

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | NOVEMBER 2019

TOASTMASTER®



Highlights from the 2019 International Convention

Spicing Up Science
How to make science talks less dry

**Dealing with
Distractions**

Magical Mentoring

I am confused; I have no idea what to do!
Have there been occasions in your life when you've felt this way? Oftentimes we don't know what we don't know. Those are the occasions when we need mentors the most. Effective mentors have the uncanny ability to probe our motives and help us find our true potential when we struggle with self-doubt and self-imposed limitations.

Toastmasters' founder, Ralph C. Smedley, stated, "We realize that the two most important factors in Toastmasters are mentoring and evaluations. There is no doubt that if these two are done well ... your club will be filled with spark plugs ready to fire upon request. Mentoring and evaluations create enthusiasm, and once you light that fire, the only thing it needs is some kindling."

Our Toastmasters journey becomes all the more exquisite with the help of mentors gently guiding us along and helping us navigate our paths. Whether we are new to the "rituals" practiced in our clubs or veterans with many speeches under our belt, mentors can help us all.

My mentors' motivation, patience, and guidance helped me overcome challenges and obstacles that I did not believe I could.

I fondly recall my first Toastmasters mentor, the late Narinder Kumar Bajaj, who invited me to join and continued to mentor me until his last days. Janaki Prasad Pattanaik, DTM, past gulf territorial council chair, provided answers to my innumerable questions without demur when I served as division governor of a newly formed district. I met Past International President Dilip R. Abayasekara, DTM, when he installed me as division governor in May 2006. He has been a pillar of strength for me ever since.

Past International President Ted Corcoran, DTM, became a fast friend and my mentor from the time we served as region advisors together in 2011–2012. My mentors' motivation, patience, and guidance helped me overcome challenges and obstacles that I did not believe I could.

We need mentors at every level. Even the Board of Directors has a strong formal mentoring program for every Board member. Past International President Jim Kokocki, DTM, served as my mentor when I was elected second vice president. Immediate Past International President Lark Doley, DTM, mentored me all through last year to prepare me for this year.

If mentoring is critical for the success of the Board of Directors, should it not be embraced by all our clubs and members? Make mentoring a prerequisite and experience how mentoring makes magic!

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International President



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Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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The *Toastmaster* magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, Colorado, United States 80112. Periodicals postage paid at Englewood, Colorado. POSTMASTER: Send address change to the *Toastmaster* magazine, 9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, Colorado, United States 80112.

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

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

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Club members show their Toastmasters spirit during meetings.



Diablo Champagne Breakfast Club of Walnut Creek, California, celebrates its 40th anniversary and proudly displays its Distinguished Club ribbons.



Members of George Burton Toastmasters of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, gathered with their families for a picnic, Ice Breakers, Table Topics, and a panel focused on how skills learned in Toastmasters assist members in their careers.



Dialog Toastmasters of Colombo, Sri Lanka, hosted a Bollywood-themed installation ceremony for their new club officers.



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 358,000 in more than 16,800 clubs in 143 countries.

Find out more at www.toastmasters.org.



Improve public speaking skills



Build leadership skills



Maximize your potential

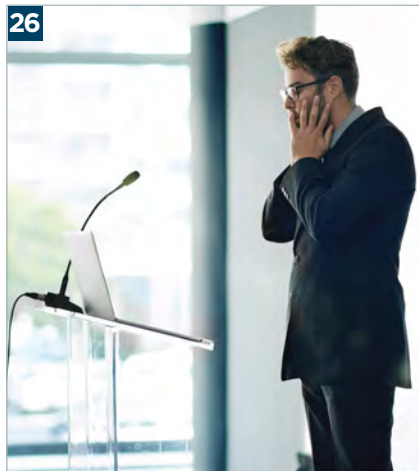
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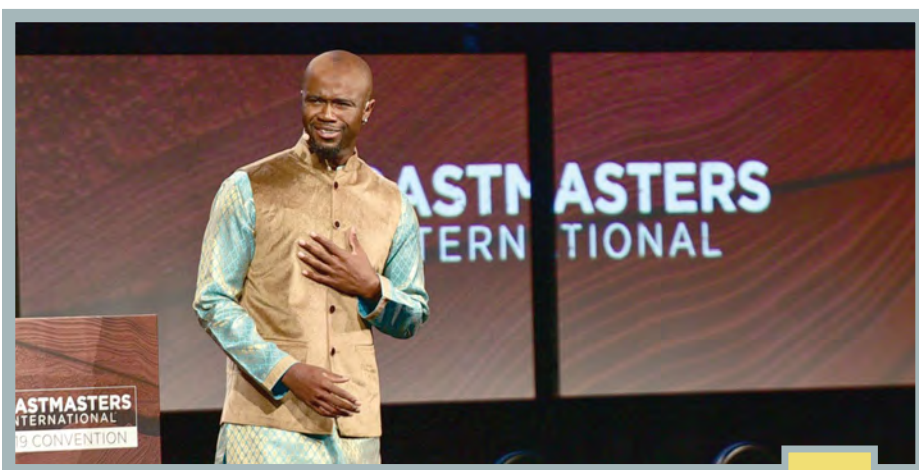
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www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

-  **Watch** informative videos.
-  **Listen** to enlightening audio features.
-  **View** collections of fun and interesting photos.
-  **Access** valuable resources through hyperlinks.
-  **Share** articles with prospective members, friends and colleagues.



FIND MORE ONLINE THIS MONTH:



New World Champion WOWS

Still thinking about the World Championship of Public Speaking? So are we! Learn more about the first, second, and third place winners and watch their winning speeches online. While you're there, catch up on what took place at this year's annual convention.



How Likable Are You?

Are you someone who listens to others and shows empathy? Or do you often interrupt people and talk about yourself too much? Watch a video to learn how you can be a more likable person in business and in life.

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Here For The Long Haul



Hear from Toastmasters Toolbox author Bill Brown, DTM, as he explores what long-term members are looking to improve upon, and how their clubs can help.

WEB RESOURCE



Online Store

Whether you're looking to buy balloons or banners for your open house, manuals or medals for your meetings, or pens and polo shirts for yourself, we've got you covered! Visit the Toastmasters Online Store and browse the many products offered to members, clubs, and districts.

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This icon at the top of a page means an online extra is included with the article at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

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▶ MEET MY MENTOR



Vijay Anand: Finding Potential

BY GANESH PAI

Rajdeep Manwani, Ph.D., DTM, is an inspiration for many reasons. At a young age, he lost his eyesight due to macular degeneration, but undeterred, he is now a professor in the department of commerce at Jain University in Bangalore, India. He is also a motivational speaker, trainer, and counselor who has completed three post-graduate degrees and received his doctorate in the field of commerce. Additionally, he has given a TEDx Talk and been the recipient of several awards, including a national award honoring him as a role model for people with disabilities.

However, many of his accomplishments would have been impossible without the guidance, encouragement, and mentorship of Vijay Anand. In 2007, Rajdeep joined the Bangalore Toastmasters club in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. He wanted to release his inner voice. He quickly found a mentor in Vijay, a corporate trainer, executive coach, and seasoned Toastmaster of more than 17 years, who saw great potential in Rajdeep. Vijay actively mentored and supported Rajdeep through his public speaking journey, which included Rajdeep winning speech contests and eventually becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster.

Rajdeep, how has Vijay helped you in your Toastmasters journey?

I am grateful to Vijay for helping me in multiple ways. First, he understood my challenge with accessibility due to macular degeneration. He would go out of the way to come to my house to listen to me practice my speeches. Second, he helped me slow down my speaking rate. Vijay made me mindful of speed and helped me speak at an appropriate rate to ensure the audience was able to understand me. He also gave me invaluable advice in organizing and structuring speeches in the right manner to make a deep impact on my audience.



Rajdeep Manwani, Ph.D., DTM, and his mentor, Vijay Anand.

Which of Vijay's qualities do you admire the most?

Vijay has this amazing ability to articulate complex and sensitive topics in the most precise and deft manner. He has mastered the art of simplifying key messages. He is a quick and clear thinker. I always look up to him for his sage advice. I also like his amazing sense of humor. There is never a dull moment around him—his zest for life is contagious.

How have Vijay's methods influenced your own mentor-mentee relationships?

I have taken a systematic approach in helping my mentees to become better speakers and better leaders. I try to be empathetic, understand their needs, and tailor my solutions accordingly. I push them where they need to grow, pat them on the back when they do well, and ensure I am always there whenever they need me.

Ganesh Pai is a member of Bangalore Toastmasters Club in Bangalore, India. He is the club's vice president public relations.

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

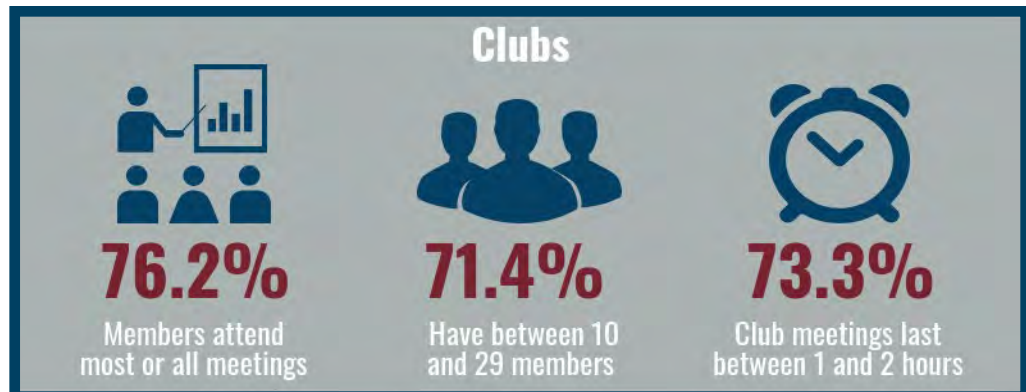
LOOKING FOR A MENTOR IN YOUR CLUB?

