

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | AUGUST 2019

TOASTMASTER®

THE LINK
BETWEEN

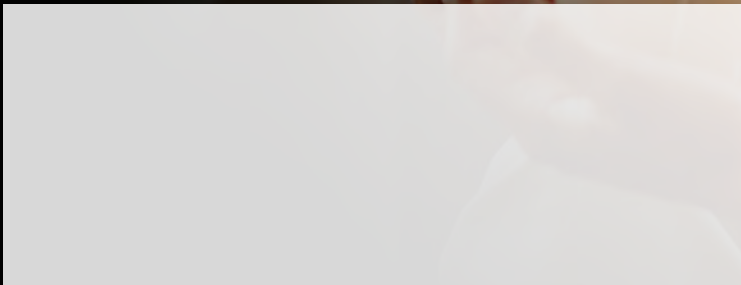
Listening AND Speaking

Making meaning
from sound

Welcome to
Pathways 101!

A refresher course on
our learning experience

How to become
a fearless
ringmaster
of words





Be the Change You Want to See

As I reflect on this past year, I believe “change” has been the theme for Toastmasters International.

We moved World Headquarters from California to Colorado, continued transitioning from the traditional education program to the Pathways learning experience, downsized our district conferences from two each year to one, and implemented videotaped quarterfinals for the International Speech Contest.

We placed new emphasis on public relations and conducted an advertising campaign pilot in California and Florida. We asked district leaders to focus on club support early in their terms. We encouraged area directors to schedule area council meetings more frequently. We asked districts to build new clubs and strengthen them with ever-higher levels of education and training.

For our clubs sponsored by corporations, government agencies or colleges and universities, we asked for a new approach. We want every organization-driven club to have multiple “organization champions.” We want club officers to share Toastmasters’ return on investment (ROI) by reporting regularly regarding club and member achievements.

I had the privilege to see this ROI in action in Bangalore, India, during events sponsored by Tech Mahindra and NetApp corporate clubs, and another event sponsored by the eight clubs associated with the Jain University Center for Management Studies. These clubs believe in the impact of Toastmasters. This has also been the year of #MyWhy and the year of *Wow*/Factor. We added district leader credit to the Club Coach program to support club quality and Distinguished Toastmaster credit. I’m sure your clubs have taken advantage of as many of these opportunities as possible.

Yes, this has been a year of change, challenges and hope. When I visited District 112 in New Zealand, District Director Toni Sharpe told me how she lost her eyesight at age 13 in a horseback riding accident. Toni said from that day forward, she looked at the rest of her life as an opportunity to live. I was humbled by her courage and by her positive outlook on the dramatic change in her life.

Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” I will continue my journey of change and hope you will continue yours. I will continue to learn from Pathways and from each of you. I will continue to support this organization, this family.

I believe our organization changes lives, and by changing lives, we change our world. When I campaigned for Second Vice President, I ended my campaign speech with Gandhi’s quote. I find it fitting to end my term as International President with the same words. Let’s embrace the changes in our organization and continue our future together as the first-choice provider of dynamic, high-value, experiential communication and leadership development.

It has been my *golden* honor to serve. You have inspired me. You have touched my heart. I will always remember this year of changes, this year of #MyWhy and the *Wow*/Factor—this year of GOLD.



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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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Toastmasters Clubs Celebrate Milestones



Georgetown Toastmasters club of Georgetown, Guyana, celebrates its 60th anniversary. Members say it's the oldest club in the Caribbean.



Members of the Nokia Noida Toastmasters gather in Noida, India, to celebrate the club's 200th meeting. Leaders from Nokia Networks—a telecommunications equipment supplier that sponsors the club—and Division C in District 41 join in to offer their support and congratulations.



Lloyds Banking Group Toastmasters in London, England, marks the club's 150th meeting.



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

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About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization teaching public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Membership exceeds 357,000 in more than 16,600 clubs in 143 countries.

Find out more at www.toastmasters.org.



Improve public speaking skills



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-  **Watch** inspiring videos.
-  **Listen** to educational audio tips.
-  **View** collections of engaging photos.
-  **Access** helpful resources through hyperlinks.
-  **Share** articles with prospective members, friends and colleagues.



FIND MORE ONLINE THIS MONTH: You are no longer required to log in to view the current issue, so sharing is easy!



Another Peek at Pathways

Does your club need a refresher on the Pathways learning experience? Review the basics and watch videos to learn why Pathways began and how it transforms members' careers.

Steal the Stage



Using the stage as a visual aid is easier than it sounds. Listen to an audio recording by Toastmasters Toolbox author Bill Brown for advice on how to involve your audience in your message.

WEB RESOURCE



Take a Step Into Toastmaster History

Discover a treasure trove of articles, illustrations and historical moments by downloading full PDF issues of the *Toastmaster* magazine. Visit the **Toastmasters Gallery** and be transported to a different time with entertaining topics, unique cover art and lessons from leaders who paved the way for our organization as we know it. Start your journey back in time!

bit.ly/TI_MagArchive

Can You Cope With Change?

Hear from Toastmaster Dana LaMon, Accredited Speaker and 1992 World Champion of Public Speaking, as he shares tips on how to maximize the benefits of change and focus on what lies ahead.



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► STAFF MOMENT



Spotlight on WHQ's Club Quality and Member Support Staff

This department assists clubs and members on a wide range of topics, especially relating to Pathways and club operations.

If you've ever called World Headquarters with questions about paying member dues, the Distinguished Club Program, navigating Pathways Base Camp or tracking a supply order, you've likely spoken to someone from this department.

Thirty-four members of the Club Quality and Member Support department receive 8,000 phone calls and 10,000 emails per month. The team works in three shifts, between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, to answer questions via email, phone and web chat, and provide support to Toastmasters around the world. Whether answering questions, solving problems or processing transactions, this highly trained and enthusiastic team ensures that members receive accurate and prompt support and guidance.

This department is part of the larger Member Engagement and Support Division, which consists of 52 employees—roughly one-third of the World Headquarters staff. Its members are busiest during renewal periods (with deadlines of April 1 and October 1 each year) and during Toastmasters' year-end when the Distinguished Club Program concludes and new officers begin their terms in July. They handle all questions relating to clubs:

financials, meetings, Pathways, officer training, club elections, reinstatement, membership-building programs and the Club Coach program, membership transfers, dual membership, policy and protocol, etc.

This department is an eclectic group with a wide range of interests, such as cooking, painting, songwriting, gaming, dancing, community service and social media. They describe themselves as a competitive department—always ready for a softball game or a wellness-inspired “step-counting” competition against other World Headquarters teams.

To reach Member Support, call +1 720-439-5050 between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mountain Time, Monday through Friday. For a list of email addresses for specific questions, visit www.toastmasters.org/about/contact-us.

Editor's Note: This article is one in a recurring series about the various departments at Toastmasters World Headquarters.

QUICK TAKES

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



My Mentor, My Confidence Booster

Shibani Krishnatraya credits her mentor, Himanshu Sharma, for helping her own the stage.

Since I joined Toastmasters, I have been blessed to meet people who always help me improve my speaking skills. Over time, I realized that assisting others is a priority for all members—helping fellow Toastmasters runs in their blood. When I was a new member, I was assigned a mentor, since Toastmasters can be overwhelming at the start. That person was Himanshu Sharma.

He has an unflinching faith that the mentor-mentee relationship is not a one-way road, but a two-way street. We learn and grow together. In fact, Himanshu says I've made him a better performer—I've helped him improve his vocabulary and the content and structure of his speeches.

Just as the mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell, Himanshu is the powerhouse of confidence. Somehow, he has channeled that confidence to me as well. Under his guidance, I learned how to own the stage, be upbeat and engage my audience.

For my second Toastmasters speech, one of the best speakers in my Delhi Toastmasters club was also speaking that day. I was petrified, terrified, horrified—all the synonyms under the sun for “scared.”

I rushed to my mentor for calming advice, and he told me: “The speech is yours; preparation is yours; confidence is yours; the stage is yours; the audience is yours, and the caliber of your presentation is yours. Just go up there and do your best. The rest will fall into place.” His words took hold of me—I delivered my speech and won the Best Speaker award.

In June 2018, I was elected as my club's vice president membership for 2018-2019. I had to run against six other competent and efficient contenders. I cannot deny that I was nervous. Himanshu was the one who gave me confidence and support.



Himanshu Sharma and Shibani Krishnatraya

Himanshu still helps me stay confident as I go about completing my officer duties, even now as I am vice president education. My mentor is a constant pillar of support, always available to answer any of my questions and the perfect guide when I feel lost at sea.

Shibani Krishnatraya is pursuing a degree in English from Delhi University. She joined Delhi Toastmasters of New Delhi, India, in February 2018.

Want to nominate an exceptional mentor? Nominate your mentor by emailing your story and a photo (1MB or larger) to MentorMoment@toastmasters.org.

