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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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## Reflecting on the Unprecedented

The time has come to write the final chapter in my term as the Toastmasters International President. It's often said that no matter how much you prepare to take on a role, you are never fully prepared, and I couldn't agree more. How can any leader, whether they be a club officer, District leader, Region Advisor, or member of the Board, prepare to lead through an entire year of a global pandemic? Yet that is what we did. In my inaugural address I stated that "leaders don't run away from a challenge, they run toward it" and you did. You found new and innovative ways to lead, motivate, and support each other.

I witnessed as the global community of Toastmasters grew closer. Our members were no longer siloed in their clubs or Districts; the world became a keystroke away. We often tell members they are not just a member of the club, but also a member of a global organization, and this year we experienced that more than ever. There was a cultural evolution as members explored new countries, new cultures, and new languages. The world has become a smaller place thanks in part to technology.

The ability of World Headquarters to adapt their procedures and processes to meet the changing needs of our members in this time of uncertainty is a testament to their dedication. A special thank you to the training team and convention team for being able to quickly shift from "the way it has always been" to "the way it needs to be."

**We often tell members they are not just a member of the club, but also a member of a global organization.**

It was not an easy year, or the type of year any of us had hoped for, and there were bumps along the way. We missed out on many experiences we were accustomed to, but we gained a lot as well. I am proud of what we accomplished this year by taking advantage of the opportunities we had rather than focusing on the challenges. Each of you proved to be an epicenter of action this year.

American author Pat Conroy stated, "Once you have traveled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey." The journey that I have traveled with you as your International President, the things that I have witnessed, and the changes that I have experienced will be forever etched in my mind. It was my honor and privilege to serve as your 2020-2021 International President. Thank you.

**Richard E. Peck, DTM**  
International President

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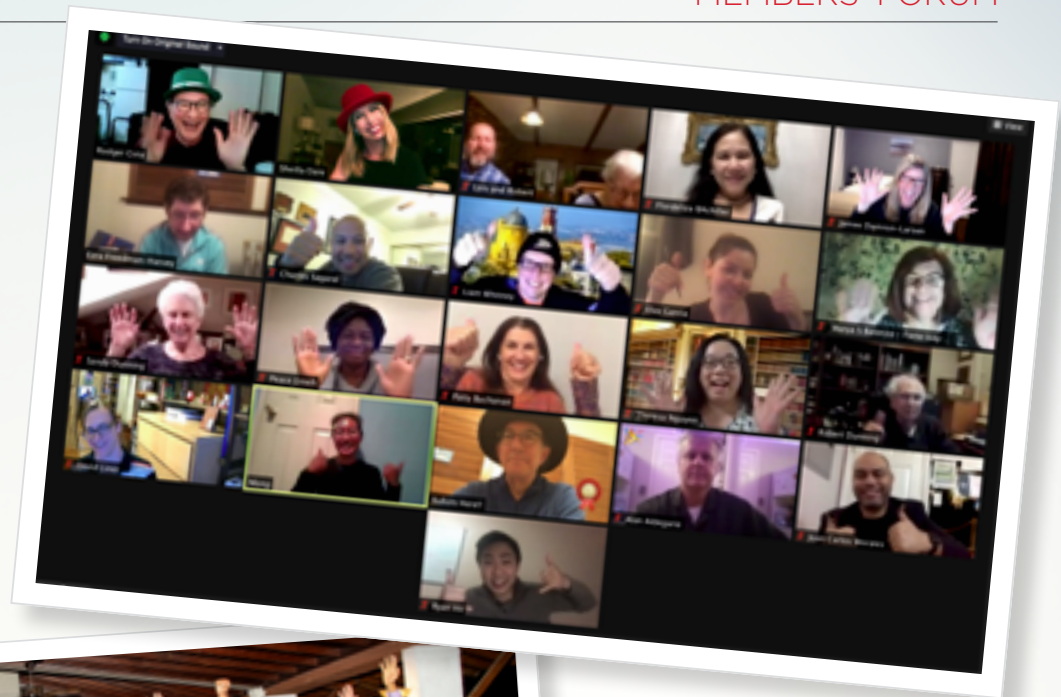
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Clubs celebrate anniversaries and connect with Toastmasters everywhere.



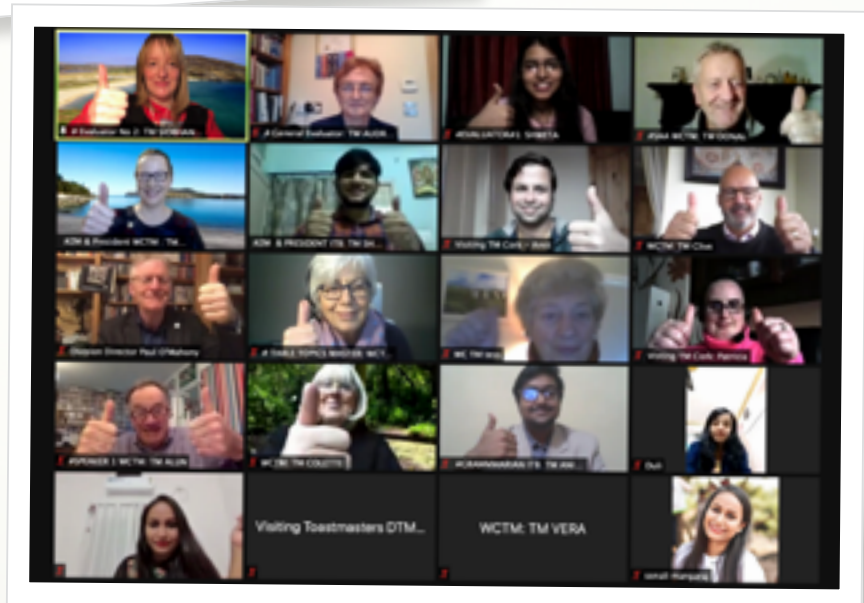
Members of Long Beach Gavel Toastmasters Club of Long Beach, California, meet on Zoom to celebrate the club's 88th anniversary.



The Millennium Toastmasters Club of Colombo, Sri Lanka, celebrates its 20th anniversary after months of online meetings.



West Cork Toastmasters of West Cork, Ireland, hosted a joint meeting with Infosys Toastmasters, Bhubaneswar club of Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. For two hours, more than 20 Toastmasters listened to speakers from both countries, and afterward said they plan to do so again.



**Send your fun club photos to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org).** Include a description and your club name, number, and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) 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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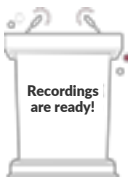
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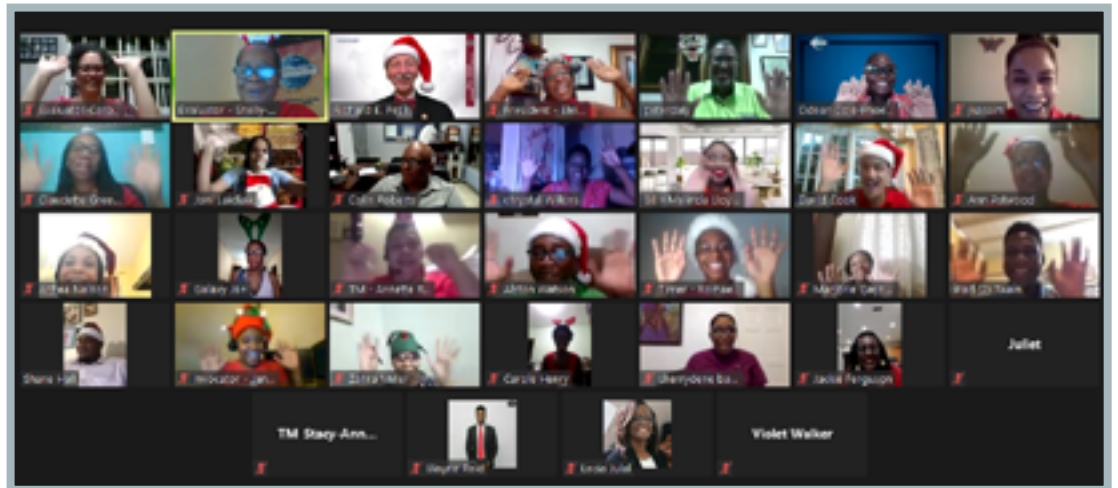
Hear the latest episodes from [The Toastmasters Podcast](#).



Listen for tips from the author of Toastmasters Toolbox on connecting during online meetings.



[Watch webinars](#) for extra inspiration.



## World Tour Wrap-up

International President Richard E. Peck, DTM, made his way around the world and virtually visited clubs in 141 countries! Find out what he learned, view an interactive map, and listen to an exclusive podcast to hear about his adventures.

## Convention Coverage

Enjoy the 2021 Virtual Convention from the comfort of your home! After you attend events like Opening Ceremonies, Golden Gavel, or education sessions, write to [magazine@toastmasters.org](mailto:magazine@toastmasters.org) and tell us about your experience!

## Calling All Traveling Toastmasters!

Have you recently journeyed around your own city, state, or country? Or maybe you traveled to one of your favorite destinations. [Send us a photo](#) while holding the print or digital magazine for a chance to be featured in *Traveling Toastmaster*.



## Life in Color

Read about a talented Toastmaster who has made great strides as a full-time artist. View photos of her work in an exclusive online gallery.



## MEMBER RECOGNITION

# Showcasing members, mentors, and clubs

**Corren Thomas, DTM** • Kingston, Jamaica



### The Toastmasters Encyclopedia

Many have called Corren Thomas, DTM, of Dynamic Speakers Club in Kingston, Jamaica, the “Toastmasters Encyclopedia” due to her history as a Toastmaster and knowledge of the rules and regulations. In 2005, she joined the organization as a charter member of the UCC Toastmasters Club in Kingston, and has since held multiple club officer and District leadership roles. Thomas even served as Club President for two clubs at the same time.

