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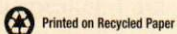
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Find Your Voice



“Work harder on yourself than you do on your job.” How do you interpret that quote from internationally known speaker Jim Rohn?

I understand it this way: Each person is born into this world with unique gifts and the capacity to develop them. But many people do not discover their gifts or if they do, they devalue them. Our greatest riches are within ourselves and the most fertile field for development is one's own self. We spend a great deal of time and energy on earning paychecks, but the greatest dividends are found in the investments we make in our own growth. In the process of discovering our gifts and potential, we will find our voice.

One of the great things about our organization is that it attracts people who want to improve themselves. I delight in hearing how individuals have “found their voices.” You probably have your own story to tell! Here are three memorable stories I've heard:

After a childhood filled with traumatic events, and later on, a bankruptcy in her business, Sheryl was urged by an acquaintance to visit a Toastmasters club. She did and was immediately attracted to the energetic, supportive, upbeat atmosphere. Sheryl cried through her first two speeches but gradually built up her self-esteem and confidence. She went on to complete multiple CTMs, ATMs and a DTM, earn the Accredited Speaker designation, serve as district governor, write several books and launch a successful professional speaking career. Sheryl, who has touched the lives of thousands, said to me, “Toastmasters changed my life.” Sheryl found her voice!

Elliott had a stammering problem long before he joined Toastmasters. He used his club's speaking opportunities to train himself to speak effectively. He gained so much confidence that he went on to become district governor, led his district to Distinguished status and became President of the International Foundation for Stutterers. Elliott found his voice!

Ashok, an immigrant to the USA from India, embraced the Toastmasters opportunity to improve his communication, language and leadership skills. He went on to lead his district's largest club to President's distinguished status, co-presented a seminar at a district conference, co-chaired a district conference, and is now serving as a district leader. Ashok told me, “Beyond speaking skills, the Toastmasters program helped me develop as an individual. It is exciting to discover my innate gifts.” Ashok continues to find new facets of his unique voice!

A Web search just revealed to me that non-Toastmasters related symposia titled Find Your Voice are held in central London regularly. Authenticity and self-discovery are deep human needs. The Toastmasters program with its club support structure helps to fill that need. Are you taking advantage of your Toastmasters opportunities? Parker J. Parmer wrote, “Each of us is a master at something, and part of becoming fully alive is to discover and develop our birthright competence.” My wish for you is that you become fully alive. May you find your voice!

Dilip R. Abayasekara
Dilip Abayasekara, DTM
International President

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The Toastmasters Vision:

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

The Toastmasters Mission:

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

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

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

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Bouncing Higher From Failures

The article "Rising above Failure" (February) was very motivating. How many of us give up after the very first rejection? How many of us never commit ourselves back to our goals after a minor setback? God only knows I still have my fair share of "failures" as I go through life; they somehow magically reappear just when I think I've had enough. But these days I see them for what they are – temporary setbacks, each one filled with opportunities to grow.

Each setback I have faced now seems so trivial, but it certainly wasn't so at the time I faced it. As a lifelong student of failure, someone who is determined to learn from every experience, I can't tell you how valuable articles such as this one are for me as I recommit to my goals. None of us is immune to missing a goal here or facing a disappointing conclusion there. So why not use each one of those "failures" to bounce back higher in the true Toastmasters spirit?

Hari Candadai, ATM-B • ICC Articulators-584244 • Milpitas, California

Terrific Toastmasters!

I would like to thank Toastmasters International for putting me back on the mailing list for *The Toastmaster*, which I had missed since June 2005. Thanks, too, for the package of back issues.

In the June 2005 issue on "How Toastmasters Improves Your Health," I fully agree with author Dennis Hett that public speaking boosts our immune system, makes us feel good and promotes longer life. In my last job of 12.5 years, I remember taking only one medical leave. I thank God and Toastmasters for my measure of good health!

I appreciate how Toastmasters is grooming me to be a better listener, thinker and speaker. I am grateful to

have served in leadership roles and in having my circle of friends enlarged and, thus, the opportunity of networking.

It's terrific to be in Toastmasters!

Soh Swee Kiat, DTM • Spans-Jom Club 6170 • Singapore

Academy Award Speeches

As I watched the Academy Awards last night, I couldn't help but think that Americans have a dire need to improve their public speaking skills.

These were professionals – the tops in their fields – standing in front of the microphone, yammering and stammering, fidgeting and making a general spectacle of themselves in front of millions of viewers, their colleagues and their bosses.

It's not as though they were pulled from the audience at random, either. In most cases they were among a handful of potential winners. So why the lack of preparation?

We can't all be George Clooney, but we can learn to be smooth in our own right. To last night's Oscar winners, I say, "Get thee to Toastmasters!"

Joanne Ritter, VPPR • Marin Club 890 • San Anselmo, California

Power Point Tips

In his excellent article, "How To Power Point," Kevin Lerner recommended starting from an outline. I teach my students how to use Power Point to create their outlines – it's a real time saver. Here's the process:

- Start a blank presentation and choose the Bullet slide layout.
- Switch to the Outline view.

- Start thinking about (brainstorming) what you want to say. Type your ideas one at a time, and press Enter after each one. PowerPoint will make each a separate slide.

- Critically review the ideas and delete any that veer from your topic, don't relate to your purpose or don't lead to your conclusion.

- Turn on the Outlining toolbar (it will appear down the left side of the screen). Use the arrow buttons to move ideas up, down, left or right and organize them into slides and bullet points.

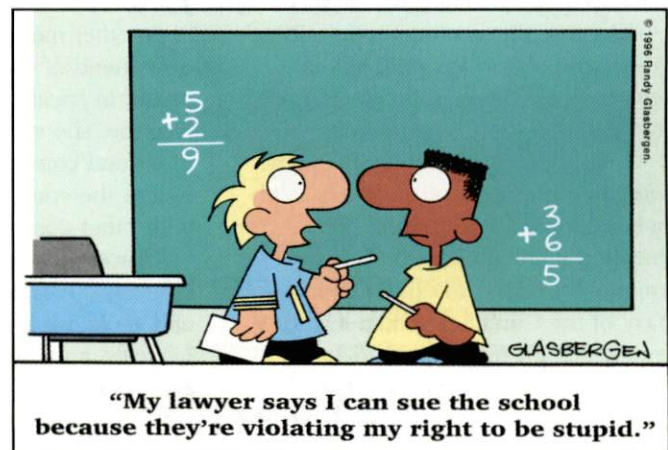
That's it! Your outline is finished, your slides already have text on them and you're ready to refine the wording. If you're not using PowerPoint, your speech is ready to rehearse. If you are, re-read Kevin Lerner's article and follow his advice!

