

TOASTMASTER[®]

AUGUST 2006

Special Storytelling Issue:

It's All About

*Stage
Time!*

How to Tell Tall Tales

Acting Techniques for Speakers

All I Need to Know I Learned in Fairy Tales

Thanks for the Memories



Remembrance. Reflection. Gratitude. That is what this last column is about. My presidential year has gone by unbelievably fast. As I reflect back, I am filled with a sense of wonder and gratitude for the honor and privilege of serving as your president.

My wife Sharon and I had the pleasure of connecting with many members at district conferences through personal meetings, educational sessions and keynotes. I also had the opportunity to help districts charter new clubs by meeting decision makers in organizations and corporations. Districts arranged for me to promote the Toastmasters opportunity via appearances on television and radio programs and newspaper interviews. We visited districts 1, 12, 13, 18, 32, 34, 36, 37, 56, 64 and the Territorial Council of South Asia, as well as conferences in regions 3 and 4, meeting at least 3000 members and guests!

We encountered enthusiastic receptions, packed conference halls, tireless workers, inspiring speech contests and tremendous educational programs. Many members told me how their Toastmasters experience has helped them "find their voices." In Mexico, I had the pleasure of delivering short speeches in Spanish and presenting a workshop with the aid of an interpreter. At the opening night of the conference of the Territorial Council of South Asia, more than 650 Toastmasters and guests packed the convention hall for an incredible evening of inspiration, education and entertainment, bringing together people from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

To set policy and strategic direction, I had the honor of working with our dedicated Board members. Essential to this work was the support and hard work of our Executive Director Donna Groh and the World Headquarters (WHQ) staff. Here are some insights you may find meaningful:

- The Toastmasters program is successful because it meets fundamental human needs for personal development, significance and recognition. All people need what we offer.
- Leaders are engaged in an ever-continuing journey in which we hold positions for a short time before we pass on our leadership mantles to others. So fostering and nurturing new leaders is a priority.
- Our success also depends on teamwork – within and among clubs, districts, the Board and WHQ; we are interdependent.
- One of the most fulfilling things you can do is to give your all to create a better world. Find Your Voice. Serve Your World!

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you and the organization I love. The great Scottish author and playwright James Barrie wrote, "God gave us memories so that we might have roses in December." You have given my family and me memories we will always treasure. The fragrance of these "roses" will forever be in my bones. Thank you and farewell.

Dilip R. Abayasekara
 Dilip Abayasekara, DTM
 International President

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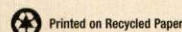
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The Toastmasters Vision:

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.

Do you have something to say? Write it in 200 words or less, sign it with your name, address and club affiliation and send it to letters@toastmasters.org.

Remembering Terry McCann

Terry McCann was present for several important moments in my life and was personally responsible for a few of them. A few years ago, I delivered a speech for his new group SIMA, Surf Industry Manufacturers Association, in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and sat with him on the beach over dinner. The folks there treated him as a god. He was the "spirit and thought" leader who guided them. No matter where he went, he uplifted the organizations he joined. His management savvy and strength of character are an inspiration to multitudes. I am certainly among them.

And now that he has a new assignment in heaven, Moses no longer needs Joshua to speak for him; he's got Terry McCann as his speech coach now.

Thanks for being here, Terry. We are better because we knew you.

Jim Cathcart • Toastmasters' 2001 Golden Gavel Recipient
Carlsbad, California

Time for a New Name

In the June issue, Thomas LeFleur suggested that Toastmasters International change its name. I agree that the name "Toastmasters International" no longer serves us well enough. For 20 years I wanted to improve my speaking skills. I had heard of Toastmasters but assumed it was a bunch of company executives getting together in their suits and ties and making toasts. Three years ago I overheard a librarian saying she was in Toastmasters. Since she was obviously not a company vice-president, I finally realized my understanding of Toastmasters could be wrong. I wasted a lot of years because of my misperception.

Larry Wilson, ATMS, AL • Don't Stop Talking at DST,
Kansas City, Missouri

Once a Toastmaster Always a Toastmaster

"Fellow Toastmasters and guests" – this phrase has been music to my ears

for the past five years and I am sure it will be for many more years to come.

In response to Frank Fasano's letter ("Marketing Faux Pas," June) about the new award titles not mentioning the name Toastmasters, I want to point out that in some critical ways, they still do: The new award titles don't change the fact that we can still proudly call ourselves "Toastmaster so and so, Competent Communicator" (or Advanced Communicator, Competent Leader or whatever title we may have).

Once we are a Toastmaster, we'll always be a Toastmaster, whether we call ourselves an Able Toastmaster or Advanced Communicator.

R.Sunderrajan ATMS • Pioneer TMC • Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Applause for New Leadership Manual

Congratulations to TI for introducing the most significant enhancement to the educational program in the last eight years.

Having recently completed my second DTM, embarked on a third "round" and completed all 15 advanced manuals, I was looking forward to a new challenge! The new *Competent Leader* manual is providing that new challenge for me – and will hopefully do so for many Toastmasters around the world.

I have long felt that the previous CL offered little in terms of helping members to develop or demonstrate leadership skills. The new CL overcomes many of its predecessor's weaknesses. As a management trainer by profession, I believe that the new *Competent Leader* manual provides basic insights into a range of 10 key leadership functions. And the requirement for completion of a minimum 21 separate assignments should ensure that becoming a CL is no longer a "quick-fix."

But, in true sandwich evaluation style, I believe that relative weaknesses remain. For example, being a Table Topics speaker in Project 1 does not

really equate to any of the other assignments. And, there seems to be an imbalance within Project 10 between the time requirements to complete two A assignments when compared to any one of the five B assignments.

However, such anomalies should not be allowed to diminish the important contribution to committed Toastmasters made by the innovative new CL process. I hope that clubs worldwide will encourage their members to pursue the new CL program and that it will be implemented with integrity and monitored effectively.

Geoff Andrew, DTM • Brunei Speakers Club
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

Bridging the Sexual Orientation Gap

"Recruiting for the 21st Century Toastmaster" (June) was one of the *Toastmaster's* best articles. I agree with the author that "Toastmasters must change with the times" to "stay relevant and continue to serve the needs of the 21st Century Toastmaster."

Besides "bridging the gap among the generations, genders and races," the sexual orientation gap also needs bridging. Fortunately, I belong to a diverse, inclusive and accepting club, where I feel comfortable being openly gay. I've discussed gay-related issues and brought my male domestic partner of 28 years to club events.

This welcoming attitude doesn't prevail at all clubs. As a result, a few clubs specifically serve the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community. While people often choose to associate with like-minded individuals, I believe these few clubs exist because LGBT people don't feel accepted and comfortable in other clubs.

Toastmasters needs to include LGBT persons in their recruitment efforts and welcome them to be "out" and open about their sexual orientation or identity.

Peter Tannen, ATM-S, CL • President, 25 Alive Toastmasters
San Francisco, California

Our internal theater opens up when the speaker paints a picture with words.

Superb Stories Sell!

Mustafa, a fellow Toastmaster, worked very hard to perfect his 10th and final speech for his CTM. Eager to make it a success, he approached me for help. "Could you have a look and fix it up a bit?"

Those of you who are mentors in your club will agree that it is an honor to have the opportunity to assist other members. So of course I agreed to help him.

The first thing I noticed while reading Mustafa's draft – on the subject of his favorite sport, running – was that the writing lacked structure. Additionally, it was full of jargon like *success*, *goal* and *plan* – imageless words that fail to ignite the imagination and stir people to action.

Once I'd completed reading the draft, I realized I had no idea why Mustafa had started running. So I called him at home. With pen in hand I waited to jot down responses to my questions.

"Mustafa, why did you want to run the 10K?"

"Because I gained weight after my surgery." Then he paused and added, "Well, actually, it all started in grade school." Aha! So this is where his story began.

So often, Toastmasters forget their stories. It is there, within their own experience, that the impetus of motivation and the magic of ideas usually rest. Stories are at the heart of any good speech. Why, you ask? Because the human mind loves stories! We latch onto the images conjured by the narrative and easily follow its structure. Its sequence of events elicit our emotions, which then trigger neurons to fire. Strings of peptides wiggle their way into cells throughout the body when we hear a terrific tale. We make a vital, visceral connection.

Mustafa told me that a friend invited him to run the 10K with him.

I asked, "What's his name?"

"Bram."

"Then, include that fact," I advised.

"Where did you start running?"

"Through Thornhill, along the streets."

"Describe the streets."

"Tree-lined," he said. "But then, we ran through a ravine."

Great! The word *ravine* suggested watery sounds of a stream. I could imagine the coolness of shady trees followed by a ravine with running water. Maybe he leapt over rocks. The images were no longer static.

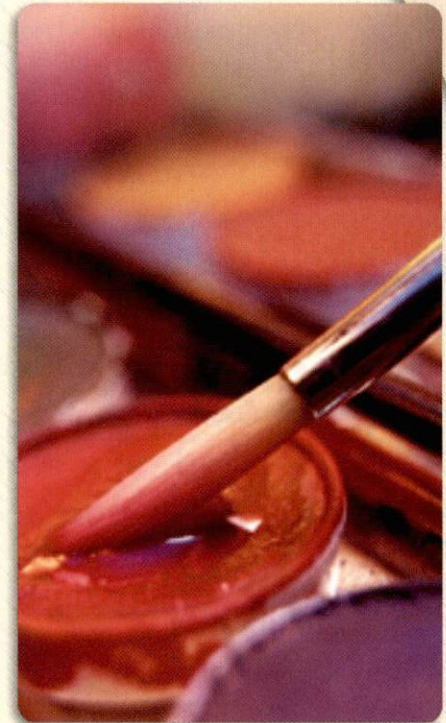
"Were you alone?"

"No, come to think of it, Bram's dog, Harry, was with us."

Doesn't the scene spring to life with just a little more description? The audience feeds on such detail. Our internal theater opens up when the speaker paints a picture with words. An evocative account like Mustafa's draws the listener in, making her feel included in the story.

Mustafa recognized that his success formula "plan, set and live" applied to running as well as to Toastmasters, but he failed to make the connection between his 10K journey and the 10- speech process. Once he had his story in place, and his speech was better structured as a result, he also made the connection between the two.

The next night Mustafa bounded into the room at Grosvenor Toastmasters in full running gear. He let out a huge howl, a victory scream: "I did it!" He recounted his superb tale with passion and ended with a quote, another terrific device for adding authority to a story.



The joy Mustafa experienced with his running accomplishment and his CTM completion speech reverberated throughout the room. Like him, we were all pumped, and he went on to win Best Speech.

A good story, well-told, communicates universal emotions to the audience. According to research, these universal emotions are happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise and disgust (Black, Yacoub, 1995). In this case, the emotion conveyed was happiness. The backbone of Mustafa's story – its emotional appeal – might have been lost in the middle of a dull, pictureless presentation.

