

The TOASTMASTER

JULY 2003

Aloha from Hawaii

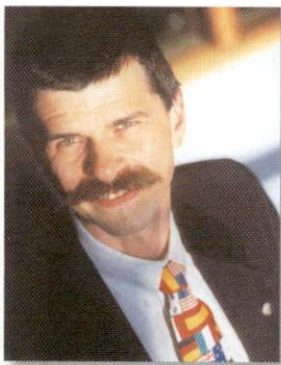


An interview with Hawaii Governor
and Toastmasters supporter Linda Lingle.

What's Your EQ:

Emotional intelligence is more relevant to
success than intellectual intelligence.

Lie, Cheat and Steal
Your Way to Table
Topics Success



VIEWPOINT

A Business Plan for Success

◆ ANY BUSINESS NEEDS A PLAN TO BE SUCCESSFUL, SO ONE OF THE FIRST TASKS FOR your new club executive committee is to develop the club's business plan. This activity will include deciding on goals and identifying strategies to achieve them. Make objectives attainable and measurable. For example:

- Determine how many of your club members will achieve CTM, ATM, CL, AI, DTM.
- Set a target figure and target dates for enrolling new club members.
- Ensure that all club officers are trained and that dues and club officer lists are sent to World Headquarters on time.
- Determine who is going to do what by when, and what resources they will need. Make sure the resources are available.

This probably sounds familiar! It's the Distinguished Club Program (DCP). Every club around the world has this invaluable tool at its fingertips to help plan, monitor and ensure its success.

As Bea and I travelled around the world this year, we heard very strong support for our organization's Distinguished programs. For example:

- Leo from New Zealand is very proud that his club has been a President's Distinguished Club every year – demonstrating excellence in leadership.
- David from Australia excitedly reports that ever since the introduction of the DCP, his club has achieved all 10 goals by January every year, and it continues to register educational accomplishments until the June 30 deadline.
- Louise from Canada was the governor of a Distinguished Division three months before the end of her term. She credits her success to her amazing team of area governors and club officers.

World Headquarters tracks your progress against your 10 DCP goals. You can see how your club is doing on the TI Web site: www.toastmasters.org. Be sure to display the club's achievements at your meetings (tracking charts are available from the TI *Supply Catalog*). That way the whole club gets involved in striving for success.

Achieving the DCP goals means that members are developing their communication skills, enhancing their leadership skills, and benefiting from all that Toastmasters has to offer.

If you're a club officer, I encourage you to use the Distinguished Club Program as your business plan for success. If you are not a club officer, I encourage you to ask your executive committee to display the goals set for the club and to monitor the club's progress during the year. That way you can help your club achieve its goals, and on or before June 30, you can proudly state that you are a member of a Distinguished, Select Distinguished or even a President's Distinguished Club.

The plan works, so I urge you to work the plan. That way, you will bring out the best in yourself and your fellow members.

Gavin Blakey
Gavin Blakey, DTM
International President

The TOASTMASTER

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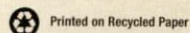
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The Toastmasters Vision:

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

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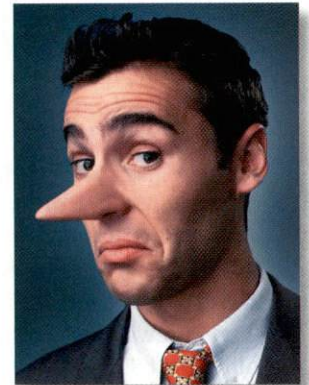
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History is filled with "old" people who accomplished great things.

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LETTERS

From the Mouths of Babes

My 7-year-old son recently attended the Division F International and Tall Tales speech contests with me. After we listened to four excellent speakers in each contest, I asked my son what he learned. Without hesitation, he said, "To talk to everyone like they were a king."

George S. Monat, ATM-G • Advanced Orators 3345-31 • Foxboro, Massachusetts

Let Me Be Clear

Reading John Cadley's May article was like walking on broken glass. Mr. Cadley's article is not about linguistic obfuscation, not about confusing the listener, but about abusing the listener. It's unacceptable to mislead and confuse another person by choice; this is called emotional abuse. Maybe shrewd businessmen use it as a strategy, but then shrewd businessmen have been known to embezzle funds as a strategy too.

What Mr. Cadley describes is the hallmark trait of an emotional disorder known as passive aggressiveness. People who are passive aggressive use this behavior to control and abuse their victims. I was a victim of this behavior and feel obligated to point out that this is wrong; it's emotional abuse and the author knows this, otherwise he wouldn't mention in his closing paragraph: "I thought I'd be a little embarrassed discussing such a delicate topic." Not only should he be embarrassed, but if this is how he deals with his personal relationships, I suggest he get some psychiatric help.

Nancy S. Jew • Bryant Park Club 2895-46 • New York, New York

Country of Origin

In the May issue, Mark Von Dadelszen of New Zealand complains of a "bias" by Toastmasters when addresses from writers in the United States don't include "U.S." as the country the writer is from, but just includes the state. I can address that issue for him and others who may have wondered the same thing.

It is common practice for newspapers and magazines not to include geographic origins of writers if they are from the same geographic region the publication is from. The same goes when referring to locations of events in articles.

Because *The Toastmaster* magazine is written, published and printed in the U.S., it is not necessary to say letters written in the U.S. are from the U.S.

In light of this explanation, it is hard for me to see how the writer can still call that a bias. Besides, most U.S. states are bigger than most countries, except for a few such as Russia, China, India and Australia. Publishers, you're doing it right; don't change anything.

Mike Kesselring, CTM • Mountain Messengers Club 3261-37 • Sylva, North Carolina

Good Things Come in Nuclear Packages

I enjoyed the article "Saying It Right" by Kimberly Porrazzo in the May issue. However I take exception to her final paragraph. In it she hopes for the removal of the word "nuclear" from the next edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* because it is often mispronounced and used as an adjective to describe war, arms or threat.

Nuclear is but a word that means relating to or pertaining to a nucleus, which is defined in *M-W Collegiate Dictionary Online* as "a central point, group, or mass about which gathering, concentration or accretion takes place."

Good things can come in nuclear packages: Consider nuclear family, nuclear medicine and nucleus, the central organelle in a living cell. Let's keep the word around a while longer and encourage presidents and others to pronounce it correctly.

Heather Pate, CTM • Discovery Club 1146-21 • Campbell River, BC, Canada

Martial Arts for the Mind

Sam Horn's article "Tongue Fu!" in the May issue was simply superb and contained information vital to effective communication. It is an article I will read again and again because it contains valuable ideals that need to be constantly reinforced. I encourage all Toastmasters to read the article and use its principles every day to reduce conflict and to encourage cooperation. And perhaps *The Toastmaster* magazine might consider reprinting the article from time to time to ensure that the message is kept alive.

Steve Howard, ATM-G • National Club 1117-70 • Sydney, NSW, Australia

Comedic Timing

The publication of Jason Love's article about stand-up comedy ("Defusing the Bomb") in the April issue was perfectly timed for me. On April 29th, I finally made my stand-up comedy debut – after more than 10 years of trying to get up the nerve to do so. It was only through my experience at Toastmasters that I was able to muster the courage to get up onstage. On top of that, Jason's article provided valuable insight from the lessons he learned from his experiences.

I remembered his advice about "fake it until you make it," and as I went onstage, I told myself, "Be a comedian." I followed Jason's advice further by "spritzing" the audience by thanking the comedians who came before me – all 17 of them – for warming up the crowd for me.

Surprisingly, the laughs came right away and pretty much flowed throughout my routine. It was a lot easier than I had imagined, and I have Jason and Toastmasters to thank for helping me achieve this goal.

Peter Junker • Wordsmiths Club 8449-F • Newport Beach, California



We hear what we expect and we listen for what we secretly want to hear.

Listening to the Audience

◆ LISTENING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF COMMUNICATION; it is too important to leave entirely in the hands of the audience. All great performers “play off” of their audiences. It’s essential that we speakers also respond and are affected by ours; that we close the circuit of feedback and create a living, dynamic relationship. This requires sensitivity, an emotional intuition, an empathic skill also known as “reading the audience.”

When comedian Bert Lahr was acting in *The Beauty Part* by S. N. Berman on Broadway, his son John was watching from the wings. At one point Lahr got a huge laugh on a single syllable. When he came offstage, his son asked him how he had known they would laugh at that moment. Lahr replied, “I just listened to the audience. They told me there was a laugh there.”

Anyone who works with an audience needs to develop the skill of listening to them. Ideally, we want to create a dialogue with them, just as we do with a group of good friends in close conversation. When the feedback loop is closed and each party is reacting energetically to the other, that’s when communication is the most successful and the most gratifying.

Standup comedy is the clearest example of this phenomenon. When great comedians are hitting their stride, it’s like a tennis match. The performer serves a punchline and the audience returns laughter. The performer reacts to the laughter, listening for the perfect moment to slap another one across the footlights. An experienced comedian can build the momentum in an audience until they become hysterical with laughter. Sometimes the audience must burst into applause simply to win a moment’s relief from laughter.

Few of us have the talent, skill or experience to provoke that degree of response from an audience. But we each create some level of response and it’s our job to listen for it, understand it and answer it. When we talk of “eye contact” most people think it’s a gift we give to the audience, one of the speaker’s tools of communication. But that’s just a by-product; the true purpose and value of eye contact should be reading them, paying attention to them, listening.

It’s important to read the audience correctly, and not to assume that they are hearing the same meaning you intend. This can be tricky, because sometimes the audience is not aware of their actual perceptions. Misunderstandings often rise from mis-hearing or mis-listening (mistening?). We hear what we expect and we listen for what we secretly want to hear.

Isaac Stern, the great violinist, once gave a concert in Montreal that I was privileged to attend. For one of his encores he played a piece that ended with progressively higher and higher notes, ending with the highest of all played whisper-quiet to a rapt audience, hushed and still. Interrupting the applause, Stern stepped forward and asked how many of us had been able to hear the last note. Eighty percent of us raised our hands. “That’s remarkable,” he said, “because that note is impossible to play on the violin. I merely drew the bow across without touching the strings. You created the note yourselves out of your need to hear that sound.”

The same thing happens in everyday communication. We hear what we need to hear.

My younger sister was nicknamed “Mimi” as a child. When she grew up she considered this diminutive name distasteful and told us all she wished to be called by her given name, Rebecca, instead. I agreed to this, though it was difficult to break a habit of 20-odd years. As the years passed, I grew accustomed to Rebecca in thinking of my sister, and by the time she reached her mid thirties, I was retrained.

One day we decided to meet in New York, on Fifth Avenue in Greenwich Village. At the appointed time I was standing on the corner, scanning the crowds of people and traffic for my sister. When she appeared on the diagonally opposite corner, I called to her – “Rebecca! Rebecca!!” – in a good strong voice. No reaction. She kept looking around in the wrong direction, obviously not hearing me. At last I shouted “Mimi!” and immediately her head snapped around to find me waving to her. What she was listening for on the deepest level was the old nickname. Perhaps at that moment on the corner she felt a bit small and in need of an older brother.

Being heard accurately and correctly is not to be taken for granted. We speakers must be aware of all the obstacles – physical, mental, emotional and musical – that stand between an audience and perfect understanding. **T**

Michael Landrum, ATM-B, is a speaker, actor and presentation coach who publishes a free online newsletter – *The Passionate Speaker*. He can be contacted through his Web site: www.CoachMike.com. He is a member of Henry Hudson Club 4507-53 in Newburgh, New York.



**Put your
hands in
their place.**

A Feat for the Hands

By Wes Andruet, CTM

Oh, the hands. So much depends on them. When we want to tie our shoes or dial a phone, we're awfully glad they exist. But when it comes to public speaking, sometimes the hands can feel like uninvited guests. They fidget, they clench, they flit all about, fueled by a nervous energy that gives them a life of their own. As Toastmasters, we strive to refine every nuance of our speaking skills, yet even the most accomplished speakers are sometimes bedeviled by those darned hands.

So what's the secret to hands? How do we reign them in and harness their expressive power? How do we avoid the troublesome and often repeated scenario where the hands control the speaker rather than the other way around?

The first thing to remember about hands is that they are an integral and inseparable part of the overall system of body language. Yet time and again they are singled out as the primary focus of attention – the proverbial hood ornament on the make and model of our speech. It is fitting, therefore, to put special emphasis on these two appendages,

for even if we master everything else, a pair of errant hands can give our luxury car the look and feel of a Yugo.