Julie Biddle, soon to be CTM • 777 Toastmasters Club 627794
Toronto, Canada

More Crossword Puzzles

Most enjoyable was working the crossword puzzle "Presenting the President" by Dana Lamon, DTM. Please publish additional crossword puzzles!

Dr. Deborah Louise Morgan Martin, ATM-S • Cavalier Club 596
Newport News, Virginia.



After giving 10 speeches, aren't we more confident than competent?

Competent or Confident?

When I discuss Toastmasters with non-Toastmasters, I explain the benefits of our organization and refer to the 10 speeches in the communication manual. I describe the purpose of the manual and the evaluations. Then, I mention that once they have given their 10 speeches, they become a CTM, a Competent Toastmaster (or as of July 1, a Competent Communicator).

A *Competent* Toastmaster?

What is "competent"? *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* states that competent is "having the capacity to function or develop in a particular way, or qualified or adequate." Another definition is "adequate for the purpose" or "sufficiently qualified or capable." Although competent is not a negative word, it is an ordinary word. If I'm competent, this, to me, signifies I'm part of the general population, one of many, a commoner.

What if new Toastmasters were already competent when they joined? Perhaps a few are not, but the vast majority of new members are competent. Even I, who still rank as the Ah Champion of my club, with nearly 30 ahs when answering a two-minute Table Topic – or was it 30 ahs in less than one minute? – was, in my humble opinion, competent.

I had been quite successful as the outgoing president of the Rotary club when I joined Toastmasters. I had initiated many projects in the community, including the International Day of the Child, an annual event of young people singing and dancing in the costumes of their heritage. However, I wasn't confident enough to emcee this event and asked a

fellow Rotarian – who happened to be a Toastmaster – to be the Master of Ceremonies while I did what I was comfortable doing, which was coordinating and filming the event (i.e. behind the scenes activities).

Now, after more than 13 years in Toastmasters, I have successfully begun teaching a course on "Overcoming the Fear of Public Speaking." Imagine the confidence I've gained during my tenure with Toastmasters!

More than any one thing Toastmasters does for a new member is to build confidence. I've seen it so many times in my club and elsewhere in Toastmasters. One member in my home club participated in Table Topics for the first time. This woman took a whole minute before she uttered one word and then she spoke for only 30 seconds. Less than six weeks later, she was competing in our club's Table Topics contest, and that was only her third Table Topics question! She didn't win, but she had gained enough confidence in only six weeks to compete with seasoned Toastmasters.

Another member of our club, a dear friend of mine, was already competent in speaking before she joined. Like me, she was already a member of several community organizations, where she communicated frequently with other community leaders.

However, when she did her Ice-breaker, she came up to the lectern and spoke for less than one minute (actually, it was more like 30 seconds). Four years later, she started her second CTM and gave her second Ice-breaker in our club. She got up, went

to the lectern and spoke for nearly 15 – not seconds – but a whopping 15 minutes. We couldn't get her to stop even when the timer began flashing the red light after eight minutes! This person had gained confidence.

What is confidence? By *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, confidence is "characterized by assurance; especially self reliance." The *Oxford Dictionary* states it is "feeling certainty about something." Isn't this what we become after we have presented 10 speeches and received 10 evaluations?

Whenever a member completes the Communication and Leadership Manual, I say something like this: "Toastmasters say that CTM stands for Competent Toastmaster, but I believe you joined as a competent speaker. Now you have the confidence to stand before a group and present a speech in an orderly and effective fashion. I consider you not a Competent Toastmaster but a Confident Toastmaster. Congratulations on being able to speak confidently."

We have changed the ATM designation from Able Toastmaster to Advanced Toastmaster to Advanced Communicator. I believe we should consider changing Competent Toastmaster (or Communicator) to *Confident* Communicator to reflect what really happens when a member joins our organization. **T**

Frank S. Adamo, ATMS, is a member of Eclectic Dialectics Club 3828 and Professional Speakers Club 9. He is a business consultant, coach and instructor in Cypress, California.

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Marlyn Binda:

Learning to Think in English

By Julie Bawden Davis

A move to Australia from Holland posed language problems for this Surinam native.

When Marlyn Binda migrated to New Zealand from Holland to set up a business and found herself facing a seemingly insurmountable language barrier, she received the best advice of her career.

"While talking with my accountant, Helen Walker, I told her how I found the language change from Dutch to English difficult," says Binda. "To start a business in a completely different country is not a small step. I had to effectively communicate in order to reach clients and sell my services,

but some of the English words and expressions I didn't recognize. Her solution to my problem surprised me. She suggested that I start thinking in English."

Thinking in English was a new twist for Binda, who had spent 27 years in Holland speaking Dutch. To further confuse matters, her first language is Hindi, as she was born and raised in South America in Surinam. She speaks six other languages, including English, but until moving to New Zealand hadn't had much opportunity to use English.

Fortunately for Binda her accountant is a Toastmaster, and her solution for the struggling entrepreneur was to attend a club meeting.

"I am so glad that I took her advice and visited Toastmasters, because the organization helped me considerably," says Binda, now a member of Central Park Toastmasters in Auckland, New Zealand.

"Toastmasters was exactly what I needed. I had all of the knowledge to run my credit management business, but my language skills were definitely lacking. The fact that I'm Indian in appearance and a woman was also difficult for some people to relate to, especially with my communication skills being so poor. Even though I knew the English language, I found that my vocabulary was limited, and when I did speak it was slow, because I had to think of words in Hindi or Dutch and then translate them to English."

Attending Toastmasters to learn how to think in English intrigued Binda, who began participating almost immediately.

"On my third or fourth visit I did my Icebreaker," she said. "I talked about growing up in Surinam, and how the country is large and warm, and then moving to Holland when I was 22 years old, where everything is so small and the weather is very cold. I described seeing my first snow the day I arrived in Holland. It was so beautiful and unusual that I tasted it. Then I told the audience



that in many ways New Zealand reminds me of Surinam, with the warm weather and spaciousness."

