

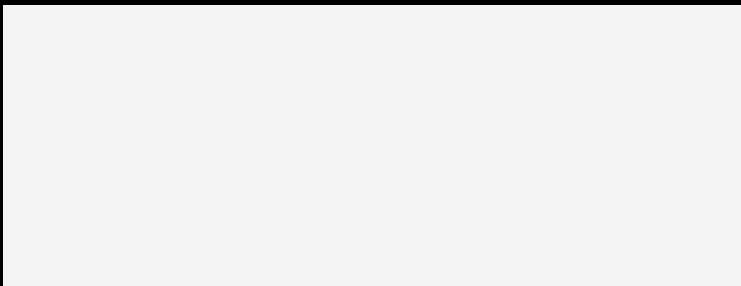
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TOASTMASTER®



The Value of Volunteerism

How helping others can make you healthier



**Eye-Opening Lessons
From a Club Coach**

**Brush Up Your French for
the 2020 Convention**



Become Extraordinary!

In today's world, we all want to be successful. Even more so when we join Toastmasters. We join clubs to seek the benefits that Toastmasters offers; to use this learning laboratory to achieve our true potential without the fear of being judged; and to learn skills that are not taught this way anywhere else in the world. We transform from the ordinary to the extraordinary!

What makes this possible? It is the dedication, passion, and commitment of our leaders who serve our clubs, districts, and beyond. Without their service, our members and clubs would be rudderless.

How do our leaders prepare these responsibilities? Training enables them to understand their roles; prepare and plan for success; share ideas, tips, and techniques with their peers; learn how to handle challenges; and polish leadership and communication skills they can use both in and beyond the club setting.

We transform from the ordinary to the extraordinary through the dedication and commitment of leaders who serve our clubs, districts, and beyond.

It was the sweltering hot summer of 2004 in New Delhi, India. While browsing the Toastmasters website, I discovered a section on club officer training. With two Toastmasters clubs and a club under charter in our city, we realized our officers needed preparation too.

We downloaded the training material and dove into learning together. Little did we know then that Toastmasters clubs in other cities in India were replicating this process. That early passion and commitment to training helped the growth of Toastmasters in India, which presently has over 900 clubs and four districts, with another district under formation.

As Toastmasters founder Ralph C. Smedley once said, "Here we are, with tremendous opportunity before us. I challenge you to get to work to bring us up to a higher level of service. Let us share with others the benefits we have gained for ourselves."

Become the best leader you can by participating in all training opportunities that are available. Make yourself extraordinary and enable others to become extraordinary as well!

Deepak Menon, DTM
International President

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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An open platform for your tips, tactics, comments, and encouragement.

A Toastmasters Love Story

Annesha and I met thanks to a Toastmasters event in Mysore, India, during an education session where she was a facilitator on “Build Your Brand Using Social Media Storytelling,” and that was the beginning of our love story. Toastmasters was not only instrumental in our meeting, but it has also helped us find new avenues of creativity and expression together. We have been dating for a year now and will be married on Feb. 4, 2020. It has been a riveting story of not only how people meet thanks to this organization but also shape their future together, every step of the way. Thank you, Toastmasters, you will always be the starting point of our journey, and of the journey ahead in our lives together.

Sagnik Biswas, DTM
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
Spoken Word

Teacher's Take

Writer Mary Nesfield's poignant Q&A, “How to Release Your Fear and Feel at Home on Stage” [Interview with Lisa Wentz, October 2019] was riveting. As a retired English teacher, I felt Ms. Wentz's compassion for the student who was told, “Sit down. You are stupid, and you always will be,” was meritorious. How different that boy's reaction might have been if that teacher had said, “Stand up! You are so bright. I want to hear everything you have to say!”

Thank you, Ms. Nesfield, for sharing Ms. Wentz's experience and what the vast majority of teachers would have done. Thank you for taking the time to

empower a once stifled child. It takes a village indeed!

Linda Childress
Palm City, Florida, U.S.
Palm City Orators

International Inspiration

“Make your club the only place that your members want to be.” That is a powerful statement from Toastmasters International President Deepak Menon in the October 2019 *Toastmaster* magazine. It's powerful for two reasons.

First, it goes to the root of what we do. We do things that matter to us, that we care about. If a Toastmasters meeting is the place that we feel is the most important place to be, or be part of, then we are going to be there. Number two has to do with want. If we want something, we will do whatever it takes to get it.

Thanks for your letter and for inspiring us to succeed.

Guido Rivero
Downey, California, U.S.
Whittier Wordcrafters

First Impressions

I am delighted to know that Deepak Menon was elected International President. I met him a number of years ago in person, before I joined Toastmasters, and found him to be a sincere, humble, and kind man (as you may discern from “Meet Deepak Menon” [September 2019]). Thus, I loved reading his “First Impressions” letter in September's *Toastmaster*. However, I would just like to add to his remarks.

I think it is well worth the time and effort to check out various clubs before joining one to see which is most suitable, preferably an ideal fit. I visited nine clubs before joining my first club, which was near my workplace. The location, meeting space, and schedule appealed to me, as did the members.

“I think it is well worth the time and effort to check out various clubs before joining one in order to see which is most suitable.”

—ELLY STORNEBRINK

When I rejoined Toastmasters after a year of absence for personal reasons, I checked out a few clubs again to see which seemed most appropriate. I highly recommend doing this: Schedule, location, and members are important, but so is finding a club that can challenge you to learn and grow, rather than become complacent or stagnant.

Keep this in mind when you wish to invite someone as a club prospect!

Elly Stornebrink
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Speak Your Mind

Embrace Your Differences

Jolene Stockman is amazing. After reading her article, “Fitting in as an Autistic Speaker” [July 2019], I immediately watched her TEDx Talk. She's an inspiration and a reminder that there's nothing scary about being different. Now, I feel excited to go out in the world and be okay with who I am and who I am not. No more hiding and no more pretending to be normal. Everyone fits, no matter how different they may seem to this world.

I like the ending of her speech: “You can't tell anything about anyone by looking anymore. There is no normal. There is no real world, only the one we decide and the one we create. You may be weird, and you may be different, but you belong here. Your existence—our existence—rewrites normal.”

Thank you, Jolene, for sharing your story.

Jenny Biacora
San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines
City of Angeles Toastmasters Club

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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FIND MORE ONLINE THIS MONTH:



Consider Coaching

Watch a video to learn how Toastmaster Savitha Setlur, DTM, coached a fellow member and colleague to confidence through the Effective Coaching path in Pathways.

Be Our Guest



Potential guests are out there—where can you find them? Hear from Toastmasters Toolbox author Bill Brown, DTM, as he gives tips on how to get visitors through the door.

WEB RESOURCE



FAQ for You

Do you have a question about club officer roles? Are you wondering how to process a reinstated member, or how to attend online meetings? Check out the Frequently Asked Questions section on the Toastmasters International website. Here you can quickly find answers to your most important inquiries.

www.toastmasters.org/FAQ



Fun With French

The 2020 Toastmasters International Convention takes place in Paris, France, August 5-8. Are you ready to *parler français* (speak French)? Watch teacher Carol Bausor as she shares her tricks to learning a foreign language.

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▶ STAFF MOMENT

Spotlight on WHQ's Digital Marketing Team

Digital marketing professionals aim to share a strong message with audiences everywhere.



FROM LEFT: Kristi Yablonski, Blake Carver, Stephanie Lassiter, Trevor Lockwood, Kathryn Sisney, and Gerhard Ka'aihue.

In 2019, a new team at Toastmasters International was formed, giving the Marketing and Communications division an opportunity to enhance the company's digital initiatives.

Each member of the team has a specific set of creative skills, and together they create dynamic digital communications aimed at current and prospective members.

Gerhard Ka'aihue serves as the digital marketing manager, overseeing five team members: Video Editor Blake Carver, Marketing Project Coordinator II Stephanie Lassiter, Senior Product Marketing Specialist Trevor Lockwood, Digital Content Specialist Kathryn Sisney, and Digital Marketing Specialist Kristi Yablonski.

Carver plans, produces, and edits video content, while Lassiter manages the marketing email communications. When it comes to the Toastmasters website, Sisney builds webpages and ensures links are up to date. Lockwood manages the online store and finds vendors for new products, while Yablonski creates social media plans, posts on Toastmasters' official social pages, and serves as a liaison for her team and the Marketing department at World Headquarters.

