

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JANUARY 2018

TOASTMASTER®

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a light blue gradient with faint, circular logos. One logo on the left says 'APPROVED AUG-10 2013 STATES OF AMERICA'. Another logo on the right says 'APPROVED UNITED STATES'.

Laurel Hilbert

Blind Syrian student's love of learning sparks journey to U.S.

**Accredited Speakers
Speak Up**

**Harnessing the
Power of Moments**

Raising the Bar



Kaizen” is a Japanese word that literally translates to “continuous improvement” or “change for the better.” But Kaizen is more than just a word—it is a lifestyle. It represents striving for constant improvement in all areas of life. This philosophy pushes us to always raise the bar, and that is the very essence of Toastmasters.

We strive for improvement at every meeting and in every function we perform in Toastmasters. The knowledge we gain, and the skills we learn, enable us to improve and excel in other areas of our lives. Performance and improvement are key aspects of our program. We may perform a role in or outside Toastmasters, but that does not mean we are improving. Improvement means changing for the better, and it also implies that it can be measured. Evaluations help in that regard, but are not enough. One valuable technique is a self-evaluation brainstorm, in which you list and evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. It can be done alone, with a mentor or with a small support group. Conduct this kind of self-assessment after every important task, such as serving as Toastmaster of the Day, speaking, evaluating, training, chairing a meeting or event, or serving in a leadership role. After every important event, ask yourself, *How could I have done better? Have I improved?*

We can't always be perfect, but we can always improve.

One of Kaizen’s principles is: *Think of how to do it, not why it cannot be done.* I apply this concept to my leadership journey in Toastmasters and every part of my non-Toastmasters life as well. I identify the obstacles keeping me from reaching a goal and then I come up with ways to overcome them. I don’t tackle the entire problem at once but break it down into smaller, more manageable pieces. I may not reach my goal at this time—but I keep persevering.

Don't seek perfection. That is another Kaizen principle. Halfway to a goal is better than no progress at all. If your goal is to lose 50 pounds and you lose only 25, are you a failure? Of course not. We can’t always be perfect, but we can always improve. Strive for improvement and excellence—these are attainable goals. In every project you undertake, ask yourself, *Can this be improved?*

Resolve today to work toward continual, incremental improvement in every aspect of your life, inside and outside Toastmasters, and excellence will be a word associated with all you do. You will always be raising the bar.

Never stop improving!

Balraj Arunasalam, DTM

International President

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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL®

P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.

+1 949-858-8255 • Fax: +1 949-858-1207

Voicemail: +1 949-835-1300

www.toastmasters.org

CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining

or building a club, visit:

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submissions@toastmasters.org

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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“I believe a major reason speakers use filler words is because they are trying too hard.”

—PHILIP YAFFE, ACB, CL
Armada Toastmasters
Brussels, Belgium

An Inspiring Article

As president of The Stuttering Foundation, I can't tell you how many Toastmasters members sent me your inspiring cover article on Genein Letford [October] and how she succeeded in overcoming her stuttering by playing the trumpet. Over the years, I have known many people who stutter who raised their confidence or became more fluent through participation in Toastmasters.

The Stuttering Foundation website has a list of “Famous People Who Stutter” in addition to a “Celebrity Corner” section of biographical articles on famous people who stutter. So many of these famous people found their voice through acting or singing. Genein Letford's story conveys that a person who stutters can find improvement in fluency and/or self-esteem through playing a musical instrument.

Jane Fraser
President of The Stuttering Foundation
Memphis, Tennessee

I'll Take That Dare

John Cadley concluded his September column entitled “Malapropisms” with: “My then-6-year-old son ... asked me if I was drinking decapitated coffee. Beat that. I dare you.”

I'll take that dare, John! My lovely and talented wife of 21 years is notorious for

her unintentional but memorable rhetorical accidents. Though technically not malapropisms, here are three of my favorites:

“There are two open bottles of ketchup in the fridge. The one on the right is the openest.”

Suffering from a head cold, my wife's response to my suggestion that we postpone a planned recreational vehicle trip was, “If I was going to stay home, I would have done it a long time ago!”

And my all-time favorite: When she heard a car drive up to the house, she asked, “Will you go out and see if that's whoever it is?”

Sky Shipley
High Noon Toastmasters of Prescott club
Prescott, Arizona

How Do I Stop, Ya Know, Using Um and Ah?

I believe a major reason speakers use filler words is because they are trying too hard. For any subject, there are usually several ways of saying the same thing. If you are always looking for the “best way” to say something (assuming there is one), then you will invariably find yourself inserting “ums,” “ahs,” “you knows” and other distractions. In the vast majority of cases, sacrificing fluency while searching for the best word or words just isn't worth it.

If you think you could have said something better, start your next sentence with, “To be more precise . . .,” then say it better. This technique will not only keep your speech fluent, it will make you appear to be the master of your subject, not its apprentice.

I have seen people who once regularly used 15 to 20 filler words apply this technique to reduce the number to four or five, and occasionally down to zero, literally from one meeting to the next.

Philip Yaffe, ACB, CL
Armada Toastmasters
Brussels, Belgium

It Can Still Be About You

I just read the “My Turn” article by Karen Friedman “Speakers: It's Not About You.” While Lesson 1 was on point, I take exception to her advice, especially in lessons 2

and 3. Karen's advice was to not tell stories about yourself but that is in direct contradiction with the advice to always include a personal story. Perhaps what she should have said was to be sure the story is appropriate then make sure to include the lesson from the story for the audience's benefit (tell a story, make a point). Lesson 3 is in direct contradiction to the “embrace your power” advice we so often give to uncertain speakers. Many speakers shrink back instead of standing confidently and being the experts that they are. Maybe Karen experienced someone who was an over-the-top egotist, but for the vast majority, confidence and personal stories are key to a great presentation.

Pam Wilson, DTM
Speakers Bureau Toastmasters club
Reston, Virginia

Bell-Out the Ahs

I strongly agree with the article written by Lisa Marshall on how to stop using ums and ahs! Being an active Toastmaster for 63 years, I can say that this subject is always at the forefront during a meeting. Though most clubs give an Ah-Counter report at the end of meetings, the results are soon forgotten. Coaches in golf or tennis do not wait for an hour on how to swing properly. The pupil is reminded immediately of what to do. Years ago I came up with the idea of a bell master immediately hitting a call bell when an ah is uttered. It has worked wonders for all members. We do not ring the bell for guests or members who have not yet given their Ice Breaker speech. The maximum number of rings is twice throughout the meeting. This reminds the speaker and all in attendance to be aware of the use of ahs.

Burt Epstein, ATM
Fox Talkz Toastmasters
Los Angeles, California

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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January Online Extras:

- **A Race to the Stage**—Discover more about Myles Drake and his talents through additional photos. 📷
- **I Had An Endless Vision**—Watch Laurel Hilbert’s member testimonial video to learn more about his journey. ▶
- **Accredited Speakers Speak Up**—Hear from the new Accredited Speakers in an exclusive Toastmasters video. ▶

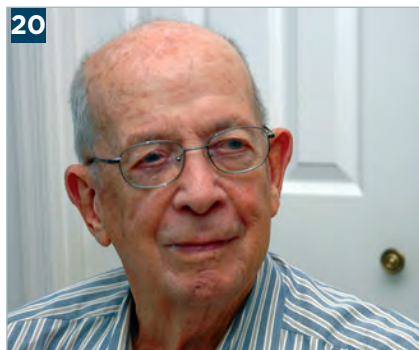


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It's 2018!

Kick off the year by taking stock of your goals.

By joining Toastmasters, you've already set and reached a few goals. You are committed to self-development and social interaction. But if you don't know specifically what it is that you wish to learn, your efforts may leave you frustrated.

Start by defining what it is that you'd like to achieve, and why it's important to you. Be specific. Consider the following words of wisdom from some successful people who achieved lofty goals.

"Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement."

—BRIAN TRACY

"What is not started today is never finished tomorrow."

—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

"It's up to you to make your life. Take what you have and stack it up like a tower of teetering blocks. Build your dream around that."

—CHERYL STRAYED

"The goal is not to be perfect by the end. The goal is to be better tomorrow."

—SIMON SINEK

"I think goals should never be easy, they should force you to work, even if they are uncomfortable at the time."

—MICHAEL PHELPS

"Who aims at excellence will be above mediocrity; who aims at mediocrity will be far short of it."

—BURMESE SAYING

"We think, mistakenly, that success is the result of the amount of time we put in at work, instead of the quality of time we put in."

—ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

"Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal: my strength lies solely in my tenacity."

—LOUIS PASTEUR

"A goal is not always meant to be reached; it often serves simply as something to aim at."

—BRUCE LEE

"Success in business is passion combined with fearless execution. The most successful people I know focus on the things they can control and perfect the details."

—GINA BIANCHINI

"If a man knows not to which port he sails, no wind is favorable."

—LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

▶ **SNAPSHOT**



DFCC Toastmasters members visit Ramboda Falls, the 11th-tallest waterfall in Sri Lanka. The club held an outdoor meeting amid the beautiful hills of Ramboda. Members each held a *Toastmaster* magazine from 2017, with the September issue featuring International President Balraj Arunasalam, who is a fellow countryman.

▶ **VISITING A CLUB WHILE TRAVELING**

A Warm Welcome in Melbourne

Maheeka Ariyapperuma, ALB, ACB (front row, far right), from the Wiri Ramblers Toastmasters club in Auckland, New Zealand, visits the Aero Speakers Toastmasters club in Laverton, Melbourne, while on holiday in Australia.