When it comes to the hands or any other aspect of body language, some pundits will simply say "act natural." Believe it or not, however, acting natural takes hard work – ask any teenager who's been caught smoking. It's similar to saying, "act comfortable," a pretty self-conflicting statement at best. The underlying theme here, however, is that a Toastmaster must "act," which is a skill that takes conscious effort and practice. So, merely forgetting about the hands won't work. We must make a concerted effort to make them do what we want.

Professional public speaker Patricia Fripp believes the first rule of hands is getting them out of the way altogether. In an article titled "Capturing Your Audience," she espouses a program of total restraint: "Try practicing a speech by clasping your hands behind your back to avoid meaningless, repetitive arm and hand gestures. It will be tough at first to concentrate on your talk without using your hands, but it will help stop superficial flailing and gesturing."

While banishing the hands to exile may seem a bit extreme, it is the first step toward understanding just how ostentatious and needless they can be. Like relinquishing any crutch, taking the hands away altogether may feel awkward, but in time this exercise builds a comprehensive awareness of body language and reduces the impulse for the hands to find their traditional, and often distracting, comfort zones.

Yet unless we're doing a speech on handcuffs or Houdini, there's no public speaking venue that will allow us to keep our hands behind our back. Eventually, they will have to be allowed to fall where they may, which can be a speaker's most difficult balancing act.

Steven Smith is a professional speaker, consultant and veteran Toastmaster who hesitates to offer tips for the hands alone – again, they are merely part of the overall package – but he readily admits most people have a problem with them. He's a firm believer in the notion that the hands have their time and place in a speech. "I compare them to the little red lights on a boom box," he says. "When the volume rises, so do the red lights. When it subsides, the lights go away." In other words, hands should rise and fall commensurate with the message of the speech.

Where should they fall? There's only one answer, according to Smith, and that's straight down. "The hands should fall loosely at the sides," he says. "That's naturally how we speak. But you'd be surprised at the number of public speakers who simply cannot do it."

Smith says because this seemingly natural impulse is so hard to perform on command, it is something that must be constantly and subtly practiced. "I call it water cooler practice," he says. "When you are engaged in everyday conversation, take notice of how your hands fall. You should default to this same natural hand position in front of a crowd."

Yet for all this emphasis on self-policing, there are some who believe the hands should be afforded more freedom. Gary Plaag is a speaking coach in Fairfax County, Virginia, who issues a ready caution to anyone who follows the rules too closely. "Hand gestures are an art, not a science," he says. "What's more, they're uniquely personal. What may be comfortable for one person may not be for another. It's all about knowing what your particular weaknesses are and working on them speech by speech."

Mr. Plaag's method of drawing awareness to the hands is to videotape his speakers and jointly discuss what they see. He is convinced that the value of video goes far beyond spoken evaluation. "If they can see it, they can work on it," he says. Of course, while he emphasizes a tailored, individual approach, he's not above employing a few tricks for itinerant hands. "If their hands are really out of control, I hand them a bowling ball and tell them to try the speech again," he says, propagating the idea that the speaker may be helped along if the hands are otherwise occupied.

"The hands should fall loosely at the sides," Smith says. "That's naturally how we speak. But you'd be surprised at the number of public speakers who simply cannot do it."

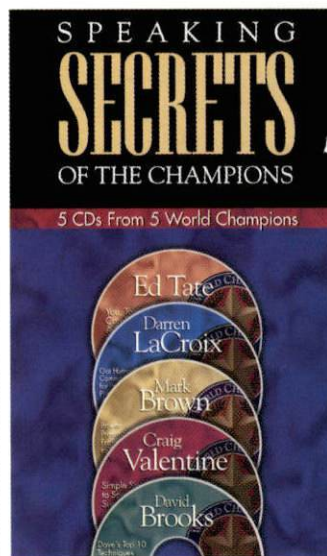
So if there is a lesson to be learned from the three noted speakers above, it is that the hands are an indispensable part of any verbal presentation, not just a pair of accessories along for the ride. Therefore, every public speaker must give due consideration to the hands, beginning with a very basic awareness of where they are and where they want to naturally stray. Gaining this awareness may require full restraint, or simply the "bowling ball treatment." In the end, however, the hands should suit not only the speaker but the message as well, complementing – not detracting from – the spoken word.

While acting natural may feel anything but, it is incumbent upon all Toastmasters to explore and conquer the various public speaking gremlins that tend to appear when the timing light starts. The hands are but one (or even two) of the elements composing the total physical package, but depending upon how they perform under pressure, they can mar an otherwise flawless speech.

So put your hands in their place, let them find their comfort zone, and consciously do what so many others can't... make it look easy. **T**

Wes Andruess, CTM, is a member of PENTAF Club 2014-27 in Washington, D.C.

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Lie, Cheat and

Your Way to

When I approach Table Topics, I don't want it to be too easy – give me something challenging to play with! Do you agree? Do you live for the adventure of rising to the Table Topics challenge?

Let me assure you that I didn't always feel this way. I remember many humiliating moments at the lectern when "the right answer" wouldn't come; I would stammer and blush and mutter disjointed thoughts. Several years ago, I realized that even though most Toastmasters have anxiety about Table Topics, many others embrace every opportunity to participate. They seem to carry this enthusiasm, adventurous spirit and mental flexibility into other areas of life as well. These people are great examples to anyone who feels limited by self-consciousness and muddled thought processes.

After months of observing these talented members, I made a commitment to bite the bullet and brave the Table Topics session whenever possible. I was determined to gain confidence and develop the skills that would please my audience, myself and even the contest judges. In this article, I want to share some lessons I've learned along the way so that you, too, will approach Table Topics with eagerness and confidence.

Attitude Is Everything

The next time you observe a Table Topics session, notice the body language of the potential participants. As a question is stated aloud, people around the room visibly begin to shrink. Their shoulders droop, their faces become pinched, and you can almost see cartoon bubbles appear over their heads saying, "Please don't call on me!"

But others react differently: They become electrified by what they hear. Occasionally, even a typically shy member will thrust a hand into the air, move quickly to the speak-

ing area and command the full attention of the room. This occurs when he or she hears "the perfect question" – one that holds personal significance for that person. You can see enthusiasm for the subject obliterate any hesitation, fear or self-consciousness. Whether or not these words are spoken, everything about the person says, "I'm so glad you asked me that question!"

The title of this article is intended to dramatically alter your current assumptions about Table Topics. My first goal is for you to think of Table Topics as a place where every question is the "perfect question" for you! Even if you don't immediately relate to the subject, there are many ways you can take hold of any Table Topics question and claim it as your own.

In the same way that "possession is nine-tenths of the law," taking ownership of a question goes a long way toward delivering a powerful and memorable answer. Assuming that the question is perfect for you will allow your demeanor to shift from that of a "Table Topics victim" to one embodying strength and control. You'll not only feel more empowered during your response – you'll receive immediate attention and respect from your audience.

The following suggestions are a combination of standard approaches from our Toastmasters literature and my own observations and experiences at the lectern. These alternative approaches can be tapped on those occasions when you have trouble taking ownership of the original question. The non-traditional strategies will develop new dimensions of mental flexibility – and may inspire some surprising contributions to your club's next Table Topics session!

"When you participate in Table Topics, you aren't on a witness stand and haven't sworn to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Traditional Strategy 1:

"Present sensible, worthwhile ideas that add to the knowledge of others." This strategy focuses on presenting factual information. Although most Table Topics questions do not require specialized knowledge, they often ask us to provide explanations, insights, solutions or other data that

BY SHELIA SPENCER, DTM ■ PHOTOGRAPH BY PICTUREQUEST

Steal to Table Topics Success!

No matter what
strategy you use
for Table Topics,
commit to it!

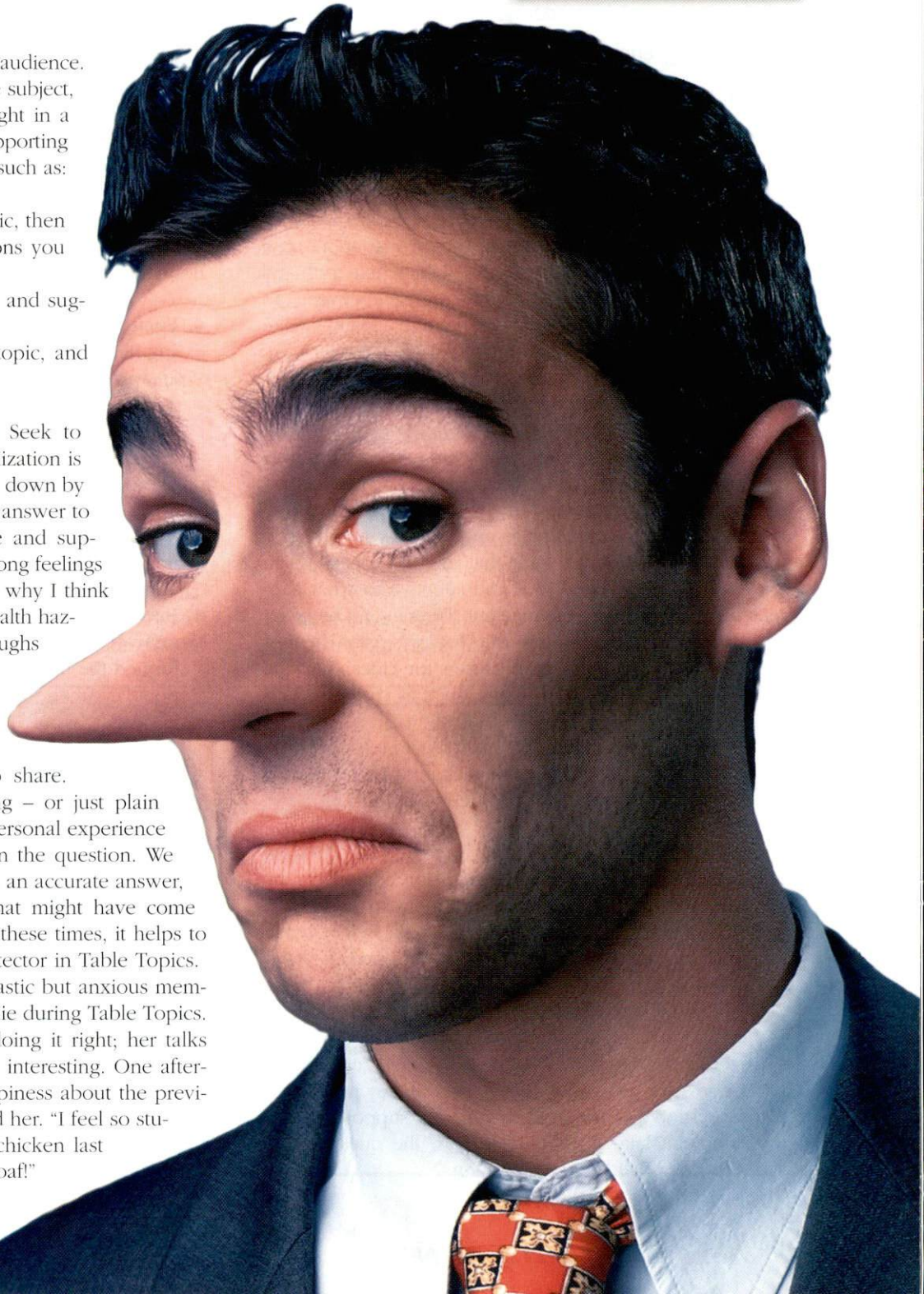
will be of interest and value to our audience. If you feel knowledgeable about the subject, begin by voicing your central thought in a simple sentence. Follow with supporting material in a straightforward format such as:

- State your opinion about the topic, then explain one or two of the reasons you hold this opinion.
- State a goal related to the topic, and suggest steps for achieving it.
- State a problem related to the topic, and describe one or more solutions.

Popular Alternative Strategy: Seek to entertain, rather than inform. Organization is still important, but don't get bogged down by thinking you have to give a serious answer to every question. Whether you state and support a ludicrous proposal or vent strong feelings about a minor problem (i.e. "Here's why I think paper cuts are one of our biggest health hazards...") don't be afraid to aim for laughs rather than enlightenment.

Nontraditional Strategy 1: LIE!
Sometimes, we just don't have an honest response that we want to share. Our thoughts may be embarrassing – or just plain boring – or we may not have any personal experience related to the situation proposed in the question. We sweat, stall and scramble to present an accurate answer, sacrificing a lot of the pleasure that might have come from a more creative approach. At these times, it helps to remind yourself: There is no lie detector in Table Topics.

I shocked Karen, a very enthusiastic but anxious member, when I told her it was okay to lie during Table Topics. Karen continually worried about doing it right; her talks were always detailed, but not very interesting. One afternoon, she called to express unhappiness about the previous meeting. I asked what bothered her. "I feel so stupid!" she moaned. "I said we ate chicken last night, when we actually had meatloaf!"