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
RESEARCH LAB

Club Statistics

Check these findings from a recent club survey. Are your club numbers similar or very different?



▶ CLUB QUALITY

Serving in a Club Meeting Role? Try These Online Resources

Whether you're a veteran or novice Toastmaster, taking on club meeting roles is a great way to learn and grow. For help, consider taking advantage of these handy resources on www.toastmasters.org.

- ▶ "Ah-Counter Script and Log" – This script helps you introduce the role and track filler words in the log.
- ▶ "General Evaluator Checklist" – A reminder of what to look for when evaluating a club meeting.
- ▶ "Grammarian Script and Log" – An easy tool to remember the Word of the Day, log who uses it, and track improper grammatical uses and favorite quotes.
- ▶ "Speaker Introduction Form" – For speakers to fill out and hand to their evaluators before the meeting starts.
- ▶ "Timer Script and Log" – A definition of timing guidelines and log for tracking speaking times.
- ▶ "Topicsmaster Script and Log" – Note each speaker's topic.

To download these documents, visit www.toastmasters.org/MeetingRoles and click on the appropriate role's webpage.

▶ NEWS FROM TI



TI Board Report

Recent Board decisions now online.

Toastmasters International's Board of Directors met in August and reported on its decisions during the Board Briefing, held during the International Convention in Denver, Colorado.

The meeting minutes are an official record of the Board's decisions. To read the minutes from the August meeting, as well as from previous meetings, visit www.toastmasters.org/meeting-minutes.

▶ SNAPSHOT



Oasis Toastmasters of Nittambuwa, Sri Lanka, held its first meeting of the Toastmasters year with the theme "Greatness starts with a single step." The car pictured was manufactured in the United Kingdom in 1927 and was one of the first cars in Sri Lanka. Still operational, it is displayed at the hotel where the club meets, as a reminder of progress.



▶ NEWS FROM TI



District 116 was honored as the 2018-2019 No. 1 district in the world at the 88th Annual Toastmasters International Convention last August. The district is made up of clubs located in Qatar. It was also named the first-ever Smedley Distinguished District after the new designation was introduced at the convention in 2018. In order to reach this designation, the district had an 8% net membership payments growth, 8% net club growth, and Distinguished clubs equal to at least 55% of the district's club base.

▶ PATHWAYS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Two Paths Now Available in Korean and Tamil

Pathways materials in Korean and Tamil are now available. Tamil is an official language in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, and Mauritius.

Materials in these two languages are being rolled out two paths at a time. The first two paths are Presentation Mastery and Leadership Development. The next two paths, Visionary Communication and Effective Coaching, as well as the Mentoring Program in Tamil and Korean, will follow in a few months.

The availability of educational materials in so many members' native languages is one of the many benefits of the Pathways learning experience. All Pathways educational materials are currently available in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese. Toastmasters around the world volunteer their efforts to serve on Translation Review Teams, which ensure that all Pathways translations are accurate and authentic to local cultures. The teams review the professional translations, help



develop Pathways glossaries, and ensure the translated content reflects the Toastmasters experience.

Visit www.toastmasters.org/Translations to learn more about members of the Tamil and Korean Translation Review Teams and other translation teams. For more information, please email the Translations Team at World Headquarters at translations@toastmasters.org.




1 | OLIVIA TAM of Mountain View, California, watches a tennis match in London, England, at Wimbledon, the oldest tennis tournament in the world.


2 | TARIK EL ASSAL of Rabat, Morocco, demonstrates a tree pose at the Barcelona Yoga Conference in Spain.

3 | ANGEL OMAR SANDOVAL of Mesa, Arizona, stands in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Piazza dei Miracoli in Pisa, Italy.

4 | MARIA MARTINEZ, DTM, of Lakeland, Florida, poses on a statue of a peddler on a bicycle in Guadalajara, Mexico.



 **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!

Convention Memories

Why the annual event still thrills me after all these years.

BY CAROLYN KALDY, DTM

Since I joined Toastmasters, I've been fortunate enough to attend several International Conventions. Each year I have enjoyed a new meeting location, a new world champion speaker, and a global melting pot of Toastmasters attendees who, despite their different countries or languages, share a love of learning and self-improvement.

The most unique and beautiful convention was the one in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was the first held outside North America and had such diverse attendees—it was a cultural delight to “see something” different (a nod to the title of 2014 World Champion of Public Speaking Dananjaya Hettiarachchi’s memorable speech, titled “I See Something.”)

I still relish the Opening Ceremonies and Parade of Flags. I seek out opportunities ranging from the education sessions to the Accredited Speaker Program to the World Championship of Public Speaking, and even the Candidate Showcase to learn how to capture the hearts and minds of an audience and create chatter afterward. One of these memorable moments came from the 2017 Golden Gavel recipient, Erin Gruwell. Her authenticity still resonates in my heart and inspires me.

And when I am back home, certain songs will instantly transport me back to Past International President Ted Corcoran’s late-night sing-along of popular songs from different eras and parts of the world and ending with Ted’s signature rendition of the Irish ballad “Danny Boy.” Another thrill is meeting various leaders and champion speakers, and getting to know them beyond their credentials. I always marvel at how sincere and caring these individuals are, and how “validated” they make me feel (a shout-out to Lance Miller’s 2005 championship-winning speech, “The Ultimate Question.”)



Author Carolyn Kaldy, (second from left) with friends Bea Bincze from Budapest, Hungary; Collins Christian from Perth, Australia; and Mojeed Dawodu from Kent, England.

Many memories revolve around the exchanges—albeit too short—with other convention attendees and reuniting with past acquaintances to create more memories. Two unexpected moments spring to mind.

At the 2015 Las Vegas convention bookstore, I overheard my father’s native language—Hungarian—being spoken. I was thrilled, as I have rarely heard it since his death. Like a homing pigeon, I flew over to the voices and met Bea Bincze, DTM, Immediate Past Select Distinguished District 110 Director, who lives in Budapest, Hungary. Her welcoming smile resulted in my meeting various Hungarians over the following years, allowing me to practice my basic Hungarian and feel connected to my upbringing.

At the 2018 Chicago convention, while riding in a hotel elevator, I started chatting with another attendee. And, like a loaded deep-dish Chicago pizza, by the time we finished the Chicago River cruise, the group grew to seven Toastmasters, all originating from different countries. Over the following year, our group texted back and forth, sharing Toastmasters accomplishments and

providing encouragement as we competed in contests or held leadership positions.

What will your convention experience be like? If you are apprehensive about attending an international convention, let me suggest:

- ▶ Suspend expectations and go with an open mind to seize whatever experiences may present themselves.
- ▶ Be brave and take the opportunity to say hello to someone outside your district, or who has a different ethnicity or nationality.

I invite you to join me and likely thousands of other Toastmasters at the 2020 International Convention in Paris, France, the second time the convention has been held outside of North America. Let’s celebrate the similarities we have in our global community and honor the diversity and uniqueness of all our members. **■**

CAROLYN KALDY, DTM, lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She is a past District 42 Director and a member of CanOrators Toastmasters.

Annoying People Are Everywhere

Trade irritation for curiosity and watch conflicts dissolve.

BY SHARÍ ALEXANDER

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could feel deeply connected to and get along with every person in our lives? Sure it would ... and I also want a unicorn.

Some people will always rub you the wrong way. You're stuck in the office with them. They're in your club meetings. You sit next to them at an event. You painfully chat with them on the sidelines of your child's soccer practice.

Having a game plan for how to deal with annoying people will save you from unnecessary emotional turmoil—and you might find yourself actually enjoying an interaction with someone you never thought you'd like.

Consider what you can—and can't—change.

Start by examining what you have control over and what you don't. Remember: Other people's thoughts and actions are not within your control.

Instead of focusing on what's out of your control, set up scenarios that guide someone to do, say, or even think what you would like them to. That's the essence of influence: manipulating what you *do* have control over in hopes of influencing someone else. So, to not be annoyed by annoying people, you must go straight to what you have control over—namely, yourself. You can control your state of mind, your reactions, your intentions, your approach, and your choice of words.

Think about a person who annoys you. Really conjure a clear picture. See the

person's smug face. Hear their cringe-inducing voice. Now, notice. How do you feel? What expressions surface on your face? When you think about this person, does your nose crinkle? Does your body give an involuntary shudder? Do you feel a surge of contempt? This is the place to start controlling your reactions.

In his extensive studies on marriage and relationships, American psychologist John Gottman was able to predict with over 94% accuracy whether or not a couple would last. His most effective measurement? Contempt. If he sees signs of contempt in one or both partners, it's a good indicator they will be facing each other in court one day.