"This team is hungry to do something new," Ka'aihue says. "My job is to make sure we are successful." The team collaborates with departments across the company, most recently with the Information Technology department. Keep an eye out for new initiatives from digital marketing in 2020.

One project members might recognize from the digital marketing team is the "12 Days of Deals" featured on social media throughout the month of December. In addition, many videos that you see on the Toastmasters International website and on social

media were born from the ideas of this team, with more to come.

The digital marketing team takes an empathetic marketing approach by putting themselves in members' shoes. They brainstorm ideas on what would encourage members to comment or share on social media, or what emails might be opened and viewed. "Content is king," Ka'aihue explains. Digital marketing's goal is to figure out exactly what content Toastmasters want to see in their inboxes and social media feeds, and on the Toastmasters website. They also aim to build brand awareness to engage new members and support current members.

So what are the team's goals for the future? "An improved website experience is a top priority," Ka'aihue says. "We want to create campaigns that will resonate with those uninitiated with Toastmasters, and of course, we will develop content with an international flavor."

Stay connected with Toastmasters International and see what the digital marketing team is creating by following the official social media pages!



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

► NEWS FROM TI

More Speech Contests at Paris Convention

Last year saw the debut of a new level in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest structure: region quarterfinals. The change reduced the number of districts represented at the contest semifinals, which are held at the annual International Convention, and meant 14 speakers competed in the semifinals—one from each Toastmasters region in the world.

That number will be increased at this year’s convention in Paris, France. While last year’s change to the contest structure generally drew positive feedback, some said they wanted to see more speech contests and participants at the convention. To that end, the Toastmasters Board of Directors approved a change to the format: The top *two* contestants from each region quarterfinal will now advance to the International Speech Contest semifinals in Paris.

In 2020, four semifinal rounds (rather than the two held last year) will be conducted, featuring seven speakers in each session. The top two from each round will progress to the finals, where eight speakers (up from six last year) will vie for the title of World Champion of Public Speaking. The revised format will provide more contests and speakers for convention attendees to watch.

At district conferences held over the next few months, you’ll have the chance to watch the speaker who will represent your district in the region quarterfinals—and who may advance further than that.

The Emergence of Video

Region quarterfinals were instituted last year because of the growing number of districts represented in the semifinals each

year, which resulted in more time and resources going to the convention contests at the expense of education sessions and other business. District-level International Speech Contests are video recorded, and once the district winners are determined, video of their speeches is viewed by region quarterfinal judges. While most districts submitted eligible videos to Toastmasters World Headquarters last year, approximately 15% of districts did not meet all video requirements.

The speech contest team at World Headquarters created a tips video and other helpful resources for district leaders that demonstrate what to do and what not to do when submitting videos of district winners. District program quality directors can also answer questions about this process.

Once all districts in a region have submitted video, judging for that region will begin. As soon as results from an individual region are confirmed by the chief judge, they will be announced, even if other region quarterfinal contests are still in progress. This will enable region quarterfinal winners to start planning as soon as possible for attending the semifinals.

Attend your district conference and cheer on the contest participants. Besides providing support, you’re likely to gain helpful tips from seeing these polished speakers in action.

*Learn more at www.toastmasters.org/SpeechContests, and in *Toastmasters’ Speech Contest Rulebook* at www.toastmasters.org/Resources/2019-2020-Speech-Contest-Rulebook.*

► NEWS FROM TI

Why Tracking Your Packages Is Important

No one ever wants to lose a package in the mail. The next time you order a shipment from Toastmasters World Headquarters, consider tracking it. It’s the best way to monitor the status of your package. It may cost more, but it will give you peace of mind.

For international shipments, Toastmasters offers two levels of service: airmail and courier. Airmail service does not include tracking information or provide delivery confirmation, and shipments usually take seven to 14 business days for delivery but can take longer. Courier is the recommended shipping method for larger-quantity orders. Courier service, which is provided by DHL, includes detailed tracking information and delivery confirmation, and takes two to four business days for delivery.

To place courier shipments, you must use a physical address and phone number. P.O. Box addresses are not accepted by DHL.



And always make sure your delivery address and contact information are accurate and complete. Toastmasters International is unable to refund or replace orders that are undeliverable or lost in transit.

In addition, be sure the location can be accessed by the carrier. It’s also a good idea to contact your local postal service and customs authority to see if they can provide any additional information on requirements for customs clearance, or offer any suggestions to better ensure a successful delivery.

If you have questions, please email supplyorders@toastmasters.org.

▶ SNAPSHOT



Members of PestBeszéd Toastmasters of Budapest, Hungary, create a “Tetris Challenge” photo. The grid format, a nod to the 1980s video puzzle Tetris, was adopted by emergency service professionals to visually organize the equipment they use on jobs. The Tetris Challenge is now a photo trend among global emergency units. This club created its own Tetris image, placing people and meeting props in logical order.



▶ CONVENTION

Paris Awaits!

From August 5-8, the 2020 Toastmasters International Convention will be in Paris, France, and now is the time to start planning! While the city is full of some of the most iconic sites in the world, it also has plenty of other exciting attributes. We’ve rounded up some fast facts about this fascinating city to help you get excited.

- ▶ The city is home to 2.14 million people, yet it covers a land area of only 105 sq. km/41 sq. mi. People who are relatively active can cross the entire city in around two hours.
- ▶ Paris is home to 130 museums, ranging from the famous art ones (Louvre, Musée d’Orsay, Centre Pompidou) to lesser-known ones, such as the Musée Curie and the Musée Pasteur (medicine), the Musée de Cluny (archeology), and the Cabinet des Medailles (history).
- ▶ Bring an appetite. There are nearly 44,000 restaurants in Paris, ranging from casual brasseries to some of the best (and priciest) eateries in the world. Additionally, there are approximately 30,000 bakeries in Paris, with crusty baguettes and mouthwatering pastries. And of course, no visit would be



complete without spending time leisurely sipping a small cup of espresso or café au lait at a Paris café.

- ▶ The Pont Neuf (ironically, “New Bridge”) is the oldest of the 37 bridges that span the Seine River. It was completed in 1607 and connects the small island of Île de la Cité to the rest of the city.
- ▶ There’s only one stop sign in Paris. Otherwise, Parisians adhere to the rule of *priorit droite*, which means drivers approaching an intersection from the right get the right of way.
- ▶ Paris is nicknamed the City of Light, referring to the high concentration of intellectuals, such as writers, artists, scientists, and academics, who are drawn to the city.
- ▶ The obelisk (a large Egyptian column) in the center of the Place de la Concorde also functions as a giant sundial. There are Roman numerals on the pavement, and throughout the day, the shadow of the obelisk reveals the time.

Ready to make plans? Visit www.toastmasters.org/Convention.




1 | CYRUS CHAN of Queens, New York, completes the Mount Storm King hike and looks over Lake Crescent near Port Angeles, Washington.

2 | KSHAMA PARAKH of Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, explores the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, Turkey.

3 | SANDI EMDIN, DTM, of Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, poses in front of an old hospital in Sudbury. It was painted in 2019 and is now the largest mural in Canada.

4 | ANDREW CENIZA of Cebu City, Philippines, reads his magazine with a friend in Seoul, South Korea.



 **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!

Confessions of a Pathways-Resistant President

How I embraced change and discovered limitless growth.

BY LORINNE GRISWOLD

For IT professionals like me, updates and upgrades are the name of the game. Nothing stays the same, so keeping up with technology is required to remain competitive. “Change is good,” I have announced on more than one occasion, often in the direction of colleagues struggling to adjust. *Agile. Flexible. Adaptable.* These are words I often used to describe myself.

Then came the Pathways learning experience. Instead of jumping in with both feet and seeing it as a chance to supercharge my growth and development, I froze. I resisted the new digital format. The old program was my security blanket, and I was like a 3-year-old who wasn’t ready to give it up. As our club president, I “talked the talk” and promoted the program, but because I did nothing more than deliver my Level 1 Ice Breaker, I was definitely not “walking the walk.” I kept finding excuses *not* to make progress. I was too busy. I couldn’t remember my password. Blah, blah, blah. I was stuck.

As time stretched from the delivery of my first Pathways speech, I became bored and frustrated. I considered the possibility that I had outgrown Toastmasters altogether. While planning my exit strategy, I watched a fellow member begin to fully embrace the new program. She was not only consistently delivering speeches, but she was sharing her positive experience with Pathways and inviting us to join her. She was growing by leaps and bounds, and I had a front-row seat to her amazing transformation.