Binda's speech was well received, which helped build her confidence. "They were stunned at how well I knew the language, and I think everyone

related to the speech, which gave me the courage to try again," she said.

Taking every possible opportunity to speak, Binda practiced often and it paid off. "In a very short time I had done seven speeches," she said. "I also judged two contests at different clubs in New Zealand."

Other Toastmasters members note how quickly Marlyn progressed



Marlyn Binda

Binda credits the evaluation reports she received for steering her in the right direction. And, she adds, "When I realized that everyone in the club would have a hard time speaking in another language, I felt more relaxed."

Flinkenberg is impressed with Binda's progress. "I admire her 'can do' approach," he says. "She is a great example of what Toastmasters can do through the friendly support and encouragement that the organization offers."

Binda's only regret with the increased business she has received since gaining confidence in Toastmasters is that her 10- to 15-hour-work-days are cutting into her ability to attend meetings on a regular basis. "I

"I truly believe that my success is directly related to my improved communication skills."

— Marlyn Binda

because of her involvement and commitment. "Marlyn made tremendous gains in her public speaking in a very short space of time because she was focused and spoke at every available opportunity," says Glenn Flinkenberg, a 10-year member of Central Park Toastmasters.

Christine Latu is another member of the club, and she also saw Binda's quick transformation. "Marlyn has improved greatly since she first joined, particularly her confidence level," says Latu. "Her pronunciation is better, and she speaks slower and uses descriptive words to emphasize her speeches. She's very knowledgeable and always interesting."

Toastmasters was so effective for Binda that her business grew almost overnight. "I had a breakthrough about four to five months ago, and now I'm doing a variety of major projects, including one for a large insurance company," she says. "I truly believe that my success is directly related to my improved communication skills. Toastmasters enabled me to speak and think in the English language, and I became more confident overall."

hope to be able to employ someone very soon so I can start to spend more time at Toastmasters," she says.

When asked her advice for giving speeches in a language other than her native tongue, Binda offers the following: "Read a lot in the language you're going to speak in, and don't be shy. Also keep in mind the skills that Toastmasters offers. The organization teaches you to develop your speech and be precise and accurate in your timing. Most importantly, remember to be yourself and remain positive. I always remind myself that yesterday was good, today is better, and tomorrow will be the best." **T**

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

Editor's Note: Do you or any Toastmaster you know have an inspiring story of how the Toastmasters program has helped you overcome challenges in your life? Please contact this magazine at letters@toastmasters.org.

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Lessons from Oscar

By Gene Perret

Why some acceptance speeches are touching while others are merely annoying.

Oscar Night in Hollywood is a study in contrasts. Some of the gowns are gorgeous; a few grotesque. The ad-libs can be either funny or “forget about it.” The tuxes range from the classic black tie to “Excuse me, did you not know that you were going to a party tonight?” The acceptance speeches can be either memorable or eminently forgettable.

As speakers, we can all benefit from Hollywood’s big night. We can learn why some speeches are touching while others are annoying. Following are just a few of the tips we can learn from “Oscar” that will benefit our own presentations:

Be Prepared: Many of the honorees step to the microphone and either pretend they have nothing to say, or indeed, prove that they have nothing to say. Nevertheless, they all go on to say it. Some of them excuse the lack of preparation by saying they didn’t think they were going to win. That’s a weak explanation. Being nominated and having your name plastered in every newspaper in the country – if not the world – and broadcast on countless TV shows is a pretty good hint that you may be in the running. If there is a chance that you might be called onstage to accept the honor, it might be wise to have a few phrases worked out beforehand.

Many of the speeches that leave a pleasant aftertaste do so because of just one or two particularly striking phrases. The honoree said something



▲ Academy Award winner for Best Supporting Actor George Clooney accepts his Oscar during the 78th Annual Academy Awards at the Kodak Theater in Hollywood, California, on Sunday, March 5, 2006.

that resonated with the audience. Usually, that’s the result of having thought about the moment and either written or mentally prepared a statement.

I’ve written for the person who hosted the Academy Awards several times and I know that we were always prepared. We knew who the possible winners were and we had ad-libs prepared for each of them. We either used them or didn’t, depending on circumstances and the timing, but we had them on call just in case we needed them.

As speakers, we should never approach the podium without some sort of preparation. We may be asked to introduce another speaker, to emcee an entire evening, or even be fortunate enough to accept an award

of our own. We should never step to the microphone and admit, "I have nothing worthwhile to say."

Be Aware of Time: Some of the Oscar acceptance speeches go on and on. The producers are aware of this but can't seem to find any workable solution for the problem. They've tried giving all of the nominees a specified time, but that's forgotten in the excitement of the moment. They've tried to have the orchestra play as a warning to the honoree, but that turns out to be embarrassing – for both the Oscar winner and the Academy. The producers have even discussed charging those people who run long for the broadcast time. At the rates they charge for commercials, running over even a little bit could cost the offender several thousand dollars. That has never been implemented, and the ideas that have been tried have mostly failed.

It seems the speaker should have a built-in timing mechanism. Listeners go through three phases:

1. "I want to hear what you have to say."
2. "I think I've heard just about everything you have to say."
3. "I wish you would stop saying it now."

In fact, phase 3 sometimes could be, "I wish you would have stopped saying it some time ago."

Even our best speeches are only sterling for a certain amount of time. It's interesting to note that one of the most memorable and most memorized speeches of all time is Lincoln's address at Gettysburg. It's fairly short. Lincoln spoke for only two minutes.

No one remembers the speech of Edward Everett, the person who spoke before Lincoln at that ceremony. Why? Because his talk lasted over two hours. The audience was definitely into phase three by the time he finished. People couldn't remember his speech because they were too busy trying to forget it.

Think back on some of the Oscar acceptance speeches you've heard over the years. The ones that leave an impression are those that say what they have to say, say it well, and say no more.

Be Humble: I used to have a plaque on my desk that my children presented to me. It read, "It's hard to be humble when you're as great as I am." Admittedly, it's difficult to be modest when you've just been named the greatest actor, director or whatever of the year by a panel of your peers. Certainly you've earned the right to crow a bit...but just a little bit.