Judgment closes the door to change. Curiosity opens it.

But contempt can exist in any relationship. That's why it's important to stop this feeling before it festers.

When you feel yourself rolling your eyes or raising your eyebrows, ask yourself:

- ▶ What is my first reaction when I see or talk to this person?
- ▶ What thoughts (or judgments) automatically come to mind?
- ▶ What physical reactions do I experience (tension, change in breath, shift in posture, change in vocal tone or cadence)?
- ▶ Are any not-so-hidden sighs of annoyance slipping through my lips?

This is what you're putting into the relationship. You're responsible for your side of the relationship.

Pay attention to your physical response.

In general, when you don't get along with someone, you get a spike in cortisol or adrenaline. Your muscles tense up—you'll feel a tightness in your chest, maybe your shoulders lift toward your ears, or you might just hold your pen a little tighter in your hand. Perhaps your brow furrows or you tilt your head down while your eyes look up at the annoying person (a primitive body language posture that signals bubbling aggression).

Your disapproval toward that person can be heard as well as seen. You might talk painstakingly slower or agitatedly faster.

Not only does the annoying offender pick up on these cloaked signals, but these physical reactions also amplify your internal negative emotions. Now you're in a feedback loop of annoyance.

The real danger is when your reactions become automatic and you're not aware of them. Mitigate your annoyance level by consciously taking control of your reactions. Focus on relaxing the tension in your body. Breathe at a comfortable (not annoyed) pace.

Your goal is to adapt a neutral position—physically, emotionally, and mentally—so that you can use a different approach with people who annoy you.



After thinking about it a bit, my client said, “Well, he’d probably say that he just wants everyone to be happy.”

“Yes!” I said. “And now imagine how difficult his job is every day. He’s the boss. And there’s no way to be the boss and keep everyone happy all the time. You have to disappoint people, which sounds like his biggest fear. Every day presents him with a challenge—a chance for him to be disliked. And you (my client) also seem like the type of person who isn’t easily impressed. So, maybe now we can see where the clash is occurring.”

My client paused as he considered this, then exclaimed, “That’s SO BIG! I never thought of it that way!”

After shifting the belief from “he always seeks everyone’s approval” to “he’s really afraid of letting people down,” we figured out ways we could repair and improve their working relationship.

I coached my client to sandwich his criticisms and differing opinions between validating statements, such as, “I like where we’re headed with this. We could improve the process if we integrated this other system,” or “I think you’ve laid out a great framework for us to work with here.”

By questioning a faulty belief, we were able to find things within his control that could improve the relationship.

Shift to curiosity.

The next time you find yourself tensing your muscles or furrowing your brows, shift your mindset to one of curiosity rather than judgment. In doing so, you change the dynamic in the relationship because judgment closes the door to change. Curiosity opens it. **T**

Editor’s note: A version of this article first appeared on shari-alexander.com/blog/.

Shari Alexander is a speaker, writer, trainer, and coach, specializing in influencing techniques. She is certified in neurolinguistic programming, micro expressions, and body language, and has designed numerous communication training courses.

Tune in to your thoughts.

Next, do a thought audit. Consider if you have created certain beliefs about this person. Some examples could include:

- ▶ She never listens.
- ▶ He always seeks attention.
- ▶ He is so egocentric.
- ▶ She doesn’t follow through on anything.

Once you have awareness of those thoughts, question them. Are they true?

You can quickly identify false beliefs whenever you use the words *always* or *never*. It’s unlikely that one person could always do anything or never do another. You can find circumstances in which they have done the opposite of your always/never belief. Try changing your (judgmental) beliefs by swapping out the words *always/never* for *sometimes*.

Exercise your brain and find a different perspective.

Now that you’ve captured your automatic thoughts playing on a loop, it’s time to find a more helpful thought to replace it. Is there an alternate truth you could use instead?

I’m not talking about lying to yourself or pretending everything is fantastic but

rather remembering that human beings are complex, layered creatures, and no one can be defined in black-and-white terms. We only see a fraction of what other people experience.

Keep questioning your assumptions so you can operate from compassion and make stronger connections. Is there a nuance you can add to your thoughts and beliefs about this person that would enhance your relationship with them, rather than build more barriers between you?

Other people’s thoughts and actions are not within your control.

For example, a client of mine dislikes his boss. He feels like his boss is always seeking approval from everyone. (Did you catch that “always”?) And because his boss wants approval more than anything else, his boss doesn’t like to ruffle any feathers and, therefore, lets other employees get away with bad behavior.

I asked my client, “How would your boss describe himself? He likely would not say ‘I always seek everyone’s approval.’ So, how would he say it?”

Want to Be More Likable?

If you want to be liked, simply like others for who they are.

BY KAREN FRIEDMAN

Think of someone you really like. Now consider *why* you like them. Are they thoughtful? Interesting? Friendly? People described as likable tend to draw others toward them almost magnetically.

As a leadership communication coach who has worked with thousands of likable and not-so-likable people for more than two decades, I believe likability can be learned. Being seen as a likable person can lead to both personal and professional satisfaction, which leads to overall life contentment. What's not to like about that?

I recently worked with a client we'll call Blake. Blake is a likable guy who had been promoted to CEO of a publicly traded company. Even though he was acquainted with most of the employees, he knew it was critical to make a great impression in his new role when he addressed them at an upcoming company meeting.

As we worked together on content and delivery, I asked Blake what he wanted employees to feel when he was done talking. "I want people to feel warm and welcome," he said, adding that he wanted to create a people-first atmosphere where employees are encouraged to speak up even if others don't like what they have to say.

This attitude is part of what makes Blake likable. He puts others first and is genuinely interested in their input. When he spoke at that company meeting, he captivated the hundreds of people in the room as he talked about his vision, because he prioritized how *they* would play a part of that vision. If that's not enough, under his direction over the next few years, the company went on

to become one of the top performers on Wall Street.

The Importance of Being Likable

In the workplace, likability goes a long way toward getting elected, hired, or promoted, and can be a key ingredient in motivating people and closing deals. William Arruda, author of *Digital You: Real Personal Branding in the Virtual Age*, says that when you prioritize people, you create connections and become more likable.

Many people struggle with "conversational narcissism" ...the desire to turn the focus of any exchange to themselves.

Arruda breaks likability into four elements:

1. **Being interesting.** Sharing relevant and compelling stories draws people in.
2. **Being transparent.** It's hard to be likable if someone thinks you're hiding something.
3. **Being generous.** No one likes a bragger. Make others feel valued.
4. **Finding similarities.** Identifying what you have in common with others creates a bond.

Lisa Sable echoes that sentiment as an executive partner at BreakFree Strategies, a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based company that uses behavioral assessments to help managers develop awareness about

themselves and their teams. "Employees want to be heard and valued for who they are," she says. "When managers truly understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each employee, productivity increases, turnover decreases, and managers are deemed 'likable.'"

Learn to Be Likable

The good news is that likability isn't a trait you're born with—you can learn to be more likable. It isn't a difficult trait to cultivate. Here are my top five likability tips:

Ask questions. This draws people out and signals your interest in what they have to say. In fact, studies have found that people who ask questions, specifically follow-up questions, which show they are listening, are better liked by their conversation partners.

Be vulnerable. Don't be afraid to share a personal story or display emotion. As a television news reporter covering a Category 5 hurricane years ago, I reported on destruction that was almost impossible to describe. When I got off the air, my producer told me to be more vulnerable when reporting. At first, I was offended. Why would I allow my emotions to spill into my report? But she was right. When I opened up just a bit, people were more connected to the story, and donations to those in need increased significantly.

Be present. Put your phone away and look people in the eye. Truly listen and focus on the conversation.

Use people's names. This practice makes people feel important and remembered.



consistently drop names of people they've met or experiences they've had, hoping to impress listeners. Rather than appearing sophisticated or connected, they come across as insecure braggarts. You don't need to show off to be likable.

The good news is that likability isn't a trait you're either born with or you're not—you can learn to be more likable.

Gossiping or sharing confidences. I have a friend who often begins sentences with "Please don't tell anyone, as I was told not to say anything." I'm always baffled by this. If she was asked not to say anything, then why is she betraying a confidence? People who do so may feel a temporarily inflated sense of importance by knowing something that no one else does, but they come across as untrustworthy and less likable. It's much better to keep quiet if asked to do so.

Being likable doesn't have to be complicated. It boils down to one basic concept: If you want to be liked, simply like others for who they are. Being open to different viewpoints, ideas, and ways of doing things makes you approachable. Express curiosity about people's lives and who they are. Consider different perspectives when giving a speech or conversing with a colleague. Even if you disagree, try keeping an open mind and not passing judgment.

When you're comfortable seeing the world through a different lens, you increase the chance that others will also like you for who you are. ■

Karen Friedman is a business communications expert, syndicated columnist, and author of *Shut Up and Say Something* and *Ordinary People: Extraordinary Lessons*. Find out more at karenfriedman.com.

When you say, "What is your opinion, Victor?" or "So nice to see you, Sofia," you also create a connection. Just be careful not to overdo it.

Smile and be friendly. A genuine warm smile positions you as positive, friendly, and approachable, and it portrays confidence and professionalism.