Her contagious joy and excitement about Pathways reminded me of the way I felt when I first joined Toastmasters. Back then, everything I did was out of my comfort zone—taking on a meeting role, delivering a prepared speech, and eventually becoming a club officer. With every stretch beyond the familiar, I learned something



Lorinne Griswold

new about myself. I gained confidence. I made new friends. I missed the energy and excitement of those days.

And then it hit me. *I had become complacent. I had stopped stretching. I was the cause of my own frustration and boredom. Thankfully, I also had the cure!* I decided to give Pathways another try. With my Toastmasters password memorized, I logged in. I completed Level 1 of my path, then Level 2. I attended Pathways training. I read the Frequently Asked Questions. I volunteered to be the Pathways champion for our club, supporting other members and encouraging them to join me on my journey. Once I made the decision to release the old and grab hold of the new, my passion for Toastmasters returned and with it the realization that my opportunity for growth in Toastmasters is limitless.

Here is my advice for officers and members who find themselves stuck in the

abyss between the traditional education program (which expires June 30, 2020) and the Pathways program. Although the first step into anything new can be intimidating, life-changing growth takes place when we feel the fear and uncertainty but take that first step anyway. Trust me when I say that you are on the cusp of an adventure of a lifetime.

Tips for Officers:

- ▶ **Lead by example.** An officer who is making consistent progress in the Pathways program will inspire and motivate club members.
- ▶ **Offer support.** Share tips and tricks with others who may be struggling. Stay positive.
- ▶ **Announce program enhancements.** The release of new features will continually improve program quality. Share these positive changes with your club.

Tips for Members:

- ▶ **Be consistent.** As with any new tool or program, the more you use it, the more comfortable and familiar it will become.
- ▶ **Utilize resources.** There are resources available on the Toastmasters International website (www.toastmasters.org/Pathways) and on most district and division websites. Seek help from club members who may be a few steps ahead of you in the process.
- ▶ **Understand the benefits.** If you’re not quite ready to commit, learn more about the 11 paths and how they can lead to the development of more than 300 new competencies. **T**

LORINNE GRISWOLD is an IT Solution Architect for Chevron in San Ramon, California. She is past club president and current vice president education of ChevMasters, one of Chevron’s corporate Toastmasters clubs.

IT'S NO SECRET:

How Toastmasters Skills Can Boost Your Career

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

BY NINA JOHN, DTM

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

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

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

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

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

Introducing Yourself—The first speech in the Toastmasters education program is about introducing yourself to your club members and evaluating your current level of speaking skills. Part of this first Ice Breaker speech may be something you can use for job interviews, for social introductions at parties, even for potential investors—it's your elevator pitch for the right occasion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Being Prepared—Have you ever attended an office meeting and walked out wondering what it was about? This is



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

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

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

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

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

Being Persuasive—Every single team leader, every single project manager, every single CEO has to persuade team members to do things above and beyond

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

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

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the December 2017 *Toastmaster* magazine.

Nina John, DTM, is the director of coaching firm *Envy Communications*. She is a member of *Chennai Toastmasters in Chennai, India*.



Satish Shenoy

Antarctic Adventure

Bringing the Toastmasters spirit to a remote part of the world.

BY SATISH SHENOY, DTM

Ranking high among my passions are traveling the world, running, and Toastmasters. In March 2019, I had an incredible opportunity to travel by ship to a pristine and beautiful place, Antarctica, “the last continent.” I was traveling there with 100 other runners to complete a personal milestone of running at least one full marathon across all seven continents to join an exclusive group of athletes who have achieved that goal.

My other mission: bringing the Toastmasters spirit and experience to my shipmates.

I live in San Jose, California, and any time I visit a new city, country, or continent for that matter, part of my Toastmasters mission is to try to visit clubs. Over the last six years, I have visited 25 clubs across five continents. When I traveled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to prepare for a marathon, I visited the BA Tango Toastmasters club in that city.

I had hoped to visit a club in Antarctica as well. However, a search on the Toastmasters website came up empty, as it did when I spoke to members and district leaders and feverishly searched the internet. Then it hit me: If there was no club on the continent, why not show people traveling there what our meetings were all about? After all, with 100 of us on a ship together for 14 days, what better way to spend some time than sharing our stories at a Toastmasters-inspired meeting.

Before we left, I decided I would host my own demonstration meeting on the ship to promote Toastmasters and encourage speech-giving. I designed the banner and put together an agenda.

The Journey Begins

Once we were underway, I approached our team captain, Jeff. To my pleasant surprise, he already knew about Toastmasters and

told me he would fit the meeting into the ship itinerary. He recommended scheduling it after the marathon was held. That made sense to me, and I was thrilled! But I still had to get my shipmates interested.

Jeff announced the plans for a Toastmasters demo meeting one night at dinner when most of my shipmates were present, and I kept spreading the word to my new friends on the ship. Among these wonderful folks were Bruce and Helen, a couple from Australia who now live in Houston, Texas. Bruce told me he had been a Toastmaster years earlier. I immediately enrolled him to be Table Topicsmaster for the meeting. By the time meeting day approached, I had about 10 people committed to attend, and five who had agreed to speak.

Icy Endeavor

Meanwhile, there was a marathon to run. In the seven years I’ve been running, I’ve



completed 10 marathons in all seven continents in addition to half-marathons and various 10K and other races. The training I did for the Antarctica Marathon was longer and harder than for other races, but in the end, it was mind over body. The 26.2-mile (42-km) course was on St. George Island and included more than 3,000 feet (914 m) of uphill and downhill segments, much of it covered in mud and even patches of quicksand.

We ran in waterproof shoes and multiple layers of appropriate clothing since the trail was ice in the morning and then got very slushy as the day went on and the ice melted. Luckily, it was a sunny summer day, with temperatures

in the mid-30s° F (1° C). Of the 116 participants, 98 completed the race.

Memorable Meeting

The marathon run was successful, and now it was time to tackle the Toastmasters meeting. The fateful day came, and slowly but surely the room started filling up. Jeff did a stellar job kicking off the meeting and talking about Toastmasters and why we were all there. I was the Toastmaster for the meeting, and I expressed gratitude to all who came and promised them the session would be worthwhile. Two prepared speeches and eight Table Topics later (led by Bruce as Topicsmaster), we had the rapt attention of all 25 folks in attendance.

As the meeting wrapped up, I asked everyone to sign a commemorative banner. After all, it isn't very often that a meeting like this happens in Antarctica. Most attendees came by and told me they had a great time and would look into Toastmasters. A month later, I found out that a few had checked out Toastmasters in their hometown and at least one had already joined a club.

Mission accomplished! 

Satish Shenoy, DTM, is a member of Big Basin Toastmasters club in Saratoga, California. He helps create successful technology partnerships; advises start-ups; and is a speaker, author, and runner. He lives in San Jose, California, with his family. Find out more at www.satishshenoy.com.

ANTARCTICA CLUB 549: MCMURDO STATION

Back in the 1990s, there was a Toastmasters club in Antarctica—Club 549 at McMurdo Station. Founded in 1955, the research facility is run by the National Science Foundation and attracts scientists from around the globe. It is the largest research station on the continent.

John Donnellon, DTM, of Denver, Colorado, spent three summers at McMurdo while employed as a boiler technician and maintenance specialist with Ratheon Polar Services. He joined the McMurdo club in 1999 and participated each time he went down.

He remembers the club met weekly on Monday evenings in one of the dormitories' recreational rooms. The club followed the standard Toastmasters meeting agenda and had about 20–25 members during the summer months. "It was a wonderful interaction among people," he says. "Club members came from all over the world, including scientists from various foreign countries." After the meetings adjourned, members would frequently continue discussions about what they had heard.

"The members that I worked with all agreed that their experiences at the McMurdo club directly or indirectly helped in their work in Antarctica," Donnellon says. "While I was there, several of our members gained promotions at their job because of the lessons in communication they learned as members of the club."

Just getting to McMurdo is a feat. It's located on the actual continent of Antarctica along the remote east coast, and the nearest landmass is New Zealand. While the summer population at McMurdo hovers just above 1,000 people, the winter population shrinks to around 150. Lasting from February–August, winter brings total darkness with a mean temperature of -51° C/-60° F. There are no flights into or out of the continent during those months, leaving residents completely isolated from the outside world.

According to a December 2000 article in *The Antarctic Sun*, former Toastmaster Madison Hall joined the club because it offered something new. "All the other clubs around here had something to do with drinking," he said at the time. As a self-proclaimed introvert who enjoyed working the night shift in the winter months, Hall credited the club with helping him become more comfortable and articulate in front of groups.

