get plenty of help on what to say and do. Each club has its own protocol, and the more experienced members are happy to walk you through it. In this article, we will focus on the bigger picture.

For most of the meeting roles other than that of speaker, you show up and you perform your responsibilities. If there is action required before the meeting, it is along the lines of coming up with a word of the day or a list of questions for Table Topics.

Serving as the Toastmaster, however, is different. You are the manager of the meeting. What would you do if you were in charge of a meeting at work? You would put together an agenda, make sure all necessary participants were confirmed and prepared, and fill any holes that might develop. And when the meeting started, you would take charge.

Being Toastmaster is no different. In fact, you could look at it as an opportunity to develop skills necessary at work. And if you are not yet at a manager level, it is an

opportunity to show off your management skills to those who can promote you. It is an opportunity for you to shine.

Not only are you the manager of the meeting, you are also the master of ceremonies. First—you set the personality and tone of the meeting. You are the central figure, and the unifying force. You hand off the baton to the various speakers and they pass it back to you. The advantage of this is that if a speaker is not, shall we say, the most interesting, well-organized presenter, your strong, upbeat, in-control personality keeps the tempo going. You may not feel very strong right now, but you are. Just take charge.

## The Toastmaster is responsible for the success of the meeting as a whole.

Second—if you are that strong, upbeat, in-control personality, your confidence rubs off on the various speakers. When the master of ceremonies is good, the other participants in the meeting perform better.

But what if you aren't as strong, upbeat and in control as you would like? Welcome to Toastmasters, where you can make your mistakes and learn from them. If your club president is a strong master of ceremonies, draw from his or her energy and capability. And as you grow in your capabilities, watch the other Toastmasters as they fill the role. Take mental notes on what they do well and try to incorporate that the next time you are the Toastmaster.

There is another way to gain experience as a master of ceremonies. The Table Topics Master and the General Evaluator are also, on a smaller scale, the master of ceremonies of their portions of the meeting. Sign up for those roles, as well, to gain valuable experience.

There is a third area that can help you keep the meeting organized. Many clubs have a theme for each meeting. Perhaps yours does too. And even if it doesn't, what a great time of year to have one. It is the holiday season, a time to celebrate. I was in a club once that never had a themed meeting, but our last meeting of the year was a potluck, where all members brought food to share based on their own holiday traditions. After every speech we took a brief break to refill our plates. That was a fun meeting. You might want to try it yourself.

That theme could be tied in with Table Topics. This is particularly effective if your club has a wide variety of nationalities, with everyone sharing their own cultural traditions. All the roles in a Toastmasters meeting help you build your leadership skills, but the Toastmaster role gives you a significant opportunity to grow. Yes, it carries with it responsibility, but that is a giant part of leadership. Embrace the opportunity. **T**

**Bill Brown, DTM**, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of two clubs—Pro Toastmasters and Powerhouse Pros. Learn more at [www.billbrownspeechcoach.com](http://www.billbrownspeechcoach.com).

# Shine as an Area Director

Improve your skills while nurturing the clubs you serve.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

I was nervous. Sitting in my car outside of a large corporate office building, I tried to settle myself with a deep breath. *OK, Maureen, I thought. You can do this. You can do this.*

I was a new area governor (now called area director), and “this” was visiting one of my area’s clubs. As the liaison between the club and the district, my job was to observe the meeting to see if they needed help with anything. That seemed intimidating to me, and I felt wholly unqualified, even though I had been a Toastmaster for five years and served as a club officer twice. I had even visited other clubs to practice some speeches before a contest. But this was scary. I felt the big fancy title outweighed the skills required for the job.

But the minute I walked into the meeting, my fears were vanquished. “Maureen! We’re so glad you’re here! It’s an honor!” The club members embraced me with enthusiasm, warmth and openness. I felt like royalty. Apparently, the area governor visit was a big deal to them. By the end of the visit, I had a roomful of new friends and the privilege of helping them brainstorm ways to improve their club culture.

That visit changed my perspective on the leadership path. I loved my year as area governor. In fact, other former area governors and directors would say the same thing: It’s the best role!

## What Exactly Is an Area Director?

The area director is the first link in the district leadership chain. While members certainly grow within the club, greater growth happens outside of the club—it’s what I call escaping the “club bubble,” or the “clubble.” Life in the clubble is warm, comfortable and safe. But outside the clubble, leadership roles are filled with skill-building challenges and exciting opportunities to meet new people.

The area director is the information conduit between clubs and division and district leadership. The area director helps clubs meet the mission of helping members grow. Don’t think of them as su-

pervisors of the club but rather as *resources* for the club. They don’t single-handedly solve club problems, they partner with members to brainstorm and carry out solutions. They are not district “spies,” rather trusted advisors who can help identify club circumstances that may benefit from the strength of district leadership.

An area has four to six clubs. The area director is required to visit each club twice a year to observe a meeting, and to help track the clubs’ progress in the Distinguished Club Program. They also attend regularly scheduled district leadership meetings and facilitate area speech contests. The one year of serving in this role can be a very fun one!

## Why Become an Area Director?

After surveying dozens of current and past area directors, I identified four primary reasons why people take on this district leadership role.

1. Someone asked them or challenged them to do it.
2. It fulfilled the DTM requirement.
3. They desired stronger leadership skills.
4. They loved and wanted more of Toastmasters.

Most area directors will say the experience was much better than they expected. Leah Cox, DTM, of Crosswinds Toastmasters in Marshalltown, Iowa, says, “I met some of the best people in Iowa. I gained more confidence than I ever thought possible. After area governor, I became division governor, district secretary, conference chair, assistant to the district governor and then district director. Now I am a division director again, looking forward to doing it all over.”