What Makes People Unlikable

In the same way we can think of people we like, it's easy to think of people we cross the room to avoid. But why? Have you considered what it is that makes you want to avoid them? Have you noticed people trying to avoid you? I've rounded up what I've found to be the most common "unlikable" traits. Hopefully, you don't see yourself in any of these descriptions.

Talking about themselves too much. Typically, these people get so focused on what they want to say that they don't actually listen to others. They want to cut you off and turn the conversation to themselves.

Competing in conversation. This person tries to compete with everything you say and "one-up" your stories. For example, if someone's son won second place in a contest, the competitor jumps in with the news that *their* son won first place. If someone has traveled to Paris five times, the competitor has been there six times. Get the picture?

In his book, *The Pursuit of Attention*, sociologist Charles Derber studied face-to-face interactions where researchers watched 1,500 conversations unfold and then recorded how people vied for attention. Derber discovered that without being aware of it, many people struggle with what he calls "conversational narcissism," which is the desire to turn the focus of any exchange to themselves. Derber points out that good conversations are cooperative, not competitive.

Name-dropping. Meeting interesting people and mentioning them in conversation while sharing a story or experience is fine. However, some people



◀ A Toastmaster from Ghana holds the country flag during Opening Ceremonies.

◀ Deepak Menon is Toastmasters' 2019-2020 International President.

▼ The six new Accredited Speakers.



Highlights from the 2019 TOASTMASTERS IN

BY LAURA AMANN

In August, Toastmasters from around the world gathered in Denver, Colorado, for four days of inspiration, friendship, and learning. One attendee called the event “Toastmasters without borders.”

This is an apt description for the fast-paced program, which drew more than 1,700 members—41% of whom were first timers—representing 71 countries around the globe.

Opening Ceremonies included the always impressive and moving Parade of Flags, where members dressed in national costumes carrying the flags of nations in which Toastmasters has a presence. Keynote speaker Phil Hansen, an internationally recognized multimedia artist, author, and innovator, spoke afterward. His energetic and inspiring presentation, “Embrace the Shake,” examined how working within our limitations, rather than letting them defeat us, can actually expand our possibilities.

Entrepreneur Jia Jiang received Toastmasters' prestigious 2019 Golden Gavel award for his training methodology around a common yet painful experience: being rejected. He spoke about what he learned by confronting his biggest fear, rejection, head-on, every day, for 100 days. Jiang is a pioneer in the concept of rejection therapy, and his 2017 TED Talk was one of the most viewed talks of that year.

World Headquarters Tours

Toastmasters World Headquarters is located about 20 minutes from the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center, where the convention was based. Many attendees took advantage of the proximity to visit the new offices; the organization relocated from California nearly two years ago. For two days, buses brought hundreds of enthusiastic visitors to Headquarters for the Smedley Tours.

During the tours, Toastmasters met staff, browsed the just-installed interactive museum, and took countless selfies with staff, each other, at the building's front door, with a portrait of Ralph C. Smedley, and posing with their country's flag, which was part



▲ District leaders use Legos during a team-building training exercise.



▲ Toastmasters delegates use electronic voting devices to cast their votes at the Annual Business Meeting.



◀ Canadian Toastmasters celebrate before Opening Ceremonies begin.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

of a custom lobby display featuring the flags of all countries with Toastmasters clubs. Proceeds from the Smedley Tours went to support the Smedley Fund.

Annual Business Meeting

All 12 proposed amendments to the Bylaws of Toastmasters International and the Club Constitution were adopted during the Annual Business Meeting. Members can read more about these amendments at www.toastmasters.org/governing-documents.

Accredited Speakers

It was a banner year for Accredited Speakers. Six candidates vying for the coveted designation gave their final presentations to the judges—and for the first time in years, the judges conferred the title on all candidates. The new Accredited Speakers are: Paul Artale, DTM, from Swartz Creek, Michigan, U.S.; Dr. Yelena Balabanova, DTM, from Mukilteo, Washington, U.S.; Michael Bayer from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Sima Dahl, DTM, from Chicago, Illinois, U.S.; Thomas William Iland, DTM, from

PARIS AWAITS!



In 2020, the 89th Annual Toastmasters International Convention will be held in Europe for the first time! Mark your calendar for August 5-8, 2020, to gather with friends at the Palais des Congrès de Paris, in Paris, France. Register now at www.toastmasters.org/events and get 2019 pricing through December 31, 2019!

Valencia, California, U.S.; and Gregory Van Borssum from Killcare Beach, New South Wales, Australia.

New Board of Directors

Deepak Menon, DTM, of New Delhi, India, was installed as the 2019-2020 International President during inaugural ceremonies on August 24. A chartered accountant and partner with the New Delhi firm of J.P., Kapur & Uberai, Menon has been a Toastmaster for 17 years and played a key role in club growth across India and neighboring countries.

Richard Peck, DTM, a 13-year Toastmaster from Seymour, Connecticut, U.S., became the new International President-Elect. Rounding out the Executive Committee: Margaret Page, DTM, Delta, British Columbia, Canada, first vice president; Matt Kinsey, DTM, Coral Springs, Florida, U.S., second vice president; and Lark Doley, DTM, Jonestown, Texas, U.S., Immediate Past President.

Seven new international directors were also seated for two-year terms: Naomi Takeuchi, DTM, Petaluma, California, U.S., Region 1; TK O'Geary, DTM, Albuquerque,



◀ Lark Doley (right) presents the President's 20-Plus award to the top three districts.



▲ The 2019-2020 Toastmasters Board of Directors.

Highlights from the WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Aaron Beverly becomes No. 1 with 'An Unbelievable Story.'

BY PAUL STERMAN

In 2012, Aaron Beverly entered his first Toastmasters International Speech Contest. Just three years out of college and full of ambition, he competed at the area level, and, by his own account, was confident he would be declared the winner.

"I was totally shocked when I came in second," recalls Beverly.

What happened next marked a turning point. "Afterward, a person came up to me and asked me, 'Do you want to know why you lost?'" Beverly listened. "He told me what I lacked was a story. That I was just trying to preach to people and tell them what to do, and I had no substance to back it up."

So Beverly set his mind to mastering the art of telling personal stories, and honed his speaking skills through repeated practice at club meetings. In 2016, he finished second at the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking—and this year he finished first.

The 30-year-old project manager for JPMorgan Chase captured the speaking title in August at the 2019 International Convention. In his winning speech, "An Unbelievable Story," Beverly unspooled a captivating tale about his experience at

a friend's 2018 wedding in India. Speaking by phone from his home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he reflected happily on his victory and how Toastmasters has lifted him, both personally and professionally, over the years.

"Toastmasters has really expanded my world," he says.

An Early Speaking Stumble

Beverly is a member of two clubs: the JPMorgan Christiana Keynote Toastmasters in Newark, Delaware, and the University City Toastmasters at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He joined Toastmasters largely because of a traumatic speaking experience in college. At the time, Beverly was a sophomore at Central Pennsylvania College, where he participated in the school's Student Leadership Training Institute—a program directed by adjunct professor and past Toastmasters International President Dilip Abayasekara, DTM. When the Institute held a graduation ceremony of sorts, Beverly was asked to present a gift to the keynote speaker.



New Mexico, U.S., Region 3; Mohamad Qayoom, DTM, Kenner, Louisiana, U.S., Region 5; John Lesko, DTM, Front Royal, Virginia, U.S., Region 7; Stefano McGhee, DTM, Weymouth, Massachusetts, U.S., Region 9; Aletta Rochat, DTM, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa, Region 11; and Sudha Balajee, DTM, Bengaluru, Kamataka, India, Region 13.

Hall of Fame

During the Hall of Fame ceremony, five Toastmasters districts were recognized as President’s Distinguished; eight were recognized as Select Distinguished; eight as Distinguished; and 17 as Smedley Distinguished, the highest level of recognition a district can achieve.

In addition, Presidential Citations were given to 18 members for exemplary service and dedication at the club, district, or international level.

Speech Contests

More than 110 contestants participated in the International Speech Contest Region Quarterfinals. Fourteen advanced to compete in the semifinals at the International Convention: Beverly P. Adams, DTM, (District 39), Jivitha Siddharthan

(District 28), Aaron Beverly (District 18), Kevin Robart (District 45), Khushi Pasquale, DTM, (District 95), Bharat Sangekar (District 73), Mariann Pascal (District 102), Daniel Midson-Short (Founder’s District), Luisa Montalvo (District 55), Eric Beba (District 24), Herman Noronha (District 35), Faith Ellis (District 81), Omar Alhusseini, DTM, (District 79), and Kwong Yue Yang (District 89).

Six finalists competed for the World Championship of Public Speaking: Beverly Adams, Aaron Beverly, Bharat Sangekar, Daniel Midson-Short, Luisa Montalvo, and Kwong Yue Yang.

The first-place winner was Aaron Beverly from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.; second- and third-place winners were Luisa Montalvo from San Juan, Texas, U.S.; and Kwong Yue Yang from Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.

Twenty-four contestants competed in the Video Speech Contest (a category for members of undistricted clubs). First place went to Winston Owino of Nairobi, Kenya, with the speech “Basic Human Drive.” Second place went to Zaid Kaliya, DTM, of Karachi, Pakistan, with the speech “Three Magical Words,” and the third-place winner was Oltesh Thobias, DTM, of Nairobi, Kenya, with the speech “Round and Round.” **T**

Laura Amann is associate editor for the Toastmaster magazine.