Although the club disbanded in the early 2000s, the Toastmasters McMurdo club helped foster a sense of camaraderie. "The isolation is tremendous," recalls Donnellon. "But the Toastmasters club did a lot to keep people busy and engaged."

Laura Amann is associate editor for the Toastmaster magazine.



CLUB COACH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is a club coach? The coach, an experienced Toastmaster from outside the struggling club, guides clubs in rebuilding membership, restoring enthusiasm, and earning credit in the Distinguished Club Program (DCP). With the coach's support, the club undertakes the active revitalization work, utilizing a variety of Toastmasters resources.

Who is eligible for a coach? Eligible clubs have at least one but no more than 12 members. The club must not be suspended or closed.

How can my club request a coach? Your district director or club growth director can appoint a club coach by sending the

completed Club Coach Appointment Form (Item 1152 in the Toastmasters online store) to clubcoach@toastmasters.org. If the club is not located within a district, the club president can appoint a club coach.

How can I become a club coach? You must be a paid Toastmasters member in good standing and not an existing member of the club to be coached at the time of appointment.

For information on the Club Coach Program, including FAQs, *How to Rebuild a Toastmasters Club*, the *Club Coach Troubleshooting Guide*, *Moments of Truth*, and the *Distinguished Club Program and the Club Success Plan*, visit www.toastmasters.org/Club-Coach-Program.



CLUB COACHES,

Learn From My Mistakes

BY RYAN URIE

The experience can be transformational for both club and coach—if you go about it the right way.

In true Toastmasters fashion, Sara began her evaluation of my club coach tenure with, “Your coaching was *invaluable*. *Everything* was done extremely well.” But? “You needed to talk to individuals to learn how Toastmasters can meet *their* goals. The group vision starts with individual visions.”

She was right, of course.

Her comments were among the numerous peer and personal insights I gained during my year as a club coach—a year that ended with the club worse off than when I began. Of course, we often learn more from our failures than our successes. But it can be hard to face our mistakes to discover the wisdom they hold.

I believe being a club coach is one of Toastmasters’ most valuable volunteer positions—both for club improvement and for coaches hoping to hone their leadership skills. I was eager to lead, but ultimately, I was not successful. At first, I blamed the club’s members. But through self-reflection and feedback from the club and other coaches, I became aware of several subtle ways I had sabotaged myself along the way. Eventually I gained much greater insight into what it takes to connect, motivate, and rebuild a struggling club than I would have if things had gone according to plan.

My Moment of Truth

I became a club coach with a strong personal goal: to receive the required credit toward my Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award.

A fellow Toastmaster helped me find a club that was proactively seeking a coach due to dropping membership. Membership eventually dipped to 12, the eligibility point for coaching assistance. Since I had previously helped my own club recruit members to achieve Distinguished status, I felt my coaching role was a simple matter of helping the club grow by five new members to meet the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) membership requirement.

I began by holding a *Moments of Truth* session from the *Successful Club Series* to help the members reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, and goals. The club’s responses reflected a

positive attitude and strong camaraderie. However, there were also signs of discord; some members complained that others didn't contribute enough. Still, by the end of the session, we had an extensive list of ideas to help strengthen the club.

Overall, I viewed the club as healthy. They just needed to use more branded materials, dust off their guestbook, and get the word out. Within a couple of weeks, the club banner was prominently displayed, guest packets were in hand, and the club website was updated. Things were starting to click.

Then everything stopped.

I encouraged members to implement the strength-building ideas we'd identified but week after week, members failed to complete the assignments they volunteered for. Few guests attended meetings, and even fewer joined.

I pushed them to develop a Club Success Plan. To get them started, I created a simple, two-page document for members to record their aspirations, break them into bite-sized steps, and decide who would do what by when. However, weeks later the plan was unfinished, and membership was still dwindling.

This pattern repeated through the rest of my term—ambitions to get better, then no action. By the end, membership had dropped from 12 to nine. I'd read all the club coach teaching materials—what went wrong?

What Went Right

For a critical evaluation, I turned to my friend David Mauel, DTM, past president and vice president education of Liberty Lakers Toastmasters in Liberty Lake, Washington. He worked with Vision Speaks, a club in Spokane, Washington, that chartered in 2010 and had never achieved Distinguished status. Vision Speaks is open to anyone but tends to operate differently from other clubs because most members are visually impaired. There are no written evaluations, no voting, and little reliance on a written agenda. Mauel quickly realized that he was facing a situation he was not prepared for.

I learned that the real prize of engaging a challenge is what we learn and who we become in the process.

"The biggest thing is, I went in there with a really open heart and a willingness to learn," Mauel said. He recounted wearing a blindfold while serving as Toastmaster to experience the role the same way as the other members. "The only way to actually have empathy for someone is to walk in their shoes. And if you can't do that if you're not willing to take off your own," he said.

"They were, at first, really nervous about me. They thought I was going to come in, kick in the door, change their universe," he continued. Instead, Mauel began meetings by asking each member about their own reasons for being in the club. This



established the trust and safety needed for the members to be open to change.

Mauel didn't focus on the club's weaknesses or obsess over DCP points. Instead, he adopted the role of cheerleader. "I was constantly reminding the club of how great they were doing and building their confidence. If you can create a culture of 'we can do this,' the numbers will come."

Under Mauel's tutelage, Vision Speaks grew from eight to 14 members and achieved Distinguished status for the first time.

No Nitpicking

When Ceitllyn Connal, DTM, District 9 club growth director and member of Cascade Club in Yakima, Washington, was a club coach, she quickly realized that progress hinged on individual relationships and needs. She immediately applied that idea to her coaching efforts with the Greater Yakima Chamber Toastmasters. Nitpicking adherence to every small program detail could be counterproductive, she said.

"When you get pedantic and say, 'We have to do this, and this, and this,' people get frustrated. Instead, you must meet people where they are and show them the best way to achieve what *they're* looking for," she explained.

The coach earns many rewards, Connal told me. "To see the members change and take responsibility, to see the light turn on when they realize 'this is what it's supposed to be like,' is incredibly rewarding."

Reflection

After reading, reflecting, and talking to other coaches, I took my new ideas to the club I had coached to get some feedback.

COACHING FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE

While the Club Coach Program is a specific, internally focused Toastmasters initiative to revive struggling clubs, the concept of coaching—helping others set and achieve personal goals—is an essential philosophy practiced by quality clubs. Whether on a formal or informal basis, Toastmasters regularly embrace the idea of mentoring and supporting their club peers.

To that end, the Effective Coaching curriculum of the Pathways learning experience helps participants polish advising and leadership skills for use in the club, the workplace, and other life settings.

For example, Savitha Setlur, DTM, who works at a Wells Fargo bank in San Leandro, California, put her Effective Coaching training to practical use by mentoring a fellow Toastmaster and bank colleague. Setlur encouraged the young woman to boost her confidence by voicing her opinions and ideas at work, and by participating in Toastmasters speech contests.

Later that year, the woman received a work promotion and reached the division level of the Toastmasters International Speech Contest. Her coach couldn't have been happier. "I was able to help her see her own potential," says Setlur.

As a member of three Toastmasters clubs, Setlur believes this path has improved her own capabilities as a positive communicator and leader.

"I love the way you analyze different communication and leadership styles. You figure out what yours are, which ones work best, and how you can combine different styles to be effective in certain situations," Setlur says.

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

Watch a video of Savitha Setlur, DTM, talking about her Pathways experience at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

One member told me that while I provided good ideas, what was really missing was honest, open communication. "Leadership is about building connection and trust," he told me. "Leadership is caring. To make changes, you need to have honest, heart-to-heart communication."

He added that long-term members were resistant to change and that the other members, afraid to dissent, either left or remained silent. "What we needed," he told me, "was to get everything out in the open." Other members expressed similar sentiments.

Lessons Learned

Check your motives. My first mistake was having a personal priority of earning education credit for my club coach participation. I lost sight of the fact that the real purpose of improving a club is not to get a ribbon but to enrich the lives of members. The purpose of earning the DTM is not to gain recognition but to grow as a person and leader. By focusing on the symbols, I missed out on the substance.

Work through conflict. My next mistake was trying to side-step necessary conflict. The resistance to change and simmering discord in the club I coached were the very crux of what was holding them back. By not engaging them directly, I undermined any hope of building the foundation of trust needed to create change, which doomed all my other efforts.