Currently, she’s serving as a mentor to eight members, including Conrad Miller of Dynamic Speakers. Miller says having Thomas as his mentor is “a little like having Usain Bolt for a trainer. No matter how patient he is with you, you are guaranteed to have a few moments where you are both motivated and a little intimidated by his raw awesomeness.” The first time Miller told a fellow Toastmaster that Thomas would be his mentor, they said he was lucky, but also told him to be prepared because she had so much knowledge to share and uses “tough love.” Miller says, “She is arguably the most caring, motivational, understanding, supportive, empathetic mentor that can be found.” After just one phone call with Thomas, Miller knew he wanted to join her club because of her eloquence, articulation, and overall interest in his well-being.



**Nelson and Shalini Menezes, DTM**

• Dubai, United Arab Emirates



### Mentoring Together

Nelson Menezes, DTM, joined Toastmasters in 2007, and a year later, his wife, Shalini Menezes, DTM, joined him. The two are members of several clubs in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and have served as mentors to one another over the years. Both have held leadership roles, but Shalini encouraged Nelson to take larger steps toward the Area and Division levels. She says, “We were both mentoring each other to chisel the best versions of ourselves for ourselves, and it was truly magical to see ourselves unfurl with newfound skills and accomplish the title of Distinguished Toastmaster.”

In 2020–2021, Nelson served as District Director for District 105 (Oman, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon). This accomplishment was a source of great pride for both Nelson and Shalini. They looked back on how far they had come in Toastmasters, and Shalini was reminded that they can only give what they have and work hard to become better leaders and speakers. She is proud that they may have become better human beings along their Toastmasters journey as well. Shalini says they will continue to mentor one another “as life is a beautiful journey, and learning and loving never ends.”



**Talk to Us!** Do you have a short story (aim for 130 words), fun photo, inspiring anecdote, or Toastmasters “Ah-Ha” moment you’d like to share? Has someone made an impact on you or your club? Do you know a Toastmaster who has a unique achievement? We want to hear about it! Mark your submission “Member Recognition” and email it to [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org).

## QUICK TAKES

### ▶ CLUB EXPERIENCE

## How to Help a New Member

You've [welcomed a new member](#) into your club—now what? With many clubs still meeting online or in a hybrid format, new Toastmasters might feel a little lost. Below is some basic information you can send to get them started. A short, friendly email can make a big difference—don't forget, you were a new member once!

### 6 Quick Tips to Get Started

1. Log in to [www.toastmasters.org/Login](http://www.toastmasters.org/Login) to ensure that your username and password are correct.
2. [Enroll in Pathways](#)—the Toastmasters education program.
3. Review [The Navigator](#)—your guide to Toastmasters. Once you've logged in as a member, you have access to The Navigator.
4. Sample your first Pathways project, the [Ice Breaker](#).
5. Ask your Vice President Education to pair you with a [mentor](#), to help you along the way.
6. Have new members fill out the [New Member Profile Sheet](#). This is a great way to establish your goals, and then review them with your mentor or a club officer.



### Explore Possibilities With Pathways

The foundation of the Toastmasters experience is the education program, Pathways, which is critical to your growth. Some benefits include:

- ▶ Opportunity to develop many skills relevant to an evolving global marketplace
- ▶ Frequent recognition of educational achievements
- ▶ Online access to educational materials
- ▶ Engaging videos that model the skills you are learning

### ▶ NEWS FROM TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

#### Convention Countdown

Don't miss out on the Toastmasters International 2021 Virtual Convention, taking place this month August 23–28. Find the agenda, events to attend, and education sessions on the [convention webpage](#).

#### Brand Manual Update

The Brand Manual has been updated with guidelines on gradients and other details. If you are looking to create your own Toastmasters-branded materials, [refer to the manual](#) to remain brand compliant. Learn how to leverage the Toastmasters brand in the August article [“The Benefits of Branding.”](#)

#### Online Magazine Video Tutorial

Whether you're visiting the online magazine for the first time, or you're a dedicated digital reader, [this video](#) will help guide you to making the most of your online experience. Share it with members, guests, friends, and family—there are articles and online features for everyone!

#### New Club Officer Training

Check out the seven new Club Officer and Area Director Training sessions! [These sessions](#) cover critical topics to help your club and Area succeed, including marketing, member engagement and retention, and quality club meetings.

#### Translated Certificates

When you complete levels and paths in Pathways, you can now request completion and proficiency certificates in Arabic, French,



German, Japanese, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, and Tamil. Email the [Education Services Team](#) and specify your desired language, path, and level. Your certificate will then be emailed to you!

#### Grow Your Club

Adding new members is a great way to revitalize your club experience! Here are three easy steps to help you with the process. Step 1: Make sure your club's information is always up to date in Club Central. Step 2: Get into a habit of checking your email every other day to see if anyone has tried to contact your club. Step 3: Make sure you reply to all emails from prospective members in a timely manner. You may also consider putting your online meeting information in your "Club Contact and Meeting Information" section in Club Central to help guests attend meetings. For more helpful tips, read the [Find a Club Best Practices](#).



## ▶ SNAPSHOT



Shimonoseki Toastmasters Club of Shimonoseki, Japan, held a hybrid open house in April 2021. The theme was “Refreshing Evening in Spring,” and members were asked to wear spring clothing, while those attending online used spring backgrounds like cherry blossoms. Eleven guests from Japan and other countries attended.

## ▶ NEWS FROM TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

## Tips for Attending an Online Convention

Attending a virtual convention means an alluring location has been replaced by a very comfortable one: your own home sweet home.

However, you can still feel the excitement and transport yourself to an amazing experience, just as you would in person. Here are six ways to focus on getting the most from the Toastmasters International 2021 Virtual Convention:

**1 Practice the Platform.** The online platform will likely be new to you. Take time before the meeting to check out the convention site and familiarize yourself with its features and tabs.

**2 Plan Ahead.** Plan your attendance just as you would for an in-person event. Decide which sessions you want to attend and whether they are live or available to view at any time. Use a [time zone converter](#) and add local times to your viewing schedule before the convention begins.

**3 Be in the Moment.** This is your time to learn, have fun, and fully engage in the convention experience. When attending, put your phone on silent mode or shut it off. Mark yourself out on your work calendar and do not check email.

**4 See the Big Picture.** To truly feel like “you are there,” watch all events on the largest screen you have available. Take notes on a separate device—a laptop, a tablet, or even a pad of paper.

**5 Connect Everywhere.** Take advantage of the virtual connection/networking events. Sign up to meet/hear speakers live. Join online breakout sessions and happy hours. Enter contests; respond to attendee polls. Great networking is still possible, even at a distance.

**6 Take Breaks.** For avid attendees, convention usually means long days. Stretch or take a short walk during meeting breaks or as needed. You can also take advantage of recorded sessions and watch at your convenience.

The 2021 Virtual Convention will feature all the usual event favorites, and much more. But there’s no bag to pack, no comfortable shoes needed. Just find a cozy spot and soak in a world of learning and camaraderie.

**Renée Covino** is senior copywriter for Toastmasters International’s Marketing and Communications Department.



**GET CREATIVE!** Traveling *Toastmaster* wants to highlight creativity in quarantine! Take a picture in your home or socially distancing with your magazine or other Toastmasters memorabilia. Send your fun photos to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org).



**1 | SHANHUA TOASTMASTERS CLUB** members of Tainan, Taiwan, show their club support as they climb Mt. Hehuan, also called Joy Mountain, in the Taroko National Park.

**2 | KATHERINE EATON** of Tallahassee, Florida, celebrates her 40th wedding anniversary in Marco Island, Florida. She printed out the May 2021 cover of the *Toastmaster* magazine for this photo!

**3 | Members of the TCS MAITREE TOASTMASTERS CLUB** of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, attend a club meeting at Marine Drive—a long promenade that runs along the coast of a bay.

**4 | MATTHEW and NANCY ELLENSON** of Warroad, Minnesota, tour the Redlin Art Center in Watertown, South Dakota. The center displays more than 150 original paintings from Terry Redlin, an American artist who grew up in Watertown and is known for his outdoor themes.



View additional **Traveling *Toastmaster*** photos in the [online magazine](#) for some extra inspiration.



# Lifting the Curtain on Leadership Success

Performing new roles in Toastmasters made me a better actress and entrepreneur.

BY QUINN LEMLEY, DTM

I've been onstage all my life, making my living as an actress, singer, and producer. Before the pandemic, I was starring in two popular off-Broadway shows in New York City and touring with those shows across North America. In one, *Rita Hayworth—The Heat Is On!*, I impersonate the legendary 1940s American movie star Rita Hayworth and am backed by an 11-member band, giving tribute to the Golden Age of Hollywood. In the other, *Burlesque to Broadway*, I perform with a troupe of singers and dancers.

People often ask me, "Why did you join Toastmasters, since you perform in front of large audiences all the time?" I joined a local Toastmasters club eight years ago to help me with issues such as interviews, impromptu speaking, and overcoming nerves when in the spotlight. Even veteran performers get stage fright! I have found that focusing on breathing and practicing impromptu speaking are great tools for helping me be present in the moment.

But I have gained more than that in Toastmasters. Since joining the organization, I've taken on a series of leadership roles, from serving as Vice President Education and Club President to being Area and Division Director. In addition, in 2020–2021, I helped charter an advanced club, DE Squared, in New York City, serving as its President and navigating a new world of Zoom meetings. My leadership roles gave me visibility within our District and connected me with people I otherwise may not have known. In fact, these opportunities literally changed my life.