BLIC SPEAKING



Aaron Beverly wore formal Indian wedding attire for his speech about his friend’s wedding in India. At right, Beverly reacts happily after being announced by International President Deepak Menon (right) as the 2019 World Champion of Public Speaking.

MEET THE OTHER WINNERS

Before her appearance in the International Speech Contest Semifinals in August, Luisa Montalvo shared her motivation for competing: “I want to make my mom proud of her daughter.”



Luisa Montalvo

She achieved that and more.

At the August International Convention, she won second place in the World Championship of Public Speaking. In her six previous years competing in the International Speech Contest, she had never advanced beyond the district level.

Montalvo, a member of several clubs, including the HUB City Toastmasters in Pharr, Texas, returned home and showed the second-place trophy to her 87-year-old mother. Magdalena Montalvo, who is in the early stages of Alzheimer's, started dancing with the trophy, and playfully insisted it was hers to keep.

“I said, ‘You know what, Mom? You’re absolutely right. It is your trophy, because if it wasn’t for you, I never would have been the person I am today.’”

“She was very honored; she was very touched.”

In her championship-round speech, “First Impressions,” Montalvo humorously described her roadside interaction with a disheveled, abundantly tattooed young man whose car had broken down. She changed his flat tire—and learned a lesson about stereotypes in the process.

Third-place winner Kwong Yue Yang’s goal in this year’s event was to erase what he says was a bad memory: the speech he gave in last year’s World Championship of Public Speaking. “My mind was so focused on trying to be perfect with every word and every movement that I wasn’t able to enjoy myself,” he says of the 2018 experience. “And when I stumbled during the speech, I was totally thrown off. I couldn’t recover properly, so the conclusion and threads [of the speech] didn’t come together.”

Originally from Australia but now living in China, Yang is a

member of several clubs including the GEM (Guangzhou Evaluation and Mentoring) Toastmasters. His championship-round speech, “Less and More,” was about how, as a 21-year-old, he



Kwong Yue Yang

traveled from Sydney, Australia, to Beijing to study at a university. Arriving at the Beijing airport, unable to speak or read Chinese, he was lost and alone. A motherly, middle-aged woman he sat next to on the plane helped the young man find his way.

Yang said he really enjoyed delivering his final-round speech this year and felt “a bit of redemption.”

You can watch videos of Luisa Montalvo’s and Kwong Yue Yang’s final-round speeches at bit.ly/TI_Montalvo19 and bit.ly/TI_Yang2019.

—Paul Sterman

“I only had to say three lines,” he says, still pained by the memory. “I got up and shook the guy’s hand—and then I totally blanked out. It was only 15 seconds, but it felt like an eternity.”

“I never wanted to experience that again,” he adds.

His Toastmasters training had immediate benefits. He was hired by JPMorgan Chase and credits his communication, leadership, and networking skills with later helping him land his current project manager job with the company.

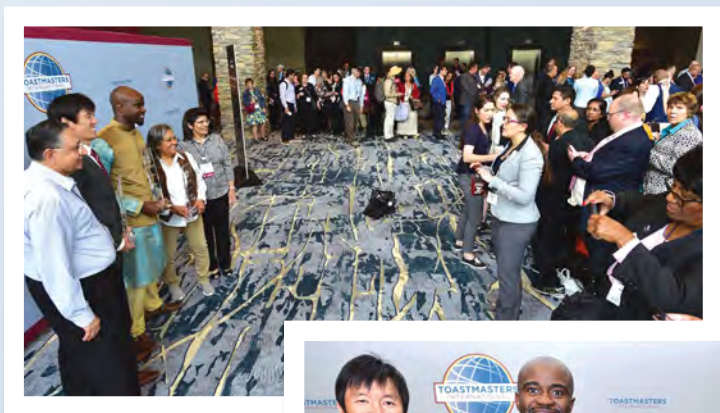
Strong Connections

Beverly says he’s also made many friends in Toastmasters, including Brandon Locke, a fellow club member whose wedding

in India formed the backdrop to Beverly’s speech. “I have had the joy of watching Aaron speak in person for a long time,” Locke says, “and I knew he would do the story justice.”

Donning formal Indian wedding attire, Beverly delivered his winning speech with polish and panache. He started out setting the scene: “Brandon’s [then]-fiancée, Devika, and her family are Indian, Brandon is white, and I am the only black man there. I can’t help but feel different.”

What helped him feel embraced and accepted was an Indian wedding ritual—a game, really: He was asked to protect the groom’s shoes before the wedding. The shoes could not fall captive to the bridesmaids or else the groom would have to pay a



▲ *The three top finishers in the championship pose for photos with their Toastmasters fans.*

▶ *Kwong Yue Yang, Aaron Beverly, and Luisa Montalvo*



▲ *Past World Champions of Public Speaking congratulate winner Aaron Beverly.*



◀ *Aaron and his proud mother, Adele.*

“ransom” to get them back. “A fact about me: When I am given a mission, I take it very seriously,” he told the audience. He wasn’t giving up the shoes.

Though he mined the tale for laughs, Beverly also tapped into its cultural relevance. The shoe game, he said, was a fun way for the bride’s and groom’s families and their respective friends—people from a mix of cultural backgrounds—to get to know each other and make everyone feel welcome. Society needs to do more of that, said Beverly, who issued a challenge to the audience: Be open-minded and compassionate toward people who are different from you—a mission to take very seriously.

“A fact about me: When I am given a mission, I take it very seriously.”

— AARON BEVERLY

Past Toastmasters World Champions of Public Speaking were impressed with the newest member of their distinguished circle. Mark Brown, the 1995 winner, says Beverly structured his speech with a deft touch, earning laughs from the audience as he chronicled the shoe adventure—“and then right at the end, driving home a powerful point about the acceptance of others. We didn’t see it coming, but when it did, it was poignant.”

Darren LaCroix, the 2001 champ, says Beverly’s message resonates during these divisive times. “As an international organization, we are all from different cultures and face this [issue of feeling different] every day,” LaCroix says. “Aaron

does not take sides yet faces the issue head-on, brilliantly, with a personal story.”

A Valued Mentor

Through the years, Beverly has forged a strong connection with Abayasekara, the past International President and Accredited Speaker whom he met in college. After Beverly joined Toastmasters and began competing in speech contests, he asked Abayasekara to coach him. From him Beverly learned how to structure a story, make it cohesive, and connect with an audience.

“Aaron would send me his contest speeches—text and sometimes video—for evaluation, and we would go back and forth with tweaks that strengthened the speeches,” Abayasekara recalls. “I think the most important thing is that Aaron is humble, which makes him a great listener, and he doesn’t let ego get in the way of learning.”

Speaking to the audience after he won the championship, Beverly expressed gratitude to his mentor for his guidance. For his part, Abayasekara says it was deeply gratifying to coach Beverly and watch him soar to such speaking heights.

He notes that Beverly has now surpassed his own performance—Abayasekara finished second at the 1992 World Championship of Public Speaking. And he couldn’t be more pleased.

“A mentor’s greatest reward,” says Abayasekara, “is the success of his mentee.” **T**

To watch Aaron Beverly’s championship-winning speech, go to bit.ly/TI_Beverly19.

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



The Importance of Being Scientifically Literate

Science is never boring. However, it's often presented that way. Here's how to change that.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

“**Y**ou’re doing it again. You’re talking over our heads.” My friend Peg said this to me frequently. In the 1980s and 1990s, I was an aircraft engine researcher for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Aircraft engines and rocket engines use the same thermodynamic principles, so I can say with guarded certainty, “I’m a rocket scientist.”

However, I often forgot that my friends didn’t know rocket science. Apparently, by Peg’s frequent observation, I had a bad habit of slipping techy-talk into my conversations, completely unaware that I was confusing *and* boring my friends. I was an awful science communicator.

These days, we are surrounded by science news. The proliferation of new discoveries, and the implications for people’s daily and future lives, now fill mainstream conversations and the mass media. Through countless blogs, websites, news stories, and stunning photos, the point seems to be: Science is never boring. However, it’s often presented that way.

As a result, a new emphasis on plain speaking has emerged as more scientists and technical experts must describe their work to nonscientists clearly, accurately, and most of all, engagingly.



Maureen Zappala



A GRAND SLAM

Aniruddha Dutta, a doctoral student in Dusseldorf, Germany, won the 2018 German Science Slam Championship with a 10-minute speech about his research on lightweight steel. Science slams are usually judged on audience response; Dutta delivered his presentation to an audience of 5,000 nonscientists, whose rousing applause gave him the title.

Science slams, now popular in more than 25 countries, allow young scientists to explain their work to the general public. Humor and creativity are heartily encouraged in relaxed presentations that showcase the young speaker's passion for their work.

In his speech, "Stealing Weight from Steel," Dutta explained how to lighten steel for industrial applications, including the manufacture of light, energy-saving automobiles.

Dutta used cream-filled cookies to illustrate his research. "Materials science is abstract and challenging to describe, but my Toastmasters skills came to my aid," he says. "I came up with props, like crushing a cookie with a hydraulic press to explain steel microstructures. I used *auflauf*, a German dish made from leftover food from a party, to explain the concept of entropy in material science. Everyone understands cream cookies and leftover food."