I once asked a celebrity who I worked with to autograph a photograph for me. The personalized inscription on the photo read, "To Gene, thank you for making me great." I immediately wanted to have it framed and hang it in *his* den. This was more of a tribute to him than it was a memento for me!

As the person at the lectern, we speakers can sometimes fall into the same trap. We can inadvertently (or sometimes "verdantly") exaggerate our own status. If we do, it can alienate an audience.

Certainly, to be effective speakers, we have to have some credentials and some presence. Otherwise, we wouldn't be asked to stand in front of the room to offer our thoughts. We should, though, allow our credentials to stand on their own without embellishment from us. And we should permit, if it's not a redundancy, our speaking to speak for itself.


Be Classy: Mortimer Levitt, founder of the Custom Shop Shirtmakers Stores,

once spoke about class. He said that class does not mean arriving at some important function (like the Academy Awards) in a chauffeur-driven limousine. That's the accoutrements of class. "Real class," he said, "is how you treat your chauffeur."

So this lesson we learn from Oscar is similar to the previous one: be considerate. So many times, if you listen to the acceptance speeches carefully, you'll hear inadvertent put-downs. The classic, which was probably never said, is "I'd like to thank all the little people." It's a backhanded compliment to call the people who have helped you "little people."

As a speaker, be considerate of your audience. They deserve a good performance – one that is appropriate for them. Be considerate of the people who booked you. Be considerate of the association you're representing by being a speaker. Be considerate of the people you meet at the affair, both before and after the show. And as Mortimer Levitt advised, be considerate of your chauffeur if your hosts were gracious enough to provide one for you.

Finally, **Be Gracious:** As a speaker, you'll get your share of awards, tributes and kudos. Accept them graciously. I once traveled with a legendary, much admired show business celebrity. I asked him once, "How can you handle all this adulation? People want to be near you, to talk to you, to shake your hand. They throw compliments at you all the time. How do you deal with it?"

He said wisely, "Thank you" always seems to work for me." 

Gene Perret was Bob Hope's head writer and is a three-time Emmy Award winner on the Carol Burnett Show. He teaches an e-mail course on using humor in speaking and has written many books on that subject. Contact him at Gper276@sbcglobal.net or visit www.writingcomedy.com.

When Chris Felske, CTM, from New Westminster, British Columbia, ends a speech, he often does a dramatic spin at the end – in his wheelchair. Felske has cerebral palsy, a brain disorder that causes muscular impairment. All four of his limbs are affected, but the left side more than the right.

But in a round-about way, it was cerebral palsy that prompted Felske to join Toastmasters in the first place. Several years ago, Felske was asked to speak about a topic he knew well – cerebral palsy in the workplace. Yet, despite having lived with the condition since birth, he was unable to talk about it. “I was marble mouth,” he says. “When I got out front, I was like ‘uh, uh, uh.’ My hands started sweating and I was all clammy. I decided to go to Toastmasters and try it out, so I’d learn how to speak in front of people.”

Since joining Toastmasters, “I’ve become more articulate,” says Felske. “I actually enunciate my words and get things out with more ease.” And while Felske’s not scared to talk, he admits to being afraid at times. “I’m scared of people’s perception of my disability,” he says.

In addition to causing limited mobility in his limbs, cerebral palsy also causes Felske’s eyes to wander. “Part of my brain, my motor system, is dead from the cerebral palsy. When I talk to you, without me even knowing, my eyes look up at the ceiling, and I haven’t quite figured it out myself, but it happens to all people with cerebral palsy to some extent.”

The feedback he gets from Toastmasters, however, helps Felske develop more control over his eye movement. When doing a speech, Felske says, “I have to really, really concentrate, especially regarding looking at both sides of the room.” Toastmasters is a place for Felske to practice and make sure everything is in check. But regular involvement in meetings is key. Everything is fine, says Felske, “as long as I continue to participate and don’t stay on the sidelines.”

For Felske, who works as a manager of customer service at a major Canadian bank, strong communication skills are important to his career: “Right now I’m managing 14 people,” he says, “so if I can’t project myself or I can’t get my point across, it doesn’t look good to the people that report to me.”

In Toastmasters, as in everyday life, a physical disability is merely a challenge that a certain individual has to deal with. Every Toastmaster has a growth point or two, whether it’s hand-clasping, stuttering or slouching. And by giving frank evaluations and making sure to watch for particular actions or habits, members can help each other overcome, or at least minimize, the effects of these challenges.

Long-time Toastmaster Emma Smith, from Clearfield, Utah, also has cerebral palsy.

When she was an infant, her parents were told she would probably never talk. Well, not only can she talk, but Smith is also a DTM and has held numerous leadership positions, including governor of district 15, which she lead to President’s Distinguished status in 1999. Says Smith modestly, “Somehow everything came together when I was district governor, because my district finished 5th out of 75 in the 1998-1999 year, and I really don’t know what I did or didn’t do.”

Smith, who often gets complimented on the clarity of her speech, went through 18 years of speech therapy to learn how to produce the basic sounds and string them together into

words, then sentences. “Apart from speech therapy,” she says, “Toastmasters has done more for my speech than anything else. I continue to speak, and my speech continues to improve.” She urges anyone with a speaking disability to speak as often as possible: “Toastmasters does wonders for your confidence as well as for improving your speech.”

Smith, who uses a walker or a tiny moped when away from her home, doesn’t have to prepare too much before speaking in a new environment. “But I do check out a stage or platform if I have to go up or down a flight of stairs,” she says. “Stairs don’t bother me if I am familiar with them.”

Smith feels it’s essential for disabled people to pursue every avenue they can to overcome the disability. “Don’t

Learning from Each Other

These successful Toastmasters are disabled but prefer no special treatment.

By Barb Adamski, CTM



Chris Felske, CTM, is a customer service manager at a Canadian bank. In his free time, he enjoys downhill skiing, bungee jumping and other thrills. He belongs to Tillicum Toastmasters in New Westminster, British Columbia. Here he is skiing in Whistler, British Columbia.

Emma Smith, DTM, is a retired IRS service center clerk and a member of two Toastmasters clubs. She lives in Clearfield, Utah, with her cat. She is active in promoting the handicapped cause and has served on several boards and committees in this regard.