Karen eventually learned that it doesn't matter what she ate; it's the telling of the story that counts. At a later meeting, Karen was asked whether she preferred Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck. "I can't believe you asked me that!" she exclaimed. She then told a

"Committing to your first impulse, whether it is 'traditional' or wacky, frees you to explore one idea long enough to mine the gold inside it."

funny story about a childhood dance teacher who said her pug nose reminded him of a duck's tail and nicknamed her "Ducky." Everyone enjoyed the story, and she won the Best Table Topics ribbon. Later, when I congratulated her and offered sympathy, she smiled and

replied, "It never happened. I just made it up!" Karen had learned to let go of the assumption that Table Topics answers must be true, and we all appreciated the result!

When you participate in Table Topics, you aren't on a witness stand and haven't sworn to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. If given the choice between an unsatisfactory truth and a fabulous lie, reject reality. Make something up, and make it good!

Traditional Strategy 2:

"Listen carefully and relate your remarks to what previous speakers have said." This strategy encourages you to tap into the communication flow that permeates and colors the entire meeting. It also encourages you to sustain and reinforce the atmosphere that already exists. When you enter the room, stay alert and attentive to what happens before and during the meeting. Tune in and be ready to "go with the flow." When the Topics session begins, focus on the Topicsmaster and listen for clues. Will the questions be built around a theme, such as current events or childhood memories? As each question is stated, listen to every word and consider how you would respond. Also listen to the answers of other participants. This will help you formulate your own Table Topics comments.

Popular Alternative Strategy: Approach the question indirectly. Sometimes the original question contradicts my own views, is more complex than I want to handle, or does not inspire any personal reaction at all. Before I give in to frustration or discouragement, there are several strategies for finagling a successful answer. Three of the most common indirect approaches are:

- **Reverse the question entirely.** Politely advise the Topicsmaster that you disagree with the key premise of the question and will explain why you support another viewpoint. Make no apologies; turn the question 180 degrees and validate your position.

- **Answer part of the question.** If one element inspires you, but you want to discard the rest of the question, go ahead. Acknowledge the original query, then focus on the area you want to pursue. ("I'm relieved to say that I don't have any regrets about what I studied in high school, but I do regret turning down an invitation to spend one of those summers on my cousin's ranch.")
- **Back into the question.** If asked "Where is the best place for a family vacation?" start by describing the worst places you can think of. (Your kids would be bored in Las Vegas. Camping trips can be spoiled by bad weather.) Continue suggesting and rejecting options until you uncover a reasonable choice. Conclude your talk with this alternative, and your response will sound thorough and well organized.

Nontraditional Strategy 2: CHEAT! The previous techniques were indirect but sincere responses to the intended question. However, don't be afraid to push the envelope a little further, if necessary, by sidestepping the normal question/answer process altogether:

- **Focus on exploring the question rather than answering it.** If your mind refuses to provide a single possible answer, you can build your entire response around an analysis of the question itself. ("What is my favorite dessert? How can I pick one, when there are so many elements to consider? The best-tasting treats are probably the least healthful, and the ones that are perfect on a hot summer day wouldn't appeal to me at all during cold weather...") Exploring the ideas behind the question can result in some meaningful insights for you and your audience.
- **Pretend you misunderstood the question and answer what you "thought" you heard.** This strategy formed the basis of the "Emily Littella" sketches on the popular American TV show *Saturday Night Live*. Gilda Radner's character would denounce "violins on television," or address other garbled concepts that resulted from her hearing problem. You may be inspired to twist one or more words from the original question until you have a refreshing bit of nonsense with which to entertain your audience.

Traditional Strategy 3:

"Draw on your own experience and knowledge of the topic." Table Topicsmasters are encouraged to prepare questions that require no specialized knowledge. But the best answers usually contain a rich combination of general and personal information. When you describe events from real life, add vitality to the story by including sensory details. I hope you have a large storehouse of vivid sense memories to share with your fellow Toastmasters: the tingle of snow on your face, the scent of lilacs, the

sound of carousel music. These details will bring your story to life and allow others to experience it with you.

Popular Alternative Strategy: Indulge your imagination and creative instincts. I remember one Table Topics session in which a “continuing story” began at a dinner party but soon involved space aliens and time travel. If the question doesn’t inspire a real-life response from you, feel free to draw on a dream, fantasy or other creative impulse. This is especially helpful if the original question feels too overwhelming for you. (i.e., “How should our city address the recent crime problem?” It would probably take the combined wisdom of Solomon and Socrates to resolve that question. If we could bring those two great minds together....”)

Nontraditional Strategy 3: STEAL! As I said before, we don’t have a lie detector in Table Topics, nor do we have a plagiarism detector ready to sound off whenever you incorporate someone else’s material. Originality is encouraged, but it is not a requirement, even in our annual Table Topics contests.

Pre-existing quotes, images and ideas are often powerful and relevant to the general public. It shouldn’t surprise you when a Table Topics question brings one of these readily to mind. Provide attribution for non-original quotes or ideas – if you have that information on the tip of your tongue. But don’t be afraid to integrate non-original material more seamlessly with your own. It is even possible (and productive) to create your entire Table Topics response from someone else’s ideas. Consider “stealing” if you find yourself in one of these situations:

- If asked your opinion about a controversial issue, summarize the positions of one or more public figures who have spoken about it. No one is demanding that you reveal your


private stance; if you prefer to maintain a position of impartiality, keep your “original” thoughts to yourself.

- If you don’t have an appropriate, dramatic personal story to tell – but recall in detail something that happened to someone else – launch into the story and make it your own. (Unless this story is common knowledge among your audience, there is no need to clarify that it didn’t happen to you.)
- If the question reminds you of a very entertaining (clean) joke, use all of your delivery skills to portray the characters, create suspense and deliver a dead-on punch line. Many jokes sound like real stories right up until that final twist. Your audience will be delighted – and won’t feel “cheated” when they realize that your material is not from your own experience.

No matter what strategy you use, commit to it! So many times when we hear a Table Topics question, our problem is not that our mind is a blank; we actually have several fragmented ideas bouncing around in our brains. We waste precious time and energy trying to figure out which is the best, rather than simply grabbing one and developing it.

Committing to your first impulse, whether it is traditional or wacky, frees you to explore one idea long enough to mine the gold inside it. Eventually, whenever the Table Topics session begins, you’ll be feeling eager and expectant. Every question will unfold as a new opportunity for you to flex your mental muscles and create an imaginative, refreshing response. Whether you lie, cheat, steal...or sincerely share your knowledge, memories and dreams, you will find yourself rewarded by every opportunity to rise to the Table Topics challenge. And success will be yours! **T**

Shelia Spencer, DTM, joined Toastmasters in 1990 and was the District 46 Table Topics champion in 1997.



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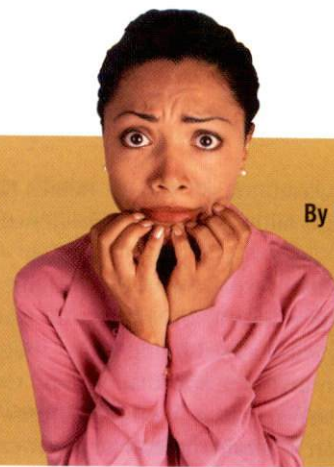
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The Table Topicsmaster's 7 Deadly Sins

By Leigh Smith, CL



◆ I LOVE THE ROLE OF TABLE TOPICSMASTER! WHY? AT FIRST, it was because it offered a non-threatening way to speak before the club. But soon, I came to love this position because it offered an unexpected benefit – the opportunity to learn something about my fellow Toastmasters in a way that simply may not occur in ordinary situations or that could take years in others. For instance, I've learned that one of my fellow members wishes he'd learned to play the piano, and about another's misadventures in learning to ride a bike. I've learned of some of my colleagues' best, worst and most challenging experiences – and all in less than two minutes!

I even like answering Table Topics questions. True, I have my “off” days, when just attending the meeting is about the extent of my participation. But where else can I receive support and encouragement while silently digging for an answer to a thoughtful question?

In our daily lives, many of us face difficult impromptu speaking situations. Situations where we have no knowledge of the topic at hand, hold opposing views or simply don't understand the question. And that's the true value of Table Topics – it's an experience designed to encourage us in voicing our opinions while building our confidence. And, as the Table Topicsmaster, you can help your fellow members by choosing questions that enhance this process.

Almost any subject can be turned into Table Topics. However, developing questions that enhance the speaking process, rather than elicit a trite answer, is an art. In our exuberance, we can easily commit one of the following “deadly” sins:

1 Open-ended questions are ideal, but if they are too vague or too personal, the respondent has nowhere to begin. Provide the stepping stone – then let the respondent determine the path.

2 Don't over-describe the scenario. What is gained if the respondent (and often the audience) gets lost in the question? If a question/scenario is more than 25 words, it's too long. Rewrite the question and give the respondent some freedom of interpretation.

3 This is not the time to show how clever you, the Topicsmaster, can be by devising scenarios that require specific knowledge or training, are exceptionally tongue twisting, or involve an elaborate sequence of events.

4 Don't steal someone's thunder! Many times, Topicsmasters develop questions based on a particular event or experience in their own lives. And, in their enthusiasm to learn of others' experiences or feelings, they may share some of their own. But remember, less is more. Now is not the time to go into personal detail. Leave the respondent room to expand on the theme.

5 When using current events, choose your respondent carefully. These days, with so little time available, many people don't follow the news on a regular basis. And, believe it or not, many of us aren't sports fans. Don't be presumptuous! Get to know your fellow members a little before posing questions. It's tough to answer a question intelligently when you have little or no knowledge of the subject.

6 Having to defend a personally unfamiliar perspective can create interesting learning opportunities. But when posing scenarios you know are contrary to a respondent's views on a subject or individual, leave some “wiggle” room in the question: Don't force a respondent to violate personal principles.

7 Never depend on a respondent's answer as the basis for additional questions! While some individuals can predictably respond with wit and poise, anyone can have an off night. When this occurs, the second respondent is at a severe disadvantage. You're the Topicsmaster – stay in control!

Ideally, Table Topics are designed to prepare us for those unexpected mini-speeches we encounter every day, as well as for those infrequent occasions that can make or break our self-esteem or career. As the Table Topicsmaster, it's your responsibility to lead your fellow club members by preparing a set of questions or situations that everyone can respond to without embarrassment or undo discomfort. Offering support and encouragement are what Toastmasters do best!

T

Leigh Smith, CL, is a member of Northshore Club 5379-68 in Mandeville, Louisiana.



When Research Requires the Big Guns

◆ THE WEB IS A GARGANTUAN REPOSITORY OF INFORMATION. **Google.com**, the popular Internet search tool, indexes a whopping three billion Web documents. You might think that, for writing a speech, the Web contains everything you could possibly need to know. Not so.

Professional researchers know well that good research involves more than just searching the Web. More than two-thirds of the publications used most often by knowledge workers either don't have Web sites or don't make their material available on the Web for free. The Web also can be a source of information that's biased, outdated or inaccurate.

It often makes sense to start with the free Web when searching for information. But when the information you need is for critical business or academic purposes, it's smart to go beyond the Web.

Libraries traditionally have been the place to go for information, and they still serve that function well. One resource used by librarians and professional researchers alike is commercial research databases. In the past, the world of commercial research databases was a forbidding one, where information was difficult to get and expensive once you got it. This has changed somewhat in recent years, with the big three commercial research databases offering easier-to-use Web interfaces and lower-priced options.

Dialog, LexisNexis and Factiva are more accurately referred to as information aggregators. They gather information from hundreds of third-party databases and let you quickly search through any or all of them using the same search procedures. Each service has its strengths, says Cindy Shamel, president-elect of the Association of Independent Information Professionals who runs her own research company, Shamel Information Services, in San Diego, California.

Dialog, at www.dialog.com, is the oldest of the three, created in 1972 as the world's first online information retrieval system. It has traditionally been strong on scientific, technical and intellectual-property material, and it's still that way. But now it's also excellent with general and business news.

LexisNexis, at www.lexis-nexis.com, is a combination of Lexis, the premier source of in-depth legal and regulatory information and public records, and Nexis, a good source of general and business news, market research and company information.

Factiva, at www.factiva.com, is a joint venture of Dow Jones and Reuters. The premier source of breaking business news and global content, it combines the full text of the *Wall Street Journal* with the Dow Jones and Reuters newswires. For information about worldwide business and international affairs, it provides material from nearly a thousand non-English sources in 118 countries and 22 languages.