LOOKING FOR A MENTOR IN YOUR CLUB?

Ask your vice president education who is available to mentor you. To start a mentoring program in your club, order the Club Mentor Program Kit (Item 1163) at www.toastmasters.org/Shop.

▶ NEWS FROM TI

Club Officers: Make Sure to Respond to Visitor Inquiries

It's vital that club officers respond to all emails in a timely manner. One important reason: You don't want to miss messages that can lead to new members joining your club.

Here's an eye-opening number: Toastmasters International receives interest from an average of 10,000 people per month. And here's another one: According to a recent survey, 60% of interested potential members who reached out did not attend

a club meeting. When asked why, more than 70% said the club never replied to them.

Don't miss such prime opportunities. Prospective members who contact your club through the Find a Club webpage (on the Toastmasters website) are eager to hear why joining Toastmasters is a good move. Your responsiveness to email inquiries and enthusiasm in greeting guests are key to membership building.

▶ **SNAPSHOT**

SriLankan Airlines Toastmasters of Negombo, Sri Lanka, hold a meeting in Ratnapura, near a scenic waterfall. Afterward, club members visited the Dhanaja Gem Museum in Ratnapura.

▶ **HUMOR**

3 Steps to Comedic Confidence

Being funny in front of a live audience takes a special kind of bravery. **BY NICK JACK PAPPAS**

While giving a presentation at a Toastmasters meeting, I asked if anyone had ever tried stand-up comedy. A few raised their hands. I then asked how many had ever wanted to try, and many more hands came up. There's such a draw to making people laugh.

If you want to practice speaking confidently before an audience outside the club, there's no better place than a comedy club "open mic" event—a program where nonprofessionals are invited to perform. Why? One reason is that trying to be funny in front of a live audience takes a special kind of bravery.

Try these three steps to get started with stand-up and boost your courage, confidence and comedic talents.

Find the right open mic

Avoid the open mic format that provides you with stage time provided you bring family and friends along. "Bringers" have built-in crowd support, but if you ask them to watch your stand-up too often, you will soon run out of friends.

Sign up for open mic time in advance and land at least three performance minutes, the minimum for a worthwhile set. Check badslava.com to find open mics around the world.

Be ready to bomb

Even the best comedians have bad nights. Many new comics do well the first time but struggle after that. Don't give up. Every time you get onstage is an accomplishment and an opportunity to learn.

Set the stage for improvement

Use the open mic to try new jokes and refine old ones, and record every set. Replay the recording and note where the laughs happen. If a joke flops three times, get rid of it. If a joke always gets laughs, hold on to it. Those are the jokes for your five-minute or "tight five" set. Send this recording as a preview to those who book performance venues.

Stand-up comedy is like anything else worth doing in life. Getting past the initial rejection could set you up for the greatest reward—bringing joy to people's lives.

Nick Jack Pappas is a stand-up comedian and comedy writer in New York City. He's one of the founders of Comedywire.com, and will be a featured speaker at the 2019 Toastmasters International Convention.




1 | UMUT TARIK AKDENIZ of Ankara, Turkey, stands at the Göbekli Tepe, in the country's Southeastern Anatolia Region. The site was built more than 11,000 years ago and is believed to be the world's oldest temple.


2 | REBECCA BISWAS of San Jose, California, visits Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on the Silk Road—the ancient trade route linking China to the Mediterranean.

3 | BYUNGJOO LEE of Seongnam, Korea, reads his Toastmaster in front of Jungfrau, one of the highest summits in the Bernese Alps of western Switzerland.

4 | LUZ BOBADILLA of Houston, Texas, visits the medieval city of Carcassonne, France.



 **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 print or online. Send images 1MB or larger to photos@toastmasters.org. Bon voyage!

Living History

The stories of seniors are a gift to cherish.

BY CARA WASDEN

One day our club president emailed members asking if anyone would be interested in volunteering for one hour at a seniors community. She said administrators wanted to set up a Table Topics session for their residents.

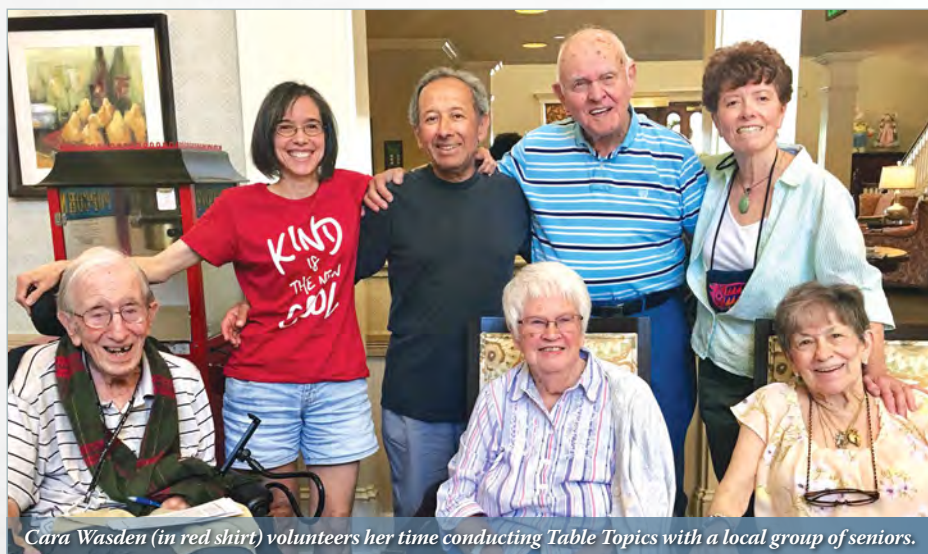
I thought, *That sounds like fun, and it's only an hour!* So I signed up and headed over to the seniors complex the following week. I was immediately introduced to Albert, Larry, Terry, Shirley and Joan, and I became fascinated by their world of living history.

I loved the stories they shared that day. Albert recalled a harrowing time for his family more than 50 years ago, as they awaited hearing whether his lottery number would be called in the Vietnam War draft. Terry talked about his career as a professional photographer on an African safari. Larry shared how he recently bought a stranger lunch—an act that was out of character for him. Joan spoke about her terrifying experience being stranded at an airport as a child.

What particularly stuck with me was what Albert told me after the session. “Joan *never* talks. That was so special to hear one of her stories.” I knew right then that Table Topics with seniors shouldn't be a one-time event. I offered to return the next week if they were interested. That was three years ago.

Today, I have my 10 regulars; others come and go. Some have passed away, and tears have been shed. “We have become a family,” a sweet woman named Pat says regularly.

When people get into their 70s, 80s and 90s, they have a lifetime of heartwarming, humorous and cherished stories to share, but they often don't have anyone willing to listen. If I hadn't stuck around, I would have missed the truly beautiful love story of Charles and Charmaine.



Cara Wasden (in red shirt) volunteers her time conducting Table Topics with a local group of seniors.

Charles is 95 years old, and the couple had been married for 75 years. Charmaine passed away a few months ago. Charles has spoken over and over again about his one true love, and of their continuous honeymoon at their home in Hawaii, where they frolicked in the waves sunbathing and skinny-dipping.

“The best part of this opportunity is that residents feel listened to; they feel loved; they hear laughter.”

Some residents have lost most of their cognitive abilities, so their contributions are more from the here and now. Whatever question Pat gets, she always says, “I love it here, just being surrounded by all of you!” When Gerry speaks, her stories often don't make much sense, but she has such variety in her voice and facial expressions that her body language is enough to keep us fully engaged.

The best part of this opportunity is that residents feel listened to; they feel loved; they hear laughter. Anyone can listen to someone else for two minutes, and I bet any Toastmaster could carve out one hour a week (or one hour a month) to help a group of seniors feel truly appreciated. Remember, we'll all be there ourselves someday!

Every week that I'm at the seniors community, I also feel listened to, loved and rewarded with a gift of smiles and laughter. If you would like to conduct Table Topics at a local seniors facility, feel free to contact me so I can help in your volunteering journey. Give a gift to others and to yourself by being a Toastmaster who truly makes a difference. **T**

CARA WASDEN is a member of the Toast of Petaluma club in Petaluma, California. She is a public speaking coach, a middle-school speech teacher and a tour guide for nature hikes with kids. Cara is happy to answer any questions about volunteering with seniors; you can reach her at tictalk2@gmail.com.

The 2019 Convention Speakers

Introducing the presenters for the 88th Annual International Convention, August 21-24, Denver, Colorado.

The 2019 convention promises peak experiences, especially via presentations by these speakers, whose words and wisdom will take Toastmasters to new heights. For more speaker information, visit www.toastmasters.org/Speakers. For details about viewing convention sessions on-demand, go to www.toastmastersondemand.com.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Phil Hansen

“Embrace the Shake: Transforming Limitation into Opportunities”

Hansen is an internationally recognized multimedia artist whose creative career was almost derailed by a tremor in his artistic hand. Undeterred, he “embraced the shake” and transformed a temporary setback into even greater creativity and innovation. Hansen’s TED Talk on finding life-changing strength within himself, and regaining the use of his hand, garnered more than 2.3 million views.