“The members in Melbourne had a warm, friendly atmosphere, which made any guest feel welcome,” Ariyapperuma says. “Not only did the treatment reflect the true nature of the club, they were very happy to give me a role for the evening as well. This is a club that certainly lives up to the true spirit of Toastmasters!”



QUICK TAKES

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



Jicky Ferrer, DTM

BY MARY NESFIELD

Jicky Ferrer is a civil servant who specializes in communications. He's been recognized for creating curriculum and setting standards for best practices in video teleconferencing. A Toastmaster since 2013, Ferrer was selected 2015 Toastmaster of the Year for his public relations efforts in Hawaii's District 49. He sponsored the DIALog Hawaii club in Pearl Harbor in 2016, and also serves as a Pathways Guide and Ambassador.

Travis Tucker, CC, a retired military analyst, serves as a senior analyst/consultant in the private sector. For years, he heard his friends talk about Toastmasters. He attended a meeting of the DIALog Hawaii club, and when Ferrer invited him to join, Tucker accepted his invitation and Ferrer began mentoring him.

Travis, what impressed you about Jicky?

I first met Jicky at work when he was collecting cans and bottles. He recycled them for over nine years to fund a college education for two orphaned children. He raised close to \$40,000 in 10 years! He's an inspiring, effective, charismatic leader—kind, compassionate and patient. His calm demeanor results in a positive club environment that invites total participation and promotes our club's goals. The club is now over 40 strong.

What was your goal when joining the club?

I wanted to develop better listening skills. I tend to make presumptions based on limited information, so I hope to understand people better by drawing them into deeper conversations.

How has Jicky helped you?

He helped me realize that the first step to gracious leadership is to consider other people's needs. He motivates me to listen and



FROM LEFT: Travis Tucker and Jicky Ferrer

respond affirmatively to speech evaluations. Through his mentorship and speech evaluations, I'm improving my leadership skills.

What do you value most about your club experience?

The lessons I've learned by listening, speaking and leading are enhancing my life. Each day, I enjoy opportunities at home and at work to improve my skills. I'm optimistic, because I receive increasingly positive feedback from family and friends.

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.

▶ PATHWAYS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Pathways Translations

Pathways educational materials in Spanish became available to members in regions 10 and 12 when those two regions rolled out the Pathways learning experience in December. Region 10 encompasses Southern California, Arizona and Mexico; Region 12 covers Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

All materials in Toastmasters' new education program are being translated into Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Traditional Chinese. Pathways materials in Simplified Chinese and French were

released in May and October of 2017, respectively, and have been well-received by members.

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 Spanish Translation Review Team: Chief Reviewer Amparo Cifuentes, lead reviewers Violetta Rios and David Camacho, and reviewers Mina Christine Yoon, Sebastian Acosta, Maria Guadalupe Flores Martinez, Silvia Zamora



Martinez, Alejandro Aguilar Sierra and Nadiely Martinez Bello. Past reviewers who served on the team are: Adrian De la Rosa, Jose Garcia, Luis Garcia and David Alejandro Vasquez Cardenas.

Visit 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.

▶ BEYOND THE CLUB



Teen Thrives in School Contest

BY DAVID REILLEY

Although Toastmasters requires members to be at least 18 years old, the Downtown Coquitlam Toastmasters club in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada, occasionally invites teenagers as “guests with speaking privileges.” In 2016, one of these teen guests was Grace Liang, daughter of then-club member Changmin Sun, CC. Grace, who was 14 at the time, delivered a few prepared speeches and regularly volunteered for Table Topics. The family has since moved away, but Grace recently shared some exciting news with the club.

As a 10th grade student, Grace participated in a schoolwide public speaking contest with more than 200 other students. She moved through two preliminary rounds to qualify for the finals, where she was one of four students judged while speaking in front of hundreds of students and teachers at the high school. In the finals Grace tied for first place, and her name is now permanently engraved on the school’s public speaking trophy.

Even though her experience with the Downtown Coquitlam club was brief, Grace said it made an impact. “Toastmasters definitely made me feel more comfortable about talking in front of people,” she said. “When we first heard about the contest, most of my friends [at school] were scared.

“I wasn’t scared. I was excited!”

David Reilley is a member of the Downtown Coquitlam Toastmasters club and a contributor to its newsletter.



▶ MEMBER CONNECTIONS

Jump for Joy

Members and young guests of the Downtown Toastmasters club in Nairobi, Kenya, have fun building camaraderie during a club outing at Ngong Hills of the Great Rift Valley.



1



1 | **RICHARD WAGNER**, from Brownsburg, Indiana, stands on the Ingraham Flats Glacier (11,100 feet) on a recent climb of Mount Rainer in the U.S. state of Washington.

2 | **CHRISTY KADHARMESTAN, ACS, ALB**, from Castaic, California, poses in front of Ullun Danu Batur Temple in Kintamani, Bali, Indonesia.

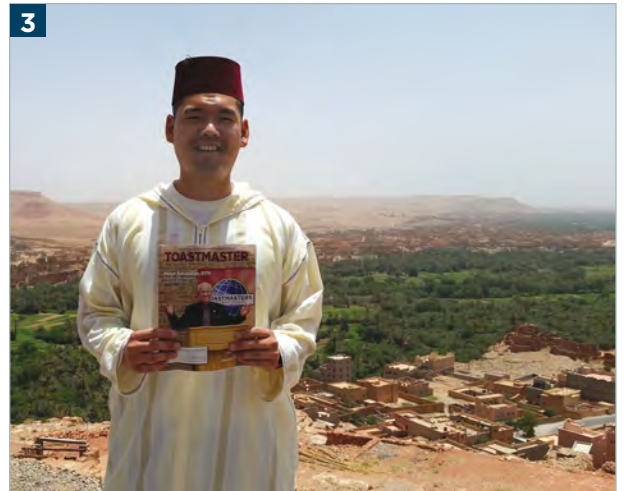
3 | **JOHN D. LIN, DTM**, from Little Neck, New York, poses in Fez, Morocco, dressed in traditional Deraa and Tarboosh.

4 | **BEATA LABOCHA, ACB, ALB**, from Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, poses in Lagos, Portugal.

2



3



4



View additional photos in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at 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. Bon voyage!

Honoring My Commitment

How I pushed past challenges to save my club.

BY CLELIA AYALA, ACB

As a bilingual Latina, I didn't have an ideal place to practice English and meet people who practiced the same customs and traditions as me until I found the Que Pasa Toastmasters in Arlington, Virginia. I joined this bilingual club, and in 2016 I was asked to serve as club president. I thought, *Ay! Dios Mio, Oh my God!* I had not attended many club meetings the previous year because of a job conflict, so when I heard these words they left me speechless.

I wasn't sure if I should accept the role. But I decided it was the right thing to do, so I accepted the honor and was eager to learn by working with advanced speakers and club members. However, experienced members started leaving the club. We began to lose club officers and I started traveling out of town for my government job with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), helping with disaster assistance.

I returned home from one work assignment to learn that my club had lost another officer: the club secretary, who had become "mi mano derecha" (my right-hand man). He was such a helpful and valuable officer. But he had to move out of state to take a new job.

Club membership was on the decline. At one meeting it was only me and one other member! I asked the member to be the timer and evaluator for my speech. We spoke for a few minutes after she delivered my evaluation and then we left together—10 minutes after the meeting scheduled for two hours had begun. The situation worried me, so I emailed the former club secretary—the one who had moved—to ask for advice. He replied saying that maybe it was the end for the club.

It was frustrating and disappointing to hear him say that. I thought of what Mike



Clelia Ayala

Today, after overcoming many challenges, our club has more than 20 members. If I can save a club, anybody can!

Storkey, then Toastmasters' International President, wrote in a Viewpoint column for this magazine. He stressed the importance of the sixth commitment in the Toastmaster's Promise: *"to serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so."*

As officers, we must serve the club to the best of our abilities. So I was determined not to let this club die. I created a strategy and took quick action. My first task was to get the club officers back. I called the former club secretary and said, "I am not going to lose you." I bought a video camera and set up Skype so he could participate via video calls.

Next, I recruited a member to create a Meetup account with me. We updated a Meetup post with current information and promptly answered any questions we received. This worked very well for us, and today nearly all our new members are recruited through Meetup.

I also took every opportunity to accept assistance from my district—District 27—with promotional and marketing efforts to increase our club's membership. And I organized an open house. The event was a big success—it was like a fiesta!—and membership rose from eight to 13.

In addition, I still needed veteran leaders. I attended every Toastmasters event outside of my club to recruit experienced members. I went to our division's International Speech Contest and recruited the division director. I visited our district spring conference and regained two former members, one of whom was Paul White, DTM, the founder of our club and the final member we needed to become President's Distinguished.

Today, after overcoming many challenges instead of accepting that it was over, our club has more than 20 members. When you take action, act assertively and meet deadlines, you can overcome any challenge. Although a tunnel is dark, remember there is always a light at the end. If I can save a club, anybody can! Find some talented and experienced people to help and support you, and you can do it too. **T**

Area Director **CLELIA AYALA, ACB, ALB**, is a member of Que Pasa Toastmasters, a bilingual club for English and Spanish speakers in Arlington, Virginia. Originally from the Andes in Peru, she works with FEMA and is currently assisting with emergency relief efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

A Race to the Stage

Young Canadian car enthusiast shifts gears to become a professional speaker.

BY SHANNON DEWEY

Myles Drake was living life in the fast lane as a recent university graduate working for a race car team in the United States. As a design engineer building rally cars for championship teams, the 24-year-old was in his element.

Despite landing his dream job at a young age, Drake, who hails from the small town of Grimsby, Ontario, Canada, did not feel fulfilled by his work. After a year and a half with Subaru Rally Team USA, he began seeking a different future, one that involved connecting more with people. After discovering the organization Live Different, a nonprofit that delivers motivational presentations to students across Canada, Drake, CC, found what he was looking for.