Mustafa wanted his listeners to learn about the three steps to success that he had found. In his revised speech, organized through a compelling narrative, he was able to effectively impart the power of "plan, set and live" to everyone in the room.

A success formula indeed! **T**

Lesley Soden, Ph.D., ATMB, is a member of Grosvenor Toastmasters in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Lisa Bishop:

Speaking Out About Autism

By Julie Bawden Davis

This Toastmaster uses her new-found confidence to help others.

▼ Lisa Bishop was recently elected Vice President of Public Relations for both of her Toastmasters clubs.



When Lisa Bishop called to inquire about Toastmasters one night at 10:30, she expected to leave a message. She certainly didn't think the club president would answer and graciously give her a thorough overview of the club.

"I was very embarrassed about calling so late and waking him up, but he was wonderful to talk to," says Bishop. "He told me all about the club and made me feel really comfortable about attending a meeting."

For Bishop, who has a mild form of autism, making that phone call was difficult. It took her two weeks to muster the courage to call, and then she did so after hours when she thought no one would answer. Thanks to the welcoming attitude of Toastmasters, however, in just a few short months since joining, she's found the strength to stand up to her fears and discover a confidence she never thought possible.

Bishop and her three sons all have Asperger's Syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism with symptoms that include social awkwardness and anxiety, the inability to read nonverbal clues, sensory stimulation issues and difficulty processing information.

Up until six years ago Bishop, who lives in Litchfield, Maine, knew that she and her boys had a problem, but she hadn't been able to pinpoint the cause. When a neighbor

had a son diagnosed with the disorder, Bishop discovered that she and her sons, Christian, Daniel and Cody, all fit the profile and went for testing. Though the positive diagnosis she received could have discouraged Bishop, it energized her instead, and she decided to respond by doing something constructive.

Bishop started working in the autism field, becoming an information specialist for the Autism Society of Maine. "I decided that it was time to start standing up for my kids and myself," she says. Eager to give presentations and workshops, she wanted to share information about autism.

"My goal is to zap the myths surrounding autism and Asperger's disorder and be a strong advocate for the many people who have these conditions and need support," she says. "The only trouble was that at work I wasn't given any opportunities to do presentations, and there were no plans to let me speak in the future. At first I was hurt and ready to back down and quit my new passion, but then something wonderful happened. My husband suggested I go to Toastmasters."

After finding the nearby Brunswick Club and finally making that fateful phone call, Bishop went to the very next meeting.

"Even though people with Asperger's suffer from social anxiety, I have to say that I felt welcome from the moment I walked in the door,"

says Bishop of her first Toastmasters meeting. "I was so comfortable that when they gave me the opportunity to do Table Topics, I took it. Even though I was shaking like a leaf, I won the [Best Table Topics] award. At the close of the meeting when they asked me if I wanted to become a member, I said 'definitely!'"

Bishop joined in January of this year (2006), and since then has blossomed through her Toastmaster involvement. As soon as she got her membership kit, she started working on her Icebreaker speech.

"I was very nervous, but I did my speech soon after joining, talking about how we should live our lives like an open book – letting people know what we go through so that we can help others," says Bishop. "I was overwhelmed by all of the positive comments I got about that first speech."

Since then she has almost completed all of the required speeches for her Competent Communicator award and has joined another Toastmaster club, Mainly Speakers, which also meets in Brunswick. Both clubs recently named her vice president of public relations.

Deb Nowak is Bishop's mentor and a member of the Brunswick Club and Mainly Speakers. "I will never forget the first time Lisa walked into a meeting," says Nowak. "She had a bright smile and endless enthusiasm, and I knew immediately that she'd be an asset to the club."

Not long after Bishop joined, Nowak was asked to be her mentor. "Mentoring Lisa has been a joy," says Nowak. "Lisa has progressed faster than anyone I've ever mentored, and it's been wonderful to see her grow. Even though she was originally unsure of herself and lacked confidence, she was an eager learner and very dedicated to her cause of getting the word out about Asperger's and autism."

Nowak has been especially impressed by Bishop's desire to help others. "Lisa wants to make improvements in her speaking and

presentation skills so that she can help others as well as herself, which puts a positive spin on everything," says Nowak. "She wants to share her wealth of knowledge about autism and isn't afraid to jump in and talk about it to anyone. I'm always amazed at how she can streamline all of her thoughts on the subject and break the information down into simple pieces for the average person to understand, while

"My goal is to zap the myths surrounding autism and Asperger's disorder and be a strong advocate for the many people who have these conditions and need support."

at the same time promote sympathy for what she and others with the condition experience everyday."

Dot Brooks is also a member of the Brunswick Club and Mainly Speakers and has learned a great deal about autism through Bishop's speeches.

"Lisa's presentations are not only educational, they're also very creative and fun to listen to," says Brooks. "In one of her speeches about autism she wore an overcoat which she had buttoned and tied up. The coat represented her when she first got to Toastmasters. As she spoke about her progress, she started undoing the buttons. This provided a wonderful visual to her speech, which earned her best speaker of the night. In another speech she peeked around a corner as she spoke, describing how timid a person with Asperger's syndrome is. I've seen her experience tremendous progress through Toastmasters in a very short period of time."

Since joining Toastmasters, Bishop's dream of speaking in public is coming true. "Doors are opening and I'm being asked to speak and participate in workshops regarding autism," she says. "I recently spoke to a group of police officers about what to do if they come in

contact with a child with Asperger's syndrome or autism. After the presentation, many of the officers thanked me for opening their eyes to the condition and giving them such useful information."

Besides improving her speaking skills, Bishop feels that Toastmasters has helped every area of her life.

"Toastmasters has been a lifeline for me," she says. "The members have an understanding of who I am, and they support me, and as a result I stand up taller everyday." She has

decided to go back to college and get her Bachelors of Science in mental health and human services and is considering continuing for her Masters degree. "I actually took a class recently and sat up front and participated for the first time in my whole life," she says. "Before Toastmasters I wouldn't have had the courage to try college. I ended up with a 4.0 in that class and was told that I was a wonderful student, which is a big change for someone who had a C average."

Bishop has also found that Toastmasters has positively affected her home and work life. "My relationship with my husband, Christian, and our children has improved, and at work I'm able to stand up for myself in ways that I never thought possible. I've even developed leadership skills," she says. "Emotionally I have never felt stronger or more positive, and I owe it all to Toastmasters." **T**

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer in Southern California. Reach her at Julie@juliebawdendavis.com.

Editor's Note: Do you have an inspiring story of how the Toastmasters program has helped you overcome challenges in your life? Tell us at letters@toastmasters.org.

By Caren S. Neile, Ph.D., ATMS

All I Really Need to Know I Learned in

FAIRY
TALES

**Imagination is more important
than knowledge. – ALBERT EINSTEIN**



he market for resources that help us lead richer lives – in all senses of the word – is hotter than ever. Search for self-help books on Amazon.com, and you will find no fewer than 9,900 entries. Many of these titles are even mega-bestsellers:

***All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten** by Robert Fulghum and **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Steven R. Covey. And of course, there's the 1936 classic that is still in print and selling strong: Dale Carnegie's **How to Win Friends and Influence People**.*

Behind much of this material is a speaker with a pocketful of motivational speeches that contain wisdom and insights for eager audiences. Self-improvement and public speaking, after all, go hand in hand.

But where does a writer or speaker come by the great ideas and insights that form the backbone of motivational speaking and writing? Ideally, through experience – through the people we meet and the challenges we overcome. Naturally, some of us are less fortunate than others in encountering inspiring mentors and character-building life experiences. Not to mention the fact that we don't always have the time needed to write a rousing speech in a week!

Fortunately, there is another way, and it is a path that our ancestors have taken for thousands of years, long before anyone ever heard of Dale Carnegie. It's fairy tales. Storytelling was the original way that character was molded, good citizens were made and life lessons were taught. The storytelling circle was school, theater and therapy session rolled into one. Self-help writers have known this for

years. Witness such titles as *The Peter Pan Syndrome*, *The Aladdin Factor* and *The Cinderella Complex*.

Take a story like the Grimm Brothers' "King Roughbeard." In it, a rather arrogant young princess, who does not wish to marry, dreams up disparaging names for each of her suitors, including the ruler of a neighboring kingdom. Her frustrated father declares that the first man to enter the palace will have her as his wife. The next visitor presents himself as a beggar who hails from the kingdom of the ruler she has dubbed King Roughbeard, and, true to his word, the king marries his daughter to him. By the end of the story, the princess, humbled by her diminished position, would like nothing better than to marry the king whom she had so cruelly mocked. But not to worry: It turns out that that her beggar husband is the king in disguise.

You could interpret Roughbeard as a story about the dangers of pride, of prejudice, of mockery or of a multitude of other psychological and social gaffes. Or, with a few minor adjustments – perfectly acceptable with stories from the oral tradition that have already changed a thousand times in as many years – you could make this a sympathetic tale about the difficulties facing a young person who aspires to do things her own way. It all depends on what you wish to make of it.

Now you may think, *I don't have time to waste reading childish fairy tales! Just give me the facts, pure and simple!* And in our fast-paced, hard-driving culture, you're not

the globe many times over. By referring to a story that people know, you have already done half the work of getting to your point, and you've touched your audience on an elemental level at the same time.

Fairy Tales as Teaching Tools

Actually, it was only in the last two centuries that storytellers directed folktales, of which fairy tales are a part, to children alone. Prior to this, they were told at social gatherings around the fire or in spinning circles, with all ages present. Today, many psychologists warn about the damage parents can cause if they forbid youngsters to indulge in the flights of fancy found in fairy tales. Not only do these stories teach us moral lessons, they also build and exercise the imagination. And that means they help us imagine alternatives in our own lives.

Take a look at some of the lessons gleaned from the classic self-improvement books and how they connect with traditional stories. First, there's advice from *How to Win Friends and Influence People*: "Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language." How many times have you heard a salesman who wants you to buy a product refer to you by name? This is one of the oldest and most successful pieces of advice from the world of self-improvement.

Where have we heard a story about the importance of names? Does "Rumpelstiltskin" ring a bell? In that classic

"A story is like a pomegranate. Its seeds can be eaten separately, but they work together to form the whole."

alone. After all, many of us would prefer to pop a vitamin pill for nourishment than exchange our fast food for a healthy salad. But consider: A story is like a pomegranate. Its seeds can be eaten separately, but they work together to form the whole. Similarly, stories contain symbols, characters, plot, language, culture and other elements that, when taken together, form a rich and rewarding experience. They touch us rationally, emotionally and ethically. When we take our own meanings from a story, we find the lesson that is most relevant for us and for our audience. We express it in our own words, through our own hearts. In other words, *the process* of learning a story is as important as *the product*; it can actually change that product.