Michael Notaro, DTM

“The Call of the Leader”

Notaro, a past International President (2011-2012), is a real estate attorney and longtime Toastmaster who has served in leadership roles throughout the organization. Sharing insight from his recent book, *The Call of the Leader*, he urges individuals to recognize, embrace and fulfill that call and in so doing, discover the passion, purpose and power of authentic leadership.

Craig Valentine

“How to Present with Impact and Persuade with Ease”

Valentine, the 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking, is considered a master storyteller who has traveled the world sharing training and motivational presentations with hundreds of companies. Valentine’s interactive convention presentation showcases the skills every Toastmaster wants to polish as a confident, memorable speaker—the kind that others line up and sign up to hear.

Lee Rubin

“Function at Full Capacity”

Human resources expert Lee Rubin is a frequent speaker and panelist at corporate and professional association conferences. He teaches that extraordinary teams, like well-oiled machines, require high-level components to deliver superior performance. During his session, he’ll discuss how investing in talented individuals and shaping them into disciplined, unified teams is the mark of an elite organization.

Ruby Newell-Legner

“How to Create a Peak Experience at Every Meeting”

Newell-Legner, with 7 Star Service in Denver, is a customer satisfaction expert who advises her clients, such as international resorts and professional sports franchises, to operate with laser focus on customer needs and expectations. The result is loyal, devoted fans. These strategies can apply to Toastmasters, who want to make every club visitor a fascinated fan and keep all club members coming back for more.

Nick Jack Pappas

“The Magic Power of Humor”

Pappas is a New York City-based comedy writer, stand-up performer and a founder of Comedywire.com, a startup that helps businesses, brands and individuals “find the funny.” His convention presentation includes strategies, which he’s “field-tested” before a variety of audiences, to engage listeners and spark laughter through humor.

Nicholas King

“Becoming a Thinking Mechanic”

King is a motivational speaker and blogger, devoted to the concept that healthy thinking habits can change lives. In his words: “Your mind does not know what to think; it believes whatever you tell it.” King’s convention session centers on banishing negativity and realizing that each of us has the ultimate power over our own thoughts and emotions.

Carol Bausor

“Speaking Confidently in a New Language”

Bausor is a management consultant who works with companies to better manage translation projects. Through her work, she discovered that Americans in particular admire those from other countries who confidently speak English. For Toastmasters who want to pursue language skills but are intimidated or unsure how to start, Bausor offers ways to learn. **T**

Editor’s note: For additional speakers and information, visit www.toastmasters.org/Speakers.



AN AFFECTION FOR REJECTION

Meet 2019 Golden Gavel recipient **Jia Jiang**.

Jia Jiang, who specializes in “rejection therapy,” is the 2019 recipient of Toastmasters’ most prestigious award—the Golden Gavel. Presented annually since 1959, the award recognizes an individual distinguished in the fields of communication and leadership. Jiang will be honored at the 2019 Toastmasters International Convention in Denver, Colorado.

Through his company, Wuju (meaning “fearless” in ancient Chinese) Learning, and his website, **rejectiontherapy.com**, Jiang teaches individuals and organizations that the fear of rejection is almost always more damaging than the actual experience. In fact, he believes that looking at rejection with open-minded curiosity can be an impressive catalyst for success.

That mindset of invincibility-through-adversity, applied in today’s personal and professional endeavors, can lead to break-through successes, Jiang notes. The payoff comes in the form of new-found confidence that fuels new ideas and strategies. “Fearless organizations and individuals are able to sell more, think bigger and achieve higher,” Jiang says.

Jiang’s training methodologies have potential appeal to a wide audience, since rejection may be one of the most common and unpleasant shared experiences in life. He has worked with small and mid-sized companies, as well as corporate giants such as Google, Hewlett Packard and Dell, and distinguished American universities like Yale and Stanford. The universality of his innovative ideas about rejection has also led to coverage in business and mainstream media outlets, such as *Time* magazine, *Forbes* and *The Huffington Post*.

Jiang is unabashed in sharing his own history of failure and dejection. Not many people would strike out on the road to success by consciously seeking a 100-day journey peppered with potential rejection. Unexpectedly, Jiang got his career start by doing



just that. He set out on a quest to conquer a fear of humiliation that had followed him since childhood. He was inspired by a game—developed by a Canadian entrepreneur—that requires the winner to be, in essence, a regularly rejected loser.

For just over three months, Jiang tested the theory on himself, making daily, unusual, often absurd, requests of people: asking to borrow \$100 from a stranger; convincing a bakery to happily create a custom doughnut, on the spot, in the shape of the five interlaced Olympic rings; recommending himself for a non-existent job as a Starbucks coffee

shop greeter. Overall, he met extraordinary humans and found that calm conversation could often transform rejection into opportunity.

Jiang turned his funny, perceptive and heart-warming experiences into a book and a speech that garnered more than 3.5 million views when featured on the TED Talks website.

The Golden Gavel award turns 60 this year. The first honoree was Dr. Frank C. Baxter, a University of Southern California professor and a pioneer in program development during the early days of American television. Among previous awardees: actress Greer Garson; international author and speaker Dr. Deepak Chopra; Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus; and, of course, Dr. Ralph C. Smedley.

For a complete list of previous honorees, visit www.toastmasters.org/Golden-Gavel

About the Golden Gavel

Jia Jiang will deliver his Golden Gavel presentation, “What You Can Learn from 100 Days of Rejection,” on Friday, August 23, during the 88th Toastmasters International Convention in Denver, Colorado.

The Link Between Listening and Speaking

Communication is a spinning circle, where the way I speak affects the way you listen, and the way you listen affects the way I speak.

BY JULIAN TREASURE

In April of this year, we saw the stunning images of a black hole for the first time, and the dynamics of that awesome (and I use the word advisedly) system reminded me of the true nature of communication.

It's a grave mistake to think that communication is linear, as in: I speak, you listen; I send, you receive. In fact, communication is a spinning circle, where the way I speak affects the way you listen, and the way you listen affects the way I speak. Just as the sphere of superheated matter whirls around the event horizon of the Messier 87 black hole, so speaking and listening dance in a spiral toward a center, inexorably entwined and interrelated ... But is their destination understanding and harmony, or is it disconnection and conflict?

All Toastmasters know the importance of training in the art of skilled speaking, and I expect you share my dismay at the fact that we barely teach children in school how to use the human voice, this wonderful instrument that we all play. It's a scandal if children leave school unable to read or write—but the far older, richer and more powerful skills of verbal communication are largely taken for granted in our education system. And if speaking is given pitifully inadequate attention, listening is scandalously ignored. It's hardly mentioned at schools—barely taught, never tested.

The importance of listening may be easy to miss because it's a silent skill, but

mastering it is fundamental for effective communication. Given our educational bias, it's not surprising that we continue to focus on sending rather than receiving when fully grown. As evidence, my TED Talk on speaking has around five times as many views as my talk on conscious listening! Social media has only served to propagate and intensify the addictive attachment we have to what I call personal broadcasting.

“Because you listen through filters, your listening is as unique as your fingerprints.”

However, if you want to speak so that people really want to listen, you must understand what listening is and be an expert listener yourself. So let me suggest some perspectives on listening that may surprise you and offer you some exercises to improve your listening.

Listening Is a Skill

It's easy to assume that listening just happens, like hearing—but they are two very different things. Hearing is a physical, chemical and electrical process, as automatic as breathing. By contrast, listening

is purely mental. Using all your memories and stored experiences, your brain seeks to recognize patterns in the sounds received, and then you do two things: You *select* what to pay attention to (mainly new sounds or sound patterns you know to be significant—for example, your name) and you ascribe *meaning* to those sounds. That's why I define listening as *making meaning from sound*.

Listening is an active process, a skill. You can practice it, develop your ability and do it in different ways. Becoming conscious of this is the first step toward being a good listener, because when you accept it, you become responsible for your own listening.

You Listen Through Filters

The way you select what to pay attention to, and what to make it mean, is a result of listening filters you have developed throughout your life. They all affect how you listen.

- ▶ **Language.** Vocabularies and semantics vary widely, channeling both your selection and your meaning-making.
- ▶ **Culture.** Family, ethnicity, city, tribe or clan, chosen peer groups and nationality all shape your listening profoundly.
- ▶ **Values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions.** You accumulate these from parents, friends, teachers and role models.



Strongly held, these cause some of the world's most intractable listening challenges. And below the surface, you have many assumptions about how other people tick and what they are thinking, which also filter how you listen to them.

► **Intentions, expectations, emotions.**

In any conversation or situation, you may have a goal or an expected outcome—and your emotional state will powerfully affect your listening too.