Drake, now 26, draws from his adventurous life experiences and the speaking skills he's learned from the Toastmasters of Greater Burlington club to captivate his young listeners. He has successfully presented to more than 25,000 students across 55 schools in five Canadian provinces.

You joined Toastmasters at age 25. Why?

I heard about Toastmasters through a presenter named Brendon Burchard, who was giving a seminar called "High Performance Academy." In the Q&A portion someone asked, "What is the best way to get involved in public speaking?" He mentioned Toastmasters. I kept hearing how it provides an encouraging environment, regardless of skill level. I decided to join because I wanted to get comfortable engaging with an audience as well as speaking without notes.

How did you get involved with racing?

As a teenager I raced motocross in the U.S. and Canada and my goal was to race

professionally. My life revolved around the sport—I was obsessed, to say the least. When I didn't make the cut as a racer, I wanted to at least help other people win, so I attended engineering school with the intent of working on a race team. Before my final semester, I flew to England and applied to all of the Formula 1 teams and big-name race teams. I found an engineer role for Subaru Rally Team USA and showed up for a "tour" of the facility, with my resume in hand. I stuck around and got a chance to speak to the chief engineer. What I lacked in work experience, I made up for in enthusiasm and landed the job.

Working for a race team is a fast-paced, high-stakes, big-budget frenzy. It was challenging, fun and adrenaline-filled. But no matter how hard I worked, I couldn't connect to a sense that I was helping other humans. Throughout university I had spent quite a bit of time as a volunteer for "City Kidz," a program for inner-city youth. There was so much fulfillment in that; I knew I had made an impact there. That's what I was looking for.

You then applied to Live Different. What is that?

Live Different puts together motivational and inspiring presentations for middle and high school students across Canada. They also organize home builds in Mexico, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

The organization has three separate tour buses with routes all across Canada, reaching over 100,000 students per year, with audiences ranging from 15 in the Northern Indigenous Tours to 1,500 in the bigger cities. The presentations revolve around a theme, like: "Choose Empathy First" or "Own Your Story," and they have speakers, a high-energy band and inspiring videos to captivate the audience. The

goal is to empower youth and provide character development support, and inspire students to make a positive difference in their world.

Tell us about your cheerleading and yoga experience.

In high school the cheerleading coach told me that she'd teach me how to do a backflip if I joined the team. Then, when I got to university, the cheerleading team had a coach specifically for flipping skills, so I had to join. Cheerleading is not an easy sport, however. Although I was very strong, I was not flexible, and my compromised form went directly to my lower spine and grinded away my lowermost spinal discs. I was in chronic pain at age 21.

Six months of hot yoga allowed my back to heal, though breaking my bank account. I realized I could make money *teaching* yoga instead of spending money *doing* yoga. I flew to India where I took a course on how to become an instructor.

How do you incorporate these talents into your presentations?

During the Live Different tour, before I share my story with the students, I walk to the microphone on my hands (handstand walk). It makes the kids go nuts, and significantly increases the amount of interactions after the presentations.

We also had a special challenge for the students, where they would text a number and receive instructions on how to facilitate meaningful conversations at school. If enough students participated, I would do a backflip on stage, or something related. It caused the students to participate more, and I absolutely loved doing it. Those were all tricks that I had picked up during my cheerleading days, and the yoga helped with the handstands.

“I incorporate rhyme, beatboxing, acting, anything—it is all fair game. That allowed me to develop a sense of my strengths onstage for the students.”



TOP: Myles Drake, CC, gives a presentation on empathy to Canadian students while on the Live Different tour.

LEFT: Myles takes a break from the stage to perform a handstand.



Why do you like speaking to kids?

Because I know the potential involved. There's something about showing up and sharing the highs and lows of our lives that have shaped who we are today that allows the students to connect. The main topic I speak about is empathy.

After the presentations, students come up to us and let go of something they'd been holding on to, and you can see that sense of release, and it opens up that path of communication. My most memorable story is of a young boy who told me (while holding back tears) about his dad who had passed away in a house fire. He could barely get it out. I wondered why he was stuttering so much, but I was patient. It had happened years before, and this kid, maybe 12, was trying to “tough out” this experience. After he told us, his personality flipped; he was happy. It was just a surreal experience. We get stories like that almost every day on tour.

How has Toastmasters helped you?

The coolest thing about Toastmasters is the community. It is such an encouraging environment, that often the members believe in me more than I believe in myself. You can't help but be lifted by that. There's no such thing as failure, no matter how many lines I forget, how many times I stumble, it is always seen as “practice.” I incorporate rhyme, beatboxing, acting, anything—it is all fair game. That allowed me to develop a sense of my strengths onstage for the students.

Toastmasters strongly encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone, time after time, only to be met with encouragement. You can't beat that kind of training environment. **T**

Shannon Dewey is the digital content editor for Toastmaster magazine.



ONLINE EXTRAS: Discover more about Myles and his talents through additional photos.

Powerful Secrets of Persuasion

How to get others to take action.

BY JAMES HURFORD, DTM

Your ability to persuade and influence people—to get them to understand, accept and act upon your ideas—is crucial to success. People who speak persuasively have greater personal power. They get more things done and achieve goals faster. Learning how to persuade and influence will help you achieve success in every area of life. Consider these tips.

1 If people don't trust you, they won't listen to you. Trust underpins everything you say and do. Without it, you are lost.

2 We like people who are similar to us. People prefer to say yes to people they like. That's why, before getting down to business, it is best to talk about who you are, what you do and, if possible, find common ground or pay a genuine compliment.

3 Put yourself in their shoes. You'll never be persuasive if you focus on your own needs. Talk to people about their needs and you'll have their attention.

4 Give a little something to get a little something in return. By giving something, doing a favor, making a concession, providing small gestures of consideration to others, you'll find that others will feel compelled to return your kindness.

5 What we see is just as important as what we hear. Like it or not, people judge you at first glance. Your body language, behavior, character, gestures and dress all have a lasting impact on your ability to persuade.

6 Confidence and certainty are compelling. You have a better chance of

persuading others if you believe in what you do.

7 Have authority. People listen to experts. By having authority you can get a yes quicker and more often.

8 Knowledge is power. Know your subject.

9 Build your reputation. Integrity, accomplishments and character are all important. When it comes to influence, your reputation is your biggest asset.

10 Physical attractiveness. While you don't have to be a model, make the most of how you look.

11 Make it scarce. If you want somebody to act, make them feel they will lose out if they don't.

12 Instill a sense of urgency. Persuade people in the present. If they don't do what you want them to do right away, they'll never do it in the future.

13 Establish rapport. When people are comfortable with you, they are more open to your suggestions. Listen, ask open-ended questions, pay compliments, use humor.

14 Be persistent. Don't give up. Persistence is an essential element of persuasion—both in business and in life. Ultimately, the one who persists will be the most persuasive.

15 Be flexible with your response. The person with the greatest flexibility will have the most influence in any situation. Flexibility enables you to achieve your outcome.

16 Stay calm, keep your emotions in check. People turn to those in control of their emotions, especially in times of conflict, pressure or stress. Would you ever look up to a leader who panics under pressure?

17 Pick your battles. Persuasive people understand that most conversations don't require getting someone to do or accept something. Aggressive pushers put people on the defense, while truly persuasive people understand their power and use it sparingly.

18 Listen more than you speak. You can't persuade others if you don't know the other side of the argument. Listen for objections, connections and moments of agreement—common ground you can capitalize on.

19 Engage. Smile, establish eye contact, and speak firmly, clearly, and slowly. People will relax and engage with you, and be receptive to your ideas.

20 Try to eliminate fear. Whether you're speaking one-on-one, or to a group or a large audience, don't think that you're not good enough or don't have what it takes. People pick up on nervousness. It creates a barrier to persuasion. We can all get better and no one is perfect.

*This article is based on the author's book, How to Write Well. **T***

James Hurford, DTM, is a professional speaker, trainer and coach. He has authored two books, *How to Speak Well* and *How to Write Well*, and is a member of Winelands Toastmasters in Cape Town, South Africa.

Building Your Audience, One Title at a Time

5 ways to craft an enticing title.

BY JUDITH T. KRAUTHAMER

Have you ever walked up and down the stacks of the library or bookstore looking for something to read? As you saunter, your eyes come to rest on a book and you pull it off the shelf. What was it that compelled you to pick that particular book over hundreds of others? *It was the title.*

Every workshop, seminar, speech, blog, book and journal article has a title. It is how we name and introduce our work to the world. It is our first—and perhaps only—lure to snag a potential audience. Yet despite its importance, crafting the right title is typically overlooked and underrated. This integral component of our written and oral presentations merits thoughtfulness and creativity.

Here are five techniques for building a title that will bring your audience to their seats.

Create Intrigue

Curiosity is the spark that ignites engagement. Find one aspect, result or observation that is especially interesting about your topic and incorporate it into your title. The main challenge is in keeping your title relevant and related to your material. If it lacks a connection to the body of your work, you are simply using curiosity as a well-documented marketing ploy. For example, I could have titled this article, “A Good Presentation Title Increases Your Sex Appeal by 73%.” Undoubtedly, more people might read this article. But because the information they are seeking is irrelevant, they will finish the article feeling frustrated, angry and duped.

Ask a Question

When you pose a question in your title, it implies that the body of your work is going

to provide the answer. Most people are drawn to resolve; there is great satisfaction in having a problem untangled. By posing a question, you are letting your audience know, in advance, that their time invested will be well spent and gratifying. For example, I could have named this article, “Can You Meet the Challenge of Creating a Great Title?”