Working through a checklist is far easier than addressing the emotional aspects of team building, but that struggle is where growth happens and is where leadership is often needed most.

Make individual connections. Coaching a club requires getting to know individuals and understanding how the club can help *them*. The club coach inspires members to care about their club and feel cared about by their club colleagues. Once members feel engaged and enthused, they will revitalize the club all on their own.

Learn and lead. Once I reconceived my experience as a learning opportunity, valuable lessons began to materialize. First, I realized that blaming is futile, and antithetical to leadership, because it steals your power to drive change. Second, being a leader is more about perseverance than it is about always succeeding.

Most importantly, I learned that the real prize of engaging a challenge is what we learn and who we become in the process. Had success fallen in my lap, I might have my DTM by now. But I've come to value far more the wisdom I gained in failure. **T**

Ryan Urie is a freelance writer, trainer, and stay-at-home dad in northern Idaho. He is currently "between Toastmasters clubs."



Love Your Club!

Readers speak about what makes their club special.

Clubs are at the heart of the Toastmasters experience. While Toastmasters International’s mission is to empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders, the club is where it all comes together—it’s the place where members are inspired, challenged, humbled, and rewarded.

Like the people who join them, clubs have their own personality—some are relaxed and laid-back, others stick to a stricter timeline and have a more formal undertone; some embrace a culture of hugs and cheers, others prefer a more professional experience. Clubs can be the gateway to new friends, to promotions, to new experiences.

The *Toastmaster* magazine asked members what keeps them coming back to their club and what they love most about it. The next two pages highlight a few of these responses and showcase the variety of ways clubs affect members’ experiences.

We are like a big family. We have a really strong connection with each other and have great fun in our meetings.

Conor Donovan
Bishopstown Toastmasters
Bishopstown, Cork, Ireland

We’re just starting out, but we’re beginning with a terrific culture. We have a mentor to keep us on track, and we have a lighthearted, quick-thinking executive committee dedicated to making things fun while learning. We’re in Eagle, Idaho, and we’re called “Soaring Eagles.” Who wouldn’t want to be a soaring eagle? I can’t wait to see where things go!

Alethea Collord
Soaring Eagles
Eagle, Idaho, U.S.

From struggling to surviving, we have grown, and as we’ve grown, we have

become a family. We welcome new members as family members, not just members. It is that spirit that I enjoy so much.

Keith Boles
NEA Toastmasters
Jonesboro, Arkansas, U.S.

The amazing camaraderie between members of different backgrounds, age groups, and professions is what makes me keep visiting my club again and again. Not to forget the after-meeting refreshments and snacks that we enjoy while networking.

Nusrat Huda
Chittagong Toastmasters Club
Chittagong, Bangladesh

The fun we have while we learn is the reason I love my club.

Kirti Kumar Kasat
Spoken Word
Bangalore, Karnataka, India



It's online and easy to access from any remote location. It's diverse and provides opportunities for new members. The leadership is very experienced.

Monica Rockwell

*The Art of 400 Online Toastmasters Club
Albany, Georgia, U.S.*

I love my club because we really love laughing and learning together. We're like a huge family looking forward to seeing each other twice a month. It's like an oasis, refreshing and recharging our batteries as we escape the busyness of life and have fun!

Joanne Schmitt

*Kloof Toastmasters Business Club
Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

We are an island of misfit toys. Each of us has a different style, skill set, education/training, background story, perspective/viewpoint, reason for joining, and goals. We have an extremely diverse group. In spite of that, we each come as often as possible with our A-game to grow and help others grow; we listen before speaking, and we strive for excellence in all of its amazing forms. It's the best club—just like all the others.

Stephanie Winn

*Chatter Masters Club
Chattanooga, Tennessee, U.S.*

My club members are my extended family and friends for life.

Fern Rashkover, DTM

*Leadership Roundtable Toastmasters Club
Douglaston, New York, U.S.*

The people! Our club's great spirit keeps getting passed from one board to the next, and I've had the pleasure of making fabulous friends throughout the 15 years I've been a member. Our club meets in cold New Jersey where people are often hurried, self-focused, and not so friendly, but our club is a beacon of acceptance, warmth, and support for anyone who joins us! Regardless of your reason for joining, we help one another achieve their goals and overcome obstacles in a safe environment.

Wendy Moses

*Essex Toastmasters
Lincoln Park, New Jersey, U.S.*

Diversity, the desire for members to work on personal development, teamwork, compete in a respectable way, and the humility of people to give and receive feedback. Also, unconditional love.

Vassil Karamanov

*Richland 2500 Toastmasters
Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.*

I am in more than one, and I love them all for unique reasons. Eloquent Entrepreneurs is my home. They have been there since the beginning of my journey. They care about me as a person. They know my struggles and trials. They also were the ones to mentor me. I have four mentors in that one club alone who helped shape me and transform me.

Trisha Trixie Hunter-Merrill, DTM

*Eloquent Entrepreneurs
Greenwood Village, Colorado, U.S.*

It is a gift to get thoughtful, constructive feedback from my fellow Toasties who want to see me improve and succeed.

Michelle Wisecaver Cloud

*Clear Communicators
San Antonio, Texas, U.S.*

Ours is a diverse club with supportive members who genuinely want to see, and help, others succeed.

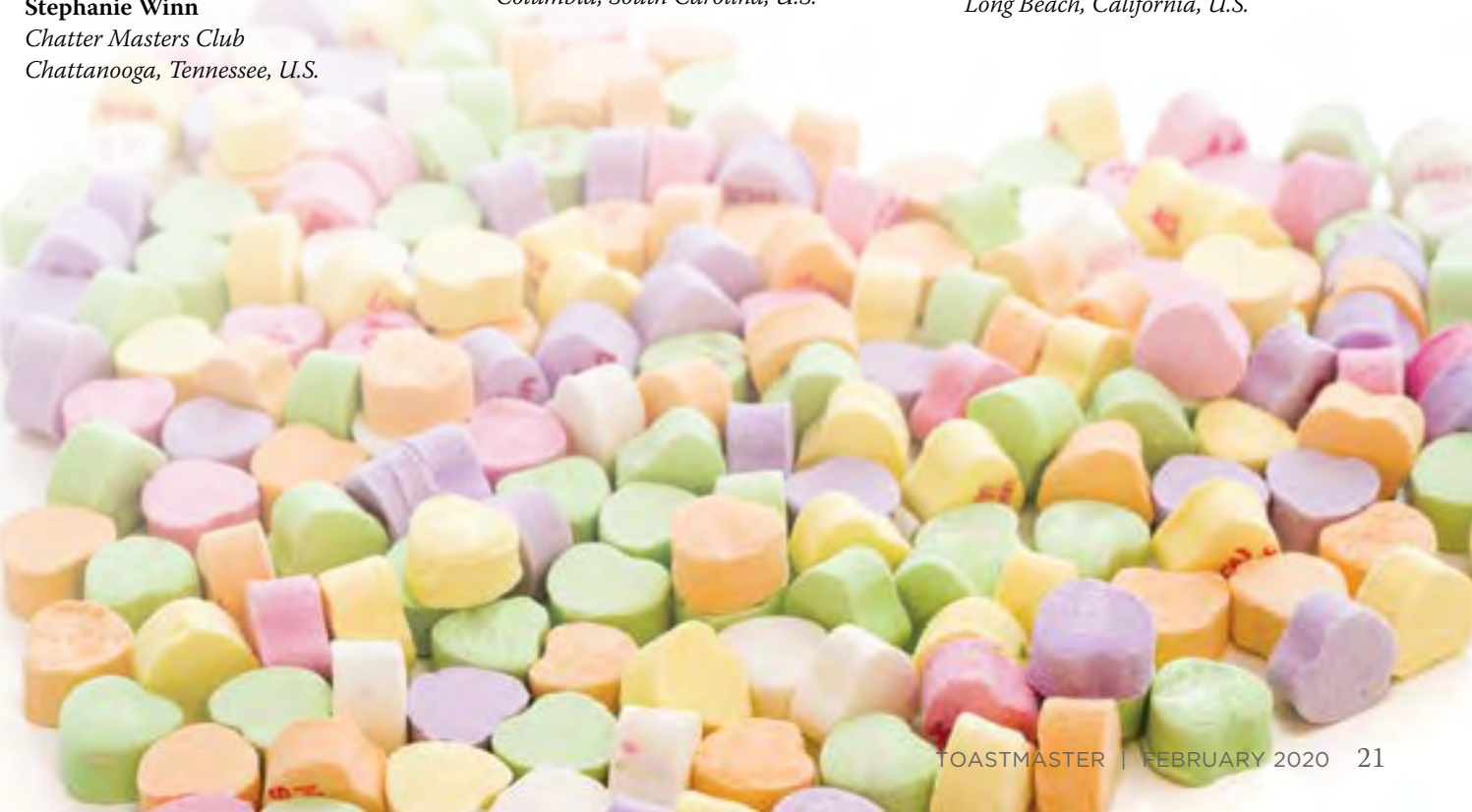
Jean Bailey Robor, DTM

*Expressive Leaders Toastmasters Club
Burlington, North Carolina, U.S.*

Our club is magical! Our members are kind and creative, and they have this incredible, "go-for-it-and-get-it-done" energy.