We can't sense everything around us, or even process all the sensory information we do collect, so reality is actually just perception: It's the map, not the territory. Your listening filters actually create your reality, because they determine both what you choose to listen to, and what you make it mean.

Everyone's Listening Is Unique

Because you listen through filters, your listening is as unique as your fingerprints.

You are the only person in the world who has traveled your road to this place and this moment. Your personal path has formed your unique listening. It is a very common mistake (including for many public speakers) to assume "everyone listens like I do." They don't!

You Can Change Your Reality

You can change your map! You do this by taking control of your own listening, which starts with becoming conscious of your filters. When you are conscious of something, you can start to change it, and by changing your filters, you can change your own reality, exploring different listening positions.

You Always Speak "Into a Listening"

Whether you speak to one person or 1,000, you always speak *into a listening*. If you become aware of this, you will start to hit the bullseye with your

"I define listening as making *meaning* from sound."

speaking far more often; ignore it and you may miss the target altogether. Simply ask: "What's the listening?" in every situation and you will develop the skill of attuning yourself.

To learn about listening exercises created by Julian Treasure, you can access a set of short videos for free at www.juliantreasure.com/toastmasters.

www.juliantreasure.com/toastmasters. T

Julian Treasure is author of *How to be Heard: Secrets for Powerful Speaking and Listening*. His five TED Talks about sound and communication skills have been viewed over 80 million times, and his talk on powerful speaking is the sixth most viewed of all time. Treasure is founder and chairman of the audio branding consultancy *The Sound Agency*.

Welcome to Pathways 101!

A refresher course on the Toastmasters education program.

BY PAUL STERMAN

Two years ago, Toastmasters launched the Pathways learning experience, the most ambitious education program in the organization’s history. Since then, existing members have been able to work in either Pathways or the traditional education program—or both—during a transition period.

But that period ends less than a year from now—June 30, 2020—after which members can only work in Pathways. Are you ready? If not—or even if you are—now is the perfect time to review the basics of this expansive and innovative program. Such information, as well as resources, statistics and answers to common questions, can be found on the following pages. Think of it as Pathways 101.

“Pathways has provided a flexible and achievable way for me to progress in Toastmasters.”

- Member in District 74



147,006
members are
active in Level 1

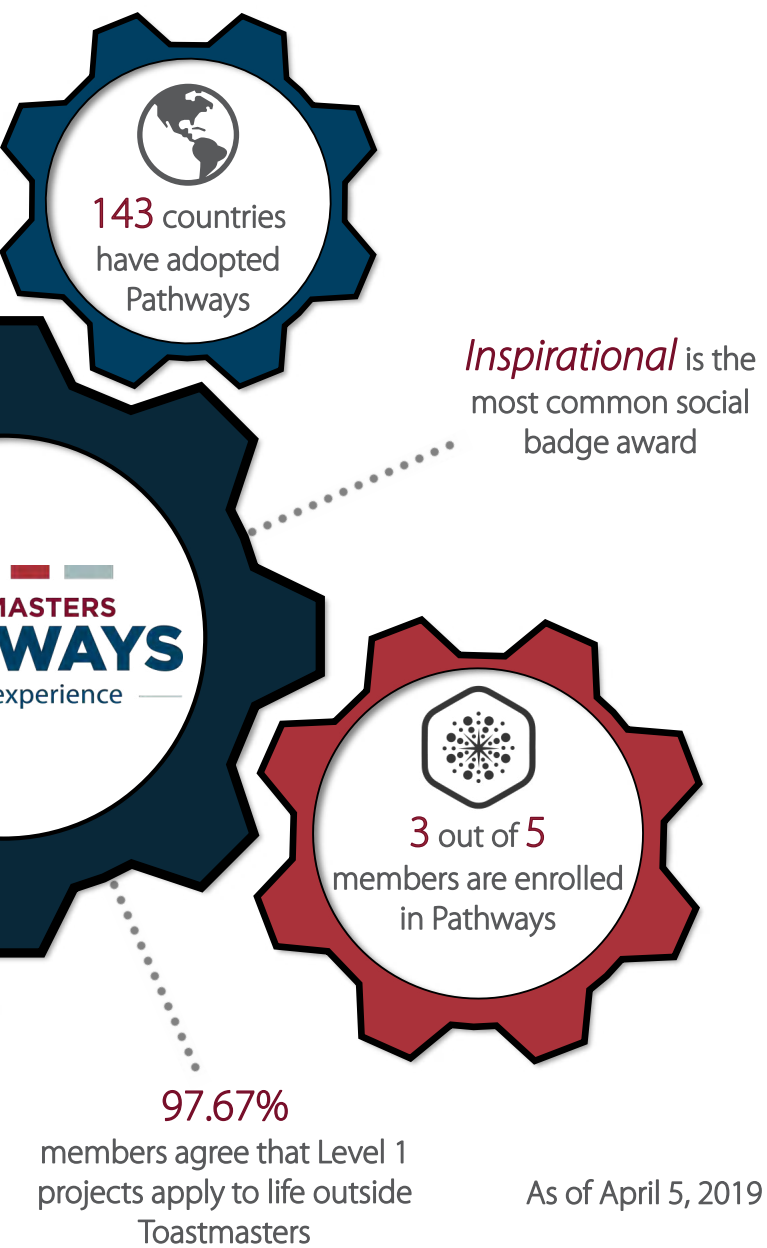


TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS
— learning experience

Let’s start with the obvious question: Why is the organization switching to Pathways? For many reasons—one of them being that it was time for Toastmasters to modernize the education program. Pathways is an online curriculum, providing users with flexibility; members can work on projects whenever and wherever they want. Participants have greater access to educational materials than in the traditional program.

Although purchasing Pathways content in print is an option, most members who enroll choose the online system, gaining access to videos, interactive content, tutorials, and other tools and resources. Members learn skills in Pathways that are transferable outside Toastmasters club meetings, as many participants can attest.

“My favorite part of the program has been the huge range of new, real-world, relevant projects available, which I’ve been able to integrate into my life and goals outside Toastmasters,” says Mark Snow, DTM, a member of three clubs in Queensland, Australia. Several Pathways projects, he adds, helped him in his career as a government financial analyst.



James Wantz, DTM, of Beaverton, Oregon, says he has honed his leadership and networking skills in Pathways, which has helped him in his work as a 3-D computer detailer for a structural steel company. “I am now the go-to person in the office to meet with the clients and discuss projects,” he says.

To hear what members say about their Pathways experience, watch videos of Snow, Wantz and others at www.youtube.com/Toastmasters.

The Online Experience

Ever since Pathways launched, members have offered extensive feedback about the program, mostly expressing praise and enthusiasm for its content and innovations, but also suggesting

improvements to the online navigation. The online gateway to Pathways is called Base Camp, where members find everything needed to navigate the program. This is where participants work on projects, track their progress and connect with club members.

The input from Base Camp users about online navigation is closely reviewed by the Pathways team at Toastmasters World Headquarters. Addressing members’ concerns is part of an extensive effort to improve the digital experience. To that end, World Headquarters last year established the Summit Team, composed of members from different departments. The group has gathered feedback from members, and its first project was redesigning and enhancing the online *Navigator*, which helps new members better understand Base Camp. It is currently working on improving the online navigation experience.

Club officers, particularly the vice president education, play a critical role in helping members become comfortable with Base Camp. Officers can lead the way by sharing their knowledge and experience. One helpful strategy is holding club meetings—or sessions within the meetings—dedicated to providing information and answering questions about Pathways and Base Camp, and getting members enrolled in the program if they aren’t already.

See some questions and answers about Base Camp on the next page.

How the Program Works

Learning paths form the foundation of the Pathways structure. Members work in the path best suited to helping them achieve personal and professional goals. In this way, Pathways is a customized learning experience, tailored to specific needs.

This reflects the progressive concepts in instructional design used by the Pathways development team. In designing the program, developers drew on the most current research in adult learning, focusing on key principles:

- ▶ Internal motivation is the driving force to learn. Adult education needs to be self-directed (thus, the customized nature of Pathways).
- ▶ Hands-on, experiential learning is vital, as is a focus on critical thinking. Wherever possible, concrete experiences are built into Pathways to emphasize the learn-by-doing approach fundamental to Toastmasters’ education programs over the years. Example: For a project on how a speaker can manage a difficult audience, club members behave like disruptive audience members so the member doing the project can practice handling that situation.
- ▶ To learn best, adults want to know *why* they need to learn something. What is the value to them? In Pathways, you apply

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS ... WE'VE GOT ANSWERS

Here are answers to frequently asked questions about Base Camp and Pathways.

1 Some members purchase both printed and online versions of a path because they want to have access to both forms of the materials. Why are they considered two separate paths?