She cherished the camaraderie she built with district leadership members. “We bonded. It was like high school again, studying and working together, discussing the work, seeing progress. I think being an area governor is the most honorable role in Toastmasters.”

As area director, Elizabeth Jordan, DTM, of Hertfordshire Speakers, Hatfield, United Kingdom, enjoyed watching others





flourish. “My favorite responsibility was visiting clubs and getting to know members,” she says. “I’d listen to their issues and work to help them as individuals as well as clubs. It was terrific to see clubs thrive. We ended the year with four President’s Distinguished clubs and two Select Distinguished.”

Distinguished Toastmaster Gwyn Pinto-D’Mello of Advanced Royal Toastmasters and Royal Lunch’N’Learn Toastmasters, both in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, points to the dramatic personal

“I learned how to set small goals to reach larger ones. It expanded my network and I made friends all over the world.”

— GWYN PINTO-D’MELLO, DTM

growth she experienced. “I grew as a speaker because, when visiting clubs, I could fill in if they needed [a speaker],” she says. “I learned delegation and time-management skills. I learned how to set small goals to reach larger ones. It expanded my network and I made friends all over the world. I took on new challenges and stepped out of my comfort zone.”

### Overcoming Challenges

The job of an area director is not complicated, but it’s not without challenges either. Common struggles include:

- ▶ Lack of confidence and fear of failing
- ▶ Difficulty getting area contest volunteers
- ▶ A large geographic area that makes club visits difficult
- ▶ Uninterested club leaders or weak clubs not committed to club growth
- ▶ Dealing with personality conflicts

## TIPS FOR CLUB VISITS

### Before You Go

Build rapport with the club president:

- ▶ Talk about the Toastmasters experience and club history.
- ▶ Email a link to the **Area Director's Club Visit Report** (Item 1471).

### During Your Visit

- ▶ Dress professionally.
- ▶ Wear your Toastmasters name badge and pin.
- ▶ If you've requested time, deliver a manual speech.

### After the Meeting

- ▶ Address club questions, needs and concerns.
- ▶ Submit your **Area Director's Club Visit Reports** by:
  - November 30 after your first visit.
  - May 31 after your second visit.

- ▶ National politics or local issues that affect club or area operations

In Toastmasters, you learn by doing, so when it comes to this leadership role you develop the skills to overcome such challenges with minimum risk. Ask for help. Be bold and creative as you find your own solutions. Don't stay *in* the problem—seek to *solve* the problem.

**“Don't think of it as a requirement for your ALS or DTM; think of what leadership skills you will develop, and how you can help your clubs grow.”**

— JAMES DENT, DTM

Brenton Hilaire, of Nature Isle Toastmasters club in Roseau, Dominica, faced a unique challenge that did not deter him. “I had a logistics and language barrier because I had two French-speaking clubs in different territories,” he notes. “My solution: I took a delegation of French- and English-speaking Toastmasters from SXM [Sint Maarten] to Guadeloupe. They conducted a club visit and officer training for me. It truly felt like a Toastmasters family.”

Linda Anger, DTM, a Pathways Ambassador and member of the Optimistic Orators Advanced club in Warren, Michigan, faced resistance from clubs when she wanted to create an area council of club leaders to help them. Her solution was pragmatic: “I decided to visit each club more often, about once a month. I was visible and available. I built relationships with members and club leaders and emailed all area members with news of upcoming events. ... A corporate club told me they wouldn't have survived without my consistent involvement.”

The challenge that Leonard Scuderi, DTM, of Leading Edge Toastmasters Club in Brisbane, Australia, faced when he was a 23-year-old area governor in 1999 was his age. He says, “Some members were 30 or more years older than I was. I wasn't sure how they'd respond to someone so much younger. But I reminded myself that everyone can learn something from everyone regardless of age or experience. I was there to serve the members, but I realized I could learn just as much from them.”

### Advice for the New Area Director

If you are a new area director and you feel a bit overwhelmed or unprepared, relax. You are neither alone, nor unusual. Any transition to a new role brings trepidation and fear. It just means you want to do a good job.

Area directors past and present have advice to share to help make the job smoother and more enjoyable. For example, Tasha Hart, ACB, CL, offers this simple guidance to a nervous new area director: Don't think you have to know everything from the start. Hart, now the president of the Daybreak Toastmasters club in Jackson, Tennessee, says at first she was daunted by the idea of serving in the role.

“I was afraid about becoming an area director. Could I handle it? Would I be effective and helpful? Then I realized that I didn't have to figure it all out at once. On your first day of Toastmasters you didn't know that 10 speeches later you would be a better communicator. You just did one speech at a time.

“Same thing with area director. I took it one step at a time. I thought, *It may take me 10 speeches, 10 steps, 10 days or an entire 10 months to figure it all out but I will not give up.* In the end you will be further along than on the day you started.”

Mala Balasubramanian, ALB, ACB, of Trichy Toastmasters club, India, emphasizes a softer side of being area director. He says, “Know yourself first, as a Toastmaster. Know your goals and your personality. Then you can help others grow. Be considerate in your communications and meticulous in your planning. And be empathetic and aware.”