Each service has different pricing options for individuals, small businesses, large businesses and information professionals. For individuals and small businesses, a pay-as-you-go plan makes the most sense. You don't pay a subscription fee but instead pay only for those articles or records you download. Searching through the databases and viewing headlines are free. Each article or record you read in its entirety costs around USD \$3, though fees can vary widely. I've found these services very useful, but if you get carried away, costs can escalate.

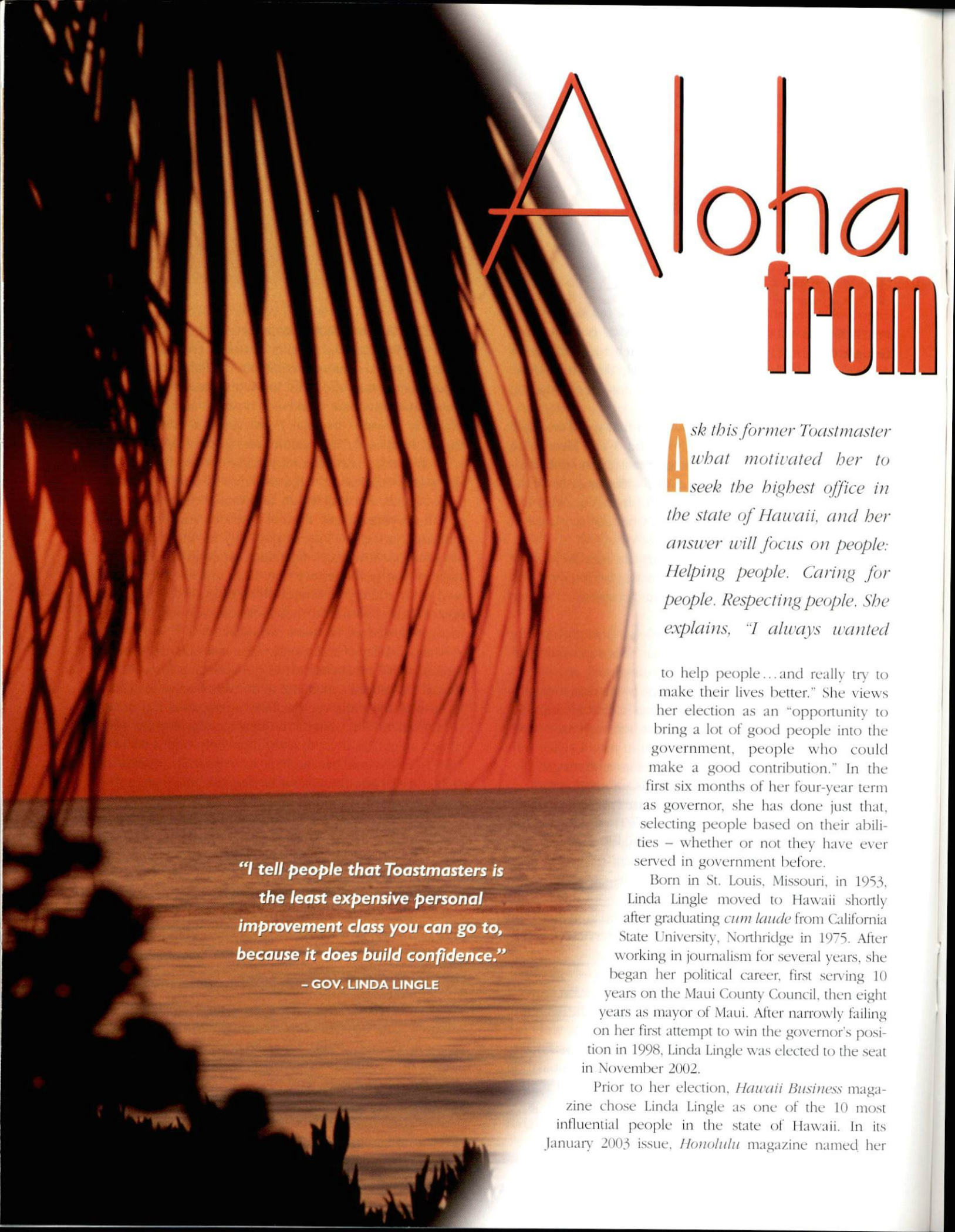
The possibility of an expensive search is one reason to hire a professional researcher to do the searching for you, says Shamel. "You need experience to do cost-effective searching."

Each of the big three database aggregators has material that others don't have. The best strategy for any given project might be to search through only one, two or all three. Professional researchers also typically bypass the Web and dial into these services directly, which gives them more advanced searching options.

Other reasons to hire a professional researcher are if you don't want to do it yourself or don't have the time. The Web site of the Association of Independent Information Professionals, at www.aiip.org, lets you search for researchers by services, subject matter and geographic area. For more on online researching, check out David Novak's Information Research FAQ, at www.spireproject.com/faq.htm.

Finally, there are times when nothing beats getting information first-hand. Instead of looking it up, you'll benefit by talking to an expert directly, observing something directly, or participating in something yourself. Primary research can be more time-consuming than secondary research, but the results are often worth it. **T**

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book *Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway*. He can be reached through his Web site www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/column.



Aloha from

Ask this former Toastmaster what motivated her to seek the highest office in the state of Hawaii, and her answer will focus on people: Helping people. Caring for people. Respecting people. She explains, "I always wanted

to help people...and really try to make their lives better." She views her election as an "opportunity to bring a lot of good people into the government, people who could make a good contribution." In the first six months of her four-year term as governor, she has done just that, selecting people based on their abilities – whether or not they have ever served in government before.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1953, Linda Lingle moved to Hawaii shortly after graduating *cum laude* from California State University, Northridge in 1975. After working in journalism for several years, she began her political career, first serving 10 years on the Maui County Council, then eight years as mayor of Maui. After narrowly failing on her first attempt to win the governor's position in 1998, Linda Lingle was elected to the seat in November 2002.

Prior to her election, *Hawaii Business* magazine chose Linda Lingle as one of the 10 most influential people in the state of Hawaii. In its January 2003 issue, *Honolulu* magazine named her

**"I tell people that Toastmasters is
the least expensive personal
improvement class you can go to,
because it does build confidence."**

– GOV. LINDA LINGLE

Hawaii

**An interview
with Hawaii
Governor
and former
Toastmaster
Linda Lingle**



BY JOANN M. McCABE, ATM-B

Islander of the Year, because she was “the one person who had the most impact on Island life in the past 12 months.”

Lingle credits Toastmasters for helping her develop her clear and informal communication style – a skill of invaluable importance in the bright spotlight of politics. She joined Toastmasters in the early 1980s, when serving as a member of the Maui County Council. “Toastmasters gave me a chance every week to speak in front of people who were very supportive and were going to help me be a better speaker,” she says. “I went through the CTM level of Toastmasters and then I just went out and practiced the things that I had learned.”

Widely regarded as an articulate and thoughtful speaker, Lingle is always poised and prepared, equally at home in televised live appearances and debates as she is in meetings with President George W. Bush, talking to school children or promoting Hawaii as a travel destination. Hawaii District 49 Public Relations Officer Ron Neff knows firsthand Lingle’s ability to adjust to different audiences. He says, “Since I served on her campaign and am also a Toastmaster, I am impressed with her communication skills. When she gets up to talk, she is very effective.”

Offering “A New Beginning”

Having won on a campaign promise of “a new beginning,” Governor Lingle, facing a lethargic economy and budget shortfalls, has her work cut out. In an effort to keep people informed, she invites the public to “talk story” – Hawaiian vernacular for informal conversations among friends – by tuning in to the locally televised *Talk Story with Your Administration* program hosted by Angela Perez Baraquio, Miss America 2001 from Hawaii.



HAWAII At A Glance

Resident population: 1,211,537 (2000)

Location: 2,390 miles from California
3,850 miles from Japan
4,900 miles from China

Six main islands:

- Kauai
- Molokai
- Lanai
- Maui
- Oahu (the city of Honolulu and Waikiki Beach are here)
- Hawaii (also known as the Big Island)

Major industries: Tourism, military, agriculture

Toastmasters: Aloha District 49
53 clubs, 975 members

Helpful web sites:

- www.gohawaii.com
- www.hawaii.gov/gov
- www.cochawaii.org
- www.district49.org

Familiar with the spotlight herself, the former Miss America finds Lingle to be an impressive speaker and personable individual. Baraquio says Lingle “can connect with a lot of people from diverse backgrounds and can bridge the gap between groups.”

On the premier *Talk Story* show last April, the governor and Baraquio discussed tough issues: expanding the economy, improving public education and restoring trust in government. These issues, common to much of the nation and the world, are the focus of Lingle’s administration.

The need to expand and diversify the economy is not lost on Jim Tollefson, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii. He has seen Lingle communicate at various levels to different groups, from business people to military officers to medical professionals. He says that not only is she a great speaker, but audiences “are impressed with her desire to do the right thing. When she speaks, it is coming from the heart. She really wants to do the right thing for Hawaii, for all the people of Hawaii.”

Meeting the Challenge

Communication skills merge with leadership skills as Lingle travels the world representing Hawaii. Imagine the variety of expertise needed on her recent trip to Washington, D.C. and New York City. Besides meeting one-on-one with President Bush, she testified before Congress, discussed Hawaii’s bond ratings with the major rating agencies, discussed city operations with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, spoke with the president of the New York Stock Exchange and met with former NYC Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. And perhaps you saw her on national television, appearing live on CNN’s *Inside Politics*, *Fox News* and *The O’Reilly Factor*.

Closer to home, Lingle spent the morning of May 1 this year on the beach in Waikiki promoting “May Day is lei day in Hawaii” via several national television networks. With the blue Pacific Ocean in the background and sunny skies overhead, she finds there are many different ways to promote tourism in Hawaii.

Speaking Tips

Can she offer any tips to Toastmasters? She offers not one, but two: First, about basic speech structure: “Having a well-structured opening, body and closing is probably the most important, most elementary lesson.”

Second, she emphasizes that speakers must “respect their audiences. To communicate with all kinds of people, [you must] recognize that you don’t speak to a group of 10 the way you do to a group of a hundred or a group of a thousand.”

Whatever the group is, each is different, the governor notes, “and I adjust my word choice, my speaking style, my tone, everything, including what I wear, depending upon who my audience is. I was with a group of students this morning, second- and third-graders. My voice is a lot more animated with them than it might be with an adult group. So you approach each audience differently.”

The formality often surrounding her office can intimidate people, but Gov. Lingle is adept at putting audiences at ease. She does it by making a connection with them. She says, “Somehow I find that making light of yourself – it doesn’t have to be a formal joke – with me (at 5’9”), it’s my height – will let people see you in a less formal way, so now they’re relaxed, and it’s easier for you to talk with them. They’re open to what you’re going to say.”

When she became mayor of Maui County – an area that includes the three islands of Molokai, Lanai and Maui and has some of the best white sand beaches in the world – Linda Lingle helped start a Toastmasters club at the county government, because “when you’re in government, your job is to communicate – communicate with the public, communicate with the legislators or with other cabinet members.

“I tell people that Toastmasters is the least expensive personal improvement class you can go to, because it does build confidence. Anybody who begins and sticks with it any length of time ends up a better speaker, so they gain confidence. [As a result] I think they’re able to do their job better.”

Another benefit of Toastmasters training, Lingle notes, is that “You meet highly motivated people. Everyone in Toastmasters is there because they want to improve themselves, and those are the kind of people to be around.”

Advice for a new or struggling Toastmaster? “Just stick with it,” Lingle says. “You’re going to get better every single week. I don’t remember anyone who didn’t get better every single week, at least a little.”

She adds, “Go right through that workbook. If you are able to get through those first 10 lessons of Toastmasters, then it’s simply a matter of practice. Toastmasters gives you that chance.”

A Role Model to Many

When Linda Lingle won the gubernatorial election in 2002, she became the first on several fronts: the first Jewish, the first female, the first member of the Republican party in 40 years, and the first (county) mayor to become governor.

Lingle says she feels a "real responsibility to women and girls because I know that however I'm judged, whatever my performance is, over my hopefully two terms here, is how people will judge candidates to come. If people think I did a good job, that will help the next person have a chance." Lingle says parents and young girls "tell me all the time how excited they are because all that the girls who are now 6- or 7-years-old know is [that Hawaii has] a woman governor. That's their frame of reference."

To illustrate, Lingle tells a story of when she was mayor on Maui. After she spoke to a classroom of 7- and 8-year olds, one little boy raised his hand and asked, "Do you have to be a lady to be the mayor?"

With her background in journalism, Lingle is also the first non-lawyer governor in nearly 30 years. She likens public speaking to journalism in that both are a matter of "taking in information and getting to the essence of it. Speaking is another version of doing what a journalist does. It is getting to the essence but then communicating it back, not on the written page, but verbally. It's a variation of using the same skills, so having experience in both has helped me to communicate with all kinds of people."