Members who purchase two forms of the same path own both, and in the eyes of Base Camp and Toastmasters, they are two different things. Think of it like this: When you have a favorite book, you can purchase that book at the bookstore; you can also buy the same book in a digital format to read on a device, and you can purchase an audiobook. Each version has the same material, but they are different items when purchased. Members with the online and printed version of the same path will need to work with their club's vice president education to mark the path complete in both formats.

Members who want to complete the same path twice will need to complete each project twice as well. That means a new speech must be completed for each project to receive credit for two paths.

2 What are the tools and duties of a Base Camp Manager? For example, how can managers check the progress of all their members in one place?

The Base Camp Manager's primary responsibility is to track member progress and verify that members have completed all requirements in each level of their path. Because this role is focused on education, it primarily falls to the club's vice president education. However, the president and secretary of each club also have access to the Base Camp Manager page for their club.

When approving a level completion, Base Camp Managers should use the project descriptions to help them understand the requirements for each project

in the level and verify that the member fulfilled all requirements.

If you are new to this role, be sure to go through the tutorials on the Base Camp Manager home page. They were made precisely to help you understand your duties and how to fulfill them. Outgoing club officers can also be a great support by sharing their experience.

3 How much does Pathways cost me?

Your regular membership dues cover the cost of your first path. However, if you choose the printed materials option for your path, there is a \$25 (USD) printing fee. The cost for an additional path is \$20, and if you elect to work in printed materials, the \$25 printing fee also applies to all additional paths.

4 How will Pathways change my club experience?

Pathways is designed to keep club meetings at the center of your Toastmasters experience. You can still expect the same support from your fellow club members and experience the familiar structure of your club meetings.

5 Why is Pathways valuable to me?

The many benefits to members will include:

- ▶ A learning experience tailored to your personal and professional goals
- ▶ The opportunity to develop many skills relevant to an evolving global marketplace
- ▶ New technological resources to improve speeches and support club-meeting roles
- ▶ Online access to educational materials
- ▶ Videos that model the skills you are learning

what you learn, doing something tangible with your newfound knowledge. In the High Performance Leadership project, for example, you apply your leadership and planning skills by guiding a team through a project, from conception to completion.

The Pathways structure includes paths, projects and different levels of skill-building.

Paths: Eleven specialized paths are available. Titles include **Presentation Mastery, Dynamic Leadership, Innovative Planning** and **Persuasive Influence**. The content is challenging and robust—you can develop more than 300 competencies, such as blogging, answering questions effectively, speaking about personal strengths and weaknesses, and leading with resourcefulness and flexibility.



From March through July of this year, the *Toastmaster* magazine featured articles about the following paths: Presentation Mastery, Innovative Planning, Dynamic Leadership, Strategic Relationships and Motivational Strategies, respectively. (Visit the magazine archive on the Toastmasters website, at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine-Archive, to read these articles and find accompanying videos.)

Projects: Every path features a minimum of 14 projects. Each project includes at least one speech. Projects include many different topics, from understanding your own communication style to learning leadership tips to discovering how best to connect with others. To finish a path, you must complete a combination of 10 required projects and four electives (although you have the option to take as many electives as you want).

“Pathways is designed to keep club meetings at the center of your Toastmasters experience.”

Levels: Each path has five levels in which you complete projects and build on what you learned in the previous level.

- ▶ Level 1: Mastering Fundamentals
- ▶ Level 2: Learning Your Style
- ▶ Level 3: Increasing Knowledge
- ▶ Level 4: Building Skills
- ▶ Level 5: Demonstrating Expertise

Evaluations: Pathways speech evaluations are more comprehensive and uniform than in the traditional education program. The criteria is standardized: When members give a speech, they are evaluated by the same objective standards. For example, here’s criteria for assessing what might be missing in a speech: “The purpose was not evident. Content lacked organization. The majority of ideas were unsupported by additional information or details.” Other criteria reflect the success of a speech: “The member spoke clearly, and vocabulary was descriptive, accurate

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

It always feels good to be recognized for our achievements: It motivates us to do more. In Pathways, opportunities to earn awards and accolades come earlier and more often than in the traditional program.

At each level of the curriculum, participants complete two to three projects, and each time you finish a level, you receive a digital badge and certificate. You also receive a digital path badge when you finish a path. You can view your badges and certificates on Base Camp.

After each completed path, you earn the “Proficient” designation, signifying your expertise in that particular area. You can also give positive online feedback badges to reward members in your club—labels such as “Collaborative,” “Innovative” and “Inspirational.”

To learn more about awards that you and your club can achieve, visit www.toastmasters.org/Education/Pathways/Achievement-Awards.

and engaging. The member manipulated tone, speed and volume to emphasize important ideas and hold the listener’s attention.”

The evaluation guidelines lead to specific and detailed feedback, and the standardized criteria help increase the consistency of evaluations for all members.

Translations: One of Pathways’ greatest attributes is the availability of material in languages other than English. Pathways content is translated in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Simplified and Traditional Chinese—and will soon be available in Tamil and Korean as well.

Toastmasters around the world volunteer their efforts to serve on translation review teams, who ensure that all Pathways translations are accurate and authentic to the local culture.

If you haven’t already started working in Pathways, start now. That is the best way to learn about the program. Even if you want to complete certain goals in the traditional program, begin working in Pathways as well.

If you are confused or having problems in Base Camp, ask questions. Club officers and fellow members are happy to help. In addition, many useful resources are available on the Pathways webpage on the Toastmasters website.

Persevere in Pathways, and your efforts will pay off. You’ll be rewarded with an engaging learning experience that helps you develop the skills you need to thrive. **T**

Paul Serman is senior editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine.

5 Ways to Reach Your Audience with a Better Phrase

Become a fearless ringmaster of words.

BY THOMAS T. ABRAHAM

Some speakers leave us spellbound. Besides their compelling messages, these presenters captivate us with their stage presence, their articulate body language or commanding voice. Dazzled by their exceptional skills, we may overlook a fundamental fact. Like a stunning façade hiding the brick work, we may almost forget that the building blocks of those speeches were words. So let's not take them for granted and instead take a renewed interest in how specific words help or hinder a presentation.

1 Avoid the generic; choose the exact. Words, let us remember, are not the real thing. Words are codes for objects, actions and feelings. Words are proxies. Take the word *hot*. How hot is hot depends on whether we are in Montréal or Monaco. The best we can do is to be more exact. Jettison *hot*. Instead, decide if it is “sweltering heat,” “a steaming cauldron” or scientifically phrased, “42°C, feeling like 46°C.” Each is a lot more exact than *hot*.

The exact word also saves word count. Imagine that I want to say *I empathize with them and realize that the selfie obsession is a function of their demography*. Also imagine that, for some reason, I don't want to use the words *empathize*,

selfie, *obsession* or *demography*. With no spot-on synonyms, and each of them taking a sentence to explain, the result is bound to be longwinded like legalese and anything but elegant.

The specific, as against the generic, sends out sharper mental pictures. Martin Luther King did that in his “I Have a Dream” classic, invoking states and their geographies, from the curvaceous slopes of California to the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

2 Recognize and use the auditory personality of words. Words being words, go beyond logic. Words are like people; they have their own personalities, based on how they sound. *Screech*, *zip* and *swish* are selfies by those respective words. *Circumnavigate* and *prevaricate* are aptly long. *Go* and *stop* are like crisp army orders. Consonants gang up and the result—especially with r—is abrasive, harsh. Stretch and scratch, for instance. Vowels, especially the long sounds, bring calm and peace. T and I repeated—like in *titillate*, *lilac*, *Nintendo*—mimic string instruments. When we start to recognize and appreciate people for their varying personalities, we get the best out of our relationships with them. So too with words.

3 Metaphors and the famous. In the middle of your speech, say “Mahatma Gandhi” or “Michael Jackson,” and pause. In their mental screens, audience members will be watching reams of films and audio recordings of these historical figures. You have conveyed so many facts and emotions by dropping just a name. A famous name is a high-density package. Somewhat the same can be said about metaphors.

What does the title “A Ringmaster of Words” mean to you? Do you remember the circus you visited when you were a child? Didn't you remember the ringmaster wearing a black suit or cloak, or maybe a colorful cap? Just one word—and look at the distant memories and colorful pictures it invokes! Not just that. Then the idea dawns, about the power of words and how that power can be harnessed to special effect, just as the ringmaster gets the animals to dance to his whip.

4 Aim for the flab-free, six-pack of language. A concept in the field of psychology recommends that on any issue, we first take an instinctive and 100% subjective stand before applying the 100% objectivity filter, for a final view. That principle can work well in writing. After an unhindered, uninhibited outpouring of



go dressed in our own? Surely we prefer our own fresh clothes, however modest they may be. Then, on stage to make a speech, why should we borrow faded clichés when we can find fresh expressions to relay our thoughts?

“Words are like people, they have their own personalities.”

Every prospective writer and speaker can benefit from this advice. English satirist Jonathan Swift warned against using familiar, which “have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves.”