And if you're still not convinced, consider this: Most of our audiences are at least vaguely familiar with Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk and Bluebeard, even if they're called by different names in different cultures. (In China, for example, Cinderella is called Yeh-sien.) These stories, with their profound and universal truths, have travelled

tale, a young woman agrees to let a mysterious little man help her with a wretched task if she will give him her firstborn child. When she reneges on the deal, her only hope of saving herself is to guess the character's name. While this beloved story may seem like it's telling us *not* to say someone's name, it is making a much deeper point: A name is powerful. Remember it, and use it wisely.

There's a recommendation from *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*: "Play fair." Cinderella's stepsisters were anything but fair to the miserable young girl, treating her like a maid, or worse, for no reason other than their pride and jealousy. At the end of the story, Cinderella marries the prince, while in at least one version, the stepsisters get their eyes pecked out.

In Leo Buscaglia's *Born for Love: Reflections on Loving*, we find that "the love we have to give will be contingent upon the love we have experienced. But there is hope. Love is learned through loving." You may recall that in one of the most romantic of all fairy tales, "Beauty

and the Beast," a young girl who is deeply attached to her father learns that the Beast, who at first terrifies her by his frightening appearance, has a warm, loving heart and is, in fact, a prince in disguise.

Finally, Wayne Dyer, in *Your Erroneous Zones*, writes that "immunity from despair in the face of disapproval is the ticket to a lifetime of delectable personal present-moment freedom." And that's exactly the lesson learned by Hans Christian Andersen's Ugly Duckling, whom all the fowl despise until he matures into a swan.

Additional samples of the world's great fairy tales are listed below, along with a number of the lessons they contain. In addition to the general interpretations noted, each of the stories can also be understood as a metaphor for human spiritual, emotional and physical maturation. But don't take my word for it. Every story has innumerable interpretations, depending on who you are and what you're looking for. That's why it's so important to read them for yourself.

- Tom Thumb, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, Hansel and Gretel: All of these stories teach children and adults alike one of the most important motivational lessons there is: The weak can overpower the strong. They are found in Maria Tatar's *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*.
- Bluebeard (Perrault) is a meditation on the care one should take on choosing a marriage partner.
- Both Sleeping Beauty and Snow White (Grimm) describe the perils of passivity among women and young girls.
- The Emperor's New Clothes (Andersen) teaches us that we must look behind social niceties and speak truth to power.
- The Fisherman and His Wife (Grimm) is a cautionary tale about the danger of greed.
- Rapunzel (Grimm) warns parents, teachers and all others in authority over young people not to attempt to "lock them up" or subjugate them.

Don't be afraid to browse through the collections (there are more than 200 Grimms' fairy tales, although most of us know only a handful) and come up with unfamiliar stories that serve your purposes. There are countless anthologies of stories from other cultures, some of which will be familiar to Western audiences, others not. African folktales, for example, are particularly rich in life lessons. In your speech, you may simply summarize the story in a few lines as I did above.

One final note: You don't ever actually have to mention a fairy tale. That's the beauty of all of this: The insights we glean from the wisdom of the ages are ours to remake and to share. As for the stories themselves, we can continue to enjoy them for years to come.

Caren S. Neile, Ph.D., ATMS/CL, directs the South Florida Storytelling Project at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and is the managing editor of *Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies*. She will present a session on storytelling at the 2006 Toastmasters International Convention in Washington D.C. Reach her at cneile@fau.edu. 

Further Reading

Look for fairy and other folktales in the children's department of any library catalogued under 398.2. Ask your librarian or bookseller for recommendations on collections from other traditions.

For classic collections of European fairy tales:

- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Andersen's Fairy Tales*. (Multiple editions).
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *The Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales* (Multiple editions).
- Lang, Andrew. *The Orange Fairy Book*. Dover, 1968. (Other titles in this series include: *The Violet Fairy Book*, *The Blue Fairy Book*, *The Yellow Fairy Book*, as well as *Brown, Olive, Lilac, Pink and Crimson*).
- Perrault, Charles. *The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*. Clarion, 1993.
- Tatar, Maria. *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*. Norton, 2002. A beautifully illustrated book that includes Bluebeard, Rapunzel, Snow White, The Little Match Girl, The Story of the Three Pigs, Puss in Boots, and many more.

For versions, or "variants," of the same story told around the world:

- The Oryx Multicultural Folklore Series editions of *Tom Thumb*, *Beauties and Beasties*, *Cinderella*, and *A Knock at the Door*.

For a deeper understanding of the power and promise of fairy tales:

- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. Vintage, 1989.
- Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, University of Kentucky, 2002.

By Elizabeth Keogan, ATMS

“We discovered that tall tales work like potato chips – once we started writing, we couldn’t stop at just one.”

How to Tell Tall Tales

The announcement was made in July: “This year, instead of a humorous speech contest, District 27 will hold its first tall tales contest.” Everyone in the room responded with an, “Oh!” and I think we may have achieved a record for the variety of ways to say that word. Some were intrigued, some were enthusiastic... but most of our members were confused and concerned.

What was the cause for all this dread? After all, most of us began telling tall tales on the playground. By the age of five, we found it easy to make a claim like, “I can kick a ball all the way to Kentucky!” or “My dog wagged his tail so fast that the news put out a tornado advisory.”

If you’ve been in a tall tales contest, you know the challenge is to come up with something more than just an outrageous claim – you have to write a contest-worthy story that develops and supports this claim. These can be more difficult to write than their deceptively simple themes suggest. The members of my club are all talented at writing humorous speeches, but our first efforts at

writing truly clever tall tales failed.

Our members were intimidated, and only two people signed up for the contest. That changed when our club came up with the following creative ideas. Soon, we discovered tall tales work like potato chips – once we started writing, we couldn’t stop at just one.

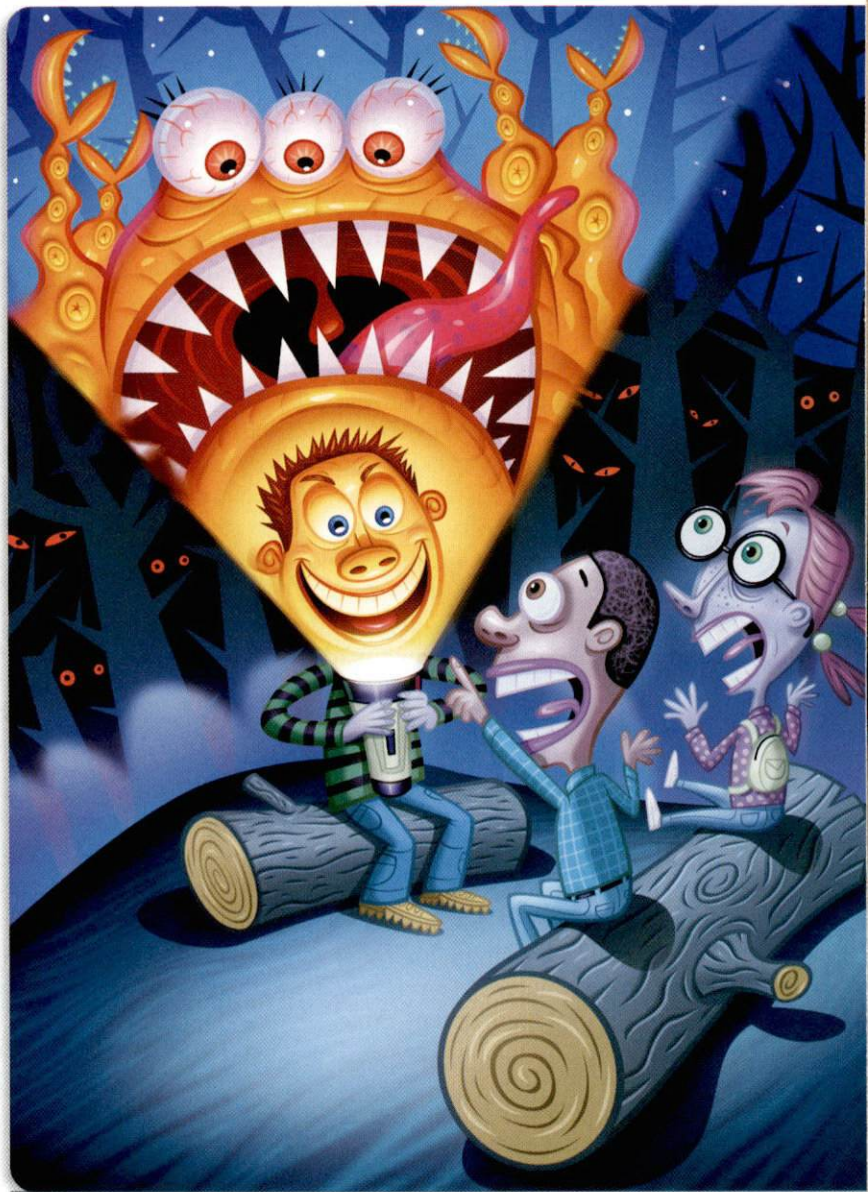
How to Begin

■ **Watch movies** such as *Big Fish* or *The Secret of Roan Inish* to hear a variety of tall tales being told. Your local library may have books of tall tales to use as examples, as well, but remember that your tale must be original! You cannot simply copy a story from a book and change a

few minor details. Also, be sure that your resources feature tall tales and not folk tales. They are distinctly different.

■ Your club can practice coming up with ideas by **using tall tales as a Table Topics theme** a month before the contest. Each participant must describe a seemingly implausible event that happened to him or her. To add an extra punch, tell the participants that they may describe a true event if they wish. Then, have the audience guess whether the story is true or a tall tale.

■ **Pick a random sentence from a book of famous quotations** and see



A Tall Tale Should Include The Following Features:

- **A character with extraordinary abilities** and a specific goal. In the best tall tales these characters are also, for the most part, ordinary people with which the audience can easily identify.
- **A problem** that is solved in a humorous way.
- **A careful blend of exaggerated and credible details.** Don't exaggerate everything in your tale. Use some realistic details to hook your audience, because they can picture themselves in such a situation. Then blend in exaggerated details to amaze them with a tall tale. With this judicious combination of various details you can really set up your audience to laugh. For example, a story about an ordinary person walking into a cave and encountering a bat as big as a bear cub can be hilarious. A story about a ten-foot-tall man digging a tunnel to the center of the Earth, where he encounters dragons and dinosaurs, is more fantasy than funny.
- **A comical ending.** The last lines should make the audience chuckle and/or groan. Clever twists and puns can also be sprinkled throughout the story.

what sort of a tall tale you can concoct using that sentence as a punch line. After you've tried this a few times, scan through the book for a quotation that captures your fancy. This also makes an excellent Table Topics theme.