Clear, concise and complete communication is the foundation of success for area directors. With some areas being geographically large, or having a large number of members in many strong clubs, keeping information flowing smoothly is essential. Ragnhild A. Sunde, ACS, CL, has decades of Toastmasters experience as a member of several clubs and the founder of the Toastmaster Academy club in Naples, Florida. As a first-time area director,

If you are a new area director and you feel a bit overwhelmed, relax. It just means you want to do a good job.



she says, “After my first District Executive Committee meeting in June, I wondered how to communicate necessary information to the clubs. I decided to produce an area newsletter. I also forwarded it to district leaders and individual Toastmasters. Overnight it went viral on Facebook.

“It was copied and forwarded left and right. It was fun! Everyone loved having all the information they needed in one place.” It’s a simple idea, but getting the word out is so important.

Here are some other useful tips from seasoned area directors:

- ▶ Plan your area contests early! Get help and be as organized as possible.
- ▶ Delegate! Annete Mayfiend, ACG, ALB, of Adventurers Toastmasters Club in Brisbane, Australia, says, “At my area conference, I was trying to do five things at once, and none of them well. One of my team members asked ‘Is this the best use of your time?’ Right there, I started to delegate so I could focus on the things only I could do.”
- ▶ Read all training material provided by Toastmasters International. Don’t miss the District Executive Committee meetings or the training opportunities. Never use the excuse that you are not adequately trained. Take the burden upon yourself to learn the role.
- ▶ James Dent, DTM, from the Fort Worth, Texas, area, says, “Don’t think of it as a requirement for your ALS or DTM; think of what leadership skills you will develop, and how you can help your clubs grow.” This is most significant because the skill of influencing a group of people over whom

you have no authority is valuable. It’s a truer indicator of your leadership than situations in which you do have power.

- ▶ Visit clubs more often than the minimum, if possible. Any effort to build rapport will not be wasted.
- ▶ Remember, you don’t supervise or lead the club itself. You are there to guide, not be the boss.
- ▶ Be accurate and truthful with your area visit reports (Item 1471 in the Toastmasters Online Store) but never harsh or disrespectful. Remember, we’re all just volunteers doing the best we can.

The role of area director is so important to the mission of Toastmasters because it measures the heartbeat of the member experience at the club level. It may be a big fancy title, but it’s a fun and richly rewarding role. Embrace it. You won’t regret it.

Learn more about the area director role in the manual *Serving Clubs Through Visits: A Guide For Area Directors*, Item 219. In it you’ll find more tips, the Area Director’s Club Visit Report (Item 1471) and a list of additional resources. **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](http://www.MaureenZ.com).

# Here's to Toasting!

Keeping the ancient art of toasting alive.

BY MISSY SHEEHAN

**iS**alud! Prost! Ganbei! There are many ways to say “cheers” around the world.

While nearly every culture has its own customs for toasting to good health, happiness, prosperity or luck, the spirit behind them is often similar. “Overall, the point of a toast is to recognize, celebrate and share the moment with others, passing along good wishes,” says Harold Osmundson, DTM, district director for District 6 Toastmasters, which serves parts of Minnesota and Ontario. “It’s an opportunity to add extra meaning and significance to an event.”

Toasting can be appropriate for just about any occasion, including holidays, anniversaries, weddings, reunions and partings. But sadly, it isn’t as common as it used to be. “There was a time, not that long ago, when one could not go to a luncheon—let alone a banquet or wedding—without hearing a series of carefully proposed and executed toasts,” writes Paul Dickson in *Toasts: Over 1,500 of the Best Toasts, Sentiments, Blessings and Graces*.

The custom of raising glasses dates back to antiquity, and possibly even further. “The ancient Hebrews, Persians and Egyptians were toasters, as were the Saxons, Huns and other tribes,” Dickson writes. Drinking to another’s health was so important in ancient Rome, he notes, that the Senate required a toast to Augustus, the first Roman emperor, at every meal.



Early in the 20th century, though, “the custom of thoughtful and creative toasting began to erode,” Dickson writes. He points to British author John Pudney, who wrote in 1963 of the “decline in the eloquence and variety of the toast in the English language.” Pudney bemoaned the fact that people seem to be “embarrassed by the formality of toasting.”

Nowadays, many of us may only hear toasts given at formal events, and often they are “of the quick, down-the-hatch variety in which the custom has been reduced to a mumbled word (Cheers! Prost!) or phrase (Happy days! Down the hatch!) uttered from habit rather than any real sentiment,” Dickson writes.

He says toasting is a custom “we are foolish to let slip away,” and many Toastmasters agree with him. Through the toasts they give during holidays and on special occasions, as well as at club meetings, they’re keeping the art of toasting alive.

## Speaking from the Heart

Osmundson says the most memorable toast he’s ever given was at his own wedding. “It wasn’t conventional, but I toasted to my wife. During the reception,

my wife surprised me by saying, ‘You’ll need to give a speech now.’ At that time, I wasn’t a Toastmaster, so the thought of speaking in front of a large crowd terrified me. But I gathered my thoughts for a moment and did what I needed to do: I spoke from the heart.”

Despite feeling nervous and unprepared, Osmundson says his toast was well received. “I’m sure I made all the mistakes that new speakers make, but I spoke from my heart, and the audience knew it. That was enough,” he says.

Since joining Toastmasters in 2011, Osmundson has improved his speaking skills and led toasts at a variety of occasions, including New Year’s Eve. New Year’s toasts tend to be short and to the point, yet heartfelt, he says. “Appropriately, they’re usually very optimistic about the future and the promise the new year brings,” he says. “I simply say ‘Here’s to the new year. May it be your best year ever.’ There’s nothing complicated about that, and even I can remember it.”