In sum:

- ▶ Favor exactitude and specifics, rather than approximations and generalizations
- ▶ Recognize and treat words as you treat people
- ▶ Metaphors and famous names offer high-density communication packages
- ▶ Elevate the writing to the flab-free, six-pack state
- ▶ Avoid the expected; instead, innovate

Be it music, gymnastics or surgery, true mastery is accompanied by a certain fearlessness—both feed on each other. That is how the ringmaster at the circus controls his show. That fearlessness and confidence bridges the obvious strength deficit.

Become a ringmaster with words. Be fearless with them. Get them to display their tricks and receive with a gracious bow all the applause! **T**

Thomas T. Abraham, is a member of Medley Toastmasters club in Chennai, India. A former corporate communicator, he was Public Relations Manager in District 82 for 2018–2019.

thoughts, be your own editor. Be a miserly, ruthless editor. Be economical with words. Any word that can be chopped without affecting the intended meaning should go. What remains will be pithy. Brevity is the soul of wit.

Metaphors, through condensed messaging, aid brevity and therefore efficient communication. Famous names do the

same, being zip files of multiple mental pictures.

A flab-free passage has the finesse and attraction of a chiselled muscular body with not an ounce to shed.

5 Avoid clichés, create originals.

If invited to a party, would we borrow a friend’s colorful but fading clothes, or

How to Benefit from

Change

Branching out can be scary, but that's where new growth happens.

BY DANA LAMON, DTM

Every Toastmaster is seeking something. No, I haven't had the chance to speak to each one, but every Toastmaster I have met has told me what he or she wants to gain from the organization. And for everyone, it is about change.

To overcome shyness or fear of speaking, to hone oral presentation tools, to develop leadership skills, to improve English language skills, to become a professional speaker, to win the World Championship of Public Speaking or even to find a spouse—requires that you change. If you are not changing, you are not growing.

As you and I grow, the organization we belong to must also grow. Toastmasters International's proliferation into 143 countries necessitates a change in the programs offered. To provide more opportunities for the personal and professional growth of members from diverse cultures with varied needs, we now have the Pathways learning experience.

Change that is drastic and/or sudden often evokes a negative reaction—a reaction based on fear of the unknown. Notwithstanding its scope and speed, change always carries with it the opportunity for the best that life has to offer. Your capacity to maximize benefits from change can be measured by your **attitude, desire, vision, in-nergy, control** and **excellence**.

If you are resisting change, see what these gauges mean to you:

Attitude. Whether or not you can benefit from change depends on your attitude, which is the perspective from which you approach an endeavor. For example, what is your perspective on Toastmasters' move to digital formats like Pathways?

Catalyst. You initiate change to promote your growth and development.

Capitalizer. You may not initiate change, but you fully embrace the change to find your opportunities for growth and development.

Consenter. You acquiesce to change, though you cannot see how you benefit.

Complier. You adapt to change, though you believe there is no benefit in it for you.

Clinger. You resist change by holding on to the past.

Contester. You fight change to restore the past.

The common attitude toward change is that of the clinger. This is especially true when change is sudden and/or drastic. We tend to hold on to static goals, to memories, to security, to habits and to personal preferences.

Primatologists sometimes attract monkeys by placing a banana in a stationary box that has a hole just big enough for



*“If you are
not changing,
you are not growing.”*

the monkey’s paw. When the monkey reaches in and grabs the banana, it cannot pull the filled paw out. It is trapped because it won’t let go. You cannot grow today if you cling to yesterday.

You cannot grab the opportunities of tomorrow’s programs in Toastmasters if your hands are filled with yesterday’s dreams and goals. If you cannot welcome change with open arms, start with one finger. Let go of the past you are clinging to one finger at a time. It will take only 10 steps to be released from yesterday and be ready for your future growth.

Desire. To know how to catch opportunity when it rides on a wave of change, you have to know what you want now. Yesterday’s opportunities were wrapped in yesterday’s circumstances.

Static goals cannot move you forward tomorrow. To gain the benefit that dynamic change can offer, you must reset your goals. *Should I say “yes” to the opportunity? Should I invest now? Should I relocate? Is it a radical revision to what I currently do?* You may have asked and answered these questions before, but when the circumstances change, you must ask and answer them again. You cannot correctly answer these kinds of questions if you are holding on to the information of the past.

When I joined Toastmasters in 1988, I had only one goal—to improve my ability to put humor in my speeches. After a few evaluations, I had to add another—improve my use of gestures. After witnessing my district’s international speech contest nine months into my membership, I established another goal—to

participate in the World Championship. And the goals kept changing as I gained experience in the organization.

Take a moment to consider what you want now—not what you wanted when you joined Toastmasters. Use your current experience and the new knowledge that you have gained to formulate a different set of goals. Let go of those static goals you have been clinging on to and you will have a free hand to reach into the future of Toastmasters' opportunities to achieve the desires of your heart.

Vision. It is possible that changed circumstances cloud or completely block your view of where you were headed. That doesn't mean that your destination cannot be reached. It just means that you have to, in the vernacular of your GPS, "recalculate." To develop an alternate route, you need to have a vision of where you want to be and the best ways to get there. Benefiting from change sometimes requires you to refer to the big picture. Change may dictate that you redraw the map you had plotted out in order to find another route to your goal. Don't be afraid to review the big picture from time to time to see how change might enhance your focus. Then use your new knowledge to rethink your plans.

"You cannot grow today if you cling to yesterday."

Law was not my original plan of study. When I was in high school, I planned a future in math. I was specific and quite ambitious. I wanted to get a bachelor's degree from Yale, a master's from Harvard and a doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I followed this course through my senior year at Yale. Then I was unable to see what I could do with a math degree. Many of my classmates were going to either law school or medical school, so I changed course. I went to law school and eventually worked as a judge. I am no longer working in law because my Toastmasters experience helped me develop a vision for motivational speaking.

If you focus on the successes of the past, you will miss the vision of what lies ahead in the coming changes. Preserve the memories of what was by writing in your private journal, by giving a speech in your club or at a district conference, or even by submitting an article to submissions@toastmasters.org for the *Toastmaster* magazine. Preserve the memories, but don't cling to them. There are new memories to be experienced and cherished.

"In-nergy." I coined this term because it is perfect for the point that your capacity to benefit from change is a power from within. *The force of external change* that might push you in a



direction not of your choosing can be harnessed by the *force of will* that is in the essence of your being. You have the power to make things work in your best interest.

Often, I am asked, "What keeps you upbeat?" or "How do you stay so motivated?" I don't have a standard answer, but the answer is always about a drive from within. I am stubborn and won't let something that is outside of me stop me. I love to prove wrong those people who note my blindness and say, "He can't." I know who I am. I love myself.

Giving your Ice Breaker speech required in-nergy. In-nergy is manifested in will, resolve, determination and persistence. If you are clinging to the past as security in the face of the changes in Toastmasters, think of those changes as additional opportunities to break the ice. Release the same in-nergy you used before.

Control. Attitude, desire, vision and in-nergy will not matter if you are clinging to habits. When you act out of habit, you allow circumstances to control your behavior. If you allow past circumstances to control your destiny, you'll be pushed in the direction of dial-up internet, manual typewriters and mule-driven ploughs. Change is inevitable, and if you are in control of yourself, instead of permitting your habits to control you, you can take advantage of changes and mold them to shape your future.

I was not born blind as were most of the 18 blind students with whom I went to high school. I was reluctant to accept the fact that I couldn't see. I initially rejected the offer of optional cane travel lessons because I did not want to carry the cane, a symbol of blindness. I walked my neighborhood on my own without the cane. As a result, I could only walk the paths with which I was familiar. In other words, I walked by habit. I could not explore new territories on my own until I stopped resisting blindness and learned to use the cane for travel.



“I could not explore new territories on my own until I stopped resisting blindness and learned to use the cane for travel.”

It is easy for you to develop habits in Toastmasters. Attending weekly or biweekly meetings, following the standard agenda, and reading from the provided scripts can put you in a groove that you come to believe is the only way to do it. Then comes rebranding and revitalization to challenge that one-way notion you have. The choice is up to you and me. We can choose to stay in the groove that we’ve already driven ourselves into, or we can follow change to create a new path. If you cling to your habits and resist change, the groove will control where you go from here; it will take you to the places you’ve already been.

Excellence. To excel, you have to do better today than you did yesterday regardless of the change in circumstances. A commitment to excellence is an agreement between you and those with whom you interact that in all your actions and dealings, you will give your best performance. Your best performance will gauge your capacity to benefit from change. Try to improve what you do in whatever circumstance you find yourself. What you are doing may be great today, but don’t be content with today’s greatness when tomorrow arrives. Greatness is also subject to change.