- **Write down five frustrating things that have happened to you recently.** Use ordinary problems, such as being stuck in traffic, spilling coffee on your suit, having no time to do the dishes, and so on. Then try to come up with preposterous solutions that would help overcome these problems.

How to Develop Flavor

- After watching the movie *Big Fish*, **try to copy the main character's story-telling abilities.** Notice the use of tone, speed of delivery and volume, as well as the use of language.
- **Play around with accents**...for a while. Then, drop the phony accent but try to retain some of the accent's flavor. In other words, try adding a bit of drawl in places, or colorful phrases such as "Now there comes a

time in everyone's life," or "He was a most intelligent man." Many people in our club also found their tales improved when they adopted a "bemused" tone of voice.

- **Tall tales are the perfect speeches to practice alliteration, homonyms, triads, and all the other vocal variety techniques.** Instead of saying "Ladybugs are found in many regions," say, "From Leesburg to Louisville, the ladybugs lurk." Used sparingly, rhymes can be very effective. Instead of saying, "The car was damaged," try saying, "Repairs were extensive and expensive."
- **Add surprises** (for example, a song, a dance, a howl, an unexpected body movement). Remember: Surprises are like pepper. A little bit adds a lot of flavor but if add too much, you ruin the result.
- **Many tall tales become livelier with a little bit of repetition.** This works best with any part that incorporates humorous gestures, such as: "The bear went up and down, and up and down, and up and down the mountain."


- It is funny to set up a predictable sequence of events, or a predictable sequence of logic, and then **twist the final link in the sequence.** Among successful humorists, the "Rule of Three" is popular. First, set up a joke. Second, reinforce the setup. Third, pay off with a punch line that smashes the pattern. For example, *This porridge is too cold. This porridge is too hot. This porridge is asking to meet our leader!*

Editing Helps

- **A good tall tale is about three to five minutes long.** After five minutes, the audience begins to lose track of the details, or becomes overwhelmed by too many details. You may find it painful to delete humorous lines – however, a day or two later, when you read the speech again, you will realize the streamlined version is in fact better without one or two of the jokes.
- **If the story involves bragging, consider telling it in the third person.** For example, one member had a story about how dozens of fabulous men wanted to date her. The first time she told this tale, it bombed. Then she changed the main character so that it was a story about the fabulous men who wanted to date her sister. This one change made the same story much funnier.
- **Videotape yourself telling the story.** Even if you don't have access to a video camera, you might be able to do a limited amount of taping with another appliance, such as a digital camera. Just taping a minute or two of your tall tale will help you see what parts need extra "oomph" or paring down.
- **Don't be too childish, and don't be too adult.**
 - ▶ Tall tales are meant to amuse adults; childish language and too much fantasy (containing princesses, unicorns, elves, etc.) can make your story sound like a fairy tale. Don't start off your story

with “once upon a time” unless you are doing so ironically.

- ▶ On the other hand, tall tales work best when they have a certain wholesomeness. Some of our club members initially wrote “adult” stories with details that were mildly risqué. They sounded like locker room jokes. There may be times, however, when you’ll want to keep adult humor in your tall tale. Just remember, any naughty references will be funnier if you tell them in the most chaste manner possible. Strive for innocent phrasing. It may help to picture yourself telling this story to a Ladies Garden Society. Whatever you do, don’t wink at the audience; this may seem like a good idea, but it comes across as sleazy.

Follow these steps and your club will soon enjoy writing and performing tall tales without hesitation. It worked well for us. In the end, all 35,000 people in our club wrote tall tales. You believe me, don’t you? 

Elizabeth Keogan, ATMS, is a member of Cascades Communicators Club 9064 in Sterling, Virginia, as well as Free Spirits Club 5160 in Reston, Virginia.

Facts Tell, Stories Sell

Follow the BASIC formula.

Facts speak to a person’s intellect, stories touch the intellect and the emotion, a much more powerful factor in connecting with people.

Fundraisers have been using the story technique for years. People will donate money if they are moved – either by personal experience or by a compelling story. Think about the number of times you are solicited for donations. Which causes are more likely to get your hard-earned dollars? What moved you to give? Watch the Jerry Lewis Telethon and you’ll see hundreds of stories about children with muscular dystrophy and other diseases and millions of dollars pledged.

Use the power of story to improve any presentation you deliver. Here are five BASIC tips to help:

- **Believe** in the story. Speak from your heart or from a real experience. Or pick a well-known story that supports your message.
- **Appropriate**. Is the story appropriate for your message and audience?
- **Structure**. Include an opening, a problem and a resolution. Stories are about journeys. You start off in one situation, face a problem, overcome the problem and grow or learn from the experience.
- **Internalize**. Practice! With enough rehearsal, the story becomes second nature and flows like part of a conversation.
- **Captivate**. Bring the story to life and focus on your audience’s needs and your message. Use facial expressions, gestures, voice inflection or props, all tools learned in the *Competent Communication* manual.

Those are the BASICs to help you get started talking with tales. For indepth practice, try Toastmasters’ advanced manual on storytelling – it’s a great tool for learning to tell and incorporate stories into all your presentations.

Carol Mon is a story consultant and author of *Ten Telling Tips for Talkers – Storytelling Tips Everyone Should Know*. You can email her at carolmon@carolmon.com.

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Murder at Walnut Hills Manor:

A Party to Die For

By Tracey Maroney, ATMB

Using storytelling to enliven club meetings.

▼ Lady Oldsmobile (Cindy Wycoff) and Gardener Tucker – the murderer! (John Peck) share a secret plotting moment.



It was scandalous! The perfect setting for a wedding... and a murder! Last holiday season, Lansing's Yawn Patrol Toastmasters tested their speaking abilities with a Murder Mystery party and invited several other Toastmasters clubs to attend.

The original storyline offered a twisting plot. The club's murderous cast included eccentric Lord and Lady Oldsmobile, who had planned a holiday gala at their country estate, Walnut Hills Manor, to celebrate the upcoming nuptials of their daughter, Bertha Mae Chevrolet. Atticus Finch, their solicitor, had just completed Lord and Lady Oldsmobile's living will and planned to announce the trustees on the night of the gala.

Unfortunately, Lord Oldsmobile was found dead, face down in the garden, the morning of his daughter's wedding. He suffered a gunshot wound



to the back, a blow to the head, and puncture wounds on his feet.

Shrewd Detective "Max Packs" Packard and Miss Jane Marbles, the town librarian and all-around-snoop, were called in to investigate the hideous crime. It seemed everyone invited to the Oldsmobile's manor could be the killer.

This approach to speaking "outside the box" encouraged role playing, thinking fast and sketching credible characters. Simple rules were laid out about two months in advance. The murder mystery would last about two hours. The cast had eight suspects, two witnesses, one detective, and one snoopy Miss Jane Marbles – who acted as the Toastmaster by directing the activities and watching the time.

Club members who participated were given a brief introduction to their character along with a motive for the murder. This included instructions on presenting a two- to three- minute speech, introducing his or her character to the audience, dressing for the role, and being prepared to ad-lib answers to any questions from the Detective throughout the performance.

Jane Marbles introduced several clues that led toward the solution of the murder.

How the Murder Mystery Dinner was Committed:

- 6:00-6:25 Social Time
- 6:30-6:45 Introductions & dinner served
- 6:45-6:50 Jane Marbles launches the story
- 6:50-7:30 Characters present themselves and clues are revealed
- 7:30-8:00 Detective Max Packs questions suspects and witnesses
- 8:00-8:15 The audience interrogates Jane Marbles, the suspects and witnesses
- 8:15-8:30 Dessert is served
- Voting
- 8:30-8:45 Detective Packs eliminates suspects and exposes the murderer
- 8:45-8:50 Jane Marbles wraps up the evening
- 8:50-9:00 Final send off

The audience asked questions from the suspects and witnesses for 15 minutes after Detective "Max Packs" Packard finished his questioning. Then, they had an opportunity to solve the mystery by voting on three things: Best Performance; Best Costume and who they thought "did it." Hint: It wasn't the butler.

The Detective followed up with a 10-minute dialogue, pinning all the clues together in logical form to reveal the killer.

◀ **Colonel Duisenberg (Bil Moore) and Miss Jane Marbles (Tracey Maroney)**

Everyone deemed the program a success. The event gave the cast a chance to persuade and convince an audience of a viewpoint, organize a coherent speech, think on the spot, and collaborate and scheme using team leadership abilities.

Most importantly, the Yawn Patrol Toastmasters club celebrated the spirit of public speaking in a creative project with exuberance and goodwill.

P.S. The gardener did it, with help from several other cast members, all awaiting their "stab" at Lord Oldsmobile. 📌

Tracey Maroney, ATMB, is a member of the Yawn Patrol Club in Grand Ledge, Missouri.

Oh, What Clever Characters!

Lady Oldsmobile
Minister Passet
Gardener Tucker
Bertha Mae Chevrolet
Dr. Mercedes
Cardinal Ferrari
Groom Edsel
Tin Lizzy (maid)
Colonel Duisenberg
Atticus Finch, the attorney
Detective "Max Packs"
Packard
Miss Jane Marbles,
the narrator (Toastmaster)

The Play's the Thing

*.....the play's the thing
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.*

— W. SHAKESPEARE, HAMLET

The word was out, through local press and radio that "Murder by Moonlight" and a trial by jury were on at the Speak Easy Toastmasters Club in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland.

We had rehearsed only once, leaving it to each Toastmaster to slip inside the character as he or she understood it. We had a cast of 25, including the jury.

Simon Dumphy was charged with the murder of Patrick Griffin. The jury was selected from our own members and from members of visiting clubs. None of the jury had heard or read the play previously.

The Judge exerted her authority using the gavel while the Councilors dressed in wig and gown (as is normal in the Irish court system) questioned and cross-examined witnesses with surprising realism.

It was revealed that Simon Dumphy was a tenant farmer on land owned by Patrick Griffin. A small garden of cannabis plants was found on a remote part of the land, prompting the prosecution's case that this was the cause of a dispute leading to Griffin's murder. Dumphy denied knowledge of the cannabis garden, saying he would not know cannabis from any other weed. The defense claimed that Griffin's nephew and heir committed the crime, as he was known to have a contentious relationship with Griffin as well as a financial motive.

Ms. Mary Short, counsel for the defense, admonished the jury, saying, "The evidence against my client is fragile; it withers at a glance and falls away at questioning."

Our play gave the club members leeway to practice vocal variation, gestures and other attributes of their Toastmasters training. We hoped that it also carried enough suspense to hold the audience's attention while at the same time providing enough conflict in the evidence to give the jury cause for argument. According to plan, these arguments would eventually lead to a verdict.