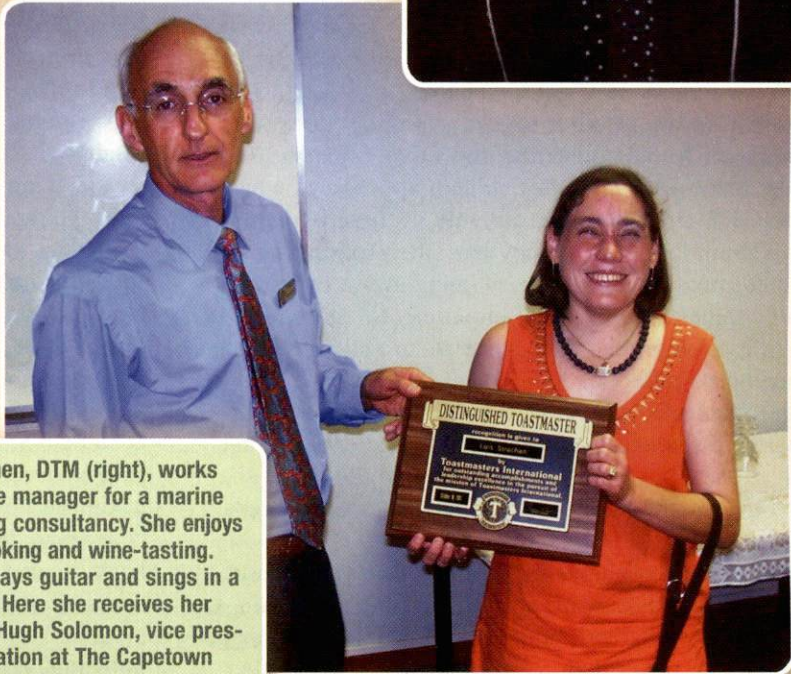


give up," she says. "Stay in there and do everything you can to help yourself. And remember, others need your help too."

A number of factors have contributed to Smith's success. "I have been blessed with determination, personal fortitude, belief in myself and confidence. And I am a survivor," she says. "I was blessed to be born into the right family at the right time and in the right place." Smith, a retired IRS employee with a Master's degree in sociology and an active member of two Toastmasters clubs, adds, "I do so many things that people forget I am handicapped, and that is exactly what I want them to do."

Lois Strachen, DTM, from Cape Town, South Africa, has been blind since age 21. She says that any speaker, blind or sighted, needs to know the same things: Who's the audience? What's the room layout? The only other thing Strachen needs to find out, she says, is whether or not she'll be able to bring her guide dog with her.

For Strachen, learning to make eye contact and use appropriate gestures and body language can be a bit challenging, especially when she can't see what works and



Lois Strachen, DTM (right), works as an office manager for a marine engineering consultancy. She enjoys writing, cooking and wine-tasting. She also plays guitar and sings in a rock band. Here she receives her DTM from Hugh Solomon, vice president education at The Capetown Toastmasters club.

TI's Policy on Members with Disabilities

Throughout the world, various laws apply to facilities and organizations regarding their responsibilities, if any, to provide access and other measures to support the participation of members and others with disabilities. In some situations, the laws do not apply because no "public accommodation" is involved.

It is the policy of TI, and each of its subordinate units, including regions, districts, divisions and areas, to comply with the applicable law of the jurisdiction in which meetings or other functions are held regarding accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Clubs are separate legal entities with very limited resources, and their legal obligations with respect to persons with disabilities may differ from the obligations of TI, depending on national, state or local regulations and the availability of facilities for meetings in their communities. Given the club's need to use free or low-cost meeting space in certain locations, it may not be reasonable, feasible or possible to provide wheelchair access or other forms of accommodation in every instance.

TI and its clubs seek to make its programs available to as many people as possible, but sometimes there are practical limitations or unforeseen circumstances that may result in some obstacle, hindrance or other difficulty for a person with a disability at an event. That is why Toastmasters organizations cannot and should not promise full participation in its programs to persons who may not be able to participate through their own efforts.

what doesn't work in other speakers. So how does she learn? "Through trial and error," she says. "Don't we all?" And like many Toastmasters, Strachan appreciates whatever help her evaluators can give her in these particular areas. "I think the greatest way that other Toastmasters and clubs can assist is simply by being aware of the needs of someone with visual impairments," she says. "That in itself is problematic, since we are all individuals and our needs differ!"

Leila, Strachan's guide dog, provides her own form of evaluation: if she likes a speech, she pays attention. If the speech is okay, but not as good as Leila would hope, she goes to sleep. And if Leila really thinks the speech needs work, she snores.

Since Strachan is unable to see the green, yellow, and blue lights that are standard at most Toastmaster meetings, she requests a verbal indication of how much time remains for her speech, rather than rely on a bell, a clap or other audio notification method.

Felske, too, adapts to suit his environment. "One of the things I do in my home club is, instead of going to the lectern, I sometimes stay at the table just for the logistics of not having to get around people, if we're a full house."

For Felske, preparation is not usually required. "The only thing I have to be careful of is if I go to a club that has stairs. I have to bring somebody with me and I have to bring my other wheelchair, which is a manual, portable chair. I'll bring an assistant with me, or another Toastmaster." And while Felske himself doesn't demand any special treatment because of his disability, special treatment is occasionally what he gets.



"Don't assume that a disabled person is not willing or able to be an active member of the club."

- Chris Felski, CTM

"People treat me differently. They sometimes make allowances that I wouldn't make for myself," he says. "I've been to conferences before where they've put me right up front because it's easier because of the way the room is set up." While this may be a thoughtful gesture, it occasionally interferes with Felske's plans to sit with friends, maybe even at the back of the hall. "I want to be able to make the choice," he says, adding that it's up to him to make a conscious effort to assert himself.

For many of us, the challenges faced by those with a disability may appear daunting. But in reality, a disability is something that many Toastmasters work around or minimize. Felske asks that we treat disabled Toastmasters as we would any other Toastmaster. Don't assume that a disabled person is not willing or able to be an active member of the club. Call on them to take on club roles, including Table Topics. Like all Toastmasters, they too are there to improve their communication skills, move out of their comfort zone, and develop the confidence needed to be active members of both Toastmasters International and society. "Yes, some people need different allowances, but make that an asset to the club, not a disadvantage," says Felske.