The Aloha Spirit

Lingle appreciates the international aspect of Toastmasters. "One of the neat things about Toastmasters is that you can go anywhere in the world and you still have your 10 lessons, and you have Table Topics and an immediate bond with everybody who is a Toastmaster, wherever they live. When people hear I was a Toastmaster, wherever I go, they want to talk to me about it, and I can relate to exactly what they're talking about. That's a really nice

aspect of having an international organization that has a defined program because then, wherever you go, you can relate to people."

Hawaii is known around the world as "the islands of aloha." Lingle describes the aloha spirit: "It's about caring for people who you don't even know, treating people in a respectful way. It's about making people feel welcome even when you don't know them."

In caring for the people of Hawaii, Linda Lingle knows that she must take care of her own health, so despite her busy schedule, she often manages to fit in an early morning swim. She also appears in a public service announcement about the importance of breast cancer awareness, emphasizing early detection and prevention.

Of her Toastmasters training, Lingle says she is "especially thankful when I try to help others become effective speakers." For example, at the state Republican convention for the last few years, Lingle taught a public speaking workshop, training new political candidates for office.

She continues to promote Toastmasters whenever possible and declared March 2003 as Toastmasters International Month for the State of Hawaii. The proclamation reads, in part, "Speaking with clarity is a powerful and important skill that can help to overcome any obstacle to effective performance in virtually every endeavor and line of work."

A Final Tip: Know When to Stop

Lingle says one of the best things in Toastmasters is that you don't talk for a long time. "Many speakers don't know how to stop because they don't have their talk clearly thought out. So I would say, know how you're going to close so you don't go on and test the patience of the audience."

Respecting people, caring for people, and helping people are all part of the job for Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle. **T**

Joann M. McCabe, ATM-B, is a member of East Hawaii Club 5508-49 in Hilo, Hawaii.

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By Judith C. Tingley, Ph.D., ATM-S

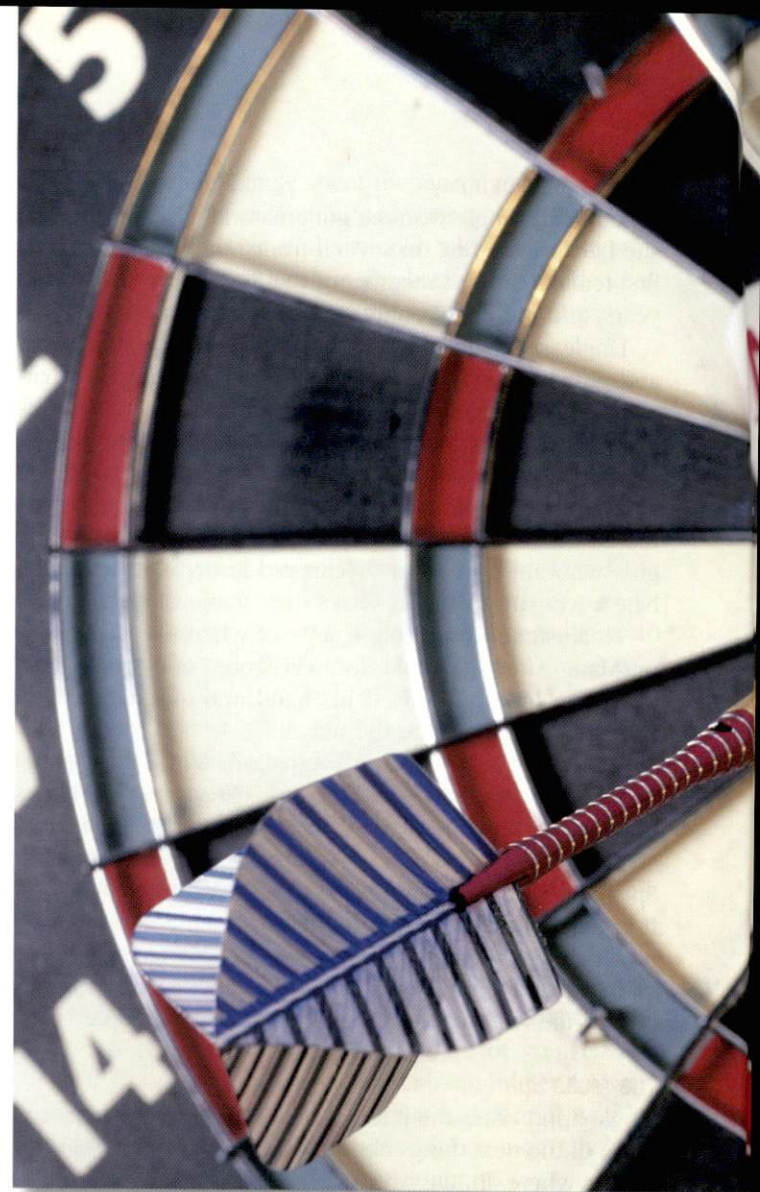
Emotional intelligence – being smart about your own and others' emotions – is more relevant to success than intellectual intelligence, or IQ.

What's Your EQ?

When I began working as a therapist 25 years ago, I believed that if I attracted intelligent clients, their progress and my success would be assured. I was certain that the combination of smart clients and a bright therapist would solve all problems. I was wrong. Fellow psychologist and author Daniel Goleman recognized what I didn't understand. Intellectual intelligence, or IQ, is very different from emotional intelligence, or EQ. Emotional intelligence is being smart about your own and others' emotions. Intellectual intelligence is being smart about thoughts, knowledge and information.

Goleman's latest book, *Primal Leadership*, written with two academicians in the fields of business and education, focuses on leadership and EQ. The authors see leaders' ability to manage and use their own emotions, and to read and connect with the emotions of their colleagues, as the key to improving the performance of those they lead. "How well leaders manage their moods and affect everyone else's moods, then, becomes not just a private matter, but a factor in how well a business will do," Goleman writes.

With his research colleagues, Goleman concludes that emotional intelligence is much more relevant to success than that two- or three-digit number many of us have been



tested for since childhood, known as our IQ or "intelligence quotient." His studies of star performers at international companies showed that emotional intelligence was the primary reason for their effectiveness. The "stars" were stronger than their competitors in the drive to achieve results through others, in their ability to take initiative, collaborate and lead teams, all skills requiring intelligence about their own and others' emotions.

Goleman says that in today's business world, a leader's foremost job is to drive the emotions of the work group in a positive direction and clear out any toxic emotions that can contaminate the workplace environment. This primary focus of leadership, he says, is almost invisible. It doesn't show up as a big rah-rah cheer or a motivational speech. It doesn't appear as a memo or in the annual report. It's a quieter, subtle, constant, consistent, contagious effect. The emotional leader inspires and influences, collaborates and develops, and is consistently recognizing the importance of other people's views. As an anonymous contributor to Carolyn Warner's book of quotes, *The Last Word*, puts it: "The extent to which you are able to transform your 'self-concern' into 'other-concern' will determine your effectiveness in getting others to follow along."



The EQ skills and abilities have often been viewed in organizations as “soft skills” and somehow not as valuable as the “hard skills” involved in technical, financial or strategic thinking. Viewing the primary job of leadership as emotional clashes with the traditional perspective. Only 20 years ago the typical corporate culture advised all employees to leave their

tive and being adaptable, with increasing our self-awareness and monitoring our progress. Taking on Table Topics with or without bravado and creativity also requires emotional self-control, self-awareness and self-assessment, recognizing our strengths and limitations while still taking risks.

I’m sure that every member reading this article has seen and experienced tremendous growth in these EQ competencies, for themselves and others. Through everyday practice we realize that the Toastmasters process leads us to learn or increase our skills of emotional intelligence, even if we had previously acquired some of them unknowingly and unintentionally. And there’s even more connection between Toastmasters and emotional intelligence, even greater opportunity to learn competencies that improve performance and increase individual and group success.

“People skills aren’t fluff or a luxury. They are a booster, a bolster, a team-building asset, a motivating, inspiring group of power tools for everyone.”

emotions in the parking lot, or in the trash receptacle at the front door, or at least locked tight in a desk drawer.

More recently, leaders and followers recognize that managed emotions are not only useful, they are necessary at work. People skills aren’t fluff or a luxury. They’re a

booster, a bolster, a team-building asset, a motivating, inspiring group of power tools for everyone. Robert Cooper, Ph.D., and Ayman Sawaf, leadership experts and authors of *Executive EQ*, tell us to use the energy of our emotions and the wisdom of intuition to better connect with ourselves and each other.

Personal Competence

They suggest that feedback from the heart, instead of the brain, develops creative genius, builds trust and keeps people honest with themselves. Seeing the big picture of EQ, as delineated in the sidebar on page 20, is a good place to start if you think you might want to increase your “soft skills” as a leader. Under the umbrella of Personal Competence, related to how we manage ourselves, Goleman cites two major categories, **self-awareness** and **self-management**. New Toastmasters tap into these skills as they begin the journey toward their CTM award.

Emotional intelligence is what we demonstrate when we move consistently through manuals, concentrating on ourselves, our learning, our progress and development as speakers and evaluators. As speakers, we’re concerned with controlling fears and building confidence, with taking initia-

Social Competence

As Toastmasters begin to become good evaluators and move on to pursue the Advanced Toastmaster Gold, Distinguished Toastmaster or Competent and Advanced Leader awards, we need the EQ skills of leadership, which Goleman subsumes under a second umbrella – Social Competence. **Social awareness** and **relationship management**, concerned with how we manage relationships, are the categories for this aspect of emotional intelligence. Goleman and the co-authors of *Primal Leadership* list empathy, organizational awareness and service under social awareness.

They classify inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, catalyst for change, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration as the skills of relationship management. As we acquire personal competence in managing ourselves, and develop self-awareness and self-management skills, the opportunity opens to increase skills in managing relationships with others. Being a good mentor, coach or evaluator requires us to turn our attention away from ourselves and to use our empathy as well as the skills of inspirational leadership, influence and developing others.

Choosing to be a club leader also gives us plenty of practice in managing relationships. Some members just don’t go there. They want to speak, they want to improve their performance, they enjoy being a mentor, but they may not see learning to lead as a value of Toastmasters. Some people may be willing to run for office in their own club, but not to move beyond that level. However, many past and present Toastmasters leaders confirm that their leadership experience definitely demanded and increased their “soft” EQ skills, even if they learned them unintentionally.

As a member of Park Central Toastmasters, a club that recently recognized its 40-year anniversary, a club whose membership includes Bill Hamilton, a former Toastmasters international president, and the late Cavett Robert, a former

Emotional Intelligence Domains

Personal Competence

(How we manage ourselves)

SELF AWARENESS

- Emotional self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Emotional self-control
- Transparency
- Adaptability
- Achievement
- Initiative
- Optimism

Social Competence

(How we manage relationships)

SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Empathy
- Organizational awareness
- Service

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Inspirational leadership
- Influence
- Developing others
- Change catalyst
- Conflict management
- Teamwork/collaboration

international speech contest winner and the founder of National Speakers Association, I have to say that we have been less than enthusiastic about becoming involved in Toastmasters leadership outside our club. Maybe our passivity has come from an inability to see what's in it for us to serve as leaders outside of our club.

Perhaps viewing leadership from the emotional intelligence vantage point can motivate members who have successfully moved from novices to CTMs and ATMs see the learning and development opportunities for them as Toastmasters leaders, within and outside their clubs. Past International President Bill Hamilton, our club's exception in terms of having served Toastmasters as a national officer, mentioned how much of his time in office was spent involved one-on-one with members, attempting to meet their needs and make them feel heard, determining their priorities and building cohesiveness. Although the concept of EQ had yet to be "invented," Bill was experiencing its application every day of his 1981-1982 term.

Relationship Management

As president of Park Central Toastmasters in 2001, at the lectern on Tuesday morning September 11, I too had the opportunity to use the skills of relationship management that I had learned in previous months as president, vice president education, secretary and treasurer. Some, but not all members of the smaller than usual group, had heard the news of the World Trade Center disaster on the radio as they drove to the meeting. Small groups were gathered. Several individuals suggested I cancel the meeting. Others asked to go forward with the meeting but wanted a radio in the room. Another person, using parliamentary procedure,

made a motion to cancel the meeting and insisted on a vote. Some members wanted to stay but change the normal format of our meeting on this abnormal day. High-intensity emotions and their behavioral accompaniments were seen, heard and felt by everyone.