Everyone listened closely while the jurors performed spontaneous deliberations. They dissected evidence of witnesses for the defense and prosecution. Then, they called into question the methodology of the police investigation. Their discussion ranged from serious to humorous to positively forensic at different stages.

Finally, the jury delivered a boisterous verdict of "not guilty" whereupon the accused, a young man, stole the opportunity to embrace his defense team, who were – as it happened – two lovely ladies.

John Dillon, CL, is a member of Speak Easy Toastmasters in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland.



▲ **Speak Easy members dress for their parts.**

It's All About Stage Time

By Carolyn Callan, ATMB

"Theater techniques are far from sacred. The techniques of the theater are the techniques of communicating."

— VIOLA SPOLIN

Using theater techniques for fun club meetings.

Although most business presentations don't require the talent or skill of a Robin Williams or Gilda Radner, we can learn much from actors and their craft. If you're skeptical about this idea – I was too, at first. But, when a friend and mentor suggested I take an improvisational theater class to add more punch to my presentations, I agreed and enrolled in a class given by Jack Rushen, a New York City actor and playwright.

I was nervous about performing, since an intimidating stage appearance had rattled me in third grade. But I reminded myself that I was now an adult, took a deep breath and sauntered into the room. I looked at the other students, all

seated quietly, and we introduced ourselves. I was relieved to note that they represented a range of professions and had no particular advantage over me. Within eight weeks my nervousness disappeared and other members of the group told me how much more natural and spontaneous I seemed in front of the audience.

Since I took that class, I've introduced many theater exercises at our Toastmasters meetings and even held a special "improvisational theater evening." I've been amazed at how confident and creative our members can be. Improv exercises are now a club favorite.

Speakers at Norwalk Toastmasters range from beginners, afraid to stand in front of the room, to seasoned businesspeople and public speakers. We all have one thing in common: We want to sharpen our communication and presentation skills. What are the keys to a memorable performance? My acting teacher Rushen says it's "energy, confidence and clarity of communication."

It takes most actors years to be really compelling and it takes a lot of practice to become an accomplished speaker. Here are a few acting exercises, many by Viola Spolin, the author of *Theater Games for Rehearsal: A Director's Handbook*, that you can try in your Toastmasters group. Incorporate them into the meeting as part of Table Topics, as a



transition between different sections of the meeting, or as a special events evening.

How to Prepare Before You Speak

According to Rushen, the first moments of a performance are important and set the tone, so it is vital that you are relaxed. Consider using exercises that actors do to warm up:

- **Stand up straight and let your shoulders drop.** Roll your shoulders and swing your arms.
- **Stretch your entire body and all the muscles in your face.** Repeat several times.
- **Do something physical.** Bounce up and down and shake every part of your body.
- **Articulate.** Say A words – *apple, artichoke* and *avocado* – and then B words – *buffalo, bison* and *bear* – and so on. This will help you prepare vocally.

How to Boost Your Vocal Variety

One speech in the *Competent Communication* manual is dedicated to vocal variety and the importance of pitch, rate and tone of voice. Actors also use vocal exercises to enliven their performances. Try the following exercises during the Table Topics portion of the meeting:

- **Movie Lines** – The Topicsmaster writes down the names of famous movie lines before the meeting. As an example he might write, “Frankly my dear, I don’t give a damn” (From *Gone With the Wind*). Review the elements of vocal variety – pitch, rate and tone of voice – from the manual with the group. Each Toastmaster gets up in front of the room and delivers the line five or six times. They must vary it each time by changing one of the elements of vocal variety. This exercise was a big hit at our district conference.
- **The Gibberish Interpreter** – One player gives a speech or tells a story

to the audience using gibberish (making sounds that resemble speech but have no meaning). The second player “interprets” what the first person is saying for the audience. He or she must wait for pauses, then interpret. At the end there is an evaluation. Did the interpreter communicate what the gibberish-speaking player was trying to say?

- **Building a Story** – A group stands or sits in a circle with a coach. The coach begins a story then points at random to a person who continues it. Again, the coach points to another person to keep it going. The story continues until everyone has participated.

How to Improve Your Gestures and Body Language

Actors work on a stage or a set and business presentations take place both behind a lectern and without one. In either case, the actor or presenter must feel comfortable and use some kind of physical movement. Try practicing these exercises with other people from your Toastmasters group to make your gestures more natural:

- **Object Game** – Stand in a circle. The first person imagines an object and describes it while pretending to touch it as the others guess what the object is. He or she then passes the “object” to the next person in line who creates a new object. Everyone usually gets very involved in the exercise and some may get the giggles.
- **Mirror** – Stand opposite a partner and choose who will lead first. Mirror what your partner does with his or her body and hands. Now let the other person lead. Your actions will become more spontaneous.

How to Stimulate Quick Thinking

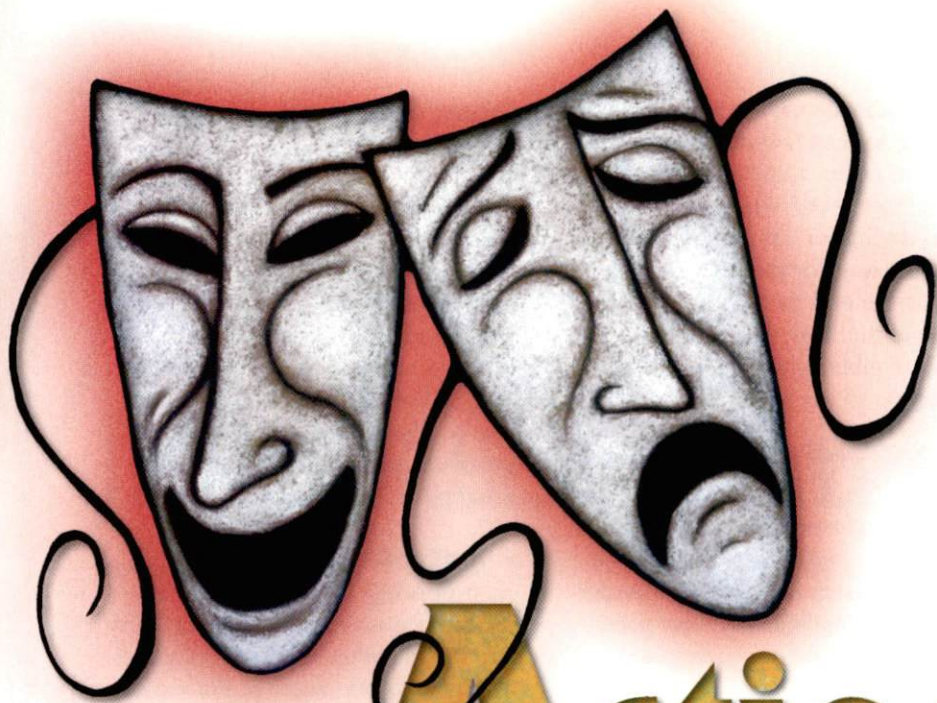
A question-and-answer session usually follows business presentations. While there’s no substitute for knowing your material, improvisational theater experience improves your ability to think on your feet in a fun and playful environment. It’s chal-

lenging and exercises your funny bone. Try these:

- **More Movie Lines** – The group writes down lines from a movie or television program on slips of paper and puts them in a bowl. Each player gets up in the front of the room, plucks a slip and begins to tell a story. Then the same person picks two or three additional slips and continues the story. The audience usually enjoys this game.
- **Another Story Game** – Sit on a chair opposite a partner. The audience chooses the subject of the story and the relationship the two characters have to one another. For example, a boyfriend and girlfriend discuss where they will go on their vacation. One partner starts the story using a word beginning with the letter A. The other person continues the story with the letter B. The story goes on until they’ve used all the letters of the alphabet.
- **Machine** – Five people stand in front of the room. The first person chooses an action and a sound and acts out his role as the first cog in the machine. The next person becomes the second cog, choosing an action and making a sound that connects her to the first person. The other three people follow until the room is humming with the sound and actions of the machine they’ve created.

Toastmasters is all about stage time. The more frequently you stand up in front of the room, the more confident you’ll feel. Take an acting or improvisational theater class at a college or continuing education program near your home. You’ll improve your skills and have fun at the same time. You don’t have to be Al Pacino to be a successful presenter at work, but learning some of these techniques will put you ahead of the game. ■

Carolyn Callen, ATMB, is the president of Norwalk Toastmasters Club 2785 in Norwalk, Connecticut.



What speakers can learn from showbiz.

By Ed Brodow

Acting Techniques for Speakers

Do you want to win an Academy Award every time you speak? To deliver each story as though you just thought of it, even though you've told it 500 times? Many successful speakers are using acting techniques to upgrade their platform skills. After all, the speaker's job is the same as the actor's – to get the audience involved. Actors have to perform the same role for months and years. How do they stay fresh? That's what speakers can learn from show biz.

During 12 years as a professional actor, it was my privilege to study with some splendid coaches in New York and Los Angeles: Lee Strasberg, Mary Tarcai, Warren Robertson, David Craig, José Quintero. This acting training has been invaluable in my career as a professional speaker. Here are 10 practical points from the craft of acting that can help you win an Academy Award on the platform:

1 **Improvise** – Improvisation means making it up as you go along. It means letting go in order to try something new and exciting. Actors use improv to free up their creativity and to discover their comfort level with the script.

You can improvise by trying out different ways of structuring your speech. By improvising with my negotiation keynote, I came up with the signature story of how I accidentally knocked my grandfather's false teeth

down the toilet. It has nothing to do with negotiation, but it succeeds in getting the point across with warmth and humor.

Speaker Tony Alessandra improvised a story to explain the

difference between the Golden Rule and the Platinum Rule. "One day," he recalls, "something suddenly popped into my mind about my mother treating people in a restaurant as if she's in her own kitchen, and I built the story up from there." Improvisation took him beyond the obvious.

Try practicing one of your scripted stories with improvised words – you will discover the language and mode of delivery that feels most comfortable. You can clean up your timing by delivering your speech at twice the normal speed or by delivering it in gibberish.

Speaker/actor Alan Ovson cleverly improvises with foreign and regional accents in order to highlight his serious business message. "While it is heavily rehearsed," Ovson says, "99 percent of my actual speech is improvised based on the mood and reactions of the audience."



The idea is to keep the instrument (you) free and open. Improvisation gives you the space to be creative and spontaneous.

2 Personalize Your Stories – The key to storytelling is not to memorize the words, but to memorize the experience. Actors do this using a technique called personalization. It means tapping into an experience from your life and

applying the emotional impact of that experience to an acting scene or to a story. Personalization is the actor's secret for being real.