By providing support, encouragement, and honest feedback, we can all be a part of our fellow Toastmasters' growth and success. And in turn, they can be a part of ours. **T**

Barbara K. Adamski, CTM, is a writer and editor based in New Westminster, B.C. Visit her website at barbadamski.com.

Is your talk accessible to attendees with disabilities?

Speaking to a Diverse Audience

Any professional speaker will tell you that one of the most important rules of speaking is to know your audience. For most speakers, this means hours of preparation researching the company or organization to which they will present their material. Speakers know that by reading trade publications, in-house newsletters and promotional materials, they will learn the jargon that is the language of that company.

Real pros will also inquire about the audience members themselves. They will ascertain something about the corporate structure, the VIPs and those employees who have won awards, for example. This gives a speaker an “insider’s edge” when he or she stands before what is otherwise a roomful of strangers. By the time the speaker takes the lectern, a great deal is known about the audience. However, there is one more piece of information that a speaker might not know but must consider when preparing a talk: Are there any attendees with disabilities? Below are a few tips that will help you make your talks more accessible and inclusive:

- When planning the audience seating arrangements, ask if there is adequate access for wheelchair users. Provide an extra-wide aisle for wheelchairs in the audience. Wheelchair users should not be forced to occupy the very back of the room, or the very front row, if they do not wish to.
- If you are using written materials, make copies available in 24-point font size. This is a standard large-print text size and will enable most people with low vision to access your valuable talking points. If you

are making a presentation using slides or video, make a point to read the text as you go, or provide a brief narrative of the content. This can be accomplished smoothly and with discretion, so as not to needlessly draw attention to any individual.

- For attendees who are deaf or hearing impaired, allow for seats to be reserved up front if you are not using a microphone, or near speakers if using amplification. Ask your assistant, sergeant-at-arms or the facility set-up crew to help attendees identify these seats. Remember to provide an extra seat if a sign-language interpreter will be needed.

If speaking at a function that does not involve a meal, try to arrange for some water and a snack, at least. If no food is available, provide some fruit, candy or even trail mix. This

“As our society becomes more diverse, so does our workplace and so must our speaking skills.”

can help attendees get through a long program. Remember that audience members with diabetes or hypoglycemia require access to food. Besides, hungry attendees are inattentive attendees.

When incorporating humor in your presentations, think very carefully about the jokes you choose. If you obtain material from humor Web sites, use the humor from their “clean” section. When in doubt, don’t use it. If you want to make a joke about an executive or supervisor in the group, approach him or her privately and ask permission first. While this is a good trick to ingratiate you to the rank and file, it may backfire. You never want to risk ruining what

may be a well-crafted image. Stay away from the big landmines. You know the ones – no jokes about race, religion or sexuality.

On the other hand, self-deprecating humor almost always works well. Don’t overdo it, though. You don’t want to come across as a victim seeking sympathy. Sprinkle observational humor throughout your presentation, and restrict it to subjects, such as bizarre policies or ridiculous procedures, equipment snafus or humorous storytelling, with a point as well as a punch line.

As our society becomes more diverse, so does our workplace and so must our speaking skills.

Remember that it is unwise to make assumptions about any group. The specific nature of that diversity may not be apparent, but that does not mean a careless remark will not deeply affect or offend a member of

the audience who may have friends or loved ones who are proud to belong to a group you just disparaged. No one will remember your silly jokes, but someone is likely to remember that you took the time to provide large-print materials.

Accommodating the needs of a diverse audience is an act of consideration and respect that can only enhance your professional reputation. **T**

Laura Gillson, ATM, is a speaker, author and educator specializing in disability awareness and accessibility. She is owner of Eloquent Insights, provider of corporate, community and caregiver training. Contact her at lgillson@eloquentinsights.com.

Overcoming Nervousness as a Learning-Disabled Person

By Robert Ward , ATM-B

This Toastmaster accentuates his skills by minimizing his disability.

▼ Robert Ward's struggles with verbal fluency were greatly helped by his Toastmasters training.



As a person with a learning disability (speech impairment and low IQ), I have a tendency to get nervous. Even positive comments from the audience can make me nervous. If I am caught off guard and don't know how to respond – well that just makes the situation even worse. Other speakers probably have this particular problem to some degree too. That is all the more reason for you to keep reading! If I can make strides to overcome nervousness while staying calm, positive and encouraging to others, you can too!

I have a speech impairment and often speak fast and run my sentences together, making it hard for people to understand me. I have to take my time, speak slowly, choose simple language and control my nerves. The way I have learned to do this is by first rehearsing my presentation several times and making sure I use the right words, ones that are easy for me to say. If the language is hard to pronounce, then it is difficult for my listeners to understand. For example, I have a hard time saying words with the letters R and L, so I look for similar words to replace them.

Also, I need to know if I am being clearly understood, and if not, what my listeners didn't understand. My experience as a Toastmaster has helped a lot; especially the advice by my mentor, Phil Smeiles, who after one of my first speeches told me to keep it simple, illustrating his message with the nursing rhyme Mary had a Little Lamb. I depend on my

speech evaluations along with feedback from other speakers. Club members also are able to show me the blind spots in my speaking and speech. I tell them upfront not to be embarrassed to say they didn't understand what I said, and from time to time I check their comprehension. I also depend on visuals to get my message across better – I use transparencies and handouts that not only outline my speech but contain each important or technical term I use so the audience can follow me better. Also, I type reminders in my notes in bold letters telling myself to speak slowly and take my time.

At Sage Skill Training, where I work as a data entry technician and speaker, students are there for training because they have been either injured on the job, have had their work replaced, or else have learning disabilities. As such they, too, are nervous – nervous about the future.

Before the first class I helped teach, I mailed a Speakers Program Questionnaire to find out about the students' needs and concerns. This gave me an idea of what to say and not to say. I told the students what skills they needed to do data entry work and the prospects for employment. I reminded them that they each would improve at their own pace, that they would be working with others who will be better and faster at data entry than they were, but not to focus on that or be intimidated by it.

I also told them that they are in training for a purpose: to make sure

they learn the skills they will need to get hired. Accuracy and timing are more important than knowing the computer software; what counts is doing the job right with an attitude

“Learning to do my best and be my best at what I do has brought me pride and contentment.”

of excellence and pride. I emphasize that they need not be ashamed to ask for help when they need it.