Enumerate

The brain operates optimally when it has finite chunks of information to digest. Offering a defined number in your title—three cures, five mistakes, 10 secrets—gives the potential audience the assurance that they will receive a delineated outline of information. Enumeration draws an audience because it pre-defines the outcome. Success, in this case, is not defined by the quality of the content, but rather, by the quantity of the content. Case in point: I could have easily named the title of this article, “Five Ways to Increase Your Presentation’s Visibility.”

The challenge to enumeration is keeping the numbers manageable. Although “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover” (the title of the 1975 hit song by Paul Simon) is exciting, it would take a long time to get through a list that long.

Elicit Humor

Humor is a universal connector, capable of drawing people together from all walks of life. Its upbeat nature tied to the human condition resonates with all ages and all professions. It provides a safe environment for topics ranging from the casual to the controversial. To illustrate, I could have named this article, “I Stayed Up All Night to Write the Perfect Title ... and Forgot to Hit Save.”



The challenge with humor is making sure that it is appropriate for your material. Topics that invoke human suffering, such as cancer or the plight of refugees, don’t resonate well with a funny title.

Highlight Your Audience

People like to feel special. You can leverage this desire by pre-defining who you want to engage as an audience. You craft a title that appeals directly and specifically to them. For example, if you are presenting to engineers, you can employ a title such as, “Expert Engineers Can Master the Art of Provocative Titles.” Similarly, I could have given this article the title, “A Toastmaster’s Dream: Creating a Title That Pleases Everyone.” The challenge in employing this technique is that it can inadvertently alienate people who might truly benefit from your expertise.

You have invested time, energy and passion in your work. Your words deserve recognition. The right title will help bring many eyes and many ears to your voice. **T**

JUDITH T. KRAUTHAMER is the author of four books and is a certified life coach specializing in mindfulness. She is the vice president public relations for the APL Toastmasters club in Laurel, Maryland. Find out more at www.quietSPACECOACHING.COM

"I Had An

Endless

Young Syrian triumphs over blindness, and homelessness to thrive in the U.S.

BY MARIAM ALAM HAIDER

When Ahmad Agha announced his decision to move to America by himself at the age of 17, his friends and family thought he was crazy. He had been blind since birth, had no contacts in the United States, spoke no English and had no money. No matter, he says: He had to do it.

Life in Saudi Arabia, where he and his family lived as Syrian-born immigrants, felt too limiting, he says. As a blind foreigner, he felt he didn't fit in and lacked access to educational support, such as audiobooks, Braille books and technology to aid with reading. Returning to his home country of Syria was not an option, as civil war had erupted.

"As an individual who is internally motivated," he says, "I wanted to learn more, to expand my horizon—to touch the stars, to be the best I can be."

It took three attempts, but he was finally granted a student visa to study English. He borrowed some cash and was on his way to Los Angeles, California. He didn't have much of a plan of what he wanted to do once he arrived. But he did have a firm resolve to somehow make it, get an education and change his life.

Laurel and his guide dog, Aero.



s Vision"

language barrier

Today, four years after he arrived in the country, Ahmad is quite literally a new person—he has changed his name to Laurel Hilbert (more on that later). The 21-year-old now speaks English fluently and has moved from Los Angeles to New York to San Francisco. He joined Toastmasters and recently founded a small business and a nonprofit that helps homeless youth, a project inspired by his own experiences living in shelters. He has transformed his life by relying on his own grit and ambition, a little luck and the generosity of strangers whom he now calls friends.

Toastmaster Mohammad Khouja, ACS, ALB, who introduced Hilbert to his club in 2014, says he admires Hilbert's drive and perseverance. "When someone tells him his situation is difficult, that [word] is not part of his vocabulary," Khouja says. As a Syrian immigrant himself, he knows firsthand the challenges one faces moving to a new country. Khouja is impressed that Hilbert has not only accomplished so much alone, but that he's done it as a young, sightless immigrant.

A Harrowing Start

When a driver picked up Hilbert from Los Angeles International Airport in August 2013, the teenager then known as Ahmad had just completed a 32-hour-long journey and only wanted a bed, a meal and a shower. He didn't know how to communicate in English so he just asked for a hotel—any hotel. The driver took him to one that cost about \$170 a night. Realizing it was far too expensive for a long-term stay, Hilbert stayed the night but left the next morning, taking only the luggage he could carry with him. He found a park to sleep in.

It was hardly the start he imagined for himself. "I think I was in full darkness in that park. I had never experienced sleeping in uninhabited areas, like park benches and streets, let alone in a

culture that I did not understand, in a language I did not speak," he recalls of his first several weeks.

Despite this daunting beginning, Hilbert pushed on. "I was homeless, but never hopeless. I had an endless vision. I told myself, *No matter how bad it gets, I'm going to make it.*"

"My purpose in coming to this country was to learn," he adds. "I knew that being homeless didn't mean I had to stop learning."

He found a gym near the park where he could shower and a library where he could access and listen to audiobooks. He paused at words he didn't recognize and used Google Translate to find their meaning. "I was basically just collecting vocabulary and attempting to put this vocabulary in use, in context," he says.

He continued for a couple of months. "The more I learned, the harder I pushed myself to keep expanding my knowledge of the language. And when I was able to communicate to some level with people, that's when I was able to start connecting myself to resources."

At first, however, remaining in the Los Angeles park, Hilbert found it challenging to ask others for assistance. "I had so much pride," he admits, "that I felt I should remain homeless until I [could] somehow get on my feet without asking people for help." But one night he finally had enough.

"It really hit me hard. It was cold and I had nothing to cover myself with," he recalls. "I was 17 and I was afraid. It was dark, I heard the trees rustling. At the time, I was just eating once a day to maintain my budget."

He remembered someone giving him a piece of paper with the phone number of a nonprofit. So he dug it out and asked a person nearby to dial it on their cell phone. An employee at the nonprofit contacted Samar Ghannoum, an Arabic speaker involved in volunteer work in her Southern California community,

asking her to look into this case of a blind boy living in the park. She arranged to meet Hilbert there with her husband. In a June 2017 *Time* magazine profile on Hilbert, Ghannoum recalls the moment she first saw him.

“Both of us were so devastated [...] to see he was finding his way with a stick,” she said.

They gave him a sandwich, guessing he hadn’t eaten for a while, and brought him to their house. Ghannoum eventually helped him secure a place in high school, find housing and connect with a lawyer. She helped him reclassify his status and apply for affirmative asylum, which would grant him the right to continue staying legally in the United States (beyond his student visa), given the danger he would face were he to return to his now war-torn birth country of Syria.

In April 2014, he was granted asylum. Hilbert was ecstatic. “A friend of mine was asking me, ‘Why are you crying?’” he recalled in the *Time* article. “I’m like, ‘I’m just really joyful. I feel that I am getting closer to my goal every single day that passes by.’”

An Independent Spirit

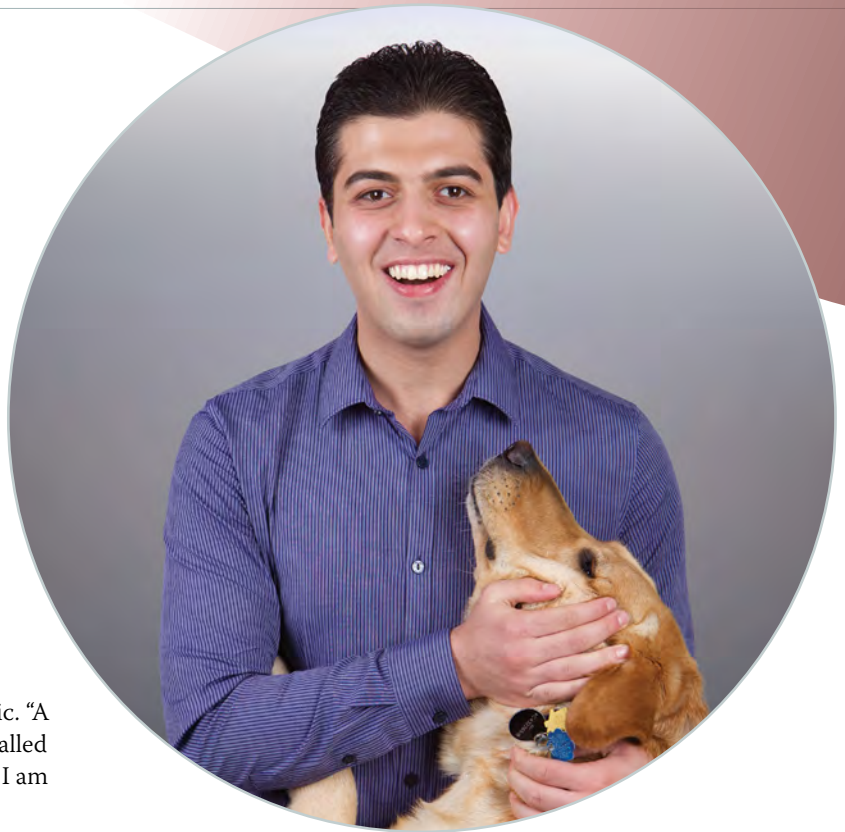
Although Ghannoum and others helped him along the way, Hilbert has never required hand-holding or lost his self-sufficiency. In fact, the *Time* article notes that his “ability to figure out complicated systems—from bus routes to bureaucracy—has shaped his life just as much as his innate perseverance.” Even his name change reflected a skill for imaginative problem-solving.

“Toastmasters has provided me with confidence, with the ability to break the silence. It has enabled me to embrace my unique gifts and deliver to the world my thoughts and ideas.”