Dot Cannon

*Shoreline Speakers Club
Long Beach, California, U.S.*



HOW Volunteering Improves YOUR Health



The mental, physical, and overall health benefits of helping others.

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK, DTM

Volunteering is an essential part of being a Toastmaster. If you serve as an evaluator, Toastmaster, or Ah-Counter, you are volunteering to help people advance their skills. If you've served in a club leadership position, such as president, vice president, public relations, or treasurer, you've volunteered to help make your club better, which subsequently makes other people's experiences at Toastmasters better.

Every day, Toastmasters members agree to help other people, in addition to themselves, develop as speakers and leaders. They serve as mentors, encouragers, and evaluators and give their time and energy to inspire other people to



grow. Being a Toastmaster is not only about improving yourself, it involves transferring what you know (or have learned) to others to help them improve.

For many people, the term volunteering conjures images of working in a food bank or traveling to impoverished areas. But volunteering is anything done willingly with no financial reward, and as such, volunteers are at the core of every Toastmasters meeting.

The Power of Volunteering

Past International President Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, joined Toastmasters in 1986 and has volunteered in countless capacities, from the club level all the way to International President in the 2005-2006 program year. Like many other members, Toastmasters helped him not only to advance in his career but also to find new inspirations through the skills he developed and contacts he made. When he first became a member, he was an industrial scientist.

Finding success in Toastmasters, he transitioned to a full-time speaking coach and soft-skills trainer and later became a college professor and administrator. Now he's a pastor using his leadership and communications skills to help his congregation grow and serve its community.

With all that he's accomplished, the career advancements and honed skills aren't the most important part of his volunteer experience. To Abayasekara, the opportunity to realize his own potential and help others do the same is the real benefit. It brings him joy.

An increasing amount of global research is focusing on volunteering and the benefits for those who give their time to help others. In 2018, the United Nations published its *State of the World's Volunteerism Report*, which studied the impact of volunteering on communities as well as on the health of individuals who volunteer. More and more scientists are finding health advantages for volunteers, ranging from general health to specific mental and physical benefits.

Recent studies have found that volunteering increases overall wellness and results in longer life. Researchers at Ghent University in Ghent, Belgium, analyzed data collected in 2012 and 2013 from almost 43,000 people in 29 European countries and found volunteers are as healthy as non-volunteers who are five years younger.

“People find fulfillment when they’re contributing to the lives of others.”

—DILIP ABAYASEKARA, DTM,
PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Scientists from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, studied a group of people over age 70 and determined that “volunteers had significantly reduced mortality compared to non-volunteers.” In fact, this association was greatest for those who frequently spend time with friends or attend religious services. Toastmasters has long provided a social outlet for people, in addition to providing important professional and personal skill advancement.

Mental Health Benefits

Improved overall health isn’t the only benefit to volunteers. There are mental and spiritual benefits to volunteering. “People find personal fulfillment when they’re contributing to the lives of others,” says Abayasekara.

Whatever way people choose to volunteer through Toastmasters, they have the opportunity to make a real impact in people’s lives—whether through being a mentor, helping grow a club, bringing in a new member and watching them gain skills and self-confidence, or offering a meaningful evaluation and encouragement.



VOLUNTEER BENEFITS BY THE NUMBERS

Need more scientific results on the mental and physical benefits of volunteering? A recent survey of more than 3,300 adults in the U.S. uncovered the following:

- ▶ 76% of people who volunteer say that volunteering has made them feel healthier.
- ▶ 94% of people who volunteer say that volunteering improves their mood.
- ▶ 96% of people say that volunteering enriches their sense of purpose.
- ▶ 80% of people who volunteer say they feel they have control over their mental health and depression.
- ▶ 78% of people who volunteer say that volunteering lowers their stress levels.

The study also found that volunteering develops work skills that benefit employers as well. Volunteers develop time management skills, improve their people and teamwork skills, and build valuable professional job skills.

Source: Harris Interactive for UnitedHealth Group.

Citizens Advice—a network of 316 independent charities throughout the United Kingdom—found that their volunteers are “happier, healthier, and more productive citizens” as a result of their service. Among the many benefits listed, volunteers cited their ability to better manage mental health conditions, such as depression, as well as enhanced self-esteem, reduced isolation, and an increase in their ability to get on in their lives.

Attending club meetings and interacting with others offers a sense of belonging, which is an important aspect of staving off depression and isolation. Toastmasters meetings provide a network of supportive people with common interests, and many members have found lifelong friends through their involvement.

With more than 358,000 members in 143 countries, Toastmasters naturally have a global support system. Members quickly become connected through that network. There is a real sense of belonging for members visiting a club in a different town or country. They find not only the same routines and rituals, but also the level of encouragement and positivity.

That’s one reason Abayasekara is still active in Toastmasters; in fact, he is currently a member of six clubs—five in the United States and one in Sri Lanka. “I’ve developed friendships locally and worldwide over the last 33 years,” he says. “Convention is like



a huge family reunion. Every year, I look for people I know, and I make new friends.”

Joyce Persichilli, DTM, of San Diego, California, has also made lifelong friends through Toastmasters. In fact, the opportunity to meet new people is one of two main reasons she stays involved in Toastmasters after 24 years. “I love meeting new people,” she says. “I also strongly believe that Toastmasters keeps one’s mind sharp, because we’re constantly learning.”

Since joining Toastmasters in 1995, she has volunteered at all levels—from club officer to region advisor. Through volunteering in Toastmasters, Persichilli has gained confidence and the motivation to volunteer for other organizations.

“Volunteering gives one a sense of purpose,” she says. She’s experienced it for herself and seen it in other members. “I know of a young man who was in prison and a young woman who is a recovering drug addict,” she says. She’s seen both grow in Toastmasters through their volunteer roles. “Volunteering has helped them with their self-esteem and has given them a purpose in life.”

Taeryeon Jung, DTM, understands this firsthand. Jung joined Toastmasters in 2011 and is a member of Japanese English Bilingual Toastmasters in Seoul, Korea. Like Abayasekara and Persichilli, he has served in officer positions from the club to the international level, including volunteering on the Korean translations team for the Pathways program.

In addition to helping him become a better leader and CEO, Jung feels Toastmasters helps him maintain a low stress level. “My work pressures are often resolved through Toastmasters activities,” he says. He enjoys learning new things from self-motivated

people of all ages in Toastmasters. “It would be impossible to have the same atmosphere at my company, because Korean society has a strict hierarchy,” he says.

Physical Benefits

There are physical benefits to volunteering as well. Giving your time and helping others can decrease the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension) by nearly 40%. It can help with weight loss and prevent cognitive decline. There are even studies suggesting that the act of volunteering can improve cholesterol profiles.

More scientists are finding health advantages for volunteers, ranging from general health to specific mental and physical benefits.

The socializing aspect of Toastmasters offers a significant impact on physical health and wellness, not just mental health. Belonging to a group and regularly interacting with people can extend your lifespan, strengthen your immune system, and stave off depression and heart disease.

For Jung, Toastmasters has done more than just lower his stress level, he also attributes his involvement in the club to his recent weight loss success—specifically the encouragement of other members after he spoke about his goal. “My physical status became much better after losing 10 kilograms,” he says. “I am still maintaining good condition because many other Toastmasters keep praising and encouraging me.”

Through volunteering, Toastmasters benefit from all of these health advantages and more. For Abayasekara, this isn’t news. “There’s an old saying: ‘When you’re green you’re growing; when you’re ripe you rot,’” he says. “The Toastmasters spirit is all about being green and growing and helping others.”