He adds: "Toastmasters taught me all the verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication—and how to organize my thoughts, the do's and don'ts of the microphone. I learned how to stand and deliver my words and most importantly, the magnificence of the pause."

To watch his winning speech, visit bit.ly/TI_Dutta.

Aniruddha Dutta, a former Toastmaster in Germany and a Ph.D. student in metal physics, has used cream-filled cookies and leftover food to demonstrate his scientific concepts to audiences. Thinking of his mother helps Dutta assess the simplicity of his speeches. "I always ask myself, 'How can I explain this to my mom,' who is a classical vocalist?" he says. (Read more about Dutta in the sidebar to the right.)



Aniruddha Dutta

Humor and persuasion also help in appealing to diverse audiences, such as the media, consumers, corporations, grant-making entities, venture capitalists, and policy makers.

Why Explain Science?

Your life constantly intersects with science. Have you flown in a plane, used a remote device, talked to your car, or cooked a meal? That's science disguised as an everyday life activity. You may not know the how or why—but you appreciate that it's there and that it works.

Allison Coffin, Ph.D., DTM, an associate professor of neuroscience at Washington State University Vancouver, is a passionate believer in science and how it matters in the world. Her expertise is in studying hearing-enabling hair cells in fish, in the hopes of developing technologies or medications to prevent hearing loss in humans.

Coffin joined Metropolitan Toastmasters in St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S., years ago to practice defending her master's thesis. She believes so strongly in the power of communication that she co-founded Science Talk, a nonprofit organization that convenes an annual conference to train scientists in making influential, effective presentations. The Science Talk website offers an invitation to action: "There's a revolution in science right now—the idea that scientists should sometimes leave the lab and talk about what we do, and why we do it, to real people."



Allison Coffin

That's because science and its applications have countless implications for society.

"In major issues, it's not just about the science," Coffin says. "There are business interests, local municipal interests, and natural resource interests. Just saying 'here's the science' won't work. But when science can be part of the conversation, and we build relationships first, it's easier to sell another person on the ideas."

Coffin is a founding member of her current club, Salmon Toastmasters in Vancouver, Washington, U.S., and has belonged to numerous other Toastmasters clubs over the years.

Expertise Is the Easy Part.

While stellar public speaking talents are in demand among technical professionals, that doesn't mean techies take to addressing



Science Talk 2019, held last April in Portland, Oregon, drew scientists eager to promote best practices in talking about their work with lay audiences. The annual meeting is the brainchild of Toastmaster scientist Allison Coffin and colleagues.

general audiences naturally. In fact, the “curse of knowledge” can be a huge communication roadblock for an expert who knows a topic so well they can’t deconstruct big-picture knowledge to levels that lay audiences understand.

Dialogue, especially your own internal dialogue, can turn science into story, and makes you seem more relatable to your audience.

In the July 2015 issue of *Toastmaster* magazine, engineering consultant Carl Rentschler, in his article “Communication Challenges of a Techie,” reflects on why technical people like himself might struggle with verbal communication. For example, he describes scientists who don’t realize they lack strong communication skills and assume that their technical strengths will communicate the significance of their work. “I have heard atrocious speeches by technical people and frankly, they seem oblivious to the fact they are not getting through,” he writes.

How a Science Speech can Teach.

If you are a scientist *and* a Toastmaster, you’ve probably delivered a few science speeches in your club or to an audience of nonscientists. Understanding even more about the unique principles of science communication can help you have more impact with your words.

A well-delivered scientific explanation that uses clear language can comfort, inspire, and empower nonscience audiences. Learning about a medical diagnosis, or a solar eclipse, or why mixing some household cleaners is dangerous, makes people feel competent, secure, and smart.

Perhaps most importantly, clear science communication makes technical information “spreadable”: Jargon-free journal

articles are cited more often; uncomplicated talks are better remembered; and straightforward science communication can provide more inclusive cross-topic collaboration between science organizations.

Master Three Elements.

Clear science communication uses a skilled mix of content, structure, and delivery. Toastmasters training helps scientists with all three.

Content is the scientific information you are presenting. Avoid using scientific jargon or industry-specific phrases. Even the same

SciComm RESOURCES

Society for Science and the Public - (www.societyforscience.org)

Story Collider - teaches scientists storytelling skills, offers podcasts, and organizes live storytelling shows. (www.storycollider.org)

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) - Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology provides scientists with communication resources and facilitates dialogue between scientists and the public. (www.AAAS.org)

Festival of the Spoken Nerd - “Where sparkling wit meets fascinating science in a comedy night for the insatiably sci-curious.” This entertaining and hilarious trio of scientists performs in London and has podcasts and recordings. (bit.ly/TI_FOTSN.)



phrases can mean different things to different scientists. When speaking to nonscientists, resist including every detail. Stick to general principles or overviews. Use analogies and metaphors, and include humor if you can.

Structure is how the content is organized. Shape your presentation on the logical sequence of the scientific method: Determine your problem, hypothesis, method, results, and conclusion. Develop an outline to keep you on track. Use smooth transitions and summarize at the end.

Delivery includes vocal variety, body language, visuals, eye contact, etc. Use your Toastmasters club to practice these elements. Record yourself on video and watch the recording. Practice using any props or slides, so you are comfortable with them.

Bring Science to Life.

Audiences crave a great presentation. As you share your story, consider describing the roadblocks and victories you experienced along the way. “While I was researching this, I discovered ...” or “I was shocked when I saw this, and I said to myself ...” Dialogue, especially your own internal dialogue, can turn science into story, and makes you seem more relatable to your audience.

Patricia Fripp, a onetime Toastmaster and now an award-winning speaker and coach whose clients include engineers and technical professionals, has additional language advice for science speakers. Her training outlines “skinny” and “fat” language, two terms that relate directly to the quality of science communication. Skinny language is very detailed while fat language is broad and inclusive.

“The challenge for scientists who want to explain or sell their ideas to people who don’t understand the science is to use ‘fat’ language and include abstract concepts and broader terms. They [should] tell the story of how their ideas relate to and affect an individual person, their life, their society, and the world in general. Increasing levels of abstraction require broader language, not the nitty-gritty specifics,” she explains, adding that it’s important to relate the story using words that are familiar or create a visual image in the mind of the listener.

If your goal is to communicate well, it could be worth it to sacrifice some precision for connection with the audience.

Analogies and metaphors help bridge the gap between what is known and unknown. The audience grasps a new concept by comparing it to something they already know. They learn at a deeper level, and retention is much higher. Science-based TED

SOMETHING IS FISHY HERE

Toastmaster scientist Allison Coffin, DTM, Ph.D., jokes that her studies in fish hearing “may sound like a small field” but it is one that could have major beneficial consequences for deaf or hearing impaired individuals.

Coffin won the audience choice award during the 2014 United States finals of the international FameLab competition, with her speech, “Heard Anything Fishy Lately?” Humans have billions of brain cells but only 14,000 hair cells in the inner ear that allow us to hear. If those cells die, they will not redevelop, which is the basis for deafness, Coffin explains.

Fish are relevant because they regenerate impaired or lost cells in a matter of days. But how? That’s the basis of Coffin’s inquiry.

“When it comes to hearing, fish are way ahead of us,” Coffin says. “We want to harness their fishy tricks so we can grow new hair cells in us.”

Watch how Coffin uses props, gestures, audience participation, humor, and relatable stories to impress the judges and audience in this science communication competition. bit.ly/TI_Coffin

speakers regularly use analogies and metaphors since most of their audience members are not scientists.

Some scientists may be reluctant to use metaphors because they are oversimplified or not entirely accurate. For example, the “ozone hole” isn’t really a hole. It’s a decrease in ozone density. A plane is powered by its engine the same way an inflated untied balloon flies when you let go of it—sort of. These comparisons aren’t totally accurate, but they represent the general idea, and help listeners understand. If your goal is to communicate well, it could be worth it to sacrifice some precision for connection with the audience.

Why Does this Matter to Me?

Maybe you’re thinking, “I’m not a scientist. This information does not pertain to me.” Consider how your life has been improved through science and tell a story about it.

You can be an ambassador for science, even if you are not a scientist or engineer.

And if you run into my friend Peg, tell her your science story in simpler words. I know I will. **T**

Maureen Zappala, DTM, a former NASA propulsion engineer, is a member of Medina Leaders Speak in Medina, Ohio, and Henderson Toasters in Henderson, Nevada. She is a professional speaker, author, and founder of the speaking service, *High Altitude Strategies*. Lean more at www.maureenz.com

Dealing with Distractions

Noisy room? Technical difficulties?
How to handle unforeseen interruptions.

BY BARBARA AUGELLO

The commotion began while I was leading a workshop in a quiet neighborhood. Everyone was engaged until we heard a noisy disruption outside the window. My audience was clearly distracted, but I plodded on. They became more and more inattentive until I lost them entirely: They got up and left! Without a good reason to continue, I joined them.

Outside we saw a huge brown bull, bashing into the fence of the farm across the street. Eventually, he broke free and started trotting down the road, leaving his little calves running wildly inside their pen. Only when the farmer had the situation well under control were we able to go back in and continue.