—LAUREL HILBERT

As recounted in *Time*, an error at his Los Angeles high school left the teen—then known as Ahmad Agha—with another student’s ID card. “He was irritated by a teacher’s insistence that Laurel—the name on the card—surely couldn’t be his real name,” the article states. “He changed his own first name legally so that it was.” For his new last name, Laurel picked “Hilbert” after the German mathematician David Hilbert. He says changing his name was also symbolic: It represented a new life.

This tendency to embrace change and growth is in part what led Hilbert to join Toastmasters. At the suggestion of Mohammad Khouja, he joined the Empowered Business Professionals (now known as the Stagemasters club) in Glendale, California.



The experience helped Hilbert fine-tune his language skills, organize his thoughts and better structure his sentences.

His favorite part about the club meetings is “connecting with people on a personal level, hearing their stories ... learning from individuals who radiate an inner light. It’s being vulnerable among people whose main motive and concern is to [help] you develop your skills.”

Having Hilbert in the club setting was a positive learning experience for the club members too, says Khouja, since many had never interacted with a blind member and were inspired by the resolute young man standing before them, presenting speeches and even entertaining them with humor. During his Ice Breaker, he joked about his blindness being a gift—because he couldn’t see the room full of people staring at him which reduced his nervousness.

After leaving Los Angeles, Hilbert joined a club in New York and has recently started attending club meetings in San Francisco, where he now lives.

The Next Chapter

Hilbert received his green card in 2015, bringing him one step closer to becoming a U.S. citizen. He faced one obstacle after another and overcame them all. After living in Los Angeles, he moved to New York City because he needed a permanent address in order to receive continued educational assistance. Once in New York, he continued his schooling online while living in homeless shelters, and took government-sponsored classes to learn new technology that helps blind people work. He obtained a guide dog named Aero and eventually secured an internship that

“My purpose in coming to this country was to learn. I knew that being homeless didn’t mean I had to stop learning.”

—LAUREL HILBERT

turned into a job as an international outreach assistant at Rennert International, a language school and translation company.

In June 2017, Hilbert left New York and headed to San Francisco to attend college. Upon arriving in San Francisco, Hilbert was unable to continue working remotely for Rennert International due to scheduling conflicts. Once again he was on the brink of homelessness. Ultimately, Bevin Dufty, a politician and longtime advocate for San Francisco’s homeless population, worked with an agency for homeless youth to secure Hilbert a place to live for up to two years.

Hilbert expresses gratitude to all the people who have helped him along the way and says he wants to “pay it forward.” To this end, he recently founded a nonprofit called A Dignified Home—Children and Youth Services (adignifiedhome.org) to help improve the treatment of people in homeless shelters and group homes. His goal is to “promote the dignity of individuals who [are] not respected or are humiliated” due to their homelessness. “When I started experiencing homelessness, in many of those shelters I felt humiliated,” he says. More than once, he stood up for himself or others and was put back on the streets because of it. “I can’t keep my mouth shut. When I see injustice being done, even if it isn’t directed to me, I can’t stay quiet. I can’t not act.”

What does the word “dignified” mean to Hilbert? “It goes all the way back to the values and traits my mom taught me. She taught me to value hard work and responsibility, as well as compassion and empathy. She made me value traits like honesty, hard work, kindness, courtesy, humility, responsibility, helping others out, being humble. That’s what my mom believes in, things that last.”

While the nonprofit is still in developmental stages, he aims to open its doors in June 2018. Hilbert is supporting his nonprofit through a side business he started by renting out his car on vehicle-sharing websites like **Turo.com** and **GetAround.com**. That is quite an accomplishment for anyone, let alone a young immigrant. “Of all that I have accomplished in my life, without a doubt, I am most proud that I have founded this nonprofit,” he says.

Meanwhile, Hilbert continues his studies. He currently takes classes at City College of San Francisco and hopes to transfer to the University of California, Berkeley, in 2019 to study social welfare. The following year, 2020, he is eligible for U.S. citizenship. **T**

Mariam Alam Haider is a former editorial assistant for the *Toastmaster magazine*.

A LOVE OF LEARNING

Ever since he was a child, Laurel Hilbert has loved to read. He describes himself as intensely curious and finds answers to his many questions in books. Blind since birth, he learned to read Braille—in Arabic—by the time he was in the third grade.

When he came to the United States at 17, he learned English Braille. And now his passion for reading, researching and learning is stronger than ever.

“I have multiple ways to read,” Hilbert says. “Mostly, I download books from a website called Bookshare.org, which is supported by the U.S. Department of Education.”

When Hilbert was exploring forming a small business, he immersed himself in reading about various business issues and created detailed business plans. “I am very methodical, very detail-oriented, very research-oriented.”

His inherent curiosity also contributes to his communication skills. He converses easily with people. Meeting strangers in places like on a train or at school, he asks questions and engages, genuinely interested in what they have to say. That has led to some fortuitous friendships with people who have been able to help him in critical ways.

The young man says he is determined to succeed in life, which is one reason he was so drawn to the Toastmasters club he originally joined when he first came to Los Angeles. “All of the members were professionals—CEOs, business owners, executives, managers in large global companies,” he says. “I really enjoyed being part of that club because I was among a professional community and making connections.”

People in Toastmasters are trying to improve themselves, which inspires him. Whether through speaking, reading or conversing with others, he plans to keep learning and pushing himself to succeed.

“I don’t like to fail,” Hilbert says.



ONLINE EXTRAS: Watch Laurel Hilbert’s member testimonial video to learn more about his journey.

In Memory of Past International President Robert W. Blakeley, 1922–2017

Past International President Robert “Bob” Wilson Blakeley, DTM, passed away in October at the age of 95 at a senior living community in Jacksonville, Florida. An influential Toastmaster and leader—a member for nearly 60 years—he will be missed by all who knew him.

Blakeley was a longtime advocate of the Toastmasters program. As the organization’s 1976–1977 International President, his theme was “Be Proud You’re a Toastmaster.” He traveled across Africa, Europe and the United States promoting the organization.

“I made the first visit of a Toastmasters International President to South Africa,” Blakeley recalled in a 2009 article in the *Toastmaster* magazine. “I went there to assess the potential for establishing a provisional district, which led to establishing a district there.”

He is survived by his wife Irene; his daughter Dot and son-in-law Bob Carver; his grandchildren Heather, Jennifer and Bobbi; and his four great-grandchildren.

Blakeley was born on August 30, 1922, in Ogden, Utah, 40 miles north of Salt Lake City. During World War II, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and fought on the beaches of Iwo Jima. He was also called up from the Marine Corps Reserve during the Korean War.

In 1956, Blakeley joined the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Two years later, after delivering an unsuccessful presentation to the Corps, he joined Toastmasters. As a civilian manager for the Corps, he was the head of administration for the military’s construction projects. In 1961, during the Cold War, he had the added responsibility of being a logistics official for the Army’s fallout shelter project. In that role, he designed what came to be a well-known symbol in the 1960s—three yellow triangles encircled in black on a yellow



Robert W. Blakeley

“As the years roll by, I continue to pass on the lessons we learned from Bob to others.”

—DAVID HOLLINGSHEAD

background. To add visibility and strength to the signs he was designing, he used reflective paint to reproduce the logo. That led to the production of 1.4 million signs, which were posted throughout American cities to identify public shelters in the event of a nuclear strike. In 1981, Blakeley retired from the Army Corps of Engineers as chief of administrative services.

Blakeley is fondly remembered as a leader in Toastmasters for the part he played in opening membership to women. In the early 1970s, as a member of the Board of Directors, he was asked to lead

a committee to *reject* the idea of changing the bylaws to allow women to become club members. But, he said in 2011, when Tim Keck, DTM, interviewed him for an oral history video, “I was driving to change the bylaws to *include* women.” A decision followed to allow each club to make the decision for themselves.

“That, I think, is a good lesson learned ... when you’re managing an organization, or leading it, you need to lead it from the people’s point of view, not in terms of what you want to do from on top. Now we’re in great shape,” he added, because of the inclusion of women in Toastmasters.

Past International Director David Hollingshead, DTM, has this memory of Blakeley:

“In 2004, in spite of my limited experience, I was entrusted with the responsibility of reforming District 47. I called on Bob and gained two things from that meeting: (1) An in-depth ‘education’ in how to reform a district, and (2) a personal mentor who aided me tremendously in both my Toastmasters and professional careers . . . As the years roll by, I continue to pass on the lessons we learned from Bob to others. I know this is what Bob would value the most as his legacy.”

Bennie E. Bough, DTM, 1992-1993 International President, agrees:

“Bob Blakeley is an example of the perfect mentor. For nearly 40 years, I had the privilege of having Bob as my mentor. His love of Toastmasters knew no bounds. Every time I approached him with a challenge or problem, he never gave me his opinion directly but rather began by asking me a series of questions that led to a solution which would end by Bob saying, ‘Now isn’t that amazing, you already knew the solution.’ I give Bob credit for all the good things I accomplished in Toastmasters.” **T**



Being the Best Table Topicsmaster

It's about you giving others the opportunity to speak.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

If I were to ask you what the purpose of Table Topics is, I suspect you would say, “To teach us how to speak when unprepared.” While that is true, another reason is equally important.

I was taught one basic principle when I joined Toastmasters: that everyone should have an opportunity to speak at a club meeting. That gives the Table Topicsmaster a second purpose—one that governs much of how to handle that role—to give more members a chance to speak.

Perhaps no role at Toastmasters meetings offers more flexibility than that of Table Topicsmaster. The purpose of Table Topics can be achieved in many different ways. Even so, the following techniques can help, no matter which path you choose to follow.