Recently I had the opportunity to speak at a Toastmasters district conference. I received second billing. A more current World Champion had top billing. On a tight program schedule with no time to spare, the first speaker spoke 35 minutes beyond his scheduled time. To help get the program back on schedule, I offered to cut my time by 15 minutes. I cut my speech almost in half. Despite the change, I maintained my commitment to excellence. It was imperative that I do so because my presentation was about excellence. My commitment is not only to what I get but what I give to others.

“Giving to” is equally as important as “getting from” your Toastmasters experience. When you resist change by clinging to your personal preferences, you ignore your responsibility to contribute to fellow members and the organization and the goals they have set to excel. The commitment to excellence governs more than what you get from Toastmasters; it applies to what you give to Toastmasters. When you have committed yourself to excellence, you are not only committed to maximizing the benefit you get from change, but you are compelled to be a supportive force to maximize the benefits that others receive. This requires that your attitude, desire, vision, in-nergy, control and excellence are fully engaged in forward motion. When you resist change by clinging on to the past, you slow down or completely thwart forward motion, and thus the progress of everyone.

No matter who you were when you joined Toastmasters, today you are a different person. Your circumstances changed. The membership of your club changed. The international organization changed. Ours is an organization about change. The reason you put your membership fee down and pay your semi-annual dues is that you are expecting change. Fortunately, we have elected international leadership that has accepted the challenge of being catalysts for change. Don’t resist or run away from it. You can maximize for yourself the benefit of the changes that will take place by taking the A-D-V-I-C-E that I offer here, and you can still get what you are seeking. **T**

Editor’s Note: This article originally appeared in the March 2016 *Toastmaster* magazine.

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Jesse Scinto (right), on Bloomberg TV Bulgaria.

The Camera Never Lies

A video recording will tell you what your friends won't.

BY JESSE SCINTO, DTM

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to be a guest on Bloomberg TV Bulgaria. The topic under discussion was Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's congressional testimony in the wake of a controversy that enveloped his company. It had been revealed that a United Kingdom company harvested data from millions of Facebook users without their consent. I was invited to appear on TV because of my expertise in persuasion and public speaking. The anchors wanted to hear my opinion of Zuckerberg's performance.

Though this was my first major TV interview, I felt confident, thanks to my Toastmasters training over the last nine years. I researched and rehearsed my points in advance. The interview went reasonably well. But when I watched the playback afterward, I cringed. My suit looked rumpled; I broke eye contact for long stretches. I knew I could do better.

Seeing ourselves on camera can be painful at times. But if you're one of those

people who avoids it at all costs, you may miss a valuable tool for self-improvement. Video shows us things we wouldn't see otherwise—both good and bad.

And though you may not expect a TV interview anytime soon, you can learn from the pros when it comes to producing videos to share online. Video communication—whether it's through vlogs (video blogs), webinars or how-to's—has become the *lingua franca* of the internet and an essential means of self-expression.

To learn how to make the most of video, I spoke with two professional media trainers to find out how they prepare clients for video appearances.

First Impressions

The good news is that many Toastmasters skills (eye contact, posture, filler words) apply directly to video. "The core stuff really works across platforms, whether you're giving a speech, appearing on a panel or appearing on TV," says Kathleen

Friery, a New York-based media trainer and former network television producer.

The one critical difference for video is that the audience isn't in the room. Your listeners view your message on a device, which means it competes with other content for their attention. "You're just one click away from losing your audience," says Friery. "They can delete your presence from their life with the touch of a finger."

This raises the stakes for first impressions. Your message must compel attention in the first few seconds. "Say less, and say it better," says Friery. "I always coach my clients to ask themselves, 'What is my headline? What is the single most important thing I want the audience to remember?'"

Angel Audiffred, a Toastmaster and marketing director for HITN, a Hispanic public broadcasting network based in Brooklyn, New York, adds, "You have to be very direct. Brevity is key." He suggests starting with a succinct statement, or key message, and then elaborating from there.



Journalists call this the “inverted pyramid,” because the writer or speaker provides the foundational issues first and then fills in lesser details. Based on what you say at the beginning, the audience will decide whether to keep listening. Once you have your talking points down, it’s time to start rehearsing.

Rehearsing for Video

Set up a smartphone or a video camera and record a rehearsal of yourself or have someone help. “The camera picks things up that you may not notice when you’re in a room with people,” says Friery. This includes eye contact, facial expressions, body language and clothing fit.

Start with eye contact. Do your eyes dart around, or do you have a steady gaze? In his book *The Media Training Bible*, Brad Phillips suggests you “aim for close to 100 percent eye contact.” That means speaking directly to the camera and looking at it the whole time. If you’re being interviewed as part of a panel, focus on the interviewer and avoid “ping-pong eyes,” as Friery describes it.

This may feel unnatural at first, because we typically have less consistent eye contact during interpersonal conversation than we’d need to have on camera; any breaks in eye contact are more noticeable on video. Audiffred notes, “When you become a really good on-air talent, you can look into the camera in such a way that the viewers feel like you’re looking directly at them.”

Mirror, Mirror...

Next, look at your clothing. “Mirrors lie,” says Friery. “When you stand in front of the mirror and see yourself, you’re not necessarily seeing what other people see.” She advises having someone take video of you in the outfit you plan to wear. “You might learn all kinds of surprising things, like ‘Oh those buttons gap across the chest,’ or ‘This makes me look 10 pounds heavier,’ or ‘This color doesn’t look great,’ or ‘This is see-through.’”

Finally, pay attention to body language. “Everything gets exaggerated [on camera],” says Audiffred. “When you put your hand to your face, when you tug on your ear,

5 VITAL VIDEO APPS

If you’re ready to dip into video, try one of these easy-to-use apps.

iMovie & PowerDirector are video-editing apps that allow you to splice together videos from different sources, make professional-looking cuts and color corrections, and add your own soundtrack. iMovie, installed on Apple computers, also comes with fun templates.

Zoom is a videoconferencing app that’s perfect for work-related meetings. It’s also the app of choice for most online Toastmasters clubs.

Instagram Live Stories, YouTube Live, Facebook Live & Periscope are popular platforms for live-streaming video. Be careful what you broadcast—there are no do-overs.

Marco Polo is a video-texting app that allows you to exchange short recorded videos.

GoReact lets you record speeches and get time-stamped written feedback from an evaluator of your choosing.

when you push your hair back—whatever mannerisms that usually go unnoticed in daily interactions are exaggerated.” Notice any filler words, tics or micro-expressions and try to eliminate them.

If you’re preparing to be interviewed, do a dry run in advance. Friery, whose clients appear on morning talk shows, tries to make rehearsals as realistic as possible. “If the *Today* show has told them they’re going to have four to five minutes, we practice it at four to five minutes. We set up the whole thing, we walk through it, and we do it how it would be done in

the perfect world.” She adds, “Once we get that down, I start throwing curveballs.” These may include cutting their time in half, dropping a prop, or asking inappropriate questions.

Friery’s clients are prepared for anything.

Using Video in Toastmasters

One of the major advantages of recording yourself on video is that it allows for self-coaching. The camera is an unbiased judge of performance, showing both strengths and weaknesses, so you can decide for yourself what to work on. Audiffred notes, “When you put people on camera, nine times out of 10 you don’t have to tell them [what to fix]. They see it and make the decision for themselves.”

These days, the easiest thing to do is just hand your own smartphone to another member and ask them to record you. That way you don’t have to worry about file transfers or privacy concerns. You can also invest in a miniature tripod or video stabilizer made for smartphones, which will give your video a more professional look.

Finally, consider using video during speech preparation. Instead of writing out your speech, try speaking it out. This may help you sound more conversational and less literary.

Honest Feedback

As we start incorporating video into our practice, it’s important not to be too hard on ourselves. Video is a tool for honest—well, sometimes brutally honest—feedback. But the lessons learned from video tend to stick. After my Bloomberg appearance I had another on-camera interview with a local TV station. This time I coached myself to keep my eyes trained on the reporter, to good effect. Self-coaching works. **T**

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Making the Most of Evaluations

Are your evaluations benefiting the entire club? They should be.

BY MEGAN PRESTON MEYER



Evaluation is a recurring club topic, and with good reason. Evaluations take up one-third of a typical Toastmasters meeting, and they are the main mechanism through which we learn, grow and improve. Without evaluations, we'd just be a bunch of people sitting in a room talking at each other.

Knowing how to evaluate effectively is one of the best things you can do to help your fellow club members grow. Consider these tips.

A conversation, not a monologue

A good speech evaluation is a multi-step process. It's like a conversation, starting before the meeting and ending after it.

As you know, Pathways levels introduce new elements of speech-crafting and leadership serially, so that new skills are layered on top of one another. Each speech has a specific objective, which allows evaluators to specifically assess how well the speaker fulfills them.

The easiest way to decipher the speech objectives is to look at the Pathways project evaluation form. The speaker should provide you with the feedback form so you can fill it out during the meeting.

You can't—and shouldn't—critique every detail of the speech. Knowing the speech objectives will help you to focus your evaluation on specific, actionable feedback.