I am not the only speaker who has tried to ignore unexpected events. Sometimes it's easier to ignore a situation, knowing how hard it can be to get back on track after an interruption and how awkward it is to intervene if the distraction is coming from your audience. When giving a speech, I sometimes feel like I am on a train journey—I want to get to my destination smoothly, without a lot of jolts or stops. To pause unexpectedly is alarming: Will we be delayed? Will I get derailed? The less experience you have as a speaker, the more these distractions will unsettle you.

Ignore or resolve the situation?

One option is to ignore the situation and simply proceed with your talk. This

passive approach works only if the interruption is not extreme or is over a short period of time. A small, flickering fluorescent light in the back of the room may drift into our unconscious. A 10-second fire truck siren is easily forgotten. But it's different if the fluorescent light is large and right over your head or if the sirens go on and on.

Check in with your audience members to see if they are distracted by the events. Are they fidgeting, looking around, nudging each other, or whispering? If so, intervention is the best approach.

Once, I observed someone answer her cell phone and start a conversation in the middle of my presentation.

Sometimes you can just acknowledge the situation; other times you might need to act. A few years ago I was in the audience when the sound of vacuuming from outside the room suddenly made it hard to hear. The speaker looked at us, smiled, and said, "Well, I'm not going to talk over that." And then he simply stopped talking. Someone went out to the hallway to ask the cleaning staff to vacuum elsewhere, and the presenter resumed his talk. His approach worked for him, but you could also be more direct and say, "I'm sorry, but that noise is just too loud

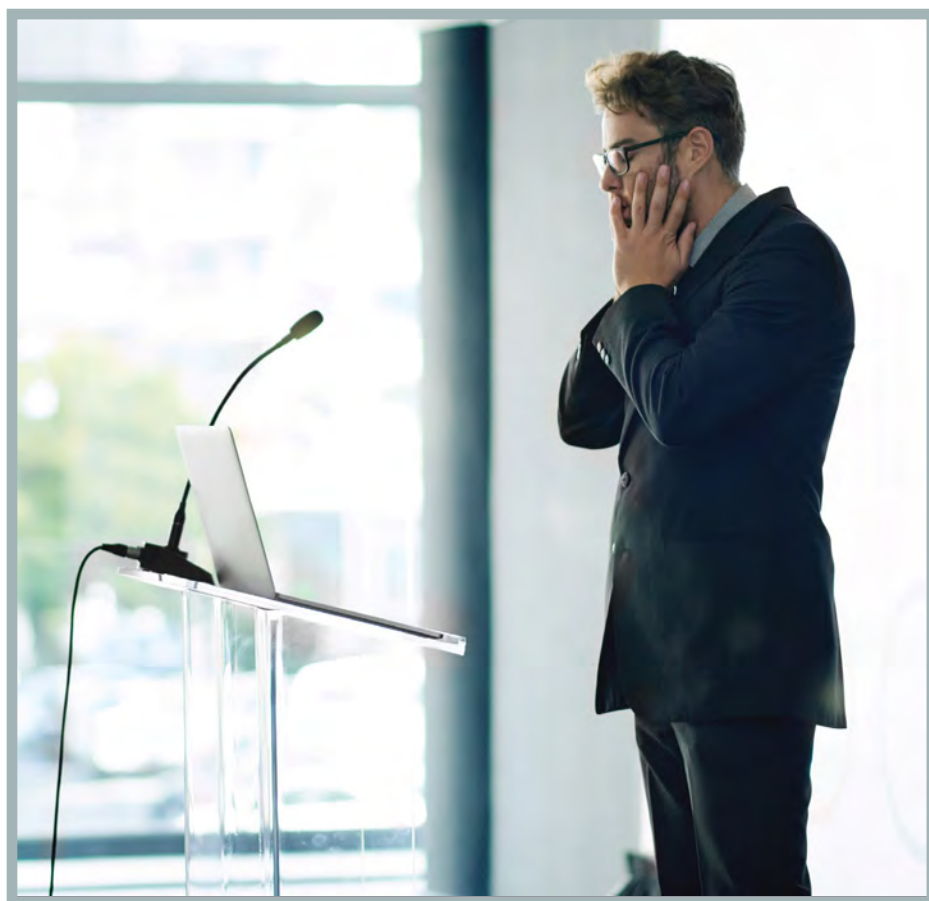
for me to talk over. Can we do anything about it? Otherwise, maybe we should take a break."

A few months ago, I was leading a workshop that included a video. I had set up my projector earlier, and it had seemed fine. But now the sunlight was streaming through a nearby window on to my projection, making it hard to see. I stopped my presentation, brought a chair over to the window and, with help from audience members, covered the offending window. Yes, my intervention caused several minutes of delay, but it also easily resolved the problem.

How to deal with people problems.

When the disturbance comes from audience members, it can be trickier. I've seen people talking, or moving about, or engaged with their devices. Once, I actually observed someone answer her cell phone and start a conversation in the middle of my presentation. If you encounter these behaviors, it's best to simply say something. Be polite but direct: "I'm sorry, but I'm having trouble focusing while you're chatting. Could you take your conversation to another room?"

If you're speaking at a club event where you know everyone, it can be equally, if not more, uncomfortable to intervene. Toastmasters tend to be more sympathetic to speaker difficulties because, well, we've all been there. However, sometimes it feels awkward to intervene with someone



with your difficult position. You have not only acknowledged the situation but given them a short-term solution.

The bull-outside-the-window event is an example of a situation that was out of my control. Instead of ignoring it, I could have stopped my presentation much sooner and said, “Wow, what is that commotion? It’s too loud for me to continue! Maybe we should take a break and go see what’s happening.”

Be positive.

Whatever happens, it’s important to display a positive attitude. Act confidently and poised even if you don’t feel that way. It’s okay to fake it. Acting composed in the face of chaos helps you feel calm and reassures the audience that you are in charge and able to deal with the situation.

Whether you are asking for assistance with the audiovisuals or confronting a rude audience member, do it with a smile. Remember, the audience is on your side; they came to hear what you have to say.

As Toastmasters, we’re fortunate to be able to practice interruptions and learn how we handle them best. Before you give a presentation, ask a member to create a distraction and then try to handle it and continue your speech. The more experience you have dealing with disruptions, the easier it will be to face them without getting derailed.

We cannot totally avoid unexpected events. But we can tackle them with confidence and poise. Take the time to make it right. Your audience deserves nothing less. **T**

Barbara Augello is a longtime Toastmaster and member of the South Shore Soliloquy club in Kingston, Massachusetts, United States. She is a freelance writer and owner/operator of Health Ed of New England.

you know. Years ago, one of our members would regularly interrupt speeches from the audience or hold side conversations during a speech; yet none of us ever knew what to say, so no one confronted her. I should have just said, “Joan, it seems like you have questions and comments to offer. It would be better for me if you could hold those until the end of my speech, thanks.” Just say it in a friendly way and with a smile.

It’s likely that if you’re distracted by something, your audience is as well. They came to hear what you have to say, and they deserve to hear it. It’s best to stop briefly, acknowledge the situation, and rectify the disturbance as promptly and effectively as you can. The first time might be intimidating, but it gets easier with time, and your audience will be grateful.

Understand some situations can’t be fixed.

Sometimes the issue may be truly beyond your control—particularly technology

problems, room conditions, or outside noises. If your audience has noticed the problem, acknowledge it. Confusion is distracting, and affirming that something is happening will reassure and likely even relax them.

Toastmasters tend to be more sympathetic to speaker difficulties because, well, we’ve all been there.

Humor is always helpful. You could say, “I’m sure you have all noticed the temperature drop in here. Anyone have an extra pair of gloves? I can’t feel my fingers!” And then add, “Apparently, the problem is with the thermostat. If you need to take a break to warm up in the hallway, feel free to do so.” Audience members will appreciate your candor and most likely sympathize

Shed the Dread of Business Writing

3 steps to crafting clear, concise documents.

BY BARBARA BASHEIN, Ph.D., DTM



Do you dread writing proposals or reports? You're not alone. It can be deceptively difficult.

Business writing tends to be brief, simple, and clear. Unlike personal writing, it's uncluttered and includes only essential information that informs or creates change in the reader. If you don't know how to write in the business style, you'll produce awkward and ineffective documents.

The challenge is compounded if a proposal or report has career-altering potential. It can also be uncomfortable to address an unfamiliar audience, such as senior executives or customers. Luckily, business writing can be made easier and more polished by using Toastmasters know-how and three simple steps: write, revise, and polish.

Write

Identify the purpose of your document and create an outline. The guidance in the Pathways learning experience also works well in organizing a business report. The Ice Breaker, the first project in every path, offer an outline worksheet. (The worksheet, along with other resources, can be accessed through the Base Camp home page by clicking the Tutorials and Resources dropdown menu.) The structure of the Ice Breaker outline is simple: (1) opening, (2) body with three to five main points, (3) conclusion. You don't need a lot of details. For a proposal, those three main points could detail what the new process would result in: better quality, lower costs, and quicker delivery.

Pathways offers more detailed outlines in the Speech Outline Worksheet and the Write a Proposal Resource. The body now includes main points, sub-points, support/evidence, and transitions. However, the steps are the same as the Ice Breaker

outline. Fill in the blanks, create a written roadmap, and develop a draft.