For example, when Anthony Hopkins is playing the role of serial killer Hannibal Lecter in the film *Silence of the Lambs*, he recreates the emotional impact from an experience in his life where he was so mad that he wanted to kill someone. What we see on the screen is Hopkins as

a psychopathic killer. In reality, Hopkins the actor is playing out the emotional reality of his substituted experience.

As a speaker, personalizing means bringing yourself into the speech. "For telling stories," speaker Patricia Fripp advises, "if *you* can't see it, the audience won't." Get the audience involved by reliving the experience with them. The payoff is that each time you recreate the experience, it will be fresh.

Even when you are describing something that happened to someone else, make the material your own. "All of my stories are personal stories," says Tony Alessandra. "If I hear a story that I like, I will rework it for me. I don't tell it the way everyone else tells it."

3 Have a Strong Drive – An actor has a drive (or objective) in each scene, and a drive that serves as a through-line for the play. The drive is what motivates the character. Hamlet's drive is to kill his uncle, Claudius. Hamlet finds many obstacles in the way, but without his drive the play would collapse.

As a speaker, your drive is whatever you are advocating to the audience, your point-of-view. My drive is to convince the audience that win-win negotiating is more productive than win-lose. Speaker Joe Calloway says, "My drive is to have the audience saying, 'Wow. I never thought of it that way.' To help them create a new perspective." Barry Wishner's drive is, "Not just to present ideas, but how to execute those ideas."

Without a drive, you are merely a walking encyclopedia. Take a stand and stand out!

4 Be Theatrical – Actors always try to be real on stage. But stage reality is actually a heightened form of what we normally experience as reality. Reality without theatricality is boring! Even the most subtle film performance has a dash of theatricality thrown in.

Being theatrical as a speaker means, "You need to be yourself but slightly 'larger than life,'" says Patricia Fripp. She adds, "Style is being yourself...but on purpose."

Speaker Marianna Nunes summed it up with, "Great performers can read out of the phone book and keep the audience entertained!" When you are communicating with a large audience, a lot of electricity is flying around. Use that electricity. Put on the Ritz!

5 Start at the Top of the Scene – First impressions are crucial. Actors know that they have to grab the audience immediately. They do this by starting at the top of the scene – their energy level must be up there right

from the beginning. For speakers, "Your energy is what motivates and energizes them," says Marianna Nunes.

"You must be warmed up when you begin."

Many speakers advise, "Come out punching."

This does not mean that you should open your speech by screaming or by jumping up and down. "Match the audience's energy and come out a little higher," Nunes suggests. "If they're low key, don't come out too wild or they'll be turned off."

Alan Ovson opens up with a story. "I involve the audience as much as possible right away," he says, "so they get the scene, the smells, the warmth, and the feeling of what's going on in the story."

I have seen speakers take half an hour to warm up. You will lose the audience if you wait too long to rev up your motor.



Being theatrical as a speaker means, "you need to be yourself but slightly larger than life."

– PATRICIA FRIPP

6 Work Moment to Moment – Great actors are great reactors. They strive to work moment to moment. This means they keep their senses open and alert, not anticipating what the other actor is going to do. Jack Nicholson's performance is more exciting because his response to the other actor's behavior is spontaneous and unplanned.

Don't be like a speaker I know who pauses at certain points in his presentation for audience laughter – whether he gets it or not! Be there fully. Allow your senses to be aware of everything that is going on as you speak, and adjust your presentation accordingly.

"The 'magic' happens spontaneously," observes Joe Calloway, "in reaction to the audience. Often my best material comes from what is happening in that meeting. My presentation is not like a train that is locked onto the tracks – it's much more like surfing, moving this way and that, sometimes falling off!"

Tony Alessandra agrees. "I have an outline in my head, but I never know what I'm going to say because I like to involve the audience," he explains. "When you ask questions of the audience, you may get answers that you weren't expecting, and you have to play off of it. Some of my best lines come from the audience."

7 Go for Variation – Anything that goes on too long in the same way is boring. Actors break a scene down into beats and establish variation for each beat. Speakers can strive for variation in emphasis, movement, volume, energy level or material.

You can build variation into the organization of your speech, e.g., story... transition... story... major point... story... and so on. Variation can occur in the volume and tone of your voice. Pausing is a form of variation. And don't forget to build variation into your body movement.

Patricia Fripp quotes her coach, Ron Arden, as saying, "The enemy of the speaker is sameness." When she outlines her talk, Fripp asks, "How many points of wisdom, stories, laughs, transitions, questions...?"

Bear in mind that your audience has a short attention span. Variation is an effective technique for keeping them with you.

8 Take Risks – Do you remember Marlon Brando's "Granny" in the film, *The Missouri Breaks*? The willingness to take risks is what makes great actors stand out. The same is true for speakers. "To be truly in the moment with the audience," Joe Calloway insists, "you have to be willing to fall off the surfboard once in a while."

Barry Wishner's risk-taking involves bringing audience members up on stage. "I never know who they will turn out to be or what they will say," he admits, "but that's exciting."

Recently, I beat up a rubber chicken during a keynote. It was a risk. Some people loved it and some hated it, but no one forgot it. People still come up to me and ask, "Ed, how's your rubber chicken?"

So, how's your rubber chicken? Have you taken any risks lately? As speaker Sally Walton says, "After all, we're not doing the presidential debates. What have you got to lose?"

9 Be Fully Committed to your Choices – When Brando put on a dress and became "Granny" in *Missouri Breaks*, there was no holding back. Actors strive to make interesting choices and then commit to them fully.

If you decide to be theatrical or to take a risk on the platform, don't hold back. When I beat up my rubber chicken, I strangled it, slammed its poor little head into the podium, threw it to the ground and jumped up and down on top of it, screamed and growled and snorted.

For speaker Marjorie Brody, being fully committed means, "being passionate about my message and how it will impact the audience's careers." Be fully committed to your message and your choices.

10 Your Relaxation Is in Your Concentration – If the actor's mind is allowed to roam free, it will focus on nervousness. Actors relax by concentrating on their preparation, the script and the other actors. Speakers can relax by concentrating on their drive, the client, the audience, customization details or room mechanics.

Marjorie Brody relaxes by meeting and greeting audience members, giving out handouts and chatting with them before her presentation. Alan Ovson concentrates on his points of wisdom.

"As I get more information about the audience, I realize that what's important to me may not be important to them," he admits. "So I concentrate on re-prioritizing my points."

To Be...or Not to Be?

Don't expect to win your Academy Award without effort. Actors who are hailed for their instant stardom remind their fans that it took years of hard work for their "overnight success."

"Acting techniques are appealing and appear easy to use," cautions speaker coach Dawne Bernhardt, "but if they don't blend in with your natural style, you run the risk of losing authenticity and appearing artificial." How can you avoid that? "Practice is essential," advises Bernhardt, "along with feedback to be sure your technique isn't showing."

When used correctly, these ten acting tips can help you to be yourself on the platform. They can help your delivery become spontaneous and alive. They can help you command your audience. So, as we show biz folk say, break a leg! **T**

Ed Brodow is a motivational speaker and expert on the art of negotiation. The author of *Negotiation Boot Camp* and *Beating the Success Trap*, he also is a professional actor who has appeared in many feature films and television movies as well as hosted his own show on PBS. Reach him at www.brodow.com.

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Table Topics is a great way to practice storytelling skills.

Two-Minute Tales!

Don't look now but we're surrounded...by stories! All around us, stories are being created, concocted or cooked up. They're being embellished, enhanced and polished. They're being told and retold.

When we were kids, our parents and babysitters used stories to put us to sleep at night. Whether they read tales from books, told family stories passed down through generations or made up stories to suit our fancy, stories instilled values, pride and an understanding of how the world worked. Stories helped us envision what was possible, and cautionary tales told us what *not* to do!

In school, teachers' stories taught about our nation, Greek mythology and Shakespeare's classics. On weekends, we learned stories of our religious heritage. Summer camps, fishing and camping trips were full of stories. And of course, *we* told tales out of school! We were natural storytellers.

As we grow older we learn new ways of imparting information: the essay, the resume, the elevator speech, job interview and the meeting report. Meanwhile our storytelling skills atrophy. The good news: Relief is just a Toastmasters meeting away. And the best way to start is by telling two-minute stories in the form of responses to weekly Table Topics.

It is crucial that you learn the elements of a story. They are: setting, characters, action and reaction – all leading to a resolution. Though making them work together and make sense is not easy, you can do all that, in style, in two minutes, and even receive applause for your effort. The first rule to follow is, never underestimate the power of an

archetypal story, one whose theme, structure or feel we know almost inherently. Those connect the best!

Here are some topics you might receive and examples of how your response can take the form of a story:

- **My Terrible Tumble.** Answer this topic with a story of you as a biker (or driver). Cycle through the scenario, action and outcome. Color the topic with descriptive language. The *whoosh* of the car, jarring of the pothole or the smell of car exhausts in the bike lane.
- **My Vacation from Hell.** Take us along with you as you revisit the vacation from hell – the misery, monotony or malady that overwhelmed your best-laid plans. Give us a travelogue with sounds, smells, moods and local color.
- **My First Kiss.** We want to hear the love story that blossomed...in school, after school or at summer camp. The tension, anticipation and ecstasy involved with the buss. Let us hear your heart beating, smell the sweat and hear the music as you kiss for the first time.
- **My Scariest Ghost Story.** Weave a yarn about a haunted house or other location where spirits dwell. Give us suspense, fear and trepidation. Let us hear the voices, see the apparitions and suspend reality as you conjure up scary monsters.
- **My Favorite Pet.** A love story if ever there was one. Anthropomorphize. Tell us about your relationship with Fifi, Fido or Fedo.
- **My Favorite Food.** Take us dining with you. Your story lets us relive the meal or special occasion. Help us breathe in the savory smells,

taste the succulent dishes and sate all our senses with your story. Give us the anticipation beforehand and the satisfaction that follows. We'll digest it all as you tell it.

According to storyteller Jean Ellison, co-director of the Bay Area Storytelling Festival, "Stories speak! Among of the benefits of story and storytelling: to remind us how to listen. If we could just be better listeners, we'd reduce our workplace quarrels, interpersonal strife, and globally the world would be a more peaceful place." We, as Toastmasters can do our part, two minutes at a time.