Like so many Toastmasters, Abayasekara, Persichilli, and Jung have given countless hours of service to their fellow members around the world. Yet they all talk about their experiences in terms of gratitude for what they have received throughout the process. They appreciate the people they’ve met, the skills they’ve developed, the opportunities they’ve been given, and—what most volunteers don’t realize—the health benefits they’ve received.

“Toastmasters offers us opportunities to grow and excel at a high level,” says Abayasekara. “Once you get to that level, you realize it’s not about me. It’s about what you can do for others. Then you help others, and you get rich satisfaction.”

Thanks to science, we now know you get a longer, healthier life too. **T**

Jennifer L. Blanck, DTM, is a member of AAMC Toastmasters in Washington, D.C., and a regular contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine.

Brush Up Your French!

How to (re)gain fluency in time for the 2020 Convention.

BY CAROL BAUSOR

Wouldn't it be amazing if you could attend the 2020 Toastmasters International Convention in Paris and order a drink at a café on the Champs Elysées in fluent French? And how marvelous it would be to speak with a clerk at a French boutique. Now is the time to start if you wish to *parler français* before August!

We are often our own worst enemy when it comes to speaking a foreign language. We can reel off a dozen excuses (*I'm too old; It's too hard; I already tried and it didn't work; I find it difficult to remember things ...*), and yet, what do you say to guests at your Toastmasters club when they say the very same thing about their doubts in their ability to speak in public? Hopefully, you reassure them and tell them that their beliefs can be changed. It's the same for those limiting beliefs concerning speaking a foreign language.

When someone tells me they are trying to learn a new language, I suggest changing the word from *learning* to *acquiring*. When you're learning something, you place yourself firmly in the shoes of an apprentice. When you're acquiring, you are already on the road to fluency. As a Toastmaster, you need no reminder of the power of the words we say to ourselves, and this is one of them.

I've rounded up three tips I feel are essential for language acquisition. And all of them have much in common with preparing a speech!

1 Define your objective. If you don't link an important goal with a date of completion, and with a means of

measuring your success, you will find that you focus on things you typically procrastinate on or that easily frustrate you. Example of a tangible objective: *By August 1, 2020, I will be able to make a telephone call in French to tell my hotel what time I will be arriving.*

Acquiring another language takes time—but it may take less time than you think.

There should always be a test of your success in each objective. And luckily, that test has absolutely nothing to do with conjugating verbs!

2 Find small chunks of time to practice. Acquiring another language takes time—but it may take less time than you think. If you have already studied a certain language at school, you will be surprised how much has stuck, even if your skill lies somewhat dormant.

Start planning ways to incorporate language skills into your daily routine. If you normally have breakfast alone, use the time to do some reading or listening. If you travel to work, get out your earphones or book and put your travel time to good use.

If you have two or three years of schooling in a language, you will want to devote around 20 minutes a day, five days a week, in order to reach your objective. For how long? Well, that depends on how

ambitious your objective is. But for most people, six months should be enough to be comfortable in everyday conversations.

3 Emulate body language. Invent a version of yourself as someone in that culture. There are often distinct patterns to how people speak in different parts of the world; watch some clips online and try to copy the stance, the gestures, and the body language. Even wearing a piece of clothing from the area helps.

Read, but Don't Study

Research has proven that the most important activity, the one that will give you the greatest boost in becoming proficient in another language, is reading. Even if you want to learn to speak, reading for 10 minutes a day will help you progress more quickly. The secret is to only read things you find enjoyable ... magazine articles, short stories, social media posts, cartoons, anything that is short and just a little higher than your current level of competence.

I don't recommend that you bother with grammar, however. There are far better ways to learn a language, and regular reading is one of them. Go online and type "easy readers to learn French" in your search engine. Folk tales and fairy stories are helpful; knowing the plot in your own language will make it easier for you to understand. You can search for articles on fashion or read newspapers about current events or whatever interests you. Just be sure that you enjoy whatever you read—don't take time to analyze the grammar.



Get Creative and Have Fun

There are plenty of opportunities to painlessly sneak some foreign language into your day:

- ▶ **Set your cellphone, GPS, or even video games to the foreign language.** Start tuning your ear to regularly hear the words and cadence of the language.
- ▶ **Listen and watch people speaking the language.** YouTube is one of the best language teachers in the world. Watch how native speakers use facial expressions and move their mouths. Try listening with subtitles and then without. Siegfried Haack, the 2020 Toastmasters International Convention Host District Chair, has a series of French videos titled “31 Stories in 31 Days.”
- ▶ **Listen to songs.** Look up the words, learn the song, and sing away! You will get a great exercise in pronunciation and vocabulary as well as learn a new song.
- ▶ **Find more structured programs** if that’s what you prefer. Frantastique (www.frantastique.com/partner/iltc/21422) is a subscription email program that sends you a daily, customized lesson with immediate personalized corrections and explanations. And they’re offering readers a free month! There is also the excellent program LingQ (www.lingq.com/fr), designed by the polyglot Steve Kaufman.
- ▶ **Organize a language exchange session** with a fellow Toastmaster who

speaks the language. Set up an online or live session, then switch languages every 10 minutes so both of you can practice speaking and listening.

- ▶ **Watch a French or Canadian television series.** As you become familiar with the characters, their way of speaking, and their stock phrases, you will progress in your understanding. For a generation of French students, their best English teacher was the 1990s TV show “Friends”! The website FluentU has short, fun videos and even TV shows. It does require a fee to subscribe.
- ▶ **Finally, don’t feel the need to apologize for your accent.** Everyone has an accent when they speak a foreign language, and that is an integral part of who you are. Remember that when you are trying to communicate with someone, most likely they are not

making a list of the errors you make. They are concentrating on the pleasure of your interaction.

Remember, learning to speak a foreign language has so much in common with learning to speak in public: You need regular practice, a dose of self-confidence, and a strong desire to please your audience.

Don’t feel the need to apologize for your accent. Everyone has an accent when they speak a foreign language, and that is an integral part of who you are.

Have fun acquiring some French phrases and conversational tidbits. It’s infinitely more rewarding to go to a foreign country when you are comfortable with speaking and reading the language! Good luck, or as the French would say, *bonne chance!* 🇫🇷

Carol Bausor is the founder of ILTC, a language training company in France. She teaches and runs workshops and events on feeling confident when speaking a foreign language. Learn more at lespeakshow.com.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH SIMILARITIES

The good news is that French and English have a bunch of words in common: Think evaluation/évaluation, qualification/qualification, limit/limite, tourist/touriste. Around 60% of words in English come from French or Latin (and French is a Latin origin language too), so that leaves far fewer lexical items to learn: Just say the English word with a French accent! It doesn’t work all the time, but it’s worth a try if you have a memory gap. Furthermore, the grammatical structures of French and English are remarkably similar: subject + verb + adverb + adjective, and verb before subject for most questions.

Become a Love Languages Linguist

How you perceive and express love can benefit your club.

BY ELLEN GILLETTE

Author Gary Chapman introduced the world to love languages in 1992 when he published his book *The 5 Love Languages®: The Secret to Love that Lasts*. The languages help readers find the way in which they perceive and express love, which can benefit all relationships.

While we often equate love with romance, Chapman says that his “5 distinct love languages” are actually about good communication. Understanding how to communicate in the best way possible improves relationships, including those in Toastmasters. Chapman identifies five different ways love is perceived: words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, gifts, and touch.

Words of Affirmation

Toastmasters allows speakers to receive immediate feedback. Evaluators sandwich points to improve on between praise and positive remarks. This is important for all, but especially meaningful for members whose primary love language is words of affirmation. Do your evaluators stay on track or sometimes stray into criticism? Does a member tend to take evaluations too personally? One speaker may not seem to be as appreciative of evaluations as others. Understanding that his or her “language” is something other than affirmation can be helpful. Appropriate feedback—comments, laughter, applause—draws members closer.

Acts of Service

Club, area, district, and international officers serve diligently to fulfill their respective missions. Every club also relies on its members for acts of service in the form of meeting roles: Toastmaster of the Day, General Evaluator, Ah-Counter, Timer, Grammarian, Table Topicsmaster, and

Evaluator. These functions communicate support and encouragement and do so especially to people whose love language is acts of service. These members will also likely volunteer for events and serve their clubs in additional ways. Need a chief judge for a contest? Someone to step in as Sergeant-at-Arms? Members who perceive love by receiving (and providing) acts of service are valuable assets. Recognizing their love language’s ability to motivate them can foster awareness and appreciation.