In 2014, my partner Paul Horton and I created *Burlesque to Broadway*, and we needed an investor to help us in our journey. With my Toastmasters friend and then-Club President Mary Cooney, DTM, we attended a casting event for the American TV show *Shark Tank*, where



Quinn Lemley, DTM

entrepreneurs pitch new products to a panel of highly successful investors, known collectively as "the Sharks." We needed a one-to-two-minute pitch for the audition. Mary said, "You've got to do this! It's like Table Topics!"

**I joined Toastmasters to help with interviews, impromptu speaking, and overcoming nerves ... even veteran performers get stage fright!**

Hundreds of entrepreneurs were there to audition. Our pitch was like a great Table Topics® response, with a powerful beginning, middle, and end. Our call to action was a hopeful, energetic request for an investment. Later, the show's producers asked us to create a five-minute video within 48 hours for the Sharks to review. We said yes!

Our video was styled like a speech. We emerged on the screen in hot pink feather fans, saying "Hello, Sharks ..." I used all the elements learned in Toastmasters—vocal variety, body language, and eye contact. It worked! The producers called, saying we had been chosen for *Shark Tank* Season 5.

We spent the summer working on our presentation with show producers. During this time, I asked a fellow Toastmaster, Lois Lynn, DTM, to evaluate our presentation. "If the Sharks don't invest, I'd love to," she said.

The producers called a day later and told us the Sharks were no longer investing in entertainment-related products. While a disappointment at first, it ended up being a blessing in disguise. Lois became the perfect partner and co-producer for *Burlesque to Broadway*. It was life-changing. We fluffed our feathers, toured North America, performed at conferences, added performers, recorded a CD, and are ready to get back on the road post-pandemic.

Saying yes to Toastmasters leadership roles gave me the opportunity to work with diverse personalities, with people outside of my line of work. I learned to be strategic, to let go, to trust, and to delegate. Leadership in Toastmasters gave me the tools, the connections, and the edge to become a better performer, producer, director, and entrepreneur.

You never know who you are going to meet in Toastmasters. I do know this—saying yes to leadership will change your life! **T**

**QUINN LEMLEY, DTM**, is Past President of DE Squared and a member of Douglas Elliman Westside Toasties, both in New York City. She is an entertainer and coach. Learn more at [www.quinnlemley.com](http://www.quinnlemley.com).





# Growing the Third Dimension

Techniques to revamp personal connections in online meetings.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

**Z**oom meetings are so two-dimensional, aren't they?

While it has been great meeting online, there is still something missing. Our personalities are restricted in that online format. It's like the mute button affects more than our voice. I started attending my current club a year ago but am just now meeting the members in person and getting a broader sense of who they are. What a difference it makes. That third dimension is important.

Fortunately, many clubs are returning to in-person meetings. Others have gone live but are continuing an online component in the form of hybrid meetings. Either way the last year has taken its toll. Some members have lost momentum because of the online format. Others have left entirely. Will they come back when you go live?

In hybrid meetings, there is the challenge of bridging the gap between those who are in person and those who are "up there" on the screen.

And for those clubs that are continuing in an online format, how do we create more of that third dimension? How do we recapture what is missing?

Here are some ideas I have seen from my previous clubs. Perhaps one or two of them might strike a chord with you and help raise the excitement level within a meeting. These techniques are in two categories: those that provide unique value and those that add fun.

## Add Value

One technique you might want to occasionally add is a round-robin evaluation. I have seen this done two ways. The first:

Instead of one speech evaluator giving comments, any member is invited to provide feedback to the speaker. This offers the speaker a wider spectrum of comments, impressions, and ideas. A second format, as practiced by one of my former clubs, is to have the standard formal evaluation and follow it up with 45-second evaluations from three different members.

*My current club has a role that I have never seen in my previous 10 clubs—the listening master.*

The round-robin format is particularly attractive to more advanced speakers. If some of your long-term members are losing momentum, you might want to try this to see if it revitalizes them. And, if someone has disappeared, you could use this to lure them back.

Another way of providing value could be to host an educational moment. Your club may already have this, but in case you don't, here is how it works. At the beginning of the meeting, a member gives a one-minute tutorial on an aspect of speaking or leadership. This way, every attendee receives a key takeaway from the meeting, even the visitors. Show them the value of being a Toastmaster.

## Add Fun

It's also important to find ways to make meetings more fun. My current club has a role that I have never seen in my previous 10 clubs—the listening master. This person listens to each speaker and jots down

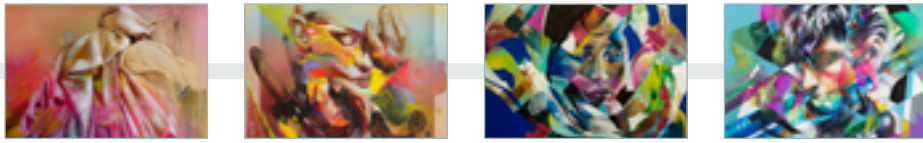
some of the details that are mentioned. At the end of the meeting, they ask a series of questions to see how well we have been listening. These are simple questions like "Where was Larry born?" "What is Gina's favorite sport?" and "Where did John meet his wife?" When on Zoom, all attendees are unmuted and just blurt out their responses. Yes, it trains us to be better listeners, but for me, it is just flat-out fun. I look forward to it every meeting.

I have also seen a club begin each meeting with self-introductions. The President selects a simple question related to the theme. Each attendee, in five to 10 seconds, says their name and answers the question. It creates energy right at the beginning of the meeting and it helps us get to know each other that much better.

Another technique you can add is the observational humor segment. In this segment, anyone who has a quip, twist, or pun based on something said during the meeting shared it with the group. This ends the meeting on a high note, and invites us to work on our humor in the process.

Zoom meetings provide their own unique challenges, and coming back from that digital environment may also require some adjustment. Hopefully, ideas such as these can help change the dynamics of a meeting to re-create that third dimension, and bring the group closer together in the process. **T**

**Bill Brown, DTM**, is a speech delivery coach in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a member of Energy Capital Toastmasters in Gillette. Learn more at [www.billbrownspeechcoach.com](http://www.billbrownspeechcoach.com).



## A Creative Career in Color

Learn how Toastmaster Allison Torneros became more “Hueman” on her journey to full-time artist.

BY LAURA MISHKIND

For nearly a decade, Allison Torneros, also known as Hueman, has worked as a full-time artist. Her job includes collaborating with big-name companies like Nike, L’Oréal, and North Face, and celebrities such as singer-songwriter Usher and United States basketball star Stephen Curry. But working with well-known clients hasn’t always been part of her career—she first had to lay the groundwork by finding inspiration and more of a human connection with her artwork.

After graduating from college, Torneros, from Oakland, California, bought into what she calls the “starving artist stereotype” and didn’t think she could be a full-time artist. Instead, she worked as a graphic designer, spending 14 to 16 hours a day behind a computer doing mostly coding and Photoshop work—not flexing her creative muscles in the way she craved.

The lack of inspiration and interaction with other creative minds took a toll on Torneros. She began a mantra of “I am a human, not a robot.” She was going through a difficult time with her mental health, and decided she had to make a change. “I was tired of feeling sorry for myself and I decided to paint a wall and do something that was outside of my comfort zone,” she says. “At that time, I felt human. I was using my whole body to paint.” She was outside, in the sun, and able to chat with people who passed by as she worked.

She wanted that feeling to last and began exploring ways to make painting her career. Motivated by her mantra, and starting to feel more human, Torneros incorporated the word “hue” to add a

focus on color to create her moniker—and Hueman was born.

“I feel like my whole career has been a bit of a slow burn,” Torneros explains. “It really started to take off in 2015 when I was commissioned to do work with NYX Cosmetics.” NYX was opening retail stores around the world and licensed Torneros’s work for all their stores and some products. “All at once my artwork was literally around the world.”

### Speaking With Words and Images

Torneros presents her work at art exhibitions and attends pitch meetings where she explains her plans to people who commission her. Often her work is large-scale on canvases or wall murals, so explaining her vision well is vital to getting the next project.

During the pandemic, she wanted to find a way to safely connect with others and sharpen her speaking skills. “I want to be able to better communicate my artwork. I feel like when I better represent myself and my art, people understand me and my art better,” says Torneros.

She wanted a place where she could gain valuable critiques and feedback, and Alameda Tongue Twisters in Alameda, California, looked to be the right fit. Torneros explains, “I liked that there were different types of members. I feel that’s really valuable when you want feedback because they might have a different way of looking at things.”

While she enjoys delivering prepared speeches, Torneros has always been prone to improvisation. “When I’m creating artwork, I like to throw anything at the canvas or sketch it on paper and go for

it. So when I’m writing a speech I do the same where I throw all my thoughts out at once and then trim it and bring structure to it,” she explains. The free flow of ideas and concepts matches the patterns she’s accustomed to in her work. “I do love Table Topics,” says Torneros. “I think that’s my favorite part of the meeting.”

Even with her love for improvisation, Torneros does have plans when it comes to her artwork. Her favorite collaboration to date will launch at the end of 2022, and since it’s still in progress she can’t share what it is. She is also working on a 10,000-square-foot space which will be covered with her art in Berkeley, California. Torneros says it goes beyond painting and canvas to include sculptures, projections, and a colorful projection map experience.

Torneros defines her work as “etherealism,” which is a blend of ethereal realism. “I like taking really old classic art and putting a new contemporary spin,” she says. To incorporate a dream-like quality into all her work, Hueman draws inspiration from nature, Baroque art, and just about everything she sees around her. Using that approach, she crafts her artwork and her speeches to help others see the beauty in the world. **T**

**Editors Note:** View some of Torneros’s art at [www.huemannahnature.com](http://www.huemannahnature.com).

**Laura Mishkind** is assistant editor for the *Toastmaster magazine*.

# A President's Path Around the World

International President Richard E. Peck, DTM, embarked on a whirlwind global tour during the pandemic.