Hunt through your kitchen drawers for an egg timer and use it to practice your two-minute stories. Remember, in Table Topics you have up to two and a half minutes! Leave a little sand in the glass. When you're next called for Table Topics, think story instead of speech or stream of consciousness. Whatever the topic, you can likely tell a two-minute story, replete with locale, characters, a challenge and a triumph. As 85-year old Toastmaster and master storyteller Orunamamu often tells her club:

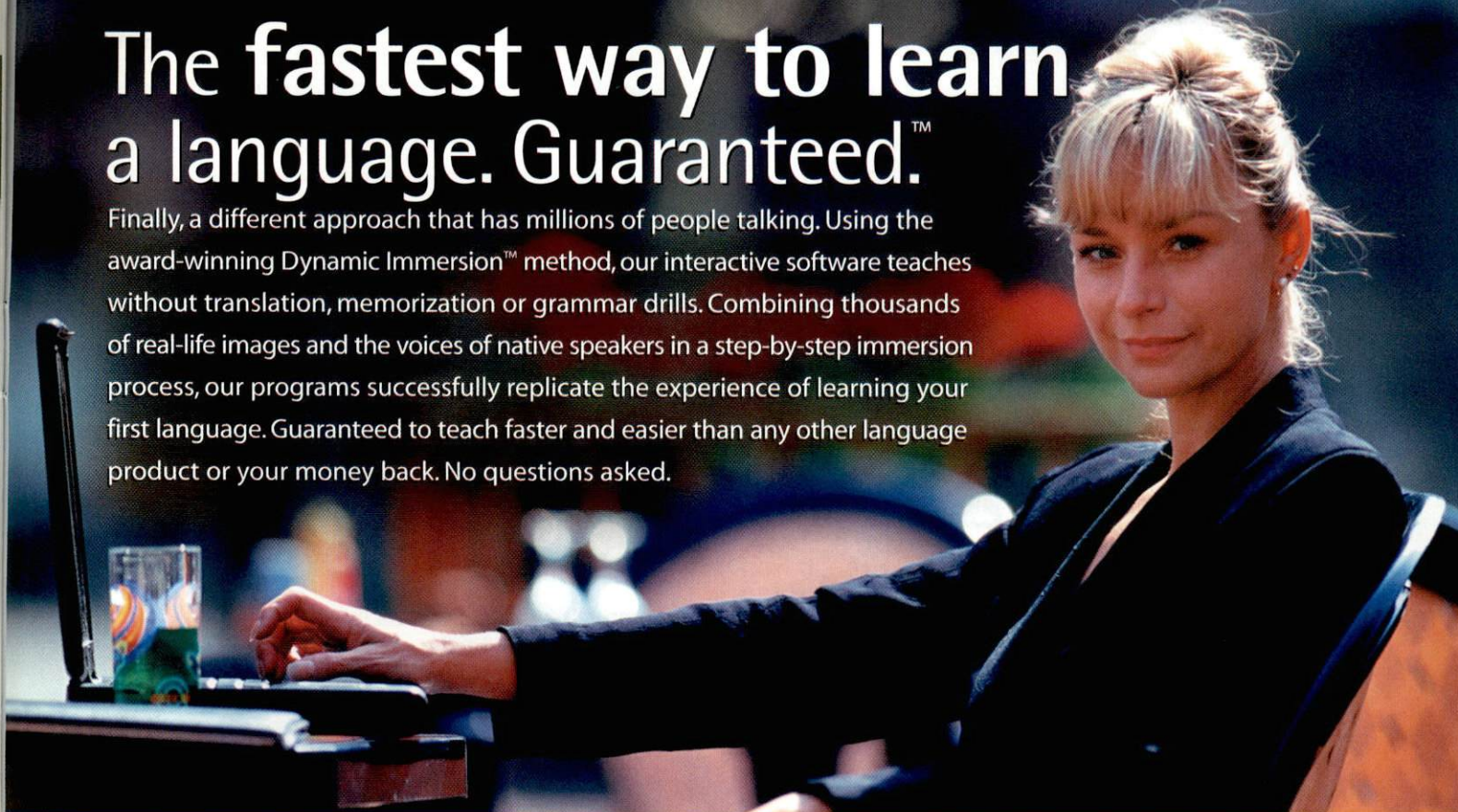
*"I stepped on a pin, the pin bent,
And that's the way the story went."*

Well, what are you waiting for? It's story time! **T**

Past District Governor **Craig Harrison, DTM**, of Lakeview Toastmasters in Oakland, California, is also a board member of the Storytelling Association of Alta California. Visit him at www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

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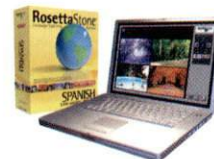
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Texas, USA

"Stupendous...the juxtaposition of text, sound and picture was masterful. The quality of both sound and graphics was first rate." - The Boston Globe

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Tips for powerful presentation makeovers.

PowerPoint:

From Average to Awesome

Recently I attended a seminar given by a well-known and world-class motivational speaker. He spoke passionately and professionally, skillfully connecting with his audience. The polished performance was marred, however, by a PowerPoint presentation that looked so cheap and amateurish that it seriously weakened his overall delivery.

Unfortunately, pathetic PowerPoint presentations are a common problem. But with a little creativity and ambition, it's easy to transform average into awesome. Here are some examples of presentation makeovers:

Use images to reinforce numeric data tables.

Franchise 3-Year Goal
Agreements Signed

	2005	2006	2007
# Agreements Signed	225	235	250

Before

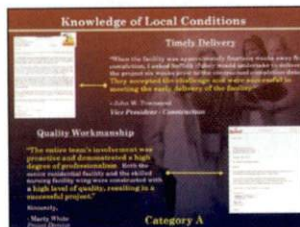


After

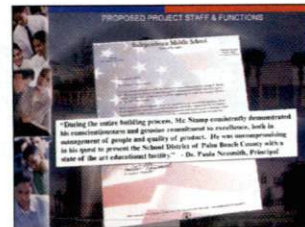
Before: The table compares data over three years. With such a small amount of data, images can be more easily and effectively used.

After: A subtitle summarizes the key message of the slide, and the table data has been reworked into three graphical icons. The graphics were created from a scanned franchise agreement cover and saved as a PNG file (for transparency). Each year's information is introduced individually with a spiral animation on a mouse-click.

Add credibility to testimonials by showcasing the real thing.



Before



After

Before: The two testimonials with 14-point text are hard to read and compete against each other.

After: In Adobe Photoshop, one letter of testimonial was scanned at high resolution and placed angled against a custom template. We then cut out a section (the quote) of the letter and placed it on top of the testimonial letter for maximum legibility. For additional impact, each item was saved as a transparent PNG file and brought in independently in a build. The process was repeated for the second letter, shown on the next page.

Alternate colors on table rows to improve visibility.

Truck Service
2004 Goals & Action Plans

Goal/Objective: Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations.

Item	Start	End	Cost
1. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
2. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
3. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
4. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
5. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
6. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
7. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
8. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
9. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
10. Hire new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000

Before

Truck Engine Service
2004 Goals & Action Plans

Goal/Objective: Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations.

Item	Start	End	Cost
1. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
2. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
3. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
4. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
5. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
6. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
7. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
8. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
9. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000
10. Hire a new Truck PSSR to increase sales and enhance customer relations	1/1/04	12/31/04	\$100,000

After

Before: An ordinary table appears complicated by border lines and bland colors.

This original template had been dominated by a bulky top bar with company logos, and an unnecessary left-side navigation bar.

After: The elimination of border lines reduces the clutter of the table; contrasting colors now delineate the various rows.

The new template maintained the Hawthorne brand image and featured a gracefully arcing montage on the left side in place of red menu buttons. We reclaimed some screen space by moving the two logos to the bottom and reducing their size. The top of the template was now freed up for a flat yellow title block area.

Increase attentiveness by spanning bullet points across pages.



Before



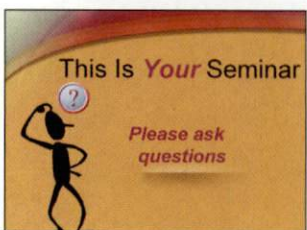
After

Before: Three main bullet points dominate the screen and take the presenter over five minutes to discuss. Yawn.

After: The same five minutes of discussion is split over three distinct pages, each with its own relevant graphic, larger type and greater breathing space.

The bullets have been converted to full text blocks and supplemented with graphics for maximum graphical impact.

Reduce monotony and increase attention with full-screen images.



Before



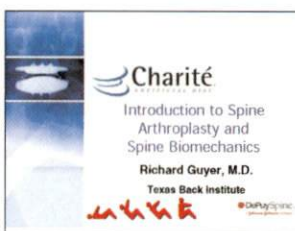
After

Before: In addition to the use of the overused and unprofessional "screen-beans," this presentation's financial content was made even more boring by a dreary template.

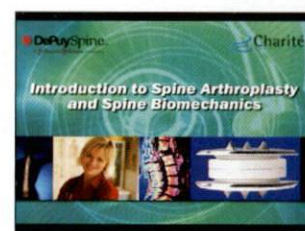
After: It's okay to break away from the template! As long as the fonts and overall look remain consistent, audiences often stay more engaged with full-screen graphics. In this case, an actual photo has replaced the old flat version

and kicks off the presentation with something new and exciting.

Raise expectations with a dynamic video intro



Before



After

Before: A flat static slide remains on screen as the audience assembles and awaits the speaker.

After: A Digital Juice Motionback loops in the background, set against medical-themed images and a bulked up title. The 30-second video was assembled in Adobe AfterEffects. The result is a professional and exciting opening slide.

Even if you can't produce a video, a looping slideshow of images will work to create an energy of anticipation for your presentation.

There is more you can do beyond these examples to create awesome PowerPoint presentations. One easy way is to use professional templates. Downloads are available from the Internet that you can store on your own computer. Familiarize yourself with these and you'll save a lot of time and creative energy with your initial design of each presentation. Moreover, you should always try to maintain consistency throughout a slideshow. PowerPoint templates are great for keeping major elements in place from slide to slide. To make the best use of this, you should:

- Keep your visuals consistent.
- Don't change typefaces or move the logo around from slide to slide.
- Don't combine clip-art in the same presentation where you're using photos.

Ultimately, you should try to think of your presentation as a story with a logical start-to-finish progression. All too often, people try to cram all their important information and data onto one slide. By expanding data onto multiple slides and finding graphical and other creative methods to convey your message, your presentation will run more smoothly and you'll make a greater impact with the audience. **T**

Kevin Lerner through his Florida-based Presentation Team company, helps companies create better presentations. Reach him at klerner@presentationteam.com. He will present a session about PowerPoint presentations at the Toastmasters International Convention in Washington, D.C., this month.

Test your PowerPoint design savvy.

Are
You
a

Finer Designer

By Marian Schickling

Are you sure your slide presentations are doing the job you want them to do? Could that rapt attention you observe actually be a catatonic reaction to massive overload or boredom? Take this test to assess your skills at reaching and motivating your audience.

Cheat Sheet: This quiz awards points for answers; and not surprisingly, the best answer gets the most points. But the real point of this exercise is to help you create effective slide presentations. With that in mind, feel free to cheat. If you don't get the answer right the first time, read the other answers (especially the best answer) to find tips that will help you become a "finer designer."