I listened to the differing concerns and comments and didn't attempt to start the meeting on time, with the usual pledge of allegiance and invocation. I moderated the group's discussion and after about 10 minutes suggested that we stay and have a meeting, not following our usual agenda but starting with the pledge and invocation, then moving to an unstructured Table Topics and eliminating voting for the best. I asked for a radio, and a member went to her car, brought a radio to the meeting room, listened to it with earphones, and briefly interrupted the meeting to tell us what was happening. I suggested that members could leave if they wanted to, whether they had been assigned a function or not, and said that members who wanted to stay could stay, but not perform their assigned function if they didn't want to.

Several members left at different points during the meeting, but most stayed for the full, but unconventional meeting. The residual sense among members who stayed was cohesiveness. Several members later commented that they were very glad to be among friends when they received the horrifying news. Those who left expressed no resentment or concern later about the meeting not being cancelled.

Relationship management, specifically involving attempted inspiration, influence, conflict management and collaboration, resulted in a good group outcome. Former Arizona Governor Jane Dee Hull suggests what seemed to work for me that day, "Get people together and let them argue while you moderate the argument, rather than using raw power to dictate." She believes that leadership is about how to build consensus, how to bring all of the interests to the table in order to achieve the best possible objectives. Attempting to build consensus doesn't require advanced degrees or technical know-how, but it certainly does require emotional intelligence.

The good news for all of us in Toastmasters? These EQ skills can be learned, retained and practiced as part of our overall experience. And we can expect to get good results, as Goleman and his researchers found in a follow-up study. Once the results of the "star" study were clear, the less emotionally intelligent performers were given opportunities, through training and self-development, to gain the same level of EQ competence as the "stars" had demonstrated. The results? Dramatic performance improvement for the formerly average leaders, which resulted in an additional one and a half million dollar profit for their employers.

The good news for all of us? Not only can emotional intelligence be learned, but the skills are retained and continue to expand with practice and experience. **T**

Judith C. Tingley, Ph.D., is a psychologist, freelance writer and author of four business books. Visit her Web site at www.gendersell.com. She is an ATM-S and long-time member of Park Central Club 3527-3 in Phoenix, Arizona.

“People only learn through two things. One is reading,
and the other is association with smarter people.”

—WILL ROGERS

The Book Review

◆ “WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY LIFE?” IS A QUESTION ALL OF US have asked ourselves at one time or another. It’s also the title of a new book from Po Bronson, published by Random House, that is enjoying success on *The New York Times* best-seller list. Although a product of America, the ideas in *What Should I Do With My Life?* have a universal application to everyone striving to be their best in the global village.

Bronson spent several years in research, traveling coast-to-coast in the United States, and visiting Canada, England, Mexico and Hong Kong interviewing 900 people who shared their stories of enlightenment as they finally learned from their own difficult circumstances the importance of pursuing passion in finding their destiny. The stories are teaching points that capture the frustration of people who invested significant talent, time and money in going in wrong-headed directions. For example, the book describes doctors who discovered that medicine wasn’t right for them and transitioned into other lines of work. One man in Pennsylvania transformed himself from being a miserable lawyer to becoming a happy truck driver, a highly paid New York financial worker became a farmer in Mississippi, and another lawyer took up the ministry.

The book contains a marvelous collection of classic stories about people growing, learning and finding themselves after a misstep or two. No one makes perfect decisions; we’ve all headed off in directions that weren’t right for us. A person close to me that Bronson missed in his research is my brother-in-law, Jim – a third-generation physician in Michigan who decided he’d be happier as an attorney in Colorado. Jim’s story fits Bronson’s theme in that we truly find ourselves when we do things that make us happy and satisfied. Most of those interviewed were 20-50 years old.

Readers will appreciate that Bronson focuses on the most obvious circumstances that negatively affect our sense of well-being: fear, low self-esteem and self-confidence, dishonesty with ourselves, and parental pressures. He refreshingly validates that counterbalancing influences benefit us in finding our mission in life. Bronson suggests that these influential factors are enthusiasm and a positive atti-

tude, risk-taking, persistence, associating with supportive and loving people, a good marriage, and having children.

If you are currently asking yourself what your best course in life should be, this book is a “must read.” You will likely relate to guideposts that benefit your journey. At about \$20 and 370 pages, *What Should I Do With My Life?* is available in hardback at major bookstores and from popular Internet booksellers.

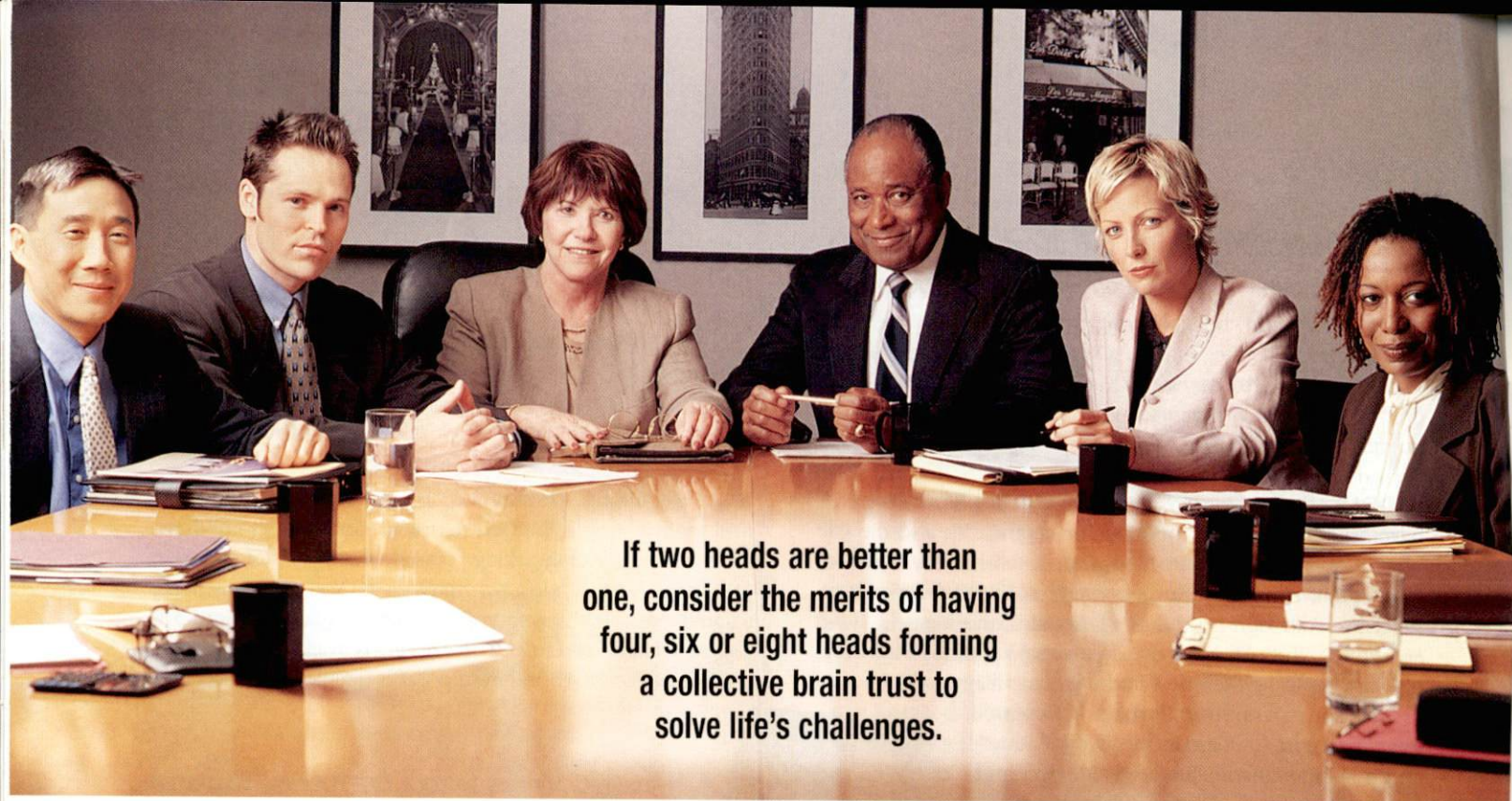


◆ IN *SPELL SUCCESS IN YOUR LIFE* (DREAMS UNLIMITED Press), Peter Colwell organizes his thoughts to help readers lessen the emotional clutter that seems almost unavoidable in today’s lifestyles. To benefit reader focus, he has created an easy-to-follow road map to help us find higher value in our lives. The map smartly reflects the acronym SUCCESS: Striving (S), Understanding (U), Creating (C), Conditioning (C), Envisioning (E), Savoring (S), and Soaring (S).

Colwell uses an energizing and insightful perspective to explain the basics of imaginative goal setting. The high value of *Spell Success in Your Life* is Colwell’s vision of the global community and the ease by which readers will grasp explanations of how they can reach a success-oriented and satisfying life. In bringing relevancy to his concepts, he provides an abundance of inspiring stories of people in our everyday lives that exemplify a spirit of success. Colwell met many of these memorable personalities through his membership in Toastmasters International, where he practiced his ideas in speeches before organizing them into book form.

It is a rare occurrence to find a young man, only 28 years old, who possesses such a highly refined system of values and the talent of self-expression for authorship of a book. His views are New Millennium, youthful, workable, and well worth the effort of learning about. *Spell Success in Your Life* is a 137-page paperback available at \$15 through popular Internet bookstores. **T**

Larry Welch, DTM, is a member of clubs in Washington, D.C. and Singapore. He is author of *Mary Virginia, A Father’s Story*.



If two heads are better than one, consider the merits of having four, six or eight heads forming a collective brain trust to solve life's challenges.

Harness the Power of a Mastermind Group

By Jo Condrill, DTM

With the frenzied pace of today's business world, we all need help identifying and planning our career moves. Even more important, we need the contacts and resources to make our goals become real. That's why so-called mastermind groups are becoming so popular, offering support and specialized knowledge to people in every industry and sector.

I became acquainted with the mastermind concept in Napoleon Hill's book, *Think and Grow Rich*. He believed that a group of like-minded, achievement-oriented individuals could dramatically leverage each member's success and used the example of Andrew Carnegie as someone who greatly benefited by this concept.

A mastermind group consists of people who work together to achieve diverse goals. The group members meet at regular intervals to brainstorm ideas, share knowledge and help each other discover tools to realize their dreams. These people work well together, but they may be very different from each other. The common element is that each draws something from the others, and each contributes freely to the group. It is the focusing of each mind on a common issue that triggers thoughts not readily available to one person. Members draw on their unique experiences and specialized knowledge to help each other.

A mastermind group is more than a social circle, in that achievements are expected. It is different from other groups, such as a Toastmasters club, because it has fewer members

and the primary purpose of the group is for members to talk about their goals, successes and challenges. As they do so, others in the group focus their mental energies on the issue under discussion. This combination of energy focused on one point creates a power or force that is not available elsewhere; some call it the "third mind."

When many minds concentrate on a single point, the activity generates a power over and above the sum total of each of the individual minds. It is as though an invisible force joins the group and provides additional insight. As a result, the group members accomplish more than any one person could accomplish individually.

For example, when I began thinking of becoming a professional speaker in 1997, I joined with Toastmasters' Past International President Bennie Bough, professional engineer and award-winning salesman Tom Grady, and management consultant Art Jackson, to form a mastermind group. One direct benefit for me from that group that continues to grow is the publication of my first book, *101 Ways to Improve Your Communication Skills Instantly*, which Bennie Bough and I wrote together.

Earlier in my life, as I was contemplating becoming a district governor, I looked for past district governors with whom I might form a mastermind group. In our district we had Pauline Shirley, who had led her district to top ranking in Toastmasters; Bennie Bough, who was on the Toastmasters Executive Committee; Chuck Waterman, a professional speak-

er; and past district governor Mike Wardinski, my mentor. I believed all of them wished me well and that we could work together in harmony. The group focused on one issue on my behalf: What should I do to become the best district governor I could possibly be? We met monthly for several months and discontinued meeting when I was elected governor. With the confidence gained from these meetings, I was able to start the year on firm footing. At the end of my term, my district held top ranking in Toastmasters.

Forming a mastermind group is relatively simple, but you need to proceed with caution. Below are some tips to keep in mind while forming your group:

1 Choose people who are not like you.

People with different perspectives will challenge you and contribute ideas that you may not have thought of. While your mastermind group participants should be different from you, they should also possess some similar qualities – they should be action-oriented, have a high energy level and have a strong commitment to follow-through. If you don't know anyone who has the skills or resources you seek, ask yourself, "Who might know a person with these qualities?" For example, if you want to secure a job in the technology field, but you don't know anyone who works in that arena, who can introduce you to someone successful in that field? Search your contact list for only those people who share your values and with whom you'd want to meet regularly.

2 Be sure the entire group can benefit from the experience, skills and specialized knowledge of each member, and from the expanded network of resources.