## Raising Glasses Around the World

While wedding receptions and New Year’s Eve parties are where you’ll most often

hear toasts in the United States, Osmundson says toasting isn't limited to formal events. Around the world, people toast at all kinds of events. Donclarte Dontsi, president of the Moderator Club in Montreal, has given toasts at birthdays, job celebrations and promotions. In Canada, celebrations for births and even informal gatherings also call for raised glasses.

"Each time we are out for a drink to celebrate an end of season at work or with my Toastmasters team, we always toast," Dontsi says.

Dontsi, who is from Cameroon in Central Africa, says toasting is more common in Canada than in her native country. In Cameroon, "it's only at more special events (weddings, funerals, etc.)," she says.

That tends to be true in Ireland as well, according to Past International President Ted Corcoran, DTM, despite the large number of Irish toasts found online. "Everybody talks about Irish toasts, but we don't do that much of it that I can see," says Corcoran, a longtime member of clubs in Dublin, Ireland. "We are very minimal with our approach to toasting. It's not something we put a lot

of emphasis on unless it's a very special occasion. We might say 'Happy Christmas' or 'Happy birthday' but just a few words, and that's all."

At banquets, Corcoran says, the Irish toast to their president. "It's very simple: You lift your glass and say, 'To the president of Ireland.' At weddings, we toast the bride and groom, of course, and wish them a long and happy life. Very simple."

### Mastering the Toast

As with other types of speaking, practice makes perfect when it comes to toasting. The *Special Occasion Speeches* manual can help members master the art. The manual also offers guidance on speaking in praise of someone, conducting a roast, and presenting and accepting an award.

Osmundson encourages clubs to schedule toasting activities throughout the year to help members build skills. Toasting is a fun way to add variety to club meetings and events, he says. In 2010, Toastmasters in District 6 held an event to set a world record (through **RecordSetter.com**) for the most toasts given at a Toastmasters event in five minutes. According

to Lisa Jenks, ACS, ALB, the district's public relations officer at the time, 78 members gave toasts. "Everybody raved about it," she says. "I'm still getting comments from people years later about how much fun that was."

Osmundson also says members should take advantage of any opportunities to toast outside of club events and formal occasions. "When you meet friends or family for a meal or happy hour, why not initiate a toast and add to the moment?" he says. "It can be as simple as saying, 'It's great to be here with you. To this moment—cheers.' Be that person at the table who makes the meeting more special."

"Since we're Toastmasters, it's pretty much expected of us!" **T**

---

**Missy Sheehan** is a freelance writer, copy editor and proofreader. For more information, visit her website at [www.sheehanwriting.com](http://www.sheehanwriting.com).



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Learn how to toast for any occasion by watching an exclusive Toastmasters video.

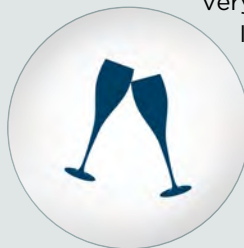
## TIPS FOR TOASTING AT SPECIAL OCCASIONS

**Keep it short and sweet.** "Two minutes maximum is great, except for very special occasions like weddings and funerals," says Donclarte Dontsi, president of the Moderator Toastmasters club in Montreal.

**Remember, it's not about you.** Your toast should focus on someone or something else.

**Use powerful adjectives** to describe the person you're toasting.

**Be careful with humor.** "Humor is a double-edged sword," says Harold Osmundson, DTM. "It can work for you if you can pull it off naturally. But if you try too hard to be funny, it steals attention from the toast and the subject of the toast."



**Practice.** Hone your delivery by practicing your toast a few times.

**Write down your first toast.** "When you stand up that first time and the audience is looking at you, you may very well forget what you have to say," says Past International President Ted Corcoran, DTM. "It's important, for the first time, to have what you are going to say written down, even if it's very simple."

**Tell the audience when it's time to raise their glasses.** "Raise your glass, ask the audience to raise their glasses, express feelings toward the subject and finally say 'Cheers!'" Osmundson says.



## BECOME A BETTER *Conversationalist*

How to talk to anyone any time.

BY PATRICIA FRY

**D**o you ever feel awkward during conversations with neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances or even family members? Are you a little anxious this time of year when thinking about the holiday gatherings and parties that are coming up and your lack of confidence in these situations?

Many people feel uncomfortable while trying to form a connection during verbal exchanges—making a point or recognizing what others mean can sometimes be tricky.

If your attempts at personal conversations are less than satisfying, you may wonder, “Is it them or is it *me*?” Don’t worry—natural communication doesn’t always come naturally, but as experts tell us, it can be learned. The Toastmasters program offers many opportunities to practice one-on-one communication. For example, you learn the art of small talk by improving your impromptu

“Conversation should be pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, free without indecency, learned without conceitedness, novel without falsehood.”

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

speaking skills through Table Topics. This will ultimately make you more comfortable with everyday communication. For extra practice, you hone your conversation skills by speaking with members and guests at club meetings.

Here are some tips for more satisfying interpersonal communication. They include helpful hints for short-circuiting other people’s annoying habits of sabotaging otherwise perfectly good conversations.

#### To Become a Better Conversationalist:

**Express a sincere interest in the other person.** In fact, if possible, learn a little about this person before engaging in conversation. Dale Carnegie said, “It’s much easier to become interested in others than it is to convince them to be interested in you.”

**Ask meaningful questions.** See if you can get this person to tell you what they think about a topic, event or news item, or how they feel about it. Ask open-ended questions—the kind that must be answered by more than a *yes* or *no*. Instead of asking, “Did you enjoy your cruise in Alaska?” try this, “What was your favorite port and what made it special?” or “Which excursion would you recommend in Juneau?”