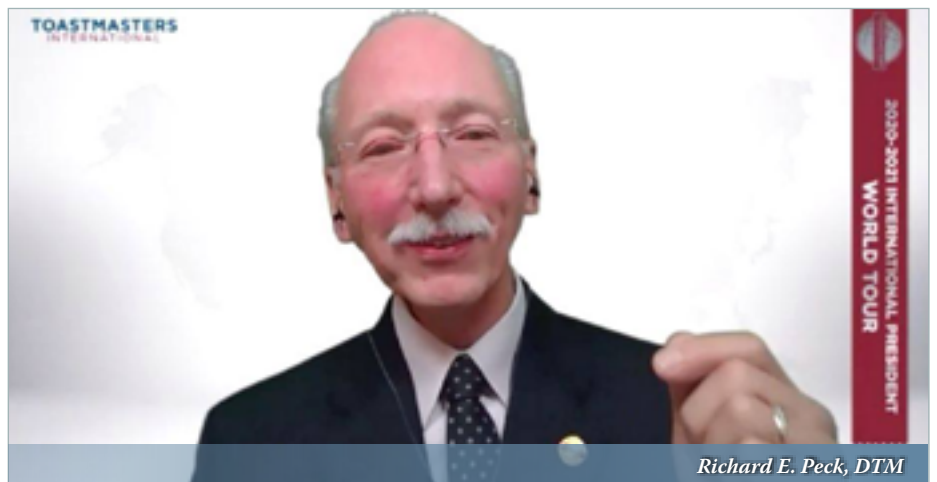
BY LAURA AMANN

In September 2020, newly installed International President Richard E. Peck, DTM, conceived of an ambitious project to make members feel connected in the midst of a pandemic: He would visit one club in every country that has a Toastmasters presence and take an active role in a club meeting.

With clubs around the world having switched to an online format, this meant international trips could be done from his home office. Over nine months, between October and June, Peck traveled to 141 countries, participating in roles in each visit. He did all of this in addition to the visits he makes for club anniversaries, club celebrations, and District conferences; and all of that in addition to the many responsibilities of an International President; and all of that in addition to the fluctuating concerns and priorities of a term marked by global uncertainty.

## Daunting Logistics

At the beginning of the tour, he wasn't sure how or if it would evolve. He didn't want clubs to feel that a visit from the International President was a mandate, something clubs would feel obligated to do in addition to everything else they were dealing with. But clubs and members embraced his visits, using them as motivation for getting creative and as a way to rally members to attend the meetings.



“When you're leading an organization, you really need to understand the people you're leading and what they're going through. We could see what we were going through [as Board Members] and we could see that others were going through something similar, possibly worse. We wanted to make sure members didn't feel abandoned.”

He started visiting one club a day, but quickly realized that wasn't going to get it done. So he bumped up his visits to three, four, or even five staggered throughout the day. He set his alarm for 3 a.m., or stayed up past midnight.

He laughs that he can travel the world in a matter of hours and not get jet lag or lose his luggage. He has zipped the globe

to Mauritius, France, St. Croix, Kenya, and Tortola all in one day.

From the beginning, Peck's goal was not just to show up at a meeting. He wanted to take an active role. “If we are truly promoting our organization, if we truly believe in what we're doing, then we should take on that role.” And so that's what he did. He gave 76 Pathways speeches and received his evaluations; he evaluated 41 other speakers; he took on other meeting roles, including Table Topicsmaster, Ah-Counter, and Toastmaster of the Day, and he participated in numerous Q&A sessions.

## Club Involvement

Clubs have come together for his visits as well, inviting other clubs to join their





meetings or holding themed meetings or doing something to celebrate their country. The Saturday Breakfast Speakers Club in Sweden held a Nobel Prize Gala; Desert Pioneers in Kuwait held a “Not So Late Show” themed meeting; the Addis Ababa club in Ethiopia had a theme of “Ethiopia: Land of Origins”; and the Vienna Toastmasters Club in Austria had fun with the theme “May the 4th Be With You.” Some clubs played local music, or presented slideshows highlighting an aspect of their culture. Some clubs challenged themselves to hold their meeting in English (Peck’s native language), even though the club itself wasn’t English speaking.

Peck finds a real benefit to attending a club meeting where he doesn’t speak the language. “As we know, communication is so much more than the spoken word. It’s facial expressions, it’s body language, it’s vocal variety, and when you go to a club where you’re not a native language speaker, you view speeches differently.”

### **A Leader and a Member**

Peck’s club visits and meeting participation allowed members to see him as a person rather than a title, and allowed the International President to get back to his roots. “I always tell them at the beginning of the meeting that I’m a member at heart.”

The tour has allowed him to give back to Toastmasters, an organization that has meant so much to him. “Each level of leadership we reach, we get further away from the people who got us to the positions,” he says. “This has been my opportunity to show my appreciation to those who helped me become who I am.”

### **Unity in the Organization**

No matter which country he visited and no matter what language was spoken, there was always a sense of hope. Wherever he went, Peck found members actively engaged, smiling, and learning. He has seen firsthand how times of challenges and difficulty are also the times when communities come together.

“This has been my opportunity to show my appreciation to those who helped me become who I am.”

—RICHARD E. PECK, DTM

“The Toastmasters organization is built on communication and leadership, but Toastmasters themselves have another drive and that’s being supportive

and encouraging to each other,” he says. “Members have risen to the times.”

His hope is that, despite all the hurdles of the past year, members find unity within the organization. He refers to a cultural evolution that is happening now, where everyone is getting a chance to know each other a little more, aided by online connection. “The world has gotten smaller, not in size, but in distance between people. The ability to connect now involves simply an index finger and an ‘enter’ key.”

Peck is now working on putting together an online journal of his experiences so that members can understand the true global nature of what it means to be a Toastmaster. After each visit, he asked the club to submit what they would like people to know about their club, country, and/or culture. He hopes the journal won’t be so much a compilation of his visits as a spotlight on the community of Toastmasters and how our world came together during a pandemic.

“From the beginning of this tour to the end of this tour, I have been super proud of our members and what I have witnessed,” he says. “Their sense of community, their sense of caring for their fellow Toastmasters has been unwavering.” **T**

**Laura Amann** is the magazine supervisor and editor for the Toastmaster magazine.

# Confronting Our Hidden Beliefs

Unconscious bias can undermine your message. Here's how to identify and address it.

BY GREG GLASGOW

It happened to Sandra Upton, Ph.D., when she attended a graduation party for the daughter of a coworker.

Upton and her husband sat down next to an elderly white woman who asked Upton, a Black woman, how she knew the father of the graduate. Upton—who serves as vice president of global diversity practice at the Michigan-based Cultural Intelligence Center—replied that she worked with the company's founder and president. The woman looked at her and asked, "Oh, are you his scheduler?"

"When she saw me, it could have been through a number of cultural filters," Upton says. "As an African American, as a woman—she made the assumption that my role had to be at a support level."

For Upton, the encounter was a perfect example of unconscious bias—social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside of their own conscious awareness. The

"The [biased] thoughts will come, but how do you manage them? How do you make sure they don't make their way into decisions, actions, and behaviors?"

—SANDRA UPTON

stereotypes tend to be negative and can involve another's race, gender, age, nationality, skin color, and more. It's an issue that's become especially topical over the past year, in light of widespread protests that have led to examinations of issues of race, privilege, and preference. Terms like "microaggression"—an unintended slight often motivated by unconscious bias—have since entered our everyday vocabulary.

"The insidious nature of unconscious bias is the unconscious part," says Valerie Alexander, a screenwriter and unconscious bias expert in Los Angeles who recently gave a keynote speech on the topic at the Toastmasters District 39 Conference. "It's that you are not aware you're treating people differently. You have different beliefs about people, different expectations of people, or behave differently toward people because of some inherent trait like their gender or their age or the accent they speak with."

Those biases come from a variety of sources, Alexander says, but they are primarily connected to how we were





raised and the types of people we have—and haven’t—interacted with in our lives, as well as the types of media we consume.

“Most of us have a lot more media images of people of different races than actual encounters with people of different races,” Alexander says. “And how the media portrays those different people determines what we see as a threat.”

The portrayals don’t have to be threatening, she adds, to create a bias.

“The majority of children’s books that have a Black child in them, the Black child lives in poverty,” she says. “Think about the well-meaning white parent who says, ‘I want to make sure my kid is reading books with kids of different races.’ And that’s what they’re presented with, is a child who’s in poverty.”

### Be Aware

No matter the source or nature of the bias, experts say, the important thing is to make yourself aware of unconscious bias before it creates negative consequences for you or others. It’s a concern that’s especially important in public speaking, where you often don’t know the makeup of your audience or might be speaking on a topic that could reveal unconscious bias. You don’t want to limit possibilities for yourself or your audience.

“Let’s say you’re speaking to a group of students about how to prepare for college, and you happen to be a white male,” Upton says. “There might be individuals in that audience who have a different background from you, and you may bring in some assumptions about that group. Say there are students from an urban community in the group—you might assume that, ‘You’re probably not going to go to college anyway,’ or, ‘This might be your first experience going to college.’ You’re assuming they’re first-generation just perhaps from what you’ve been taught or maybe seen in the media.”

We often come at an issue through our own cultural lens and our own perspective. It doesn’t mean we’re wrong, but it can hinder our ability to communicate our message effectively.