Your first task as Table Topicsmaster is to come up with a list of questions. You may ask, “How many questions should I prepare?” Every club is different. If you aren't sure how many members usually speak during Table Topics, ask a more experienced member. That number represents the minimum number of questions you should create. I always write four or five more than I need. That way I am prepared for surprises. And if your club has a meeting theme, be sure to tie into it.

The nature of your questions is also important. The first club I joined liked having really tough, off-the-wall questions. Questions like, “If you met a space alien, ...” I liked that because I am a creative person. And, as such, those were the types of questions that I wrote. I noticed something, though. The speakers weren't answering the questions but

instead changed the topic to speak about something else.

That is when I changed my thinking. If my job is to help people speak on their feet, then I need to make that task easy. My questions now are very simple, and they allow speakers to focus on crafting a response and speaking smoothly. Alternatively, your club may like the more difficult questions. If your members embrace them and answer them, then that's great. If they keep changing the topic, you might want to rethink that practice.

The Table Topicsmaster role is not about giving you an opportunity to speak; it is about you giving others the opportunity to speak.

Once I have my questions, I prioritize them. Some are better than others. Those are the ones I want to ask first. The others are my overflow. That is your pre-meeting preparation. But now the meeting day has arrived and the president has called the meeting to order. You have one more task to perform before the Table Topics segment begins: It's time to make a list of all of those attending the meeting.

I make four columns. Column 1 includes all who have no role that day. These are the members I call on first. Column 2 includes everyone with a minor role, such as Ah-Counter, grammarian and timer. Column 3 is for those with a major role to play: Toastmaster, speaker, General Evaluator and

Speech Evaluator. Column 4 is for guests, if you have any. Your club has a protocol on how to handle those visitors. If you don't know your club's protocol, check with one of your mentors prior to the meeting.

Next, I decide in which order to call on the members and I number them accordingly. I exhaust all members in Column 1 before proceeding to Column 2. I resist the temptation to call on the best Table Topics speakers first. “Oh, I want to hear Mary speak. She's good!” The problem is that Mary doesn't need practice as much as some other club members. Call on Mary, yes, but only after the less proficient members have had a chance to speak.

You can weave any guests into the column 1 group, but don't call on a guest to speak first or second. Give them an opportunity to see how it is done before inviting them to participate.

One last thought. The Table Topicsmaster role is not about giving you an opportunity to speak; it is about you giving others the opportunity to speak. Get to the next question quickly to enable more members to speak. And keep an eye on your Toastmaster who will give you the signal to wrap it up.

Table Topicsmaster is an important role. It helps make the Toastmasters experience that much more valuable for every member—including those without a meeting role. **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.

THE POWER OF Moments

Create experiences—and speeches—that have lasting impact.

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

Think back on the course of your life and you can likely identify a number of defining moments that shaped your personality, your career or your life's path. Perhaps it was a professional or personal disappointment that set you on a new course, a relationship with a teacher or manager that lifted you to new heights or a chance encounter with someone you eventually married.

These moments may seem the product of happenstance or fate, but best-selling authors Chip and Dan Heath argue that many of these defining experiences can be engineered and used by Toastmasters to fashion more powerful speeches or deliver

more enduring leadership lessons. In their new book, *The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact*, the Heath brothers recount stories of moments that propelled people in new directions, changing the arc of life paths and leading to new insights that radically altered beliefs and behaviors.

In an interview with the *Toastmaster*, co-author Chip Heath talked about the book and the research behind it. One of the key messages of *The Power of Moments*, Chip says, is that while defining moments shape our lives, we don't have to wait for them to happen.

"We can be the author of those moments," he says. "I think it's a skill that more speakers and leaders need, an ability to tap into the emotions of the moment in ways that mobilize audiences or team members in positive directions."

The Heath brothers, accomplished educators and "idea collectors," have a history of conducting groundbreaking research that generates compelling new insights. Chip is a professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, and Dan is a senior fellow at Duke University's CASE center, which supports social entrepreneurs. Together the two have written a series of best-selling books that include *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* and *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices*



“One of the best ways to connect with audiences is by revealing more of your true self to them.”

—CHIP HEATH

in Life and Work. Made to Stick, which spent 25 months on *Business Week's* bestseller list, explores the concept of why some ideas thrive while others die, detailing the anatomy of ideas that “stick” and how to increase your odds of developing them.

Defining Moments for Audiences

In the *Power of Moments* the Heaths examine traits that defining experiences have in common. Research in psychology finds that memories of experiences are not like films that we can rewind and watch from beginning to end. They are more like fragments of particular minutes or hours that stand apart from the surrounding weeks or months.

“What we know is in any time period we forget much of what is going on, but there are consistencies in things we remember,” Heath says. “We tend to remember peaks like the best or worst moments and transitions like beginnings and endings, but we forget many things in the middle. Most lasting memories of college students, for example, occur in the first six weeks of their freshman year. But their junior year tends to be a black hole of memory.”

That’s an important finding when applied to writing or delivering a speech, Heath says, since openings, closings and personal revelations—long stressed as important to presentations—may have even more impact than many speakers realize.

People often miss opportunities to create defining moments, Heath says, but we can learn how to engineer more of them for ourselves and others. What if a leader knew exactly how to turn an employee’s moment of failure into a moment of growth, for example, or a teacher could design a lesson students reflected on for years to come?

Yet the reality is leaders and speakers too often do little to distinguish one week of business or one speech from the next, Heath believes. While creating these moments takes forethought and creativity, the payoffs can last a lifetime, he says.

Four Elements of Defining Moments

In their research the Heath brothers found that defining moments possess at least one of the following four elements. “What we argue is if you understand these principles you can help create the conditions that lead to remarkable moments,” Heath says. “You don’t have to wait for chance to create them.”



FROM LEFT: Brothers Chip and Dan Heath are best-selling authors, accomplished educators and “idea collectors.”

Elevation. These are the defining moments that rise above the everyday, Heath says. They might be social occasions that mark transitions (weddings, retirement parties), moments onstage (giving speeches, performing in a play) or experiences that happen spontaneously (an unplanned road trip). To create these, speakers or leaders must enhance sensory pleasures, raise the stakes and if possible “break the script” to add an element of surprise.

Consider the moments of elevation created at the Magic Castle Hotel in Los Angeles, where a red phone is mounted to a wall near the hotel pool. When guests pick up the phone, someone answers, “Hello, Popsicle Hotline.” Guests place an order, and minutes later a staffer wearing white gloves delivers a cherry, grape or orange Popsicle to the caller at poolside. On a silver tray, for free.

People often miss opportunities to create defining moments, Heath says, but we can learn how to engineer more of them for ourselves and others.

“When you phone the Popsicle hotline, is that a defining moment?” the Heaths question in their book. “In the context of a lifetime, certainly not. But in the context of a vacation? Of course it’s a defining moment. When tourists tell their friends about their vacation to Southern California, they’ll say, ‘We went to Disneyland, and we saw the Walk of Fame, and we stayed at this hotel, the Magic Castle, and you won’t believe this, but there’s a phone by the pool . . .’ The Popsicle hotline is one of the moments that defines the trip. And it was an engineered moment—the kind of moment that other hotels often fail to conjure.”

Insight. Heath says defining moments can “rewire” our understanding of ourselves or of the world. “These moments create a deep realization about something in our lives,” Heath says. “It could be a realization that your current job isn’t the right fit for you, the person you’re dating is the one you want to marry or an insight about now being the time to finally start your own business.”

Heath says while moments of insight might appear to come out of nowhere, we can lay the groundwork for creating them by helping others “trip over the truth.” Producing moments of self-insight, on the other hand, requires that we stretch and place ourselves in situations that often involve the risk of failure.

“There is power in someone who not only points out areas where you can improve, but also expresses high expectations of your future performance.”

—CHIP HEATH

Pride. Moments of achievement or courage capture people at their best and often serve as a springboard for other accomplishments or insights. Heath says creating such moments requires understanding the “architecture” of pride. That means recognizing people for individual achievements, and in other cases planning a series of milestone moments that build on each other in pursuit of a larger goal. It also requires authenticity—delivering recognition that is *personal* and not *programmatically*.

Connection. Defining moments can create a sense of connection that bond us together, such as graduations, weddings, speeches, work triumphs or sporting events. Heath says these moments are strengthened because they are shared with others—groups often unite when they strive together toward a meaningful goal.

The Power of Opening Up

When it comes to speeches, Heath says one way Toastmasters can create more defining moments for audiences is by finding the courage to be more authentic. “One of the best ways to connect with audiences is by revealing more of your true self to them,” Heath says. He points to a study conducted about how strangers interact at bus stops. Those who simply said “hi” to others connected only at the superficial level of small talk, while those who instead said, “I really had a tough day. It’s good to finally be here at the bus stop,” often elicited longer, more meaningful—and memorable—interactions with others.

“It turns out even if you take a baby step toward revealing something about yourself, the conversation and interaction that follows can go much deeper,” Heath says. “If you look at the best

speeches, speakers are revealing things about the challenges and difficulties in their lives that others can relate to. That can create defining moments that stay with audiences long after the speech.”

Toastmasters also can create defining moments for their peers during regular club interactions. One such opportunity comes in setting performance expectations, Heath says. An example in *The Power of Moments* highlights junior high school students who were asked to write an essay about their personal hero. One group of students received a note from their teacher after writing the essay that said, “I’m giving you these comments so that you’ll receive feedback on the paper.” A second group received a different note saying, “I’m giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know you can reach them.”

After the papers were returned, students had the option to revise and resubmit them for a better grade. Only 40 percent of those who received the generic feedback note did so, Heath says, while 80 percent of those receiving the “high expectations” note chose to revise their essays, making twice as many corrections as the other group.