The way that I gain the audience's confidence in me is by making sure I know what I am talking about, taking the time to talk to the students one on one, answering questions as best as I can, talking to them during break and, after the seminar, asking them how they are doing in their training. It encourages them and builds their confidence in me.

I use an “I can relate to you” approach when I am speaking to the students. It goes like this: “I sat where you sit now. I have taken the same training that you are now taking; I

am now working at Sage Computer Services doing data entry work.”

By vocally affirming the positive outcome of the training program, it gives them the assurance that they can

do it too. I also use testimonies from others who have completed their training and been hired at Sage or other local places. This builds their confidence further and lets them know that others besides myself have done it.

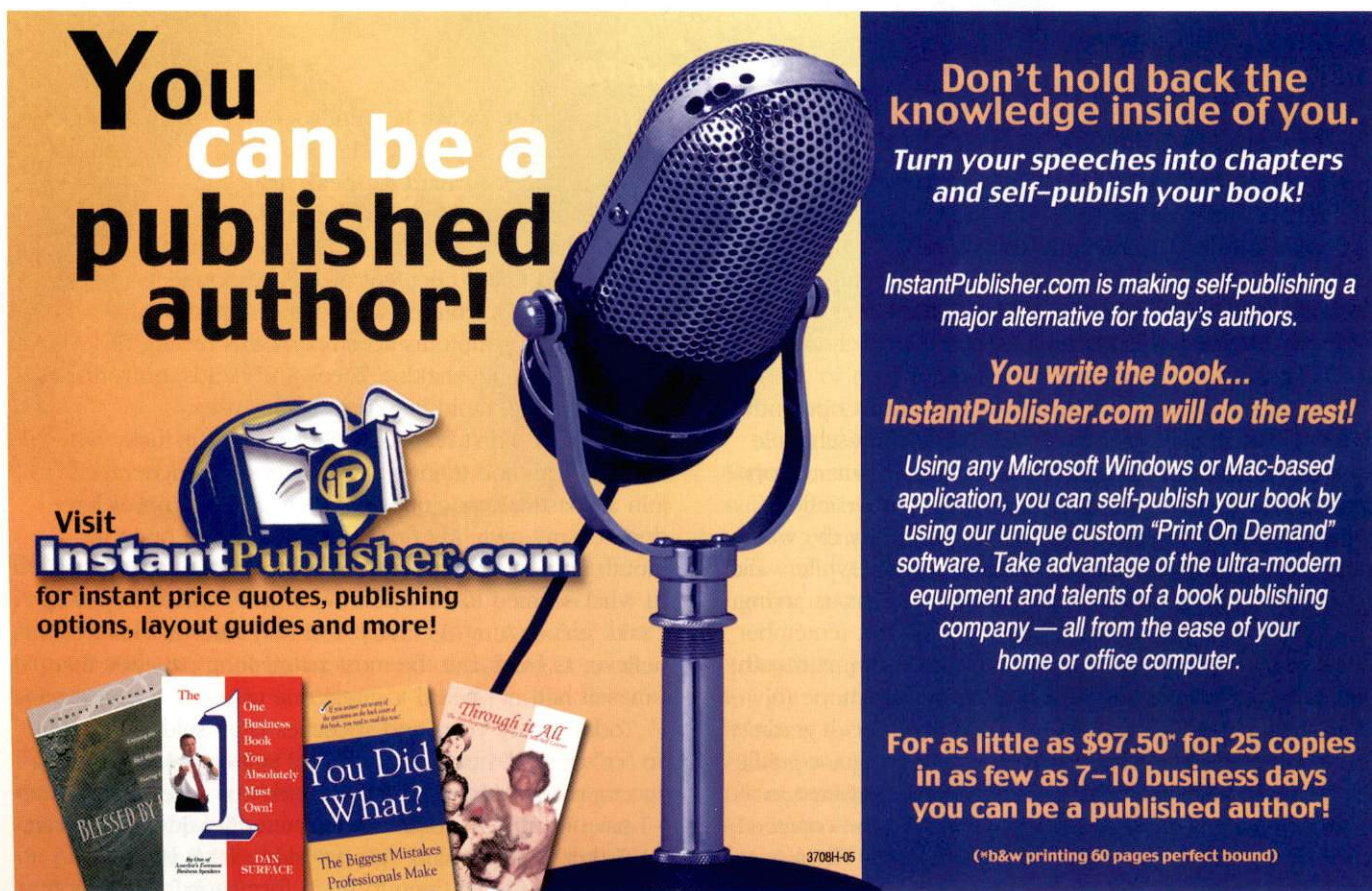
I also tape record my speeches. I want to make sure that what I say is helpful. Taping my speeches enables me to hear what I sound like, to know what I forgot to mention, and to answer their questions. Another reason is to find out what words gave me difficulty and to choose better words the next time I speak.

To be successful in life and work takes self-control. What really matters is how you use your time and skills at the job. I am learning to control

my nervousness and to stay focused at my job. In each area of my life I have learned that I need mentors to guide and help me. Being a person who learns things at a slower rate isn't always encouraging, but there isn't any shame in it, either. If someone is able to do something that I am not able to do, that is OK too.

Learning to do my best and be my best at what I do has brought me pride and contentment. I am able to control my nervousness by realizing that I can only do what I am able to do and not worry or compare myself to others. I do what I can do with a positive attitude and with excellence. I tell my students, “I know others who have done it. I have done it, and you can do it too.” **T**

Robert Ward, ATM-B, is a member of the Acron Toastmasters club and a data entry technician and speaker at Sage Skill Training, a branch of Sage Computer Services in Akron, Ohio. Reach him at **bob202w@aol.com**.



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The **FEAR** of Public Speaking:

20 Ways to **Get Over It!**

The fear of public speaking affects many people, gluing them to their chairs and bog-tying them to the status quo, no matter how unfulfilling their jobs or present situation may be. Actor George Jessel said, "The human brain starts working the moment you're born and never stops until you stand

How to get those butterflies to fly in formation.

up to speak in public." Though you might think you could never do what those clever, inspirational speakers do, you can teach yourself enough about public speaking to untie the tethers that hold you back.

Public speaking is a learned skill, developed much like other skills, such as playing the piano or painting: over time, with practice and some guidance. However, because of fear, we often avoid learning opportunities, choosing to flee rather than confront the challenge.