“One of the most important parts of public speaking is having credibility with your audience,” says Pamela Fuller,

“The insidious nature of unconscious bias is the unconscious part.”

—VALERIE ALEXANDER

author of the book *The Leader’s Guide to Unconscious Bias* and a thought leader on unconscious bias at leadership training firm FranklinCovey. “It’s important to recognize what biases you might have about that audience that could chip away at your credibility and have a plan to bridge that gap and to connect with them in a meaningful way.” Fuller will elaborate on this topic during her presentation at the [Toastmasters International Virtual Convention](#) this month.

### Tackling Unconscious Bias

The good news about unconscious bias is that you can overcome it with time and

practice. One of the most effective methods for doing so is called cultural intelligence—a skill set for working effectively in culturally diverse situations. Upton, who teaches the method at the Cultural Intelligence Center, says it has four components: drive, knowledge, strategy, and action.

**Drive**, Upton explains, has to do with how motivated and persistent you are when it comes to understanding and managing your biases. **Knowledge** involves gaining an understanding of the similarities and differences among cultures and how the reality of another’s experience may be different from the image in your head.

“I can be motivated and confident about wanting to manage my biases, but now I have to develop some knowledge to help me do that,” she says. “The audience that I’m going to give this presentation to—what are some of the cultural differences that might be represented in that audience? And how do I use that knowledge to make sure I’m not forming assumptions about different cultural groups and that my speech is bias-free?”

Knowledge also includes learning all you can about an audience before you speak, so you can keep an eye out for any specific unconscious biases, she says. The **strategy** piece comes in looking through a speech or presentation once you develop some knowledge about your audience, and adapting your presentation accordingly.

**Action**, finally, is all about behavior change, Upton says. “What behaviors do I want to be mindful of when I’m engaging



with that audience? Even gestures—what gestures might be appropriate or inappropriate, or what gestures might I make that could potentially be offensive to a certain cultural group or that may come out of a bias I might have toward someone from a certain cultural group?”

The nice thing about cultural intelligence, she says, is that it’s a skill that can be measured and developed. Once a speaker learns how to use drive, knowledge, strategy, and action when planning a presentation, each area begins to flow into the others.

“Managing those biases is really what it’s all about,” Upton says. “The [biased] thoughts will come, but how do you manage them? How do you make sure they don’t make their way into decisions, actions, and behaviors?”

### Learning From Missteps

If unconscious bias does rear its head during a speech, Alexander says, the best thing you can do is to use it as a learning opportunity.

“The two biggest things you have to be willing to do are to examine your own behavior and be open to feedback,” she says. “As a speaker, if someone says to you, ‘I don’t know if you realize it, but that example you used is really insensitive,’ your response better be, ‘Tell me more. I’m listening.’”

It happened to Alexander recently with a TEDx Talk she delivered that has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times online. Out of all those viewers, just one reached out to let her know that an axiom she described as a “Chinese blessing” was not in fact a Chinese blessing. Worse yet, Alexander illustrated that portion of the speech with a picture of a fortune cookie, which are not typically served at restaurants in China.

“That was hugely eye-opening,” Alexander says. “I followed up with her and we spoke for over an hour. At no point did I defend those choices or explain my intentions; that wasn’t the point of the conversation. My only goal was to understand her position and actively work to do better. All feedback is a gift, so as speakers, we should be incredibly grateful for it, even if sometimes it stings a little.

“I don’t know of any speaker who doesn’t want their audience to be uplifted and motivated and advanced as a result of having heard them speak,” she continues.

“I know I do. If I leave a speech and I hear, ‘Wow, these people felt really excluded because of what you said,’ I feel like that’s a giant lost opportunity.”

For those worried about unconscious bias ruining their connection with an audience, Alexander says plenty of resources exist to ensure you aren’t unwittingly offensive. Books, websites, Facebook groups, and LinkedIn groups are good places to start, she says, but you also can consider asking others for feedback.

“You could post on LinkedIn and say, ‘I’m about to give a talk that I think might have problematic elements when it comes to the way I’m discussing immigration,’” she says. “Say, ‘I want to acknowledge everybody’s humanity, and if there’s anybody who would be willing to give me some feedback on this, I would be open to it.’”

### All About Awareness

In the end, a big part of managing unconscious bias has to do with awareness. Awareness of your thoughts, awareness of what you’re saying, and awareness of what you’re planning to say. Even the words you use deserve consideration.

“When you’re giving a speech, you tell a story and you get

to move the story in the direction you’d like it to go,” Fuller says. “You get to pick the words that you use. Those words can be inclusive—they can be complete and whole—or you can tell just one story. Be really conscious about whether your word choice is focused only on your own lens, or whether your word choice is open enough and inclusive enough to include everyone who might engage with what you’re saying.”

The earlier in the process you start thinking about bias, the more successful you’ll be at weeding it out, Upton adds.

“As I prepare my outline or begin to fill it in with the content, what assumptions am I bringing to this topic or presentation?” she says. “Just ask yourself that question, and you’ll be amazed at what you see. The focus is never about intent; it’s about impact. It’s, ‘How do I make sure I’m doing everything possible so that this speech has a positive impact on everybody who hears this message?’” **T**

“How do I make sure I’m doing everything possible so that this speech has a positive impact on everybody who hears this message?”

—PAMELA FULLER

**Greg Glasgow** is a Denver-based freelance writer and a frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster magazine*.



# The Benefits of Branding

How to best represent and leverage the Toastmasters brand.

BY LAURA AMANN

**W**hen you think of the Toastmasters International brand, what first comes to mind? The logo? The colors maroon, navy blue, and gray? The club banner?

A brand is all of these things and more. Having a cohesive brand helps people recognize an organization, a product, or even a person. It's a set of unified elements that shape the perception of that organization, product, or person. It's also how you communicate your vision to your audience.

"Branding is more than just a random bunch of rules," says Ilana Herzberg, brand specialist at Toastmasters International. "It brings a cohesiveness to the organization."

The visual elements are often the most recognizable aspects of an organization or product. Think of a group of restaurants, or a product at a grocery store. There is something similar enough that when you see it, you know what to expect.

While the most recognizable elements of Toastmasters' branding include the logo and colors, the branding also encompasses

the tagline ("Where Leaders Are Made"), the core values (integrity, respect, service, excellence), and even the voice and tone (friendly, professional, and positive).

**Having a cohesive brand is what allows people from around the world to recognize the name Toastmasters.**

Everything that a club, Area, District, or region produces—website copy, social media posts, fliers, and contest announcements to name a few—has to follow basic brand guidelines. And all interactions, whether in email, phone calls, or direct conversation, need to convey a clear and warm tone.

Confused as to how to put all of this into action? In 2020, Toastmasters released a new [Brand Manual](#) to help members and leaders understand the

guidelines and quickly find information on colors, fonts, logo usage, and more. The Brand Manual and [Brand Portal](#) are great places for inspiration and marketing ideas.

## Why Branding Matters

Herzberg points out that without branding guidelines, Toastmasters would just be 16,200 clubs, each with their own logo, colors, and approach. Having a strong, recognizable brand means that clubs can benefit from 96 years of history and legacy, with a support system, a website, a way to find other clubs, and most importantly, a proven education program.

She uses McDonald's as an easily understood example of the importance of branding. It's the same Golden Arches across the world; there isn't a cowboy hat or Eiffel Tower perched on top. However, restaurants in different regions can customize their menu. In Toastmasters, this works the same way. You can tailor your meetings, but the fundamental elements remain the same.





Having a cohesive brand means that any club you visit around the world, whether online or in person, will have the same meeting elements. There will be a Toastmaster of the Day, speeches will follow the Pathways learning experience, and Table Topics® will be intimidating.

### Put the Brand Into Action

For some Toastmasters leaders, understanding brand guidelines will be their first encounter with branding, while other officers and leaders may have years of experience. The Brand Manual breaks down the disparity and makes it possible for all clubs and Districts to produce the same polished products.

One of the most common assumptions Herzberg hears is “If I don’t use the logo then I don’t have to adhere to the brand guidelines.” This is not the case, she explains. It’s not the logo alone that makes the brand. “Every material, brochure, web post, and invitation is a representation of the brand, regardless of whether it has the logo or not. It still needs the right colors, fonts, pictures, and tone.”

This means that anything your club posts online or on paper needs to adhere. You can’t have other decorative elements, such as hearts, flags, or palm trees, for example. When in doubt, reach out to World Headquarters: [brand@toastmasters.org](mailto:brand@toastmasters.org).

As long as you’re creating paper or online promotional materials (with the exception of certificates), if you are following the Toastmasters Brand Manual, you don’t need approval from World Headquarters. However, products such as apparel, accessories, videos, and websites need to get approval through a [Trademark Use Request form](#) before you purchase or produce them. And some materials (acrylic name badges, ribbons, pins, and club banners) cannot be either designed or produced locally—they must be obtained through Toastmasters

International. This is not only for brand compliance but also for award and recognition consistency.

Trademarks are particularly important for nonprofit organizations. “Any material that could merely suggest a partnership that could potentially be profitable threatens our nonprofit status,” explains Herzberg.

For this reason, clubs cannot partner officially with other fundraisers. Even a simple walk-a-thon or hospital fundraiser can be problematic. The Toastmasters logo or name might appear on apparel or fliers alongside more controversial or polarizing organizations.

### Rising to the Challenge

The first time Shruti Shivhare became aware of the Toastmasters brand guidelines was in July 2020, when she took on the role of Division PR Focal (a position on the District 98, Division A PR team). At the time, most club members in her Division perceived the guidelines as a restriction and an obstacle to their creativity. However, she was determined to challenge herself and inspire other members by showing what you could do within the guidelines.