“There is power in someone who not only points out areas where you can improve, but also expresses high expectations of your future performance,” Heath says. “That’s a proven way of motivating people to persist in becoming better.” **T**

Dave Zielinski is a freelance business writer and a frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster magazine*.

HOW TO GIVE PRESENTATIONS THAT STICK

During their research into why some ideas thrive and others die for the book *Made to Stick*, co-authors Chip and Dan Heath examined what makes some presentations more “sticky” than others. The brothers identified a number of factors that make certain speeches more effective and memorable than others. Here are three of their key findings:

Limit the Abstractions

The number one problem in presentations is that messages are too abstract. Too often speakers talk at high levels about the big picture, the Heaths found, but give no concrete details that make the big picture more understandable and plausible. Most people communicate with, say, three parts exposition to one part example. That’s exactly backward. In a compelling presentation, examples aren’t garnish, they’re the entree.

Data is a vital part of many presentations but it can be abstract, so resist the temptation to lead with it or to let it stand alone. Data is just the summaries of thousands of stories. Tell a few of those stories to help make the data meaningful.

Let Your Main Points Hog the Spotlight

If you say 10 things, you say nothing. You probably agree with that statement, yet it’s a hard rule to live by. You’ve put a ton of work into your presentation—you’ve done the research, analyzed your data, you’ve struggled with your conclusion. All of it seems important. Cutting that third bullet point on slide 17 feels like a wound.

But it shouldn’t. Think about yourself as the director of a play, and you’re allocating speaking parts among your main points. You can create a great monologue or dialogue, but if you’ve got 22 characters speaking, you haven’t developed any of them properly. So don’t dwell on the pain of cutting bullet points on slide 17. Think about the extra attention you’ve allocated to your main points.

Bring Reality into the Room

A good idea doesn’t always need visual drapes. When James Carville (advisor to former U.S. President Bill Clinton) said, “It’s the economy, stupid,” he didn’t pause to send his [associates] out looking for pictures of dunce hats. “Show, don’t tell” can be easier than it sounds. Just bring a little reality into the room.

Tom Duncan, the president of the U.S. division of the Positec Power Tool Group, had a sales call with a key account. At the last minute, he abandoned his prepared PowerPoint presentation and decided instead to set two drills on a table—his and his competitor’s. He disassembled them side by side to show the durability of his company’s design. The customer’s reaction to this surprising dose of reality and absence of PowerPoint slides? He loved it, and Duncan closed the deal.

Excerpted with permission from the article *Making Your Presentation Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath, co-authors of the book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*.

Accredited Speakers

Speak Up

Professional speakers share lessons learned along their paths to the AS designation.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

The Toastmasters International Accredited Speaker Program is designed for professional speakers who combine *expert knowledge in a particular subject* with *mastery of the spoken word*, making them sought-after experts in their respective fields.”

This is Toastmasters International’s official description of the Accredited Speaker Program, which was created in 1981. As of 2017, 75 members have earned this prestigious Accredited Speaker (AS) title. But, it’s not for everyone. Toastmasters who achieve it are paid professionals who have a viable speaking business as topic experts and engaging presenters. They know how to find clients, negotiate speaking fees, create compelling marketing material, *and* be terrific with an audience.

Why earn the AS? Every profession has its professional certification. This one is for paid speakers who have met high standards and are credible authorities in their chosen fields. It’s not a “next step” after DTM. It reflects a commitment to the craft, and gives clients confidence that they are hiring a true professional.

Don’t think of it as a contest. The pass-fail judging does not produce one “winner.” In any given year, several people can earn the designation. Some years had none. In 2017, there were six, the highest number ever in one year. The designation is also not a plateau to reach. On the contrary, the work done during the application process is the same work professional speakers continue to do to sustain their business.

What You Need

To apply for the AS, you must meet these eligibility requirements:

- ▶ Be a current Toastmasters member in good standing
- ▶ Have earned one of the following education awards, or higher: Able Toastmaster, Advanced Toastmaster Bronze or Advanced Communicator Bronze
- ▶ Have given a minimum of 25 speaking engagements (15 are paid) to non-Toastmasters audiences within the past three years

The application process has two levels. Level 1 includes an application that details your background, expertise (speaking topic), target audience and presentation format (keynote, workshop, training, etc.). You provide the list of 25 engagements, five letters of recommendation from

International Convention. Those who pass Level 2 are introduced at the convention as the newest Accredited Speakers.

Mentoring and Feedback

Since 1981, the program has changed for the better. Past International President Dilip Abayasekara (2005-2006) earned his Accredited Speaker designation in 1996 and has frequently served as a judge. He’s seen a shift that requires applicants to be paid professional speakers. He also says, “There is now a greater effort to provide feedback to the candidates who did not qualify so they can improve, should they wish to apply again.” Sheryl Roush, who earned the AS in 1993, has served as a judge several times. She says, “Judges get to shape the program, help maintain its integrity and recognize other speaker colleagues by affirming their expertise.” She passionately promotes mentoring for

“Make it a goal to become an Accredited Speaker, not for the letters after your name, but for the speaker and businessperson it makes you.”

—DARREN LACROIX, AS

clients, and a link to a video recording of one of your presentations. The video has specific requirements, so check the rules before submitting.

Using criteria similar to that of speech contests, a panel of judges reviews the Level 1 applications. Those who pass Level 1 are invited to Level 2, where they present a live 20-minute talk at the Toastmasters

aspiring AS candidates. She says, “If you want to apply, contact the current Accredited Speakers for guidance, because we’re available to guide you. Rochelle Rice and I did a session at the 2016 International Convention that explains the program. It’s worth the time to watch it.”

Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking Dana LaMon, who re-



Freddi Dogterom



Donny Crandell



Clare Crowther



Angela Louie



Joe Grondin



Bobby Cravalho

ceived his accreditation in 1993, gives wise advice: “The designation can boost your professional marketing. But don’t seek it as validation. Get that validation from your professional audiences and clients.” Fellow World Champion of Public Speaking Darren LaCroix echoes this. After he earned his AS in 2015, he wrote on his blog, “Don’t do it for the money; do it for the person you become. Make it a goal to become an Accredited Speaker, not for the letters after your name, but for the speaker and businessperson it makes you.”

Meet the Newest Accredited Speakers

The 2017 International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, had the largest class of Accredited Speakers in Toastmasters history. Here are short profiles of each one.

FREDDI DOGTEROM of Alberta, Canada, speaks on personality styles, customer service and financial planning. Her presentations incorporate stories of her life working in the tundra of the High

Arctic. She joined Toastmasters in 2002 as an emerging professional speaker and was encouraged by Toastmaster and Accredited Speaker Bob Hooey to pursue the AS designation. She applied in 2010, but failed because the quality of her recording was poor. “Lesson learned—when the rules say good quality, it has to be!” she says. She tried again in 2014 but failed because she misunderstood the judging criteria. Finally, in 2017, after being mentored by other Accredited Speakers, she passed.

“If you fail, try again, and learn along the way.”

—FREDDI DOGTEROM

To prospective AS candidates, she says, “Know the program requirements and judging criteria. Develop your support team and include some from the AS community. Craft your presentation. If you fail, try again, and learn along the way.”

DONNY CRANDELL of Reno, Nevada, is a speaker, chaplain, entertainer,

writer and educator. In 2015 and 2016, he was a finalist in the World Championship of Public Speaking®. As a magician, he’s mesmerized audiences all over North and South America. His topics include leadership development and strengthening personal connections, which he shares with audiences in the military and in churches. He pursued the AS designation because he had significant paid-speaking experience, which made the application process easier. In fact, the advice he gives to aspiring AS candidates is, “Make sure you have the paid engagements before even filling out the application. It’s so much easier.”

Reflecting on the preparation, he says, “The hardest parts were the paperwork and getting a professional-quality video. The easiest part was not memorizing since I was triggered by my PowerPoint slides. And I didn’t have to worry about overtime disqualification, as in a contest.”

CLARE CROWTHER of Elloughton, Brough, United Kingdom, is the first Accredited Speaker in the UK. “My business

covers four management areas, and I'm accredited in three of them: Executive Coaching, Team Effectiveness and Change Management," she says. "Public Speaking was the only accreditation missing. The AS designation would complete and enhance my entire business offering."

As she prepared for Level 2, she sometimes felt overwhelmed by all the feedback from well-meaning friends wanting to help. She says, "My emotional breakthrough came when I received totally contradictory feedback from two people in the same audience. I knew I couldn't please everyone! I had to be 'me.' I went on to hone a speech that I was proud to deliver, one that earned the AS designation."

"The process showed me how supportive Toastmasters is—locally, nationally and internationally."

—CLARE CROWTHER

Crowther echoes several other candidates when she speaks of the camaraderie she felt and says, "I learned so much from many sources. The process showed me how supportive Toastmasters is—locally, nationally and internationally!"

ANGELA LOUIE of Burnaby, British Columbia, has a background in Occupational Therapy, and speaks to the medical community on the topic of mental health recovery and rehabilitation, as well as organizational transformation. In 2004, she was encouraged by Accredited Speakers Margaret Hope and Past International President John Noonan to investigate the designation for herself so she could have a stronger resume when trying to get hired by meeting planners.

She says the hardest part for her was getting speaking engagements. "I am very shy, and asking to speak at events was difficult. I was already speaking for my job, and that helped." She failed at her first AS attempt in 2011, but succeeded on her second attempt. "This time, I knew what the judges expected, and I had 10 years of speaking experience," she says. "The Accredited Speaker program bridges the gap between the warm supportive Toastmasters world to the outside world where the audience expectations and standards are very different."