Make a point to ask valid questions while drawing out those longer answers. James Nathan Miller reminds us, “Questions are the breath of life for a conversation.”

**Give compliments.** There’s always a reason to say something nice, and there’s no better way to attract the undivided attention of someone than to issue a flattering remark. In a casual setting, admire a friend’s appearance or home, compliment the food they prepared or praise their work on a project.

**Listen.** How many times do you catch yourself paying little attention to what’s being said because you are busy planning your next comment? While conversations are occasionally one-sided, most of the time we strive to speak and then listen. Respond and then listen. A big part of successful communication is responding appropriately, and how can you do that when you didn’t hear the previous comment?

Remember Toastmasters founder Ralph C. Smedley’s advice, “Whatever your grade or position, if you know how and when to speak, and when to remain silent, your chances of real success are proportionately increased.”

**Avoid debates.** Some situations call for friendly debates, but avoid having it turn nasty. One way to do this is to graciously allow other people their opinions. Also, stay away from historically volatile topics. You know what they are: religion, politics and any other controversial topics that you or the other person are passionately for or against. English statesman Robert Bulwer-





Lytton once said, “The true spirit of conversation consists in building on another man’s observation, not overturning it.”

Tip: In conversation, avoid using *but*. It tends to negate what came before it. Use the gentler *and*, instead. Rather than saying, “He is a good athlete, but he could try a little harder,” try this, “He is a good athlete, and he could try a little harder.”

**Keep up to date on current events and issues.** When it comes to one-on-one communication, it is better to know a little about a lot of things than a lot about one or two things. In fact, you’ve probably noticed that your brilliant friends and acquaintances who have just one area of interest and expertise are some of the duller conversationalists you know.

**Use humor.** A little tasteful humor goes a long way. Try incorporating your natural wit into conversations. Tell a cute story—keep it brief. Smile while speaking. Nothing lightens up a conversation like a genuine friendly smile.

Before you can entertain and delight others in your everyday conversation, dust off your own sense of humor. Open yourself up to the small wonders around you—the adorable things a child or a pet does, the funny things that happen throughout your day, and the amusing stories you read about. I knew a woman who kept a small notebook in her pocket to jot down stories she could later tell.

### Handling the Poor Communicator:

**She talks on and on and on.** We’ve all been in conversations where someone is bent on stealing the show. Even when you get a chance to share an incident from your life, this person chimes in with a story of her own. She doesn’t care what you have to say. She is a one-sided communicator.

*What to do?* You can give up and just listen to her. You can interrupt her and say, “I wasn’t finished with my story.” If this is someone you know well, and you can safely share a frank conversation, consider a gentle intervention—simply tell her that she is a good storyteller, *and* that she needs to practice listening sometimes.

Irish writer George Bernard Shaw once said of someone who was monopolizing a conversation, “The trouble with her is that she lacks the power of conversation but not the power of speech.” Remembering this will put a smile on your face as you listen and nod. The same is true of author Truman Capote’s quip: “A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That’s why there are so few good conversations: Due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet.”

**He doesn’t contribute to the conversation.** One way to draw people out is to ask questions pertinent to their lives and/or their interests. And then let them respond fully. Some people are hesitant speakers. Others readily speak over them because they



are slow to respond and speak haltingly. You can help bring these timid conversationalists into the conversation by giving them more time and encouragement to respond.

### And Of Course, a Last Word

These conversation tips should help you enjoy many happy chats in the future. Like anything, however, you need some practice before your everyday communication becomes perfect. As a final thought, I suggest the following:

- ▶ **A good place to practice your conversation skills is at your Toastmasters meetings.** Strive to speak one-on-one with at least one Toastmaster or guest at each meeting. You might even ask them to rate your conversation skills or to critique your effort.
- ▶ **If you have a Toastmaster mentor, ask him or her to assist you in honing your communication skills.** For most Toastmasters, everyday conversations are even more important to their careers and relationships than public speaking is. And we should strive to master this area of communication.
- ▶ **Learn from the best.** As William Shakespeare said, “Conversation should be pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, free without indecency, learned without conceitedness, novel without falsehood.” 📖

“A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That’s why there are so few good conversations; Due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet.”

—TRUMAN CAPOTE

**Patricia Fry, ATMS**, is the author of 67 books, including 25 books in her *Klepto Cat Mystery* series. She has written numerous articles for *Toastmaster* magazine. Learn more about Patricia and her work at [www.matilijapress.com](http://www.matilijapress.com).



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Watch extra videos to learn how you can improve your interpersonal communication skills.

## HOW TO SURVIVE THOSE DREADED HOLIDAY PARTIES

Whether you’re sipping a drink at a friend’s home, sharing a turkey dinner with family, or attending the office party, use these tips for a more successful experience.

**1 Visualize a positive outcome.** Before leaving for the event, take a time-out. Shove all of the negative self-talk and old painful memories out of your mind. Fill the space with thoughts of the best possible outcome—the best experience you can imagine. If you’re sincere in your attempt at imagery, you’ll have much greater success than if you were to arrive still harboring ill feelings and dread. Remember, you can’t change other people and you have very little influence in altering a situation, but you can change the way you approach and view the event and that could make all the difference in your level of enjoyment.

**2 Seek out a friendly face.** At least upon arrival to the event, and whenever you begin to feel that creeping lack of confidence, navigate toward the people you enjoy most. This might be someone you know well or a stranger with an easy smile who seems to be popular. If she’s popular, it’s most likely because she has effective communication skills—she puts those around her at ease.