1. When I start to design my slide presentation, I first think about:

- My objective for doing the presentation.
- My abysmal lack of experience with PowerPoint® software.
- The needs of my audience.
- All of the above.

2. I adhere to the following guideline(s) when developing my slides:

- I use a consistent look for each slide.
- I use simple headings that guide my audience through the presentation.
- I limit the text on my slides to three or four main points.
- I use bullets rather than paragraphs to convey information.
- All of the above.

3. My audience knows I've considered their needs because:

- I have included a "What's In It For You" slide in my presentation delineating the personal benefits they will receive from my presentation.



- b. I've included summary slides at the end of each major topic to recapitulate the most useful information they can take from the presentation.
- c. I've included a question-and-answer session at the end of my presentation.
- d. I have allotted a sufficient amount of time for that question-and-answer session to be held.
- e. All of the above.

4. When I have a lot of information to convey:

- a. I use a detailed chart or graph.
- b. I import an article or other document to the slide to support my main point.
- c. I reduce the font size to make the information fit on the slide.
- d. I use several slides, breaking up the information into logical chunks and using subheadings to

communicate the fact that I am continuing the original discussion thread.

5. To help my audience view my slides easily, I should:

- a. Use a sans serif font, such as Arial or Helvetica.
- b. Make the font as large as possible, at least 36 points, for readability.
- c. Allow plenty of white space.
- d. All of the above.

6. I help my audience understand my presentation by:

- a. Reading the slides out loud as I present them.
- b. Skipping over slides whose content isn't needed (especially if I'm running out of time).
- c. Providing handouts of the slide content before the presentation.
- d. All of the above.

**“You can’t just say,
‘you need to hear this
because it is important.’
You have to develop at
least two solid, personal
reasons why the information
is important to them.”**

Answers:

Question 1 – All Things Considered

- **a, 3 points** – Thinking about your objective is a reasonable place to start your presentation planning. It gives you a clear focus for what you want to achieve with your presentation; but it doesn’t take into account what the needs of your audience might be. If you want them to listen, be motivated to action, and respect your contribution to their knowledge, you need to start thinking about *their* needs the minute you contemplate developing a presentation. The best answer is “d.”
- **b, 0 points** – You wouldn’t be the first, but we all have to start somewhere. You don’t need all the bells and whistles of PowerPoint to make an effective presentation. In fact, fancy presentation tricks can actually detract from your message if you’re not careful. Concentrate on the needs of your audience and your objective for doing the presentation in the first place, and let that guide your efforts. (A *PowerPoint for Dummies* book couldn’t hurt.) The best answer is “d.”
- **c, 4 points** – Very few presenters start by considering their audience first, but doing so will ensure the listeners have a vested interest in paying attention to your message. When you start by pondering why this information is important to your audience, you put yourself in their seats and can start to structure your presentation to meet their needs (as well as yours). The best answer is “d.”
- **d, 5 points** – Congratulations, you get full credit for thinking about the total package – your need to convey information, the needs of your audience (which may be different), and your forthright and honest assessment of your software skills. Grab a *PowerPoint for Dummies* book and start designing.

Question 2 – A Consistent Look

- **a, 3 points** – A consistent look for all the slides in your presentation is a gift to your audience. It enables them to focus on the message rather than the slide layout. Most slide presentation programs offer templates for establishing the look of your slides so that you can concentrate on developing the message. But this is just one of the guidelines you should embrace. The best answer is “e.”

- **b, 3 points** – Absolutely use simple, consistent headings to guide your audience through the presentation. They are powerful indicators to your audience of where you are in the presentation and how the presentation is structured for comprehension. By using headings, you begin the process of having a consistent look to your slides (a good rule to follow), but there is more you can do. The best answer is “e.”
- **c, 3 points** – This makes you a candidate for sainthood. One of the most egregious PowerPoint errors is cramming too much information onto each slide. When you do this, you upset the balance between your needs and the needs of your audience. Limit the text on your slides and apply the other guidelines listed, and you will be on the way to creating a memorable presentation. The best answer is “e.”
- **d, 3 points** – Bullets chunk information into digestible bites. They are easier to read than paragraphed text, and they have the added advantage of helping you to distill your key points to a few powerful words. You get some credit for selecting this guideline, but adopting the other guidelines as well would complete the package. The best answer is “e.”
- **e, 5 points** – If word gets out that you are incorporating all these guidelines into your presentations, it will be standing room only. You clearly understand the finer points of slide design for painless presentation.

Question 3 – What’s In It For Them?

- **a, 3 points** – Generally, presenters don’t think to provide a “What’s In It for You” slide. Some just don’t think about the audience’s needs at all. Others, who do consider their audience, find this a difficult slide to develop. You can’t just say, “you need to hear this because it is important.” You have to develop at least two solid, personal reasons why the information is important to *them*. Perhaps it enables them to achieve some specific personal goal or to directly benefit in some way from the information. That is what needs to go on this slide. Find it, and you’ll be taking a great first step in the right direction. The best answer is “e.”
- **b, 3 points** – Summary slides are very effective at helping your audience sift through the information provided to locate the “pearls of wisdom.” They can also help you structure your presentation effectively in the design stage, focusing your efforts on the most important material to convey. They do not, however, complete your presentation. The best answer is “e.”
- **c, 3 points** – A question-and-answer session enables you to clarify any misconceptions that might have occurred as a result of your presentation. Your intentions are good, but you need to take it a bit further. The best answer is “e.”
- **d, 4.5 points** – You get almost full credit for this answer even though the best answer is “e.” If you can actually plan and *deliver* a slide presentation that

allows a reasonable amount of time for a question-and-answer session, you are moving into the elite category of designers. The ability to fulfill this audience need despite the allure of adding more of your treasured, off-the-cuff wisdom to your presentation is inspiring, laudable and rare.

- **e, 5 points** – Full points for balancing your needs and the audience's needs.

Question 4 – Keep Slides Simple

- **a, 0 points** – Ah, the lure of charts and graphs. Nothing induces total-brain paralysis as quickly as a minutely detailed bar chart or a four-color graph with indistinguishable annotations. They have an immediate and enduring eyes-glazed-over effect on your audience. Can you say “handout”? The best answer is “d.”
- **b, 0 points** – Densely packed articles and other literature displayed for your audience create the same effect as charts and graphs (see “a” above). Because there is absolutely no possibility of reading any of the data on screen, you also run the risk of having your audience exit en masse (if not physically, at least mentally). If you want your audience to read a document, send it to them before the presentation. If that's not practical use the slide to present – in bulleted form – a few pertinent points from the article that they should absorb. The best answer is “d.”
- **c, 0 points** – If there were a way to award negative points for this answer, you would have earned them. Reducing the size of the font on a slide forces your audience to consider getting an eye exam. It works for you (you get your message onto the slide), but you might want to forgo handing out those evaluation forms at the end of the presentation. The best answer is “d.”
- **d, 5 points** – Full points for thinking about the needs of your audience as well as your own needs. You give your audience credit for not losing the thread of the presentation just because it continues on another slide or two.

Question 5 – Make It Legible

- **a, 3 points** – Partial credit for you. Think of slides as road signs – the cleaner the text, the easier it is to read them. A sans serif font (one without little squiggly extenders on the letters) is easier to read at a distance. The best answer is “d.”
- **b, 3 points** – Is bigger better? Absolutely! Enlarging the font size makes it more readable from the back of the room, but there's a lot more you can do to help your audience see the presentation. The best answer is “d.”
- **c, 3 points** – Having plenty of white space around the text makes the slide easier to read, but you need to add this technique to the others mentioned above. The best answer is “d.”
- **d, 5 points** – Full points for putting yourself in the audience and experiencing your presentation from

their perspective. Mix plenty of white space with a nice, large, sans serif font and your audience won't require binoculars.

Question 6 – Be Clear, Not Cruel

- **a, 0 points** – On the audience annoyance meter, reading your slides out loud pushes the needle off the dial. Adults, understandably, object to having things read to them, especially when the words are right in front of their eyes. It smacks of condescension, it negates the need for displaying the written word at all, and it interferes with your audience's comprehension as they read the slide *silently*. The best answer is “c.”
- **b, 0 points** – This is just about as annoying to the audience as reading the slides. If you find yourself skipping over slides in your presentation, think design flaw. You are either trying to cram too much content into too little time, or you have included content that is not truly relevant to the presentation. In either case, flipping rapidly through those slides will make your audience queasy. They won't thank you for that. The best answer is “c.”
- **c, 5 points** – Excellent work. You can significantly improve audience comprehension by distributing handouts of your slides to the audience prior to your presentation. The audience then has access to your slide content (even if they have a six-foot version of it in their line of sight). They can also jot notes in the margins.
- **d, 1 point** – It may sound like a solid plan, but your audience doesn't want all of the above. They don't want to be read to (“a”), and they can be seriously distracted if you flip through unnecessary slides (“b”). They do, however, appreciate the handout. So, “c” is your best answer.

Scoring:

Points earned	Status
29.5-30	Congratulations! You are a “finer designer.” Spread the word and save the business world!
29-25	You have a sensitive soul, and audiences appreciate that. A little tweaking of your presentations, and you'll be a “finer designer” candidate.
24.5-20	It's not just about you. (Remember when your mother told you that?) Think more about your audience and watch their interest level rise.
Below 20	Lock the exits! It's the only way they'll stay put. T

Marian Schickling (Mschicklin@aol.com) is a freelance writer from Rochester, New York.

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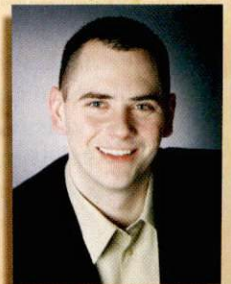
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About Bo Bennett, DTM

Bo Bennett is a distinguished Toastmaster, business man, author, programmer, philanthropist, martial artist, motivational speaker, amateur comedian, and most of all a husband and a father devoted to improving the lives of others. Since age 10, Bo has started several companies and sold them anywhere from \$1 to \$20,000,000.00. Today, Bo remains active President of Archieboy Holdings, LLC. and CEO of Boston Datacenters, Inc. Bo is also the creator of FreeToastHost.org, the Toastmasters service that currently provides free websites for more than 2000 Toastmasters clubs around the world.



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From the desk of Darren LaCroix



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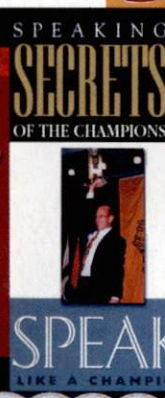
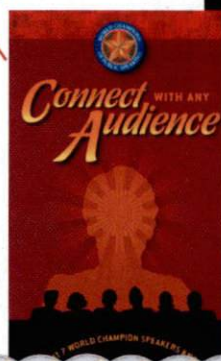
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