Know your audience(s)

Who is your target audience? "The speaker," you say? Wrong! OK, not wrong—in fact, you're right. But an even *better* answer would be "The speaker—and everyone else in the room."

The target audience for a spoken evaluation is the club itself. Every member and guest should be able to take something from the evaluation and apply it to their next speech. A good in-club speech evaluation, then, should be full of *universal feedback*, backed up by *specific examples* from the speaker's speech.

Here's an example: "I've seen you speak three times, and each time, you've ended up with your hands in the pockets of your sport coat. Try to keep your hands out and relaxed."

"A good club speech evaluation should be full of universal feedback, backed up by specific examples from the speaker's speech."

This is very speaker-specific; another member listening to this might think, *This obviously doesn't apply to me; I don't even own a sport coat.*

Contrast that with the following: "I noticed that your hands were in your pockets for much of the speech. To me, closed body language like this conveys a lack of confidence. Using more open, confident body language might help the audience to buy into your message even more."

Here, the feedback is universal: closed body language shows a lack of confidence. The speaker now remembers what to do with his hands. Others will hear the obser-

vation and have additional thoughts, such as *Don't cross arms over body or Don't hang on to the lectern so tight that knuckles turn white.*

Super-specific feedback aimed at one speaker or one speech still has a place in the evaluation process, but it should come later in the written evaluation and/or a one-on-one conversation.

For example, imagine you are evaluating a non-native English speaker. During the in-club evaluation, you could say, "I noticed that you started speaking more quickly as the speech went on, and there were a couple of words that I didn't quite catch. Take your time and articulate each word." Other non-native (and native) English speakers can benefit from that advice.

After the meeting, in written feedback or in a one-on-one conversation, you can tell the speaker, "I noticed that you tend to say the word 'essentially' when I think you mean to say 'especially.'" That feedback addresses an idiosyncrasy that likely wouldn't help anyone else in the club. The speaker still needs to hear it, but the evaluation speech is not the right venue.

Do your homework and focus on specific objectives. Recognize the difference between universal and speaker-specific feedback. You'll ensure the evaluations you give are effective and beneficial—not only to the speaker, but for *everyone* in your club. **T**

MEGAN PRESTON MEYER is a member of TM International Club Zug in Zug, Switzerland. She holds an MBA in operations management, works as a senior business analyst and is an avid collector of jargon.



Use the Stage as a Visual Aid

How to enhance your message by moving with precision and purpose.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

When I say “visual aid” what do you think of? PowerPoint slides? Flip charts? Props? I think one of the most powerful visual aids is the stage.

The stage! Isn't that simply the floor or platform upon which we speak? Unless we are constrained to speaking behind a lectern or similar small space, the stage provides a unique opportunity to involve your audience in the experience of your message.

How do many speakers today use the stage? Some stand still. Others pace around aimlessly, relieving whatever tension they may feel in speaking. And others methodically move from one side of the stage to the other, either to speak to all members of their audience or generate energy in their listeners.

For me, however, such pacing doesn't create energy; it creates tension. And it distracts me from listening to what the speaker has to say. I want the stage to *enhance* the communication of my message.

Here are three ways to do that.

1 Reenact a personal story or illustration. I remember vividly a story told by the 1999 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, Craig Valentine. He shared an anecdote about being on a tour boat. The bow of the boat was represented by one part of the stage, the stern of the boat by another. He acted out his entire story within that mental structure. We could see it. And I remember it to this day.

Several years ago, I entered the International Speech Contest with a speech about a lesson I had learned while working at a radio station. My story involved the studio, my boss's office and the radio newsroom. As I progressed through my story, I changed my stage location accordingly. That's how you can make your story real.

2 Incorporate the image of a continuum, or scale. In one of my training segments, I talk about the level of a speaker's expressiveness. I start by saying, “Imagine this stage is a continuum. At this end” (here I move to one end of the stage—my right, the audience's left) “is a total monotone. At the other end”—as I move to the opposite side—“is a raving lunatic. Each of us places ourselves at some point on this scale.” I then explain there is a particular range of expressiveness that is most effective, and I move to that area on the continuum.

“As I progressed through my story, I changed my stage location accordingly. That's how you can make your story real.”

I presented this technique at my club, and on a number of occasions since then, a speech evaluator, when encouraging the speaker to be more expressive, has walked

to that part of the stage I had moved to during my presentation. They got what I said—verbally and visually—and it stuck with them.

3 Use your creativity. Ask yourself, *Can I visually illustrate my point?* I was in a club meeting one time where a speaker pointed out all the places she and her husband had lived in the United States. In my evaluation, I suggested she use the stage as a map, to visually reference each area where they lived. The couple started out in Detroit, so I suggested she stand in the center-back to represent the Midwest. They then moved to Boston, so I recommended she step to her left (the audience's right) and remain in the back. This would represent the Northeast. The couple's next move was to San Diego, which meant she could step to the front-right to symbolize California. This strategic movement onstage takes the audience along on her journey.

The lesson I have learned is that a visual presentation of your message greatly enhances the audience members' understanding and retention of it. And the stage is frequently the best way to achieve that.

So I ask you: How can you use the stage in your next presentation? **T**

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of Pro Toastmasters and Ahead of the Curve Toastmasters. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.

Silly Similes

Those wonderful idioms that say what they don't mean.

BY JOHN CADLEY



Would you say something you knew wasn't true? Would you blithely use a phrase that was in fact complete nonsense? Would you state as fact something that was clearly not a fact?

Well, you would and you have. I have, too—all the time. They're called idioms, which are loosely defined as a group of words having a meaning the words themselves don't actually have. For instance, if you are a native English speaker, you have probably described someone perspiring profusely as "sweating like a pig." Alas, my friend, you have sadly—not to say wildly—misspoken. Pigs don't sweat. (Well, they do, but just a little.) That's why they lie in the mud—to keep cool. If a pig could really "sweat like a pig" it would and leave the mud to the worms. (The Spanish, by the way, say *sudar como un pollo*—"sweat like a chicken"—which makes even less sense since chickens don't even have sweat glands, but at least it gets the whole thing out of the dirt.)

Or perhaps you've said someone "eats like a bird." Is that so? You're trying to say the person consumes very little food, when the words themselves describe a species that eats *six to seven times as much as a human every day!* (in proportion to their body weight). If I "ate like a bird," I'd be as big as a water buffalo. All I have to do is look at the money I spend on bird seed. It makes me want to yell out the window, "Hey, all you robins and cardinals and sparrows and finches! Would you please just eat like a bird?!"

"Sick as a dog" is another one. My family dog lived for 16 years and was sick

exactly *once*. And even then he just lay there quietly and got over it—unlike his owner, who gets a cold and moans and groans like a dying sea cow. Can you blame my wife for saying, "Could you please just be sick as a dog?"

There are so many more. How about "clean as a whistle"? Are you kidding? People *blow* into a whistle with their *mouths*. How clean do you think *that* is? Pass the bottle of disinfectant, please. And then hit it with a blow torch.

"Easy as shooting fish in a barrel. If they're in a barrel they're probably already dead."

One of my all-time *not* favorites is "sleep like a baby." What's the first question you ask the parent of a newborn? Is he/she sleeping? Of course not! Why? *Because it's a baby!* The chances of getting an infant who sleeps through the night are roughly equivalent to *pi* multiplied by the square root of infinity times two.

"Dead as a doornail." Where this came from remains a mystery, and rightly so. Who would take credit for complete nonsense? There can be no death where there has not first been life, and nails are not alive.

"Happy as a clam." Why? Because its shell curves slightly upward like a human smile? How happy is the clam when somebody says, "Hey, let's have a clam bake!"

"Crazy as a loon." This comes from the tremolo or "crazy laugh" that loons make to signal alarm and frighten off predators. Hey, if saving your life is crazy, count me in.

"Drinks like a fish." Only if you have gills, and even then a fish doesn't put a lampshade on his head and think he's the funniest fish in the ocean. (The French say *boire comme un trou*, which means "drinking like a hole." Now *that's* drinking too much.)

"Drunk as a skunk." Skunks don't consume alcohol and if they did, I'm not sure who would be more insulted, the drunk or the skunk.

"Easy as shooting fish in a barrel." If they're in a barrel they're probably already dead. And so on.

I've mentioned Spanish and French sayings along with these American beauties to show that idiomatic absurdity knows no borders. And if I were giving prizes, the trophy would have to go to the Poles for *madry jak salomonowe gacie* ("wise as Solomon's underpants"). Wow! The guy's so enlightened even his clothes are smart. Imagine the scene:

"I wish to see King Solomon."

"I'm sorry, the king isn't in but I can give you 15 minutes with his boxer shorts."

You can be fit as a fiddle, sly as a fox or snug as a bug in a rug, and you'll never beat that one. ■

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

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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 that are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

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

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

We are happy to speak with you about your publishing needs.
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