**3 Be a polite listener.** This means, check your body language. Face the individual who is speaking. Make eye contact. Nod occasionally to let him know you are listening and understanding. Do not engage in distracting behavior such as answering your phone, repeatedly looking away, cleaning your nails, etc. And do not cross your arms during the conversation; it looks disrespectful.



**4 Be prepared.** Bring stories of your happy or humorous holiday activities or situations and look for the right opening to share them. Others like to talk about their experiences too, so this is a good topic to bring up this time of year.

**5 Be patient.** The nature of a holiday gathering makes it difficult to have long, in-depth conversations with any one person. Others may join in while you’re chatting with someone, children will interrupt, you (or the other person) may be called away to help with a task or meet someone. Don’t expect to handle a sticky business or personal situation at a holiday social event because your chats will generally be brief. Be flexible and be patient.

# Member Achievements

Four tales of transformed lives.

## Jamal Younis, CC

Siam Toastmasters club • Bangkok, Thailand



### Speaking Up for Good Health

A few years ago I needed to find new inspiration and a life purpose. One of my childhood dreams was to be a kickboxer like I had seen on TV. Without a Plan B, I moved from my home in Switzerland to Thailand and lived, trained and competed a few years as a boxer here. I learned valuable skills during that time, especially the importance of focus, discipline, and mental and physical strength.

That lifestyle doesn't last forever. It was time to move on, and I knew I could help others to feel, look and perform better through my experience. This led to a rewarding career as a fitness and health professional here in Bangkok.

One and a half years ago I joined Toastmasters to learn how to better communicate why I am doing what I am doing; to be able to stand in front of an audience and inspire people with my story. The change I experienced in my ability to speak, conduct seminars and tell my story in daily life situations, client consultations and speaking engagements is enormous. I learned all these important skills in Toastmasters. I just received my Competent Communicator award and I look forward to more years of personal and professional growth.



Jamal Younis



Harriet Cummings

## Harriet Cummings

Spa Speakers club • Leamington, United Kingdom



### My Success as an Author

In April 2016 I was thrilled to receive a book deal with the major London publishing house Orion. It was something I'd been dreaming of for years. The only problem? I knew the publishing world needed authors to promote their books and the prospect of public speaking made my hair stand on end.

Joining Spa Speakers in Leamington, United Kingdom, helped enormously. I got specific feedback on my speeches and a mentor who guided me through the *Competent Communication* manual. But I also loved having so many people to encourage and support my progress as a speaker. I've since joined the club executive committee and have become a mentor myself, all in less than a year.

My novel, *We All Begin As Strangers*, was published in April and my calendar filled with live radio interviews, literary festivals and talks at book shops. Speaking to a room full of people is something I never thought I could do and, in truth, I've still got much to learn. But I'm pleased with my progress so far and know my club will continue to guide me.

Last week I had a nice moment when I found myself nervous before a talk and, as I reached for a bottle of water from my bag, a piece of paper fluttered out. It was a lovely comment about a speech I'd given at my Toastmasters meeting. Seeing it really spurred me on to get up in front of that audience. The talk went well and, dare I say, I'm now looking forward to my next one!



Steve Moloney

## Steve Moloney, DTM

CBA Toastmasters • Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada



### A CC in 10 Million Steps

I've always had a bit of wanderlust. The idea of taking the road less traveled has been my dream for a long time. So when the opportunity arose to walk across Canada, I began to train for the longest trek of my life.

Over the course of six months last year, I walked some 8,000 kilometers (around 5,000 miles), or 10 million steps, from Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, to Cape Spear on the island of Newfoundland, North America's easternmost point. I was 50 years old. Yes, the physical toll on my body was extreme at times, yet I developed the ability to walk up to 45 miles in a single day, through heat, humidity, mosquitoes and mountainous hills.

The walk was dedicated to promoting the importance of freedom. Through the walk, I partook in another beloved activity—going to Toastmasters meetings. I presented eight speeches from the *Competent Communication* manual at eight different clubs. All the speeches revolved around the topic of freedom. During this epic journey I spent weeks without much human contact, experiencing individual freedom in a profoundly visceral way. Thus, speech topics like “How Can I Become More Free?” and “What Is Freedom?” burst forth from my mind as I walked, reveling in my freedom yet at the

same time vulnerable to the ever-changing weather, the roaming wildlife and mostly my many moments of self-doubt in the wild.

At all the Toastmasters clubs I visited, the members treated me like family. The warm welcomes were like soul food after spending long stretches alone on remote trails and highways. Thank you all for your hospitality.

## Yuki Wong, CC, ALB

HKUST MBA Alumni Toastmasters club • Hong Kong



### From Passion to Action


One evening in February 2013, I gathered with my parents for dinner. It looked like any other day, but it was a life-changing moment. My heart was pounding as I made an important announcement: “I will quit my job and start my own public speaking training company.”

My parents could not believe the decision. They were very proud when I joined the banking industry after graduating from university. But despite my outstanding performance in banking, I could not feel any joy in the work.

At one point, my bank sent me on a month-long overseas training trip, which included a public speaking course taught by James Leong. I had never imagined that public speaking could be a career. I approached James with curiosity and he encouraged me to join Toastmasters. I did—and it was one of the best decisions of my life. Not only did I sharpen my public speaking skills, I also gained friendships and positive energy. Eventually I became club president, and in 2015 I was the first runner-up in a District 89 Evaluation Contest.