Work quickly and add substance to the outline. Start with the body, not the opening. Using the example above, for instance, explain why the proposed work process will result in better quality, lower costs, and quicker delivery. Next, write the conclusion and, last, the opening. The opening and conclusion will be much easier to write after the points in the body are fleshed out.

Revise

Wait. Put the draft away for as long as possible. It will be easier to edit when you've distanced yourself from it.

Make multiple quick-editing reviews of the draft. Focus on one element, such as spelling, for each review. Trying to edit and fact-check every detail in one read can be overwhelming and bog you down. In this case, the beginning of the draft gets most of the close editing; the end receives little.

Focus each editing review on a specific element. Toastmasters learn to rehearse a speech from beginning to end multiple times. We learn to focus on one element at a time, such as eye contact or vocal variety. It's the same process for editing. At each round, check for the following:

- ▶ **Eliminate wordiness.** For example, change "at the present time" to "currently" or "now."
- ▶ **Use clear and concise words.** For example, change "utilize" to "use."
- ▶ **Use active rather than passive sentence structures.** For example: "The team wrote the report," rather than "The report was written by the team."
- ▶ **Fulfill the purpose.** Does the document fulfill the purpose you identified?

Reduce Text

- ▶ **Use lists, tables, and bullets for visual impact.** They make both writing and reading easier.
- ▶ **Put detail and supporting documentation in appendices.** Readers who want the details can access them.

Polish

Record and listen to yourself reading. Ask a Toastmasters colleague to listen to the recording; they are trained evaluators. Through club experiences and the Evaluation and Feedback project in every Pathways path, Toastmasters hone their ability to deliver constructive feedback on one another's presentations.

Incorporate the suggestions into the document. The Pathways Evaluation and Feedback project guides participants in presenting a speech, receiving feedback, and applying feedback into the next draft. Toastmasters can use these same skills to put the final polish on the second document.

Toastmasters training can relieve the stress of business writing. Pathways provides online resources; fellow members share feedback and help polish presentations. Club meetings provide the forum to refine skills. In essence, Toastmasters offers the protocols to establish and reinforce a mindset for clear, focused communication in speaking and writing. **T**

BARBARA BASHEIN, Ph.D., DTM, is a member of Innovative Speakers Toastmasters in San Diego, California. She is both a retired business executive and a former university professor. Her books have been widely used in MBA classes and her business-related articles have appeared in an array of publications.



The Keys to Long-Term Membership

It's about family spirit, meeting goals, and positivity.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

Every six months, each Toastmaster is given an opportunity to renew their membership. Most members stay. Unfortunately, some don't. Currently, the average tenure of a Toastmaster is 2.4 years.

Yet many clubs have one or more members who have been with Toastmasters for many years. And their expertise and wisdom make them ideal mentors for both the club and the individual members. What keeps such members coming back? Perhaps their reasons can show us a way to keep members longer.

I contacted some of my friends from around the organization—ones who have been with Toastmasters for over 15 years—to explore that question. They didn't cite the reasons many members give when they originally join, such as to overcome a fear of public speaking. These members have achieved their initial goals. Their responses, however, did show a pattern. I found three main characteristics.

First, they stick around because of the camaraderie. Reg Boaler, a 20-year Toastmaster and member of two clubs in British Columbia, Canada, says, "I enjoy the social exchange of seeing and talking with friends." He travels frequently for business and, for 15 years, has also been visiting two additional clubs in towns that are on his route. In fact, he plans his travel schedule around their meetings. He enjoys visiting his fellow members and friends, but, as a two-time semifinalist in Toastmasters' International Speech Contest, he also serves as an example and resource to them.

Roxann Andersen, of the Riverside Breakfast club, in Riverside, California,

has also been a Toastmaster for 20 years. What keeps her coming back is, in part, "a sense of family." Think about how you can build that quality in your own club. "Be creative, have fun, and do things together," suggests Boaler.

Second, they stick around because of the positive environment. Elaine Lung, DTM, another 20-year member, belongs to four clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area. A professional speaker and improv trainer, she says of Toastmasters, "It's a positive experience in a negative world." That statement really struck me. We may not realize it, but Toastmasters is an oasis in a desert of negativity for many people. That alone may be a strong reason for people to join and to stay.

Toastmasters is an oasis in a desert of negativity for many people.

The third reason that longtimers give for sticking around? To meet their changing goals. If someone joined Toastmasters to get over a fear of public speaking, they probably no longer have that need after 20 years. As we progress in the organization, our goals don't go away—they just change.

Robbie Wisdom, DTM, a 16-year member, belongs to Bitterroot Toastmasters in Hamilton, Montana. At this point, she says, she puts a priority on helping others improve their speaking abilities. "I realized a couple of years ago that the skill of empathetic, intelligent

evaluation was more important to me than winning speaking awards." She mentors the club in evaluations.

Dana Morgan Barnes, DTM, is a member of two clubs in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The 27-year Toastmaster enjoys "seeing how Toastmasters changes lives." Her focus is on mentoring members and clubs—and even candidates for the Toastmasters International Board of Directors. Lung, the speaker and improv trainer, uses Toastmasters to try new material for her sessions. She says, "listening to people of different ages keeps me relevant. I learn new cultural memes and terms."

Each of these individuals, while achieving their own unique goals, is helping to raise the quality of the club experience for other members.

One way to ensure that veteran members of your club remain active is to understand what their current goals are and then design a way they can achieve them, while also providing value to the club members.

The old-timers have Toastmasters expertise. Find a way to maximize their contributions to the club—even if it means thinking outside the proverbial box. In short, work to make your club both a family and the brightest, most positive part of everyone's week. Wouldn't it be great if we had even more longtime Toastmasters? Let's make that happen. **■**

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.

Menu Engineering

What's for dinner? More than you ever imagined.

BY JOHN CADLEY



You go to a restaurant, look at the menu, and here's what you do. You look at the top and bottom first, then your eyes zigzag across the rest of the page. This takes 109 seconds. You see one photo of the most appetizing dish and you don't see the price until the end of the descriptive copy. The price has no dollar sign. Where I live, 300 miles north of New York City, you'll be more likely to select a particular offering if you see words like "grass fed," "organic," "pan seared," "gluten-free," and "grandma." You'll also prefer to see "crisp" instead of "fried," so you won't think of cholesterol and death, and you'll like "appetizers" to be called "hors d'oeuvres" so you won't be reminded that you're eating food that kills your appetite for the food you're about to eat. If fish is your thing, you can't resist an entrée that's been "line caught." Apparently, somebody is out there with a rod catching fish for the chef, one at a time. Lastly, you will *not* see dessert selections on the menu.

Across the pond, if you're French and you want cheese (you do—you're French), or if you're German and you order bread (you do—you're German), you'd better see "local" because there are over 1,600 French cheeses and 3,000 German breads and *yours is the best!*

I can tell you all this, not because I know it, but because the experts of menu engineering know it. Yes, menu engineering, the art of crafting that innocuous list of food items you're holding into a powerful piece of persuasive messaging. Diners have been studied like lab mice to see exactly how a menu can be written

and organized to produce the highest profit per serving. Or, to put it another way, how you can be manipulated into ending up with a check that gives you indigestion. Not interested in *Chicken Pot Pie with Carrots, Peas, Celery, and Onions*? How about *Succulent Chicken Pot Pie with Locally Sourced Vegetables and Grandma's Flaky Pie Crust*? Same meal, higher price. Gotcha! I particularly like the grandma reference since the only thing my grandmother ever cooked was liver and onions—even for dessert. If I complained, she said, "Eat it or wear it." She was definitely "flaky" but it had nothing to do with pie crust.

Evidently, the menu engineers think 23.95 looks better than \$23.95—like maybe you don't have to pay with real money.

One group of menu engineers created a quadrant for laying out the most profitable menu. They labeled the upper left corner *Horse* for items that were highly popular but not very profitable. I have no idea why. Horse? The upper right quadrant was called *Star* for the most popular and most profitable items. (Remember, your eye goes to the top right of the menu first.) The lower right quadrant was *Puzzle* for high profitability but low popularity (well yes, I suppose it is puzzling why you would charge a lot of money for

something nobody wants). And finally, the lower left quadrant ... *Dog*. This is the tenement district of the menu for zero-profit dishes that most restaurants simply have to offer. Think grilled cheese sandwich. Saying "with tomato" helps a little, but not enough to avoid the waiter's Vulcan Death Stare.

So what about that menu you were looking at when we began? You only see one photo because it's the most expensive dish, and it's on the upper right hand side of the menu because that's where your eye goes first. You don't see the price until the end, so you won't be "price shopping." (Does anyone go out to eat just so they can order the cheapest thing on the menu?) And you won't see dollar signs because it makes the item seem more expensive. Evidently, the menu engineers think 23.95 looks better than \$23.95—like maybe you don't have to pay with real money. And there will be no listing of desserts, thank you, lest you skip the appetizers to save room for the deep-dish apple crisp.

This is all very well and good, and I appreciate a restaurateur's desire to maximize profits. But if you really want to sell me, have a sense of humor. After all, it's only food. For instance, offer me apple pie, as one restaurant does, that's "as American as baseball and tax evasion," and I'll add the vanilla ice cream, the demitasse, and the \$9 aperitif all by myself. **T**

John Cadley is a former advertising copywriter, 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 

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