She started designing brand-compliant fliers, posters, animations, and videos for Division-level events. “To my surprise, the work started to create an impact, and the materials got appreciated all over the District,” Shivhare says.

She soon realized that rather than looking at the guidelines as a hinderance, the limited options actually increased her level of creativity. She began working with a team to conduct sessions and workshops to familiarize club officers with brand guidelines and help them adapt. “It was a great opportunity to challenge ourselves and put our skills to the test,” she says.

Shivhare also notes that facing challenges is what helps people realize their true potential. “All the guidelines, which seemed to be obstacles at first, were an

## RESOURCES

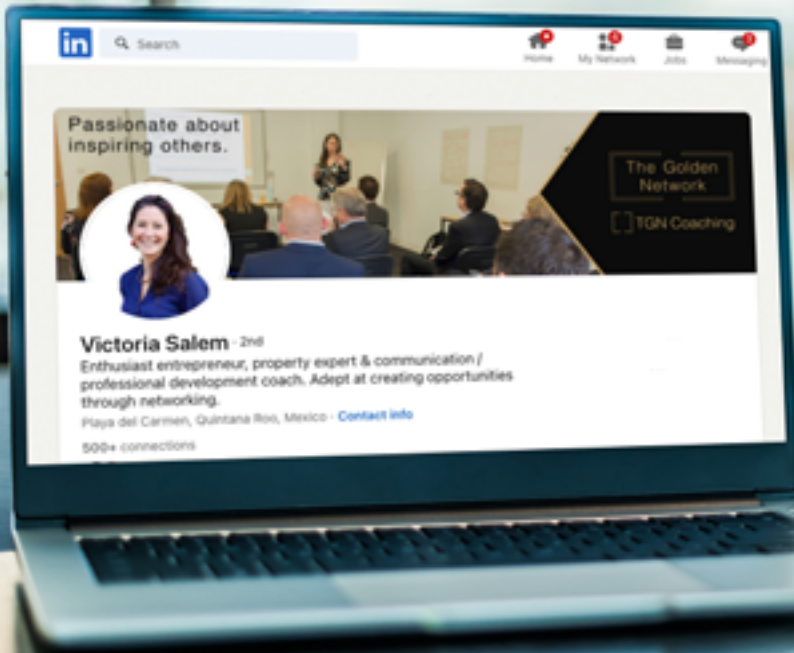
- ▶ [Brand Manual](#). This comprehensive and user-friendly manual contains all the information about creating materials, including an FAQ section.
- ▶ [Brand Portal](#). The brand portal includes the Brand Manual, as well as marketing resources, such as branded photos, templates for business cards, fliers, newsletters, and more. It’s also where you can find the Trademark Use Request.
- ▶ The [Policy and Protocol 4.0 on Intellectual Property](#) in Toastmasters governing documents explains the expectations regarding the use of Toastmasters intellectual property.
- ▶ Brand Specialist. Email [brand@toastmasters.org](mailto:brand@toastmasters.org) for any questions that aren’t covered in the manual or on the portal.

opportunity to upgrade my skills, and it’s been my pleasure to not only use them constructively but also to bring change to the perspective of others.”

Trisha “Trixie” Hunter-Merrill, DTM, of Eloquent Entrepreneurs in Greenwood Village, Colorado, also embraces the brand guidelines of Toastmasters. “Think of it this way,” she says, “if you have your own business or you’re a star, you have a brand, and you want to protect that brand. If you did all this work to build up that brand, you wouldn’t want somebody else changing the colors and fonts and doing things outside of what your brand is.”

Take the opportunity to learn more about branding—expand your skill set, challenge yourself to work within guidelines, and embrace the possibilities. **T**

*Laura Amann is magazine supervisor and editor for the Toastmaster magazine.*



“Tailor your Toastmasters leadership skills to the skills required for a given job opening.”

—KATHY HANSEN,  
PH.D.

# Revamp Your Resume

How to showcase the skills and achievements you've gained through Toastmasters.

BY VICTORIA SALEM

As a Toastmaster, you have likely improved your leadership skills, become a better public speaker, discovered oratory techniques that help you reach your goals when you present, and more. You are clear on the benefits

of being part of Toastmasters, but people you meet might not be. So how can you best explain Toastmasters? How do you showcase what you have learned? How do you use this experience to benefit your career?

Before you meet a potential new client, head to a networking event, or go on an interview, the person you are about to meet will certainly check your LinkedIn profile and/or your resume. So, where do you highlight Toastmasters within those two?

As a professional coach and networking expert, I regularly get asked this question. And the answer is that it depends on your own personal experience. Indeed, there are several ways you can highlight the skills you developed and explain the Toastmasters benefits to people you meet or people viewing your resume or profile online.

The first questions to ask yourself are:

- ▶ What information do I want people to know about this experience?



- ▶ How important is this experience within my career? Is it necessary to include it in the experiences section?
- ▶ What skills are important to highlight and how can I illustrate them with personal stories?

### The Toastmasters Journey on Your Resume

Your Toastmasters experience and the skills gained can be detailed in different parts of your resume:

- ▶ Experiences section
- ▶ Skills section
- ▶ Additional information
- ▶ Honors and awards, if relevant

Kathy Hansen, Ph.D., a former Toastmaster and author of nine books on career development and job searching, doesn't believe in separating professional experience from volunteer experience. Hansen says, "Experience is experience." Listing Toastmasters as part of your professional experience makes the most sense under certain circumstances:

- ▶ If you were a District or international leader.
- ▶ If an officer position you have held is especially relevant to the job you seek. For example, Vice President Public Relations for a PR or marketing job or Treasurer for an accounting job.

- ▶ If you have high-level achievements in the speech-contest realm and speaking/presentations are relevant to the job.
- ▶ If you have had one or more gaps in your employment history.

Ian Hanreck, a transformational career coach in London, England, suggests that your Toastmasters experience be included under your "Key Skills" or "Key Skills and Achievements" section—a section of six to eight bullet points located after your contact details and before your career history. Hanreck says, "Every CV should have a heading with 'achievements' in the title because most applicant tracking systems are programmed to search for that word when scanning resumes."

First highlight your presentation and communication skills. Then add a few words about your level of experience, mentioning you are a Toastmasters member. Most employers will care more about your skills than where you acquired them. They want to know you have that skill and at what level.

"Tailor your Toastmasters leadership skills to the skills required for a given job opening," Hansen says. She suggests you look at the list of 300 Pathways competencies and choose the top five to 10 you developed in Toastmasters that are relevant to the job description.

Hansen also recommends consulting the [Club Leadership Handbook](#) and [District Leadership Handbook](#) for the scope of each of these leadership roles and what competencies they



require. (The [Toastmasters International website](#) also has descriptions for Region Advisors and other roles.) Identify those you have practiced and developed and come up with an example of how you have used each, and ideally how that skill applies to the job you are applying for.

The skills section is usually composed of words and short phrases so you can look for opportunities in other sections to elaborate on your accomplishments or roles that demonstrate the skills cited or to highlight your involvement with a Toastmasters club (within extracurricular activities or additional information). You can list these points under a Toastmasters heading, then the title of your role, followed by two or three skills you use. Hansen shared an example from her resume:

**Public Relations Officer**, Toastmasters International, District 9 (Inland Pacific Northwest), July 2012 to July 2014

- Marketed and generated publicity for Toastmasters District covering 800 members, parts of three states, and 63 clubs.
- Achieved excellent record of press placements.
- Conducted PR training.

Your resume should not exceed two pages, so you are limited in the content you can include. Focus on highlighting the essential, which you can then develop when you meet the interviewer.

### Showcasing Toastmasters on LinkedIn

On LinkedIn, you can list your key skills and achievements in your profile summary (the “About” section). Add them with your other skills using a bulleted list. For example:

- ▶ Excellent public speaker
- ▶ Advanced team leadership skills
- ▶ Outstanding written and verbal communication skills

Then include information about your Toastmasters membership and roles further down on your profile within “Accomplishments” or “Volunteer Experience.” On my profile, I included Toastmasters under the “Volunteer Experience” section as I decided to highlight the roles I have taken in my club.

When you mention Toastmasters on your LinkedIn profile or resume, avoid jargon and abbreviations, like “DTM” or “DCP.” However, if you do use your designation in your LinkedIn name,

# A Pitch With Purpose

Can you make a lasting impression in a few seconds?

BY STEPHANIE DARLING

**A**n effective elevator speech is a bantam biography you can use to intrigue a listener in the 20 to 30 seconds it takes to ride several floors on an elevator.

The elevator speech is a ready-made opportunity to demonstrate the concise speaking skills you’ve been perfecting in Toastmasters. During your career, you’ll be asked countless times, “What do you do?” The elevator speech is your polished and personalized answer.

Like any good speech, the elevator pitch is customized to the interests of the audience, whether it’s a one-on-one exchange or given to a group of people. Rather than touting degrees and titles, share details that will intrigue listeners and make them want to know more.

Take a basic paragraph about yourself and tailor it to the audience. Four common elevator elements are: your name, what you do, a snapshot of key strengths, and a micro example of how you’ve used your talents to solve a problem or deliver noteworthy results. Some people also include what they love about their job.

If you sense a spark among listeners, or someone has questions, you’ve made an initial impact, says Simon Bucknall, an executive speaking coach who presented “The Art of the Elevator Speech” at the Toastmasters 2020 International Convention. “Your listeners’ response will lead you,” adds Bucknall, who placed

second in the 2017 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Some of his additional points: “People will rarely complain [about a short elevator speech] as long as you give enough information to move the conversation forward.” One of his favorites comes from motivational speaker W. Mitchell, describing how devastating accidents temporarily left him in the “prison” of a wheelchair. His mission to inspire others to rise above personal prisons led Mitchell to a fascinating elevator pitch: “I help people stage jail breaks.”