I began realizing that public speaking was the right career path for me. In June 2015, I took a leap of faith, quit my job and started my own company offering public speaking training and emcee services. I believe in the power of speech to make changes in the world.

I was very grateful to the Toastmasters community, who planted the seed of optimism and offered me the support and guidance in pursuing my passion. Without Toastmasters, I wouldn't have had the courage and competence to become who I am today.

It's important to walk your own path in life. And if you persevere, you'll scale new heights and experience beauty and exhilaration. From passion to action, it all starts with us. 



Yuki Wong

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](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org).

**IT'S NO SECRET:**

# How Toastmasters Skills Can Boost Your Career

Use your new skills to communicate and lead in the workplace.

BY NINA JOHN, DTM

**T**oastmasters, some say, is the best-kept secret in town. And some people who join imagine they're in a secret group, where everything that happens in the club stays in the club. Quite the contrary: Toastmasters is not a secret club to prepare and present pretty speeches, but is instead a training platform for going out into the "real world" and benefiting from your improved communication and leadership skills.

Many of the first skills you learn as you start preparing and delivering speeches are highly relevant to the professional world. And you can start applying these skills right away.

Consider the following example: What is often the first question asked in a job interview? "Tell me something about yourself." The interviewer already has your résumé so what's the point of the question? Because the answer tells the recruiter a great deal about you: your language level, your grasp of the subject and how it pertains to the situation at hand, your self-confidence, your personality and how you may fit with the existing team. Are you using the right technical terms? Are you sitting properly, using appropriate body language, wearing the right clothes and addressing the interviewer with courtesy and decorum? Are you able to persuade the interviewer that you have the right skill set for the job?

Once you're hired, will you be able to handle the job and the people on the team? How much of an impact will you have on others? Are you an effective

team player and a potential leader? Are you a good listener? Everything you do in Toastmasters can help you improve aspects of your professional life. Here are some examples of what you learn early on in your Toastmasters journey.

**Introducing Yourself**—The first speech in the Toastmasters education program is about introducing yourself to your club members and evaluating your current level of speaking skills. As you refine it further, parts of this first "ice-breaker" speech is something you can use for job interviews, for social introductions at parties, even for potential investors—it's your elevator pitch for the right occasion.

**Structuring Your Material**—What do you want to say and why do you want to say it? If, for example, you are presenting information to your colleagues, make sure to cover the main points they will need to hear to make informed decisions. Use data, statistics, visual aids and handouts, if necessary. Asking for a budget review? The same principles apply. A structured approach, with a beginning, middle and end, will make your presentation more powerful.

**Using Appropriate Language**—The language used in our conversations with our friends, colleagues and clients reflect on us. If you are addressing your industry peers, use language appropriate to your field. But avoid industry jargon when talking to customers and the general

public. Always be mindful of using language that is appropriate for the audience and the occasion.

Words are powerful. Think of Abraham Lincoln's classic description of democracy as "the government of the people, by the people, for the people." Or Mahatma Gandhi's famous words about violence: "An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind."

**Making a Statement with Body Language**—Body language is one of the most influential aspects of public speaking. The way you walk up to the lectern, where you place your notes and how you face the audience all project your confidence level. Facial expressions, posture and use of stage space are all part of learning effective body language. This skill will boost your presence in front of all types of audiences.

**Using Vocal Variety**—Speaking clearly is critical, and pronouncing each word distinctly is key to achieving that effect, especially if you work in a multinational or multicultural organization. Slow your speech and enunciate each word carefully when you are onstage, and even when you are on a conference call. Vocal variety keeps you from sounding monotonous and helps keep the audience engaged in your message.

**Being Prepared**—Ever attended an office meeting and walked out wondering what it was about? This is an all-too-com-



mon problem. One way to stand out in your workplace is to be prepared every time you walk into a meeting. Have your data ready, with graphs or even handouts. Research both sides of the issue so that you can make counter-arguments. Taking notes during every meeting keeps you ready for action and makes you the go-to person in the office. Just as in the club environment, make sure your material fits the time available.

The very act of writing a speech, drafting and revising according to the objectives, adds to your written communication skills, resulting in better emails and reports.

**Using Visual Aids**—Presentations today are a routine part of professional life, so learn how to do them with the right amount of panache. The size and composition of the audience, the size and

## Slow your speech and enunciate each word carefully when you are onstage or even on a conference call.

acoustics of the meeting room, the time limit for the presentation and the occasion (office review/ industry seminar etc.), all require different visual aids and adequate preparation. Avoid suicide by Power-Point—prepare your presentation first, then choose the appropriate visual aids. Whether you are using the lectern, notes, LCD technology or a teleprompter, be prepared with your materials and be able to use them comfortably.

**Being Persuasive**—Every single team leader, every single project manager,

every single CEO has to persuade team members to do things above and beyond their regular work. Are you going in for budget cuts or asking for more resources for your department? Tailor your arguments accordingly, keep your language simple and make sure you are clear about what you want the audience to do after your presentation, with a clear call to action.

The skills you learn early in Toastmasters will help you in many ways. And the more you continue to practice and improve in your club, the more success you will experience! **T**

**Nina John, DTM**, is the director of coaching firm Envy Communications. She has served as a District 82 governor and is currently a member of Chennai Toastmasters club in Chennai, India.



## Love Letters

*Dearest wife, when I think of our life together, words fail me.*

BY JOHN CADLEY

**M**y anniversary is approaching and I want to write my wife a love letter. That should be easy. I’m a writer. Only it isn’t easy, because I’m also a man. As fluent as I can be on other matters, when it comes to expressing my deepest feelings I, like so many of my gender, turn into a functional illiterate. It’s not so much that I can’t find the words. I just can’t say them. When I want to tell my wife how much I love her I make the bed.