JOE GRONDIN of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, has been speaking professionally since 2002 on the topics of education, communication skills, leadership and wellness. He saw the Accredited Speaker designation as a way to expand his speaking globally. He says, "As speakers, the more people we speak to, the more ways we can change lives in a positive way. In other words my gain is to help others gain."

Like Dogterom, Grondin's biggest challenge was getting a high-quality video recording. He also condensed his standard two-hour workshop into a 20-minute presentation. "I am very attached to my material," he says, "and cutting things out was very painful. But I knew the process would make me a better speaker."

Grondin, like many Accredited Speakers, is so appreciative of the growth he experienced. He says, "I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Toastmasters. If there is any way I can give back I will."

ROBERT (BOBBY) CRAVALHO is an expert in conflict management. He's a retired police officer and hostage negotiator from Honolulu, Hawaii. He shares techniques for managing conflict and chose to pursue the Accredited Speaker because of a commitment to growth. He

says, "I did not go through the program just to become an Accredited Speaker, but to continue my development as a speaker. "As a result," he says, "I am more confident when speaking to conference planners about hiring me, because I know I can bring great value to their event."

If your goal is to be a paid speaker, the AS application process can put you on the path to reaching that goal.

When Cravalho started his AS journey, he was not a paid speaker. He spoke at a district conference and asked audience members to bring him to speak at their businesses. His topic resonated with many people and free speeches led to paid ones and his reputation grew. He earned the AS on his third try, but counts each failure as an opportunity to learn. One of his biggest lessons was making the message valuable for the audience. He says, "I constantly ask, *What do they want to hear? What can I teach them? How can I bring them value?*"

Are you currently a paid speaker? Toastmasters invites you to apply for the esteemed Accredited Speaker designation. If your goal is to be a paid speaker, the application process can put you on the path to reaching that goal. The journey can change you and the designation can work for you. **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.

TO APPLY FOR THE ACCREDITED SPEAKER PROGRAM, submit your application to World Headquarters between January 1 and February 1. To learn more, visit www.toastmasters.org/Membership/Accredited-Speaker and select the Accredited Speaker Resources.



ONLINE EXTRAS: Hear from the new Accredited Speakers in an exclusive Toastmasters video.

Want to Go Pro?

Bob Hooey, AS, encourages aspiring professional speakers to seek mentoring.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

When Bob Hooey, DTM, AS, joined Toastmasters in 1991, his goal was to become a professional motivational speaker. At the time, he was a certified award-winning kitchen designer who conducted showroom seminars about kitchen remodeling. A friend of his, Past International President John Noonan, saw him speak and said, “Bob, have you ever heard of Toastmasters? You might like it.” Hooey now thinks it was a kind way of saying, “We can help you Bob!” Now he says, “Toastmasters was the perfect way to practice my presentations.”

Four years later, he decided the Accredited Speaker (AS) program would fit well in his plan to become a professional speaker. At the time, many Toastmasters regarded the AS as the “next step” after DTM. Few members were familiar with it. Bob joined with six other Toastmasters who sought the designation, and for 15 months they met monthly to plan their work. He says, “We discussed the program, practiced speeches, gave feedback and set goals. It worked. That year, 32 people applied for the Accredited Speaker designation, and five passed to the final level. Of those five, three were from my group, including me. Collaboration makes you stronger. If you want to fail, stay in isolation. If you want to succeed, involve others.”

Hooey recalls, “I didn’t earn the designation that year, or on my second try the next year. But two years later, in 1998, on my third try, I got it. Not surprisingly, in those four years, I went from not earning a penny as a speaker to becoming a paid professional, which was my original Toastmasters goal! By 1998, I was a member of the National Speakers Association, and a founding member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers. So, for

me, the process of earning the Accredited Speaker actually made me a professional. Back then, being a paid speaker wasn’t a requirement [to earn the designation] like it is today. I’m glad it is today. This is a program for professional speakers who are Toastmasters. It honors those who are doing the work to build a successful speaking business.”

The skill of speaking is different from the business of speaking.

Hooey emphasizes that the skill of speaking is different from the business of speaking. Many great speakers are not great business people. “You don’t just have to be polished. You have to be professional,” he says. “There’s a big difference. Finding paid engagements, setting fees, negotiating agreements and developing great marketing material . . . these are business skills. Many people want to become professional because it looks glamorous, they have a passion or they want to change the world, but they don’t run a business. They run out of money and they are run out of business.”

Since earning his AS, Hooey gives back by mentoring aspiring Accredited Speaker candidates. With approval from Toastmasters International, he created the website **AccreditedSpeakers.com**, a central resource for people who want to learn about the program, find a speaker for a district conference or hire one of the Accredited Speakers. The website also lists




“The Accredited Speaker application requires a three-year history of speaking engagements.” —BOB HOOEY, AS

which Accredited Speakers are available for mentoring. Hooey is emphatic about the value of mentoring. He says, “We do it for free. We won’t redesign your speech, but we’ll guide you through the process. We’ll help you understand what the judges are looking for. You’ll have a better chance of passing levels 1 and 2, and walking across the stage as a new Accredited Speaker. We’re committed to that. The better you do, the better we all do.”

Mentoring must be working. In 2017, six candidates earned the Accredited Speaker designation, the most ever awarded in one year. Hooey says, “I love how the program is getting more visibility. Right now there are 75 Accredited Speakers. I’d love to see 100 before I retire!”

Hooey’s advice to aspiring professionals: “The application requires a three-year history of speaking engagements. Start now. Start doing the work to get to that point so that in three years you’ll be running the path of a paid pro, and can pick up the AS designation along the way.”

Today, Hooey travels the world speaking about communication, leadership, sales and personal performance.

For more information, visit his website www.ideaman.net. 

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.



Is it January?

Being a slow starter, I prefer the good old days when January began in March.

BY JOHN CADLEY

If you're anything like me—heaven forbid—you're probably wondering how January got here so fast. Didn't we just have January like ... two weeks ago? I'm never ready for January. By the time I am ready it's March—and if I lived in another era that's exactly when January would be.

The first known celebration of New Year's was in Mesopotamia in 2000 B.C., held—you guessed it—in mid-March. We know this because archeologists have found party hats with *Happy Vernal Equinox!* written on them. Nobody had to worry about January because *there was no January!* Back then the year had only 10 months. Imagine that! No stupid parties, no hopeless New Year's resolutions, no dropping that ridiculous ball in Times Square.

Then in 700 B.C., the second Roman emperor, Numa Pompilius, came along and decided the year needed more months. The Romans could do stuff like that. Who was going to argue? So he added January and February, earning the ever-lasting enmity of folks like me who live in northern climates and for whom those particular months are the near-literal equivalent of hell freezing over. Thanks, Numa. May your frozen pipes burst at 3 a.m. and you have to pay the plumber double for emergency service.

However, this early Roman calendar wasn't all that precise. It kept falling out of phase with the seasons (*Hey Flavius, isn't 28 degrees a little cold for June?*) and the politicians kept adding a few days to extend their terms. They called it working overtime.

This continues until 46 B.C. when The Man Himself—Julius Caesar—comes to

power and tells the Senate that not only is he sick of all the confusion, but if he misses his wife's birthday one more time she's going to throw him and his laurel wreath out the window. So Julius consults an astronomer named Sosigenes, who tells him to forget the lunar cycle and follow the solar year like the Egyptians. Caesar liked the Egyptians. He even dated one. Upon completing their calculations, Caesar announces that the year is now 365 and 1/4 days long, with one extra day in February every four years to keep things accurate. However, this could only be accomplished mathematically if he added 67 days to 46 B.C., which he did. He apologized by calling 46 B.C. "the last year of confusion." If only.

So that's how March became January. And maybe it's a good thing after all.

Beginning in 45 B.C., then, we have the Julian calendar with the new year beginning on January 1. Sort of. For all their diligence, Caesar and Sosigenes didn't get the correct value for the solar year quite right, calculating it as 365.25 days when it is actually 365.242199 days. This amounted to an error of 11 minutes a year, which doesn't seem like much until the years start adding up. By the year 1000 A.D. the Julian calendar was off by seven days, and by the middle of the 15th century it was a full 10 days out of whack. That's

why everybody in the Middle Ages had bad teeth. They kept missing their dental appointments.

The Roman Pontiff at the time was Pope Gregory XIII, and he wasn't too happy about not knowing when Easter would be every year. I mean, of all people, he was supposed to know. So he got his own astronomer, Christopher Clavius, to set things straight, which he did by lopping 10 days off the current year. Thus, in 1582, the Gregorian calendar was introduced by a papal bull which informed the populace that the day after Thursday, October 4, would not be Friday, October 5, but Friday, October 15. Aside from a brief riot by people whose birthdays fell within the excised days (*We want cake! We want presents!*), the Gregorian calendar was generally accepted.

But not by all. The United Kingdom, for instance, didn't adopt it until 1752. (Gotta love the Brits for not rushing into things.) Russia waited until 1918, having a little revolution to take care of first. And Greece didn't switch until 1992, when they realized they were double booking tourist groups at the Acropolis.

So that's how March became January. And maybe it's a good thing after all. If New Year's was still in March it would come right after St. Patrick's Day—and I would need paramedics to help me write my April column. **T**

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

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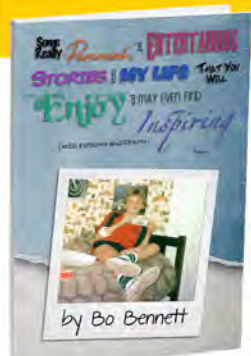
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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM



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 

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Call us at 978-440-8364 or visit us at <http://www.eBookIt.com>.

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