Each person must have something to contribute to others in the group. This can be a specific talent, leads, or specialized knowledge or skills, such as marketing or organizational ability. Some members may choose to present tips or give informational tidbits at each meeting, while others could contribute something as basic as goodwill and encouraging words. As a result, each person should be able to gain something from the group. Realize that the gain may not always be material in nature. It may be increased self-confidence or know-how. Ultimately, it may be the realization of a dream.

3 Group members must expect positive results from their participation.

Expecting positive outcomes does not mean that challenges and frustrations won't occur. It simply means that group members are predisposed to viewing things in a positive frame of mind. Negative thinkers focus on why ideas will not work rather than on finding ways to make them work. People with a positive attitude also acknowledge that sometimes an idea is simply not worth pursuing. After all, to ignore the facts is foolhardy. However, there is a fine line between giving up too soon

and altering a course when necessary. The key is knowing when to pull back versus when to reevaluate the situation.

4 The entire group should agree on organizational matters, such as leadership objectives, decisions on when and where to meet, and an established agenda.

Group leadership initially rests with the person forming the group. He or she sets the meeting time and place until the group decides on a permanent meeting time and place. Leadership of meetings may then rotate, meaning one person leads the session for a month, and another the next. There are no records kept except each individual's private notes. With an established process and ground rules, there is no need for an elected or designated leader. When a spokesperson is needed, the person with the longest group standing is usually designated. Some groups meet weekly; others meet twice a month. Some groups meet face-to-face; others use conference calls. It depends entirely on your

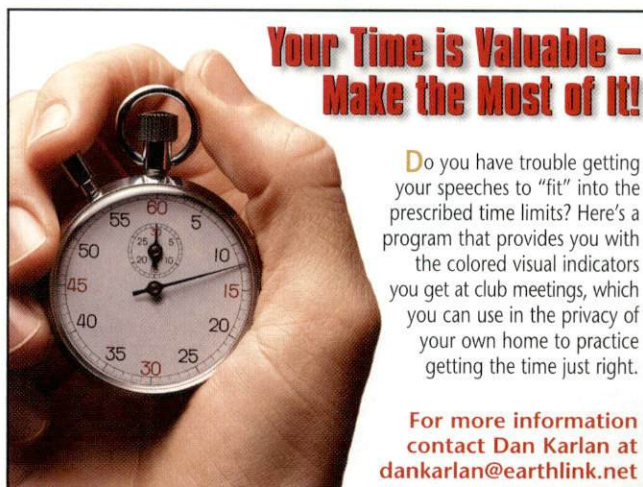
group's circumstances. The important things are that each member form a bond with the rest of the group, that there is mutual trust and a sense of well-being, and that you are willing to be vulnerable and ask for help.

Take the Initiative

Forming a mastermind group is a powerful way to get ideas and support from others. Take the initiative to start your own mastermind group today. You will soon see the wonderful benefits of contributing and receiving ideas, which will propel you and the entire group to new levels of personal and professional success. **T**

Jo Condrill, DTM, is founder and president of GoalMinds, Inc., an international training and consulting firm. She served on Toastmasters Board of Directors in 1994-96. A member of South Bay Speakers Club 2924-27, she may be reached at www.goalminds.com.

"When many minds concentrate on a single point, the activity generates a power over and above the sum total of each of the individual minds."



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"If you let the world cast you into a role, you never will go beyond that role. Create your own definition of who you are and what you can accomplish."

- GUY KAWASAKI

History is filled with 'old' people who accomplished great things.

After several years of trying to persuade grocers to carry his new brand of popcorn called Red Bow, the creator was deeply discouraged. "Was I, at the age of 63, pursuing a foolish dream?" he wondered as he drove gloomily back to his Valparaiso, Indiana, office. Were his many years of researching, cultivating and perfecting the new, better-popping corn leading him to a marketing dead end?

Whenever he approached a retailer, comments were always the same: "There are over 80 different brands of popcorn on the market. We don't have room for another, especially when it costs two and a half times as much." Although every response from retailers to his new product was disheartening, the man decided to try yet another approach. This time he asked around for the name of a good marketing company and was directed to a firm in Chicago, Illinois. After he described his new popping corn to the copywriters, they recommended that the product be marketed

Never Too Late to Start an Adventure

as Orville Redenbacher's Gourmet Popping Corn. In addition, they said his picture should be featured on the label.

"I drove back to Valparaiso, wryly thinking we had paid \$13,000 for someone to come up with the same name my mother had come up with when I was born," Redenbacher recalls thinking that day in 1970. Still uncertain about the copywriters' advice, Redenbacher decided to test market their idea. He approached the largest retailer in the Midwest, Marshall Field's Department Store in Chicago. After learning the name of the manager in charge of the store's seventh-floor gourmet food department, Redenbacher sent a case of the newly labeled product to his home. Redenbacher did not enclose a note or return address. A month later he phoned,

asking: "Did you like it?"

"Like it?" the manager responded. "We want to stock it!" Excited by his first order, Redenbacher loaded it into his pickup truck and personally delivered it to Marshall Field's huge store on State and Randolph Street. As an additional marketing ploy, he offered to autograph jars of the popcorn. Marshall Field's executives liked the idea and began heavily promoting the popcorn in newspaper ads. Redenbacher spent three full days getting writer's cramp.

Today Orville Redenbacher's product is the best-selling popcorn in the world. However, his success began as he was reaching the age when most people think about retiring. Although he could be called a late bloomer, Orville Redenbacher and many like him are living proof that it's never too late to start an adventure. Here are some principles that can help you achieve success at any age:

Begin By Remembering You're Never Too Old

Attitude is ageless. Our attitudes can determine whether we will go forward or retreat, continue or quit, remain open to new opportunities or remain frozen in the past. To

achieve success, whatever your age, begin by remembering you're never too old to succeed. History is filled with "old" people who accomplished great things. Motivate yourself by reviewing the lives of people such as:

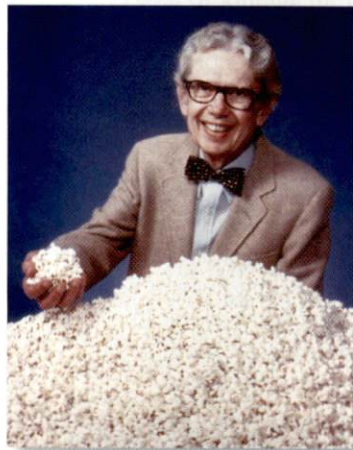
- **Winston Churchill**, who became British prime minister for the first time at age 65 and assumed the epic struggle against Hitler.
- **Golda Meir**, who became prime minister of Israel at 71.
- **Cardinal Angelo Roncalli**, who became Pope John XXIII at age 76 and inaugurated major changes in the Roman Catholic church.
- **Grandma Moses**, who started painting in her late 70s and had her first one-woman exhibit when she was 80.
- **Margaret Thatcher**, who became Britain's first woman prime minister at age 53.
- **Sadie and Bessie Delany**, who wrote their first book when they were 105 and 103, respectively. Titled *The Delany Sisters' Book of Everyday Wisdom*, it was a best seller.
- **Samuel I. Hayakawa**, who was elected to the United States Senate at age 70.

Let the example of such individuals remind you that your best years may still lie ahead of you.

Follow Your Dreams

Here is good advice from Dag Hammarskjöld, a former secretary-general of the United Nations: "Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step: Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road." Be true to your highest aspirations. Faithfully follow your dreams. Doing so will ensure that you maximize your opportunities and minimize your obstacles.

One of the most remarkable individuals of the late 20th century was Grace Hopper, Toastmasters' Golden Gavel recipient in 1988. Born in 1906, she dreamed of excelling in mathematics and serving her country. Hopper earned a master's degree in 1930 and a doctorate in 1934 from Yale University. Both degrees were in mathematics and were earned in spite of many voices assuring her she could not work in a "man's field."



Orville Redenbacher

In 1943, Hopper joined the U.S. Navy. When World War II ended, she tried to remain on active duty but was considered "too old" at age 39. However, Hopper managed to retain her commission in the Naval Reserves. Over the next few decades Hopper did pioneering work designing early generations of computers. By 1955 Hopper created and standardized a computer programming language called COBOL (Common Business Oriented Language). All the while, she continued serving in the Naval Reserves, harboring a dream to bring the U.S. military into the computer age. A sad day in her life came in December 1966 when she was mandatorily retired from the Navy at age 60.

However, the United States was engaged in the Vietnam conflict, and the Navy was having problems with the computer systems it was using. Eight months after her retirement, Hopper was "temporarily" recalled to active duty. Her mission: to reorganize in six months all the Navy's computers so they could work smoothly together. Hopper spent the next two decades promoting computer use and educating military personnel in computer functions. Because of her age, every promotion awarded to Hopper took a special act of Congress. She was made captain in 1973. In November 1985, when Hopper was 79 years old, she was elevated to rear admiral and became the first woman to hold that rank. Finally, just before her 80th birthday, Adm. Grace Hopper officially retired with the satisfaction that her dreams had become a reality.

Bounce Back from Defeat

Never allow a setback to disrupt your plans and goals. Remind yourself that life is not a straight-line pattern moving you from success to success. Rather, life is often two steps forward and one step back. Bounce back whenever you experience a difficulty or defeat.

To find out why some ordinary people often seem to achieve so much more than others, Dr. Alan Loy McGinnis, a corporate consultant and author, interviewed more than 190 women and men. He discovered that a common trait of high achievers is the ability to bounce back from defeat.

As an example, he cites the case of Sylvia Erdman. Several years ago while she was in her 40s, Erdman joined Revlon as senior director of marketing for European designer fragrances. After only seven months, she was let go as part of corporate downsizing. "It was like somebody had punched me in the nose," she recalls.

A month later, a publishing friend asked for advice on selling advertising to the beauty industry. Erdman saw an opportunity to provide the same service for other companies. The result: Within three years Erdman was working from her apartment supplying that advice to major companies and receiving an income similar to what she had earned at Revlon. Additionally, she had the pleasure of being her own boss. "Getting laid off forces you to be creative," she says. "It lights a fire under you."



Grace Hopper

Honor your personality and temperament. Too many people allow others to shape and influence their dreams and aspirations. "Don't accept society's judgment on who you are and what you can accomplish," advises Guy Kawasaki, author of *Hindsight, The Wisdom and Breakthroughs of Remarkable People*. "If you let the world cast you into a role, you never will go beyond that role. Create your own definition of who you are and what you can accomplish." Kawasaki also says that hurdles to success are most easily overcome only when people are willing to take responsibility for their own lives and successes. Always honor and respect your personality and temperament. Respond to your inner voice that is calling you to act and move in specific directions.

Maintain a Sense of Humor.

When things don't work out the way we expect and life becomes discouraging, the best antidote lies in maintaining a sense of humor. A good example of one whose sense of humor was legendary is former President Ronald Reagan. At age 69, he was the oldest person ever elected President of the United States. Shortly after an attempt to assassinate him on March 30, 1981, Reagan's approval ratings were about 90 percent, virtually the highest on record. However, when the economy plunged into a recession a year later, his ratings plummeted to 30 percent.

His pollster, Richard Wirthlin, consulted with Reagan every two weeks. In 1982, the pollster had the unhappy duty of telling the nation's chief executive that his poll numbers were now among the worst in history. He recalls entering the president's office and hearing Reagan ask:

"Well, how are they? What do the figures look like?"

"Well, they're pretty bad, Mr. President," Wirthlin said.

"Well, how bad are they?" the president asked.

"Well, they're as low as they can get," Wirthlin said.

"So what do you mean?" President Reagan asked.

"Well, they're about 32 percent," Wirthlin finally admitted.

"Anything lower than that in the second year of the presidency?" the president inquired.

"I think that's the lowest," Wirthlin ruefully replied. At that point, the president's face brightened. He smiled and said to Wirthlin, "Dick, Dick, don't worry. I'll just go out there and try to get shot again." The ability to laugh at yourself and your circumstances ensures that you are not taking yourself too seriously. Also, humor pushes back feelings of depression and discouragement, making room for creativity and commitment.

Finally, as you continue on life's adventures, remember to practice perseverance. "Victory belongs to the most persevering," declared Napoleon Bonaparte. **T**

Victor Parachin is a freelance writer and ordained minister, living in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Scottish town crier John Smith is a professional Toastmaster who wears many hats.

Shy No More

◆ FOR SOMEONE DESCRIBING HIMSELF AS “TERMINALLY SHY,” becoming a professional master of ceremonies is never an obvious solution. Nevertheless, that’s what happened to John Smith, a Toastmaster from Polmont, Shropshire, Scotland, and it gave him the confidence he desired.