I know this is setting the bar pretty low, and anniversaries call for something more. I could buy her a card but, again, I’m a writer. Getting another writer to express my feelings would be like hiring a stand-in at my wedding to say all the gooey “to have and to hold” stuff and then stepping in at the end to tell my bride, “What he said.”

Thankfully, as the saying goes, when the student is ready, the teacher appears. For me, it came in the form of a short article in the *New York Times Magazine* titled “How to Write a Love Letter,” which reported on advice given by Sonia Cancian, a history professor at Zayed University in Dubai. What would a history professor know about love letters? I was afraid she would be harking back to the days when men really did express their feelings—I believe they were called “poets”—men like Shakespeare, who wrote the famous “*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?*” sonnet, or Lord Byron, who penned “*She walks in beauty, like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies.*” If that was the standard, I might as well just get

the card, throw in some flowers and take my punishment like a man.

Luckily, it wasn’t. Ms. Cancian’s advice is far more prosaic, starting with time management. To write a love letter, she says, “you need a minimum of one hour.” That’s good to know because until now I’ve needed a minimum of forever. I’m sure Ms. Cancian has a decidedly shorter time frame in mind, but at least I know that if an hour’s hard labor produces nothing more than *You’re a great wife, honey. No, really—you are. ...* I’ll have more time to dig a little deeper.

**When a man hears the word “heart” he thinks not so much of his wife as his cardiologist.**

Equally reassuring is my tutor’s revelation that I don’t have to be poetically gifted, as long as my missive is “heartfelt.” But then ... that’s the problem, isn’t it? When a man hears the word “heart” he thinks not so much of his wife as his cardiologist. Ms. Cancian has a remedy for that, too. “If you feel stymied,” she says, you can “include shared cultural references to movies, song lyrics, or novels.” An interesting idea. How would I accomplish it?

—*My Darling Wife, remember when we were watching **The Godfather** and Michael Corleone shoots the two guys in the head who tried to kill his father? I*

*would do that for you. No, really—I would. Happy Anniversary.*

What do you think? Too schmaltzy?

I can also “play with the notion of time”—i.e., the feeling that hours pass too quickly when lovers are together and too slowly when they’re apart. OK, how about this:

—*My Sweet Super Spouse, yesterday when you asked me to meet you at the gym at 5:30 and I was 30 minutes late, you said, “What took you so long?” That’s love. Happy 23rd.*

Another option is to write about celestial bodies, which, the article says, “can help create a sense of intimacy, as if by looking skyward you can be drawn closer together by your mutual smallness against the immensity of the galaxies.” She cautions, however, not to get *too* spacey: “You have to strike a balance between poetry and everyday life.” That’s a tough one but here goes:

—*Dear Mrs. Wonderful, here we are, two infinitesimal specks of dust spinning around on an insignificant rock in an infinite, black void—and we still agree that when it’s time to paint the house again, we’re switching to aluminum siding.*

I like that one. It’s got everything—heaven and earth combined. When my wife reads it she’ll have no choice but to conclude that her husband is a hopeless romantic. **T**

**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at [www.cadleys.com](http://www.cadleys.com).

# eBookIt!

Self-Publishing Solutions for the Independent Author & Small Press

- ✓ Ebook Creation/Conversion
- ✓ Print On Demand
- ✓ Audiobook Creation
- ✓ Author Websites
- ✓ Book Promotion

**TOASTMASTERS! GET 10% OFF ANY SERVICE! USE PROMOTION CODE: 37062-6176247**



**\$199 Ebook Conversion, Distribution, and Promotion Special!**


**Limited-time offer: includes FREE press release distribution!**

**Hello! Come See Our New Website at eBookIt.com!**




We have been providing authors and small presses with publishing services since 2010. We offer ebook creation and distribution, book/author promotion, print on demand services, audiobook creation, author websites, and even online courses designed to help authors make their books a best-seller.

We invite you to come by eBookIt.com and see not only our new website, but all the ways we can help you succeed with your self-publishing goals!



**Audiobook Creation and Distribution**

Is your book right for an audiobook? If so, it can mean a whole new market and a new revenue stream. We can handle all aspects of production for you.



**Print On Demand**

Let us take your ebook and convert it into a professionally-designed print book. With our retail distribution, virtually any bookstore can purchase your print book. Double your market!



**Author/Book Websites**

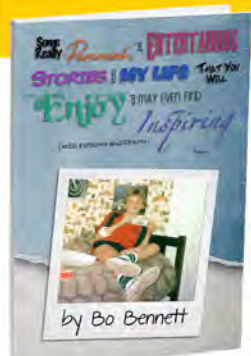
One of the best ways to promote your book(s) and yourself as an author is through your own website. We have developed software specifically for authors and their needs.



**Online Course**

Take our online course to learn the strategies that will help make your book a best seller. For each strategy, a detailed audio and/or video explanation of the idea is included.


**CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM**



You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

*Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring* by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at 

**We are happy to speak with you about your publishing needs.  
Call us at 978-440-8364 or visit us at <http://www.eBookIt.com>.**

# TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL®

## Where will Pathways take you?

Wherever you want to go!

With 10 unique learning paths that teach more than 300 competencies, you can build the skills you need to succeed in your career, community and life. Thousands of members are already on their Pathways journey. Hear what a few of them have to say at [www.toastmasters.org/MembersShare](http://www.toastmasters.org/MembersShare).