Quality Time

Some clubs meet weekly, others biweekly. Some schedule an hour; others extend the agenda to accommodate more speakers. Toastmasters contests and conferences provide additional opportunities for members to spend time together. Members whose love language is quality time will relish every opportunity Toastmasters provides. They will also appreciate things like being asked out for lunch or practicing together for an upcoming contest.

Gifts

Officers may want to “speak” to members whose love language is gifts by creating a themed meeting in which members win small gifts for answering related trivia questions. Gifts may be as simple as pieces of candy, but the Toastmasters International website also has an extensive selection of gift items for celebrating a member’s personal achievement or special day.

Certificates for participation in contests may be cherished by members whose language is gifts. While contest trophies don’t have to be elaborate or expensive, they serve as tangible reminders of a job well done. Some clubs celebrate member birthdays, club anniversaries, and national holidays—

excellent opportunities to exchange small gifts that can make lasting impressions.

Touch

It is always a good idea to ask questions about physical contact and make observations ahead of visiting another club so as not to offend anyone. A longtime tradition in Toastmasters includes shaking hands at the lectern, which may be second nature at some clubs, but in others this may not be culturally appropriate. Consider using the folded hands-at-the-heart pose of *namaste* (a respectful gesture) if physical touch does not appear to be a member’s love language.

Each club and culture can decide what is appropriate but bear in mind that touch is a valid love language. Giving someone a “pat on the back” can be a figure of speech, but members whose love language is touch will respond to an *actual* pat on the back, cultural norms considered.

Becoming proficient in your own love language is the starting point for better self-awareness and development of communication skills. And the more you learn about words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, gifts, and touch, the better you will be able to communicate with, lead, and encourage your fellow club members. **T**

ELLEN GILLETTE is a writer, illustrator, editor, speaker, and member of Florida’s Fort Pierce Toastmasters. Visit her website www.shebearinthebeautifulgarden.com.

Based on *The 5 Love Languages®: The Secret to Love that Lasts* by Gary Chapman (©2015). Published by Northfield Publishing. Used with permission.



The Quest for Guests

Make your meetings a special draw for club visitors.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

Through the Distinguished Club Program (DCP), Toastmasters International has set parameters to help members create and maintain high-performing clubs. One of the DCP qualifiers is membership.

To qualify for DCP consideration, clubs must have at least 20 members or a net membership growth of 5% by June 30. Some clubs find this easy. Others find it a struggle.

To add new members, it's important to have guests at your club meetings. But a guest is not a guest until a person shows up, so how do you get them there?

Over the years, I have talked with many club guests and have noticed four common patterns reflecting how such individuals end up at club meetings.

1 Even in this day of social media, the most common way people learn about your club is through www.toastmasters.org. Obviously, you have no control over whether or not a person goes to the site and clicks on **Find a Club**. You can, however, take advantage when they do. Does your club's page in the Find a Club section have a link to your club's website? Some club pages don't. Most clubs have a website or a Facebook page. One or the other should be linked to the Toastmasters site.

Once a prospective guest clicks on the club website link, do they see a website that promotes your club? Many clubs just have the generic Toastmasters description. While this is good, prospective guests already know the value of the organization or they wouldn't now be searching for clubs. Chances are good they will select several to visit. You want to be on that short list. Why should they pick you?

Take the time to customize your homepage. What makes your club unique? What is its personality? Do your meetings focus on fun? Or are you, perhaps, a serious, professional group? Do you specialize in a particular profession? Make the visitor to your page say, "I've got to check this out!"

2 Social media is certainly another way to attract guests. A number of platforms are out there. A popular one is www.meetup.com. The advantage of a site like this is that people who go there may not even be aware that Toastmasters exists. It is a different group of people from those who typically visit www.toastmasters.org.

You might also want to consider a Facebook Group. Many people use this platform, as well—even those who aren't looking for cat videos.

3 Another common way guests find their way to a club is through the old-fashioned personal invitation. In my club's most recent meeting, we had a second-time guest who was invited by a member. Not only did she join, she brought along a friend who was also ready to join. We gain many of our members by extending invitations to visit. You can too.

4 A fourth way guests find their way to your club is direction from their manager at work. It is not uncommon for a guest to say, "I'm here because my boss said I needed to join a Toastmasters club." Such people typically use the Find a Club feature on the Toastmasters site, but what if the manager was already aware of

your club's existence? What if they told the employee, "You need to join Toastmasters, and there is a club that meets right around the corner. Here is their information."

How would management have this information? Ideally, because someone from your club had previously contacted the company. What companies have offices near your club meeting place? Which people within the company would be most likely to recommend the club to their staff? Sales managers? Marketing managers? Human resources departments? A quick look at the corporate website might tell you their names and contact information. You could then either tailor an introductory letter to them or drop on by for a visit. This could even be a club project.

Is there a particular industry widely represented in your club? My club is made up primarily of certified public accountants and other members of the financial services industry. This was the best place for our club to start attracting members. What about yours?

These various suggestions are, of course, not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Hopefully, you have an unending flow of guests at your meetings, but if you don't, use your creativity to generate ways of changing that. After all, that is the first step in moving your membership well above the 20-person level. **■**

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

Love Lingo

Time to learn a second language, folks, and I'm not talking about French or Italian.

BY JOHN CADLEY



How's your love tank? If it's on **Full** you can skip this column and go back to binge watching *The Great British Bake Off*. If it's on **Empty**, start reading. You may find just what you need to move the needle. I'm talking about *The 5 Love Languages®: The Secret to Love that Lasts* by Gary Chapman, Ph.D., a marriage counselor from North Carolina. If you haven't heard of *The 5 Love Languages*, you're living too far off the grid, my friend. This is a book that's been selling steadily for over 25 years to the tune of 12 million copies in 50 different languages. And it's all about filling your love tank, which is Mr. Chapman's way of saying getting the love you need. (I wish he hadn't used the word "tank." It sounds like you might need an oil change, too.)

But there's no quarreling with success. Many of those 12 million readers claim Mr. Chapman's book did nothing less than save their marriages by telling them "the secret to love that lasts." Because it doesn't, you know—at least not the fun part. Every couple remembers the intoxication of new love—the butterflies in the stomach, the thrill of a touch. It's that irresistible emotion that impels you to vow before God and man that you will love and cherish your perfect mate until the end of time.

Which, according to research, turns out to be about two years.

This is when "the honeymoon is over," as we say—a euphemism for that slow but inevitable transition from "You're everything I dreamed of" to the beginning of "When did you become so annoying?" Mr. Chapman counseled many married

couples and found that this disillusion stemmed from miscommunication. After hearing the same complaints over and over, he concluded that there were five basic ways people relate lovingly, each having its own "language," and the unhappy couples simply weren't speaking the same language, like someone saying "I love you" in Chinese to a person who only understands Greek.

He might do the laundry and then feel disappointed when his wife doesn't hire a skywriting plane to say THANK YOU!

The author defines these languages as **affirmation** (compliments, encouragement, appreciation), **quality time** (doing things together), **receiving gifts** (cards, flowers, jewelry), **acts of service** (doing the dishes, mowing the lawn), and **physical touch** (holding hands, hugging, affectionate arm squeezes). The problem is that if the husband loves, say, acts of service, he will assume his wife feels the same way, when in fact her real need (language) is different—perhaps for affirmation. Consequently, he might do the laundry and then feel disappointed when his wife doesn't hire a skywriting plane to say **THANK YOU!** To her it's just part of sharing household chores. And she, who needs appreciation, will feel neglected

when he doesn't alert the national media about her promotion to assistant manager. Given this dynamic, I'd say the Chinese and the Greek have a better shot than these two.

This is where Chapman rides to the rescue by encouraging couples to read his book together, learn each other's love language, and then act accordingly. Once they're speaking the same language, each will feel loved and their relationship will blossom. It may not be the heady infatuation of their youth, but it won't be the Marriage Marathon of Misery either.

Of course, the first thing is knowing what your love language is, which you can discover by taking a test that asks you to choose one selection from 30 paired statements. For instance, "It's more meaningful to me when (A) She puts her arm around me when we're in public, or (B) she surprises me with a gift. Well, my wife already does (A). I'm sure love is involved, but it's more to keep me from walking into lamp posts and knocking over baby carriages.

I took the test myself and it turns out my love tank needs premium fuel—not one language but two: acts of service and affirmation. (I'm a needy person.) So when my wife gets home I'm going to ask her to power wash the house and nominate me for a Pulitzer Prize. I'm sure she'll have some language for that. **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 

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