Smith was once so shy that, after attending a night class on assertiveness in which the participants were required to stand up and introduce themselves – he fled, not being able to handle the pressure of standing in front of a room full of people.

He found the courage to join a Toastmasters club and managed to give a 27-second Table Topic. Although his first speech lasted only two minutes, Smith says he “was sure that if I worked my way through the Toastmasters manual I could gradually overcome any remaining fears.”

Smith eventually started the first Toastmasters clubs in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland, and was honored as the District 21 – UK and Ireland – Toastmaster of the Year in 1994-95. He now teaches public speaking training courses and serves as master of ceremonies at weddings and other formal functions. He’s even been the official Toastmaster at dinners attended by members of the British royal family.



John Smith shows his true colors to New York City firefighters at Tartan Day in Central Park.



Putting his Toastmasters training to good use at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2002.

In 2000, Smith became the only officially registered town crier in Scotland, adopted by Kiliwinning in Ayrshire. Since then, he has led 8,000 pipers and drummers along Edinburgh’s famous Princes Street for the Marie Curie Millennium Parade (to raise money for cancer care). On Tartan Day last April, Smith says he “was lucky enough to herald the coming of 290 pipe bands as we made our way down New York’s 6th Avenue to Central Park.”

“I have exceeded any expectations that I may have had of gaining enough confidence to speak in public when I entered that classroom all those years ago. Although I still feel that I constantly have to place myself in front of people, just in case I regress,” Smith says.

For more information, visit Smith’s Web site at www.scottishtowncrier.com.

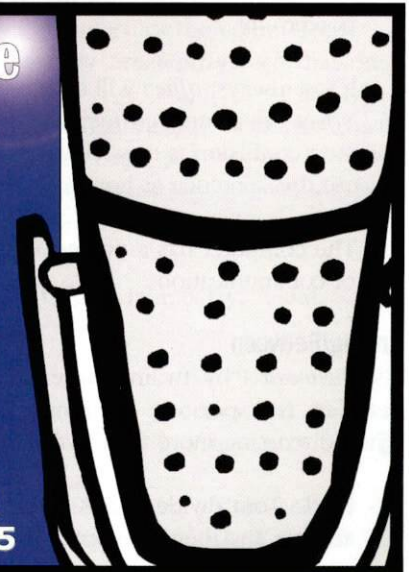


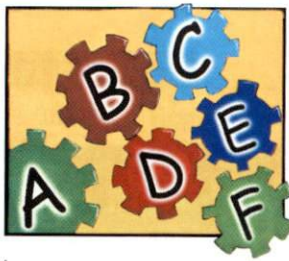
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Words that look alike
sound alike and cause us
to trip over our tongues.

The Terrible Ten

I'm proud to write for perhaps the only organization in the world whose members universally know the difference between a lectern and a podium. For discriminating speakers and writers, a lectern (from the Latin *lectura*, "to read") is the slant-topped desk behind which a speaker stands, and a podium (from the Greek *podia*, "foot") is the small base upon which a speaker may stand. Thus, when I hear someone say, "The speaker is placing his notes on the podium," I think, "How could he stoop so low?"

Lectern and *podium* are among dozens of troublesome twins – words that look alike or sound alike and cause us to trip over our tongues. Here are 10 confused word pairs that you are most likely to hear and read. My experience as a speaker, writer and teacher tells me that these particular twins often produce the most perplexing and egregious errors:

Affect/Effect

Affect, beginning with an *a*, is almost always a verb meaning "to have an effect on; to move or stir the emotions of":

The music of Beethoven never fails to *affect* me powerfully.

Almost always, *affect* will be the verb you're looking for and *effect* the noun that means "an influence." The most common confusion is to spell the noun *effect* as *affect*. Do not use this sentence at home, or anywhere else:

The computer has a powerful *affect* on the speed of communication.

Among/Between

Use *between* ("by twain") when discussing relationships between two persons or things. Generally use *among* when discussing more than two:

Uncle Tom divided the Gunky Bar *between* Sam and me and then distributed the Robo-Accountant toys *among* us five boys.

Amount/Number

Use *number* to refer to persons or things that can be counted. Use *amount* to refer to quantities. *Number* tells how many; *amount* tells how much:

Rocco made a great *amount* of money selling a large *number* of tickets to the new freshmen, granting them permission to use the toilets.

Compose/Comprise

Comprise means "to include, contain or embrace." The whole *comprises* the parts, and the parts *compose* the whole. "Is comprised of" is clunky because the terms "is included of" and "is contained of" make no sense.

The Union *comprises* the 50 states, or the Union is *composed* of 50 states, but the Union cannot be *comprised* of the 50 states, nor do the 50 states *comprise* the Union.

Different from/Different than

Than is ordinarily used with comparative adjectives, such as *better than* and *stronger than* – but *different* is not a comparative. Although *different than* is commonly used in informal speech, many careful writers prefer *different from* before a noun, pronoun or noun expression:

Today's computers are *different from* those of even a few years ago.

Disinterested/Uninterested

Which judge would you prefer?:

At the trial, the judge was completely *uninterested*.
At the trial, the judge was completely *disinterested*.

The answer is that you would prefer the second judge. To be *disinterested* is to be impartial. To be *uninterested* is to be unconcerned. At your trial, you want a judge who is *disinterested*, but not *uninterested*.

Farther/Further

Use *farther* for concrete, physical distance, *further* for abstract, metaphoric distance. *Farther* means “physically beyond”; *further* means “additional” or “additionally”:

At times, Uranus is *farther* away from the sun than is Pluto.

The committee members requested *further* details about the national health plan so that they could *further* explore its consequences.

Fewer/Less

We see them everywhere – the plague of plaques in supermarket express lines that say, “8 Items or Less.” They should read, “8 Items or Fewer.”

Less means “not so much” and refers to amount or quantity. *Fewer* means “not so many” and refers to number, things that are countable – “less food” but “fewer cookies”; “less nutrition” but “fewer calories.” With those omnipresent supermarket signs and with those contests asking for responses in “25 words or less,” when will we ever learn?

Imply/Infer

Use *imply* to mean “indicate without saying outright” or “express indirectly.” Use *infer* to mean “draw a conclusion by reasoning”:

His tone *implied* that he did not really believe us.

We *inferred* from his tone that he thought we were lying.

Lay/Lie

Caveat Orator – Speaker Beware: more than any of the other troublesome twins, these verbs lie in wait ready to lay confusion and embarrassment upon you. Here’s the problem: *Lie* is a strong, irregular verb that conjugates *lie-lay-lain*. *Lay* is a weak, regular verb that conjugates *lay-laid-laid*. Because *lay* is both the present tense of *to lay* and the past tense of *to lie* and because the weak, regular verb pattern has become dominant in English, many speakers and writers use *lay*, as in “I like to lay in my hammock” (quite a trick!), when they should use *lie*.

The most useful way to sort out *lie* and *lay* is to bear in mind that *lie* is an intransitive verb that means “to repose,” while *lay* is usually a transitive verb that means “to put.” *Lay* almost always takes an object, *lie* never. Something must be laid, and nothing can be lied. Or try visualizing this cartoon: Two hens are pictured side by side in their nests. One is sitting upright, and she is labeled LAYING; the other is flat on her back and labeled LYING. In another bestial cartoon, a man says to his dog, “Lay down!” and the dog rolls over on its back. Then the master says, “Speak!” – and the dog says, “It’s *lie*.”

EXERCISE 1: Now it’s time to lay your knowledge on the line. In each sentence below provide the proper form of *lie* or *lay*:

1. The workers are _____ linoleum in the kitchen.
2. I’m tired and would like to _____ down.
3. Now I _____ me down to sleep.
4. We found a man _____ in a ditch.
5. She had just _____ down to rest when the telephone rang.
6. For months he _____ in a deep coma.
7. I see that you have finally _____ your cards on the table.
8. She _____ the work aside for a few days.
9. The book is _____ on the oak table in the study.
10. For three days, the book has _____ on the shelf.

EXERCISE 2: Circle the italicized word that works better (not best) in each sentence:

1. The weather should not *affect/effect* our plans, as billiards is played indoors.
2. Her estate will be divided *among/between* her five surviving cousins.
3. A great *amount/number* of people showed up for the keynote address.
4. The list was *composed/comprised* of property owners only.
5. Is this quiz different *from/than* any other that you have ever taken?
6. For much of her childhood, the current world heptathlon champion was *disinterested/uninterested* in sports of any kind.
7. A bit *farther/further* down the road you will come to the Cracker Barrel Store.
8. I wish there were *fewer/less* programs on television; they annoyingly interrupt the commercials.
9. From the tapes the jury *implied/inferred* that the broker was guilty.
10. For years, the huge unabridged dictionary has *laid/lain* unused on his desk.

Answers

Exercise 1

1. laying; 2. lie; 3. lay; 4. lying; 5. lain; 6. lay; 7. laid; 8. laid; 9. lying; 10. lain

Exercise 2

1. affect; 2. among; 3. number; 4. composed; 5. from; 6. uninterested; 7. farther; 8. fewer; 9. inferred; 10. lain **T**

Richard Lederer, Ph.D., of San Diego, California, is the author of the best-selling book, *Anguished English* and many other books on language.



Toastmasters Share Their Lessons Learned

Buffet Line

◆ GO INTO ANY BUFFET FOOD LINE, AND IT'S EASY TO BECOME overwhelmed and dive headlong into the first few selections. Then, before you know it, you've no room left for the remaining food options. It's the same with Toastmasters. Some members become enamored only with Table Topics or prepared speeches and miss the other "treats" available at club meetings.

You took an important step when you joined Toastmasters. Fellow members, in sharing their lessons learned, would encourage you not to deprive yourself of the opportunities available to you when you walk through that membership door.

■ *At a recent business meeting, I encountered two situations that I handled with ease because of my participation in Toastmasters. It is customary to arrive on time, if not early, for business meetings. On this particular day, I was early, but an associate was unprepared and in a panic. She asked me to go downstairs and grab a file she desperately needed. I ran downstairs, and when I returned I was immediately introduced for my presentation. I was breathing hard and sweating, but I didn't apologize. No one noticed.*

It is distracting enough when someone else's cellular phone rings, but when it's your own, it can be embarrassing. In anticipation of the meeting, I had switched my phone to vibrate. I received two calls during my presentation, and I'm thankful that I remembered to turn off the ringer. (I advise all speakers to turn their phones off.) Again, no one noticed, and I didn't have to apologize.

DANIEL N. HILL • ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA

■ *I'm looking for suggestions about how to give an emotional talk without breaking down. When a speaker delivers a eulogy, or even an ordinary talk involving very strong feelings, he or she sometimes chokes up and can't continue easily. It becomes embarrassing for both the speaker and the listeners. What advice can Toastmasters give to alleviate this problem? I am waiting to hear from you! Please send your solutions to "Topical Tips" columnist Mark Majcher at the address below.*

CHARLES GRACE, ATM • CLEVELAND, OHIO

■ *I used to give my speeches with one shaky hand in my big overcoat's pocket and the other shaky hand holding notes. Then I read something that changed my outlook. An actor wrote that extreme fear of people is basically selfish. He suggested remedying the fear by pausing as you look at the group you are to address and thinking "there you are!" rather than "here I am." I tried it and improved greatly by thinking of the audience instead of myself. The greatest success in speech seems to occur when we are absorbed in connecting with others. I recently won an award for retelling a personal story as I had never done before. I did this by forgetting myself and reliving the episode as I spoke. At last I truly felt a mutual connection with the audience.*

ELIZABETH ELLIS • SOUTH AUSTRALIA

■ *Toastmasters is all about timing. Without even rehearsing your speech with a stopwatch or clock, you can approximate the length of your speech by using the following guidelines: If you type your speeches, double-spaced in a 14-font size, one full page should equal two minutes of a speech. Therefore, a three-page speech should take approximately six minutes to present.*

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Share with us that favorite tip, strategy or action that has made you a more effective communicator. Entries may be edited for clarity and length.

Send to: Mark Majcher
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1255 Walnut Court
Rockledge, FL 32955

or e-mail: majcher@spacey.net



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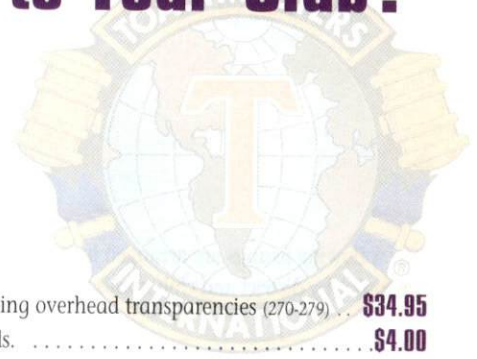
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