Stories can be a pivotal point in the elevator speech, Bucknall adds. “As anyone who’s been in Toastmasters knows, stories can bring a product, service, or idea to life.” The challenge is pruning a two-minute tale down to about 10 seconds. Crafting an elevator speech is “not an exact science,” Bucknall adds. “What resonates with one group or person may not with another. It’s not a fixed script, although in time, you start to figure out what messages people find relatable.”

Above all, a good elevator speech is delivered in a conversational and authentic tone. The speaker must demonstrate genuine enthusiasm. “If it starts to sound trite, your mindset isn’t right. You have to believe what you’re saying,” Bucknall adds. **T**

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list the full title and an explanation in the “Accomplishments” or “Licenses and Certifications” sections where awards, completed courses, and distinctions are added. A simple explanation for a DTM, for example, would be that it’s the highest credential a Toastmaster can achieve. If other awards on the list are explained, give a concise description of what was done to earn the award.

When you add your Toastmasters experience on LinkedIn, link it to the [Toastmasters International LinkedIn page](#) (this is the first line of the experience, called “Organization”). This will improve your visibility to people searching for Toastmasters-related content and it looks more professional as the Toastmasters logo will appear on your experience.

For the role, you can write, “Various roles held at the *club name*” or the title of position you hold. Then comes the description, where you describe the current responsibilities you undertake with your club, your past roles, the awards you have gained, and the skills you have developed. This is also where you can include any mentoring work you have performed, the help you have given to other members, and how this experience has benefited you.

Break up your content with short paragraphs and subheads and include bulleted lists to make the information easier to

digest. Try to keep it short with paragraphs of three to five sentences. Remember, the idea is to share limited information on LinkedIn and give more detail in an interview or meeting.

The skills you have improved thanks to Toastmasters can also be showcased within the “Skills and Endorsements” section. Add the attributes you feel are relevant to your profile and experiences. And don’t forget to ask your Toastmasters LinkedIn connections to endorse you!

In addition to your resume and LinkedIn profile, you should regularly share your Toastmasters experiences on your social media accounts. Post images, quotes, and videos directly on the feeds of the platforms you are active on. This will allow your contacts to stay in touch with you and discover more about the skills you are developing. **T**

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## YOUR TOASTMASTERS ELEVATOR SPEECH

**H**ow do you pitch your Toastmasters experience to someone you network with, a client, or a possible future employer?

To best prepare, it is key that you define your goals. Tailor the information shared, limit it to what is needed, and develop the aspects relevant for the person you speak to or for the role you are applying for.

For a general introduction, explain what Toastmasters is, [along with its benefits](#). Then highlight what skills it has helped you reinforce and how it translates to your professional life.

To highlight the responsibilities and skills developed in an officer role, your elevator speech will be more focused and specific to the role. First, write down the role you want to explain, the tasks you accomplished, and the competencies gained. Select one or two striking examples that best illustrate your experience.

Valentinus Pramana is a Toastmaster in Australia and has held numerous roles, including Area Director. Pramana says, “In order to best pitch a role you have undertaken at Toastmasters, it is important to share your personal story. We all have different



goals and the benefits we get from being an active Toastmasters member will vary for each individual. The more authentic you can make your story, the more you will resonate with the person you have in front of you.”

Here is what you could say:

“During my time with Toastmasters, I held the role of Club President, which helped me strengthen my communication and organization skills. On a weekly basis, I supervised all the roles necessary to run the club meetings and ensured that our meetings were conducted smoothly, which included managing the unexpected. One day, for example, *this and this happened, and this is how I managed the situation.*”

—Victoria Salem

# Write On!

## Journaling to Excellence

Recording our emotional responses helps us become better communicators and leaders.

BY CAREN S. NEILE, PH.D.

**W**hat do grunge rocker Courtney Love, the late South African President Nelson Mandela, and explorer Marco Polo have in common? You may be surprised to learn that they are among the millions of people around the world and throughout history who have kept journals.

According to the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York, journaling is simply writing down your thoughts and feelings to understand them more clearly. While a diary is intended to look back on where you've been, a journal helps you analyze the past with a purpose: to look forward to where you're going.

If it seems unusual that a medical center promotes journaling, consider this: Journaling has been proven to help people improve physical health—immune system, sleep, and even wound care—in large part because it affects mental and emotional health. Those benefits may include enhanced mindfulness, better memory, more self-confidence, higher emotional intelligence, and, of course, stronger communication skills.

The mental and emotional benefits in particular make journaling a highly effective contribution to the savvy communicator's or leader's toolbox. In fact, "Understanding Emotional Intelligence (EI)," a Level 3 project in the Motivational Strategies path of Pathways, requires that you keep a journal about your emotions and how they impact you and others, and then speak to your club about what you've written. EI is the ability to understand and

manage your feelings and to self-motivate, as well as to understand the feelings of others and respond appropriately.

**The benefits of journaling may include enhanced mindfulness, better memory, more self-confidence, higher emotional intelligence, and, of course, stronger communication skills.**

In addition, claims Toronto, Ontario, Canada, freelance writer Hayley Phelan, writing is "fundamentally an organizational system." So keeping a journal helps organize and process a particular event in our mind, she explains. That's one reason why our working memory improves when we journal. Our brains are freed from the work it takes to process the experience.

### Look for Patterns

Recording and reviewing your feelings and responses on a regular basis can also help you recognize patterns in your behavior and interactions. That kind of self-awareness can in turn make you a better leader and better communicator, which is one of the reasons it can have a direct effect on Toastmasters activities. There are others, as well.

"Journaling helps me to come up with speech ideas," explains longtime member Basha McCrumb, DTM, Past District 38 Director. "It also helps me to see my growth if I go back and reread where I was when I started on various paths or leadership roles and compare that to where I am currently."

For example, she recently looked back at journal entries corresponding to the beginning of her leadership journey in Toastmasters, when she became President of a newly chartered club.

"I saw how naïve and hesitant I was! Then I scrolled on to [entries marking] the beginning of other leadership roles

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNALING EXPERIENCE!

If you keep a Toastmasters-related journal, how have you benefited from the experience? Do you look back at past entries to understand yourself better? Does your club keep any kind of journal or chronicle of its growth? Share your reflections with us at [magazine@toastmasters.org](mailto:magazine@toastmasters.org).





and was amazed at the growth I have seen in myself since then,” recalls McCrumb, a resident of Delaware who belongs to five clubs. “I still have questions and concerns with each new role, of course, but they are changing as I grow.”

### Guided Journals

Many people simply use whatever they have on hand for their journals, but Emmet Naughton, of the Berkeley Square Speakers Toastmasters Club in London and the online club Firebirds Collective, went much further. In order to excel as speakers and leaders and help others do the same, he and his partner, Valeria Crespo, created [The Speaker's Journal](#), a guided journal chockfull of motivational ideas (“Passion. Purpose. When was the last time you spoke with either of these?”); quotes (From Steve Jobs: “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower”); and useful content (“Key benefits of humor in public speaking: Humor can put a tense room of listeners at ease. Being funny for a moment will also put you at ease”) that complement the Toastmasters experience.

“I needed a central point from which to build. I needed room to expand my ideas and to explore the important conversations in my life [both personal and professional] on paper,” explains Naughton. “The journal is also there to empower the user with smart, simple, and repeatable routines that range from preparation to reflection.

“From my own experience and those of others, I can tell you that it’s worked.”

### Tips for Your Journaling Journey

■ **Just do it:** Five minutes. One sentence. No censoring. Maybe you want to start writing after your next meeting or speech—or before.

■ **Keep it simple:** If you decide to go the pen and paper route, pick up a notebook or ready-made journal that calls out to you, either in style, size, or number of pages. (The [Toastmasters online store](#) has a few notebooks that could meet the need.)

■ **To be digital, or not to be digital:** Although McCrumb, the longtime member from Delaware, prefers to use a written journal, she suffers from a common condition: terrible handwriting.

“Currently I am journaling in a Word document,” she says. “However, I print it out and put it in a physical journal, as I also include mementos or other items as well. Those may be pictures or a napkin from an airplane, or confetti from a play, etc.”

Typing on a phone or computer can yield the same outcome as paper, especially if it’s easier for you. You could even use a voice recorder. Until journaling becomes a habit, you might want to use some type of reminder until you automatically remember to pull up the file.

■ **Make it a habit:** “I find consistency is a very powerful tool in journaling,” says Catalina Roza, of Berkeley Square Speakers and Early Bird Speakers in London. “It makes it easier to commit to daily goals, and it helps me set an intention before

starting the day. Then when I end the day, I check my goals and see how I did.”

■ **Top secret:** Your journal is a guide to your personal journey. You don’t need to share its contents with anyone, including club members, unless you choose to. That said, sharing bits and pieces might open up good conversations and connections with other leaders. (And as we’ve seen, a journal can be a gold mine for speech material.)

■ **Look back:** From time to time, turn back the pages of your journal to review the thoughts and behaviors you find there. Are there any you want to capitalize on, or others you want to overcome?

“I write down my emotions and thoughts before and after events and then look back at those perceptions from time to time to see how things have evolved,” says Andrew P. Bennett, DTM, another member in the Berkeley Square Speakers and Firebirds Collective.

Finally, as if you needed any more motivation to give journaling a try, remember; The kind of skills that journaling promotes has benefits far beyond the club meeting.

“Journaling and targeted reflective practices like it actually hold the keys to making you a better person,” says Andrew Ben-Salem of Berkeley Square Speakers. “They help you become not only someone who is more aware of how you communicate with others, but also someone who is constantly learning about the way you are showing up, and making improvements so that you can connect better with others in general.”

All this, of course, is on top of the physical and emotional benefits. Now that’s what I’d call a tool for success. Wouldn’t you? **T**

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# Speaking Skills in Everyday Life

How Toastmasters training helps us connect with others in a meaningful way.

BY JOHN BOWE

One of the first and best insights I received upon joining Speakeasy Toastmasters in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, came from a 40-year member, Gordon Andersen. “Speeches,” he explained, “are made up of parts and techniques.” Our primary focus in Toastmasters, he continued, is to study both.

As a writer by profession, in full command of my subjects and predicates, nouns and pronouns, I understood the idea of analyzing language—on the page. When it came to speech, however, I had virtually no idea of what he meant.

As I fumbled through my introductory exercises, I learned to isolate the various components of speech—word choice, vocal tone, body movement, and techniques like purpose and organization that bring them all together. By observing and practicing each element on its own, my understanding of what it means to be persuasive grew in tandem with my ability to connect with the people around me.

Indeed, after several years of study, I came to understand that what we learn in our meetings applies as well to virtually every kind of communication—at home, at work, with family and friends. Here are some key skills I’ve learned in Toastmasters that have helped me to be more thoughtful, effective, and connected in everyday life.

## Word Choice

In Toastmasters, we learn that being conscious and measured with our word choices can make a speech more enjoyable and persuasive. This principle applies to one-on-one, real-life discussions too.

## Be careful with absolutes.

In speeches, we avoid words likely to insult or alienate our audience. What about offstage? Couples, for example, are often shocked to discover the destructive power of the words “always” and “never.” An accusation like “You *never* say you’re sorry!” is provocative and divisive. Framing the

same idea from a more personal perspective yields a far more constructive result: “I wish that you would take the time to apologize when you know you’ve messed up, so we can acknowledge it and move on together.” The goal in both cases is virtually identical. But where the former eliminates any possibility of healing or connection, the latter serves to invite collaboration.

## Use words designed to resonate with each specific audience.

Almost every demographic describes the world with its own, inward-facing vocabulary. Butchers, garment manufacturers, and librarians, for example, all use the word “rack” to mean something completely different. In Toastmasters, we learn to unpack terms to make them mean the same thing to every member of the audience.

In everyday life as in speeches, the perfect word choice has the power to cement shared understanding. When my son, Santiago, was 3 years old, I began to

wonder what message he received when I said, “I love you.” Did he understand anything beyond a recognition that the expression meant something vaguely positive? As an experiment one day, I said, “You know what Santi? You make me really happy.” The effect was instant. He beamed. The word had landed squarely in the center of his cognitive universe, describing something he understood, and enlisting him as an active partner. Instead of being the passive recipient of my emotions, he became the guy who causes his big old dad to light up.

### Organization

Speakers—or their introducers—often explain at the beginning of a speech what they will talk about and why it might be valuable, and in doing so, they secure their audience’s attention and align both parties’ expectations. While it would be weird to begin every exchange in “real” life with a similar, formal introduction, it pays to be mindful how this principle plays out in most conversations.

**Say hello.** Before talking, it’s critical to obtain your listener’s “permission” to talk. Are you interrupting? Are they ready to engage? Initiating conversation at a bad time can be just as ineffective as expressing yourself poorly, or saying something inappropriate.

**Give adequate context.** In everyday life, it’s exasperating when people tell stories about people and events you aren’t familiar with (“Wait, who’s Travis? How did we get to Kuala Lumpur?”). However you order your comments, always make sure to cover the basics.

**Let your audience be your guide.** Different listeners can have different expectations for how a conversation will go. In many rural cultures around the world, rushing to the point before exchanging a relaxed greeting comes across as

rude. By contrast, in most North American business contexts, such a casual approach can be perceived as unprofessional.

**We like to think that feeling connected with others is a serendipitous affair. Sometimes it is—but most of the time, it takes conscious effort and knowledge of best practices.**

A friend employed by a large financial advisory firm in New York City recently began reporting to a new boss who soon took him aside. “Look,” he said, “You seem smart. But I have about seven seconds to figure out which of the two thousand things people tell me every day I really need to listen to.” He asked my friend to always give the “headline” first, every time they spoke. If it sounds stressful, it was—for a couple of weeks, until he figured it out.

### Delivery

We learn in Toastmasters that gestures and vocal variety also amplify (or distract from) presentations. How often in everyday life do we weaken our message with haphazard or unconsciously inharmonious vocal or physical technique?

**Be aware of your body.** Most Toastmasters know the damage done by shy, or awkward, onstage body language, but how often in everyday life do we sabotage good communication by slouching during meetings, looking off in the distance, checking our phones, or otherwise failing to demonstrate attentiveness? Of course, relaxed contexts offer greater leeway—but when it counts, ensure that your body language doesn’t send the wrong message.

**Mind your tone.** Think of a parent’s soothing voice while comforting a child,

or an abusive supervisor’s impatient tone while fielding a question. Your voice has the power to create or destroy good will. An editor at a prestigious magazine used to call me on the phone before sending her emailed notes about my most recent draft. “I think this is probably. Some of the best. Writing. I’ve ever. Seen. How do you do it?” Her tone was ironic, one of mock awe, and of course, I knew she was buttering me up for the criticism I’d face in the email. But it worked to ease the pain every time.

We like to think that feeling connected with others is a serendipitous affair. Sometimes it is—but my personal view is that through conscious effort and knowledge of best practices, speech training can vastly improve our mental and emotional health. Think of it this way: When we speak in ways that are confusing or fail to engage our listeners, we push people away. When we are easy to understand and connect with, others find our company more enjoyable. If you could calculate the cumulative effect of good or bad communication habits over time, it would be easy to see how good communications skills enhance or detract from our relations with the people around us.

The ultimate goal of speech education is not to be the most charismatic or persuasive person in the world—or even just to learn to give better speeches—but rather, to be happy and to make others happy as well. The world may not always agree with your point of view, but if you feel connected and understood by the people around you, odds are good that you yourself will be happier as well. ■

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**John Bowe** is a speech and presentation expert. He is the author of [I Have Something to Say: Mastering the Art of Public Speaking in an Age of Disconnection](#), and a former member of *Speakeasy Toastmasters* in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.



# Whistling in the Dark

Nothing like a little gallows humor to find fun in the not funny.

BY JOHN CADLEY

**T**he condemned man stands before a firing squad. The captain in charge offers him a final cigarette. The man replies, “No thanks, I’m trying to quit.”

This is gallows humor, a form of joking that deals with dire situations and grim subject matter in such a way as to make them more socially palatable. No one wants to hear that someone is “ill,” for instance. It’s too blunt. The word reveals a certain lack of consideration for the hypochondriacal among us who immediately jump from “ill” to “illness” to “serious illness” to “I hope he makes it.” Instead, we say the patient is “under the weather,” “not feeling up to par,” “not 100%,” “has some kind of bug,” or, if we really must be clinical, “down for the count.” Being a bit of a hypo myself, whenever I’m in mild respiratory distress I instruct my wife to refer to it as simply a “head cold,” or even more preferably, “the sniffles.” She is more than happy to comply, since the alternative would be for her to keep reassuring me that, no, I am not going to die, and yes, my will is up to date.

Freud jumps in here—as he seems to do whenever “grim” is the operative word—by theorizing that jokes of the dark humor variety are as revealing as dreams—an unconscious attempt to release psychic tension and to somehow get comfortable with a hopeless situation. It reminds me of the two men chained hand and foot to a dungeon wall, surrounded by concentric circles of (a) a moat with crocodiles, (b) a ring of fire, (c) a line of spiked fences, and (d) a pack of

ravenous wolves ... with one man saying to the other, “Now here’s my plan.”

Gallows humor gets its name, obviously, from the gallows, which has been employed throughout the ages to expedite one’s journey to the afterlife, usually involuntarily. The device reached its highest level of refinement with the Julian gallows, invented in 1892 by James Julian, an architect. Considering human safety is essential to good architectural design, I would love to know how Mr. Julian reconciled this requirement with the purpose for which his creation was intended.

**When American comedian Bob Hope was asked where he wanted to be buried, he said, “Surprise me.”**

Not surprisingly, the medical profession has a particular penchant for gallows humor, dealing as they so often do with the “ills that flesh is heir to.” (Thank you, Mr. Shakespeare.) A few years back I had a total hip replacement, which my doctor insensitively referred to as “major surgery.” (I would have much preferred “routine procedure.”) As I was about to be rendered unconscious, I remarked to the anesthesiologist that her job must require a great deal of training and a high level of skill. To which she replied, “I don’t get paid to put you to sleep. I get paid to wake you up.” Then she laughed. I didn’t.

People remembered for their words will make sure their final ones are no less impressive. When a priest asked Voltaire on his death bed to renounce Satan, the French philosopher replied, “This is no time to be making enemies.” And when Benjamin Franklin and his colonial colleagues committed treason by signing the Declaration of Independence, Franklin famously advised: “We must all hang together or, most assuredly, we will all hang separately.”

Humor being their stock in trade, comedians can always be counted on for some clever gallows whimsy, as when the American humorist Erma Bombeck wrote: “Seize the moment. Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart.” And when another American comedian, Bob Hope, was asked where he wanted to be buried, he said, “Surprise me.”

My favorite example of irreverent jesting comes from a friend of mine with a devilishly mordant sense of humor. I was going through a particularly difficult time. It seemed that everything that could go wrong, did. Having coffee with him one morning, I mentioned how low I was feeling and he said, “Don’t worry—it’s always darkest just before it goes completely black.”

You might think that’s a horrible thing to say ... but it made me laugh. **T**

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