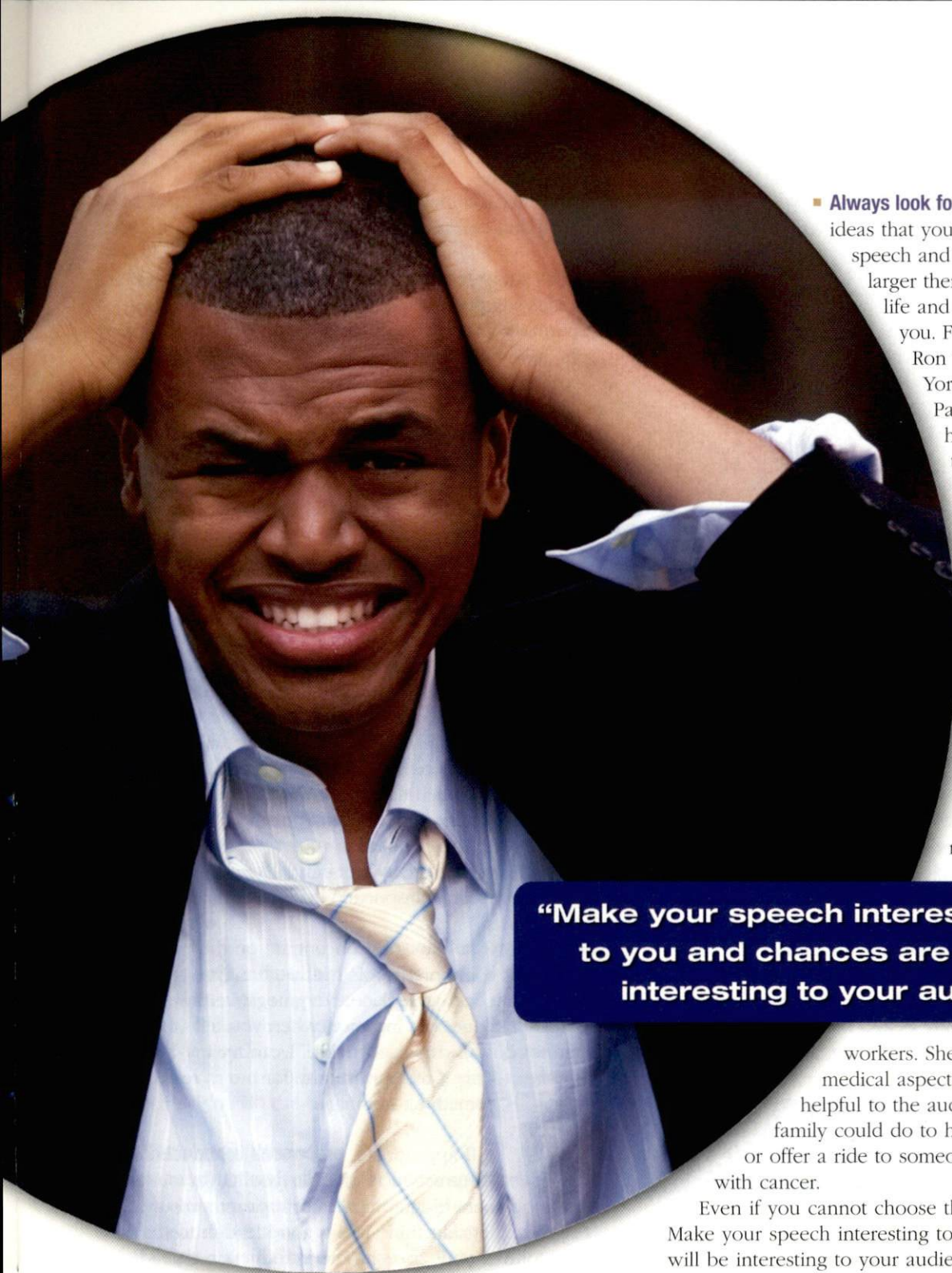
I understand this. Avoidance was my *modus operandi*. When I was in college, I manipulated my class schedule to avoid public speaking encounters. The one mandatory speech class became an exercise in rote memorization. I practiced my first speech so much I could say the words automaton-like, as if I had turned into a robot while walking to the front of the classroom. I was so nervous giving that first speech that when I finished, I did not remember actually saying the words. As they spilled from my mouth, it was as close to an out-of-body experience I hope to ever have. I survived that speech – you will too – graduated and started my career, a promising job in finance. Still, I avoided public speaking. As a management trainee in a large company, I often found myself around the conference table among a group of unfamiliar faces. When it came time to simply introduce ourselves around the room,

I would start to sweat. It sounds so straightforward, so simple: "I'm so and so." Why was it so hard to speak up?

As it turns out, I was not the only one around that table sweating. A Gallup Poll survey showed that 40 percent of U.S. respondents fear speaking in front of an audience. Specific physiological symptoms accompany this feeling of anxiety: sweating, shaking knees and hands, quivering voice, flushing, rapid heartbeat and nausea.

Though I didn't feel so at the time, I was lucky when, as part of my job training, I was "strongly encouraged" to join a Toastmasters club, something I would never have done on my own. My first speech served to open my mouth and, more important, it helped to open my eyes. In what seemed to be a lifetime of a five-minute speech, I said "ah" or "um" 33 times. You may find that hard to believe, as I did, but the most astonishing part was that I myself had not heard a single one of them.

Today, many years and speeches later, seldom uttering an "er" or "ah," I can laugh while I still cringe at that long-ago memory. Although I still get nervous – yes, every time – I have learned to control those butterflies, just as you can. As Walter Cronkite said, "It's natural to have butterflies. The secret is to get them to fly in formation." Here's how:



■ **Always look for subject matter** – major ideas that you can develop into a speech and minor ones that fit into a larger theme. Notice details. Notice life and circumstances around you. For example, photographer Ron Tarver was covering New York's African-American Day Parade. He wrote about how, while he was stuck in traffic, a woman turned to him and simply asked, "Are there really black cowboys?" Tarver wrote, "From that point on, I had a story to tell."

■ **Choose a subject you care about** that is personal to you but has a universal theme. Personal stories can carry a powerful but common message. A breast cancer survivor told of her experience in a speech to co-

"Make your speech interesting to you and chances are it will be interesting to your audience as well."

workers. She emphasized not only the medical aspects of the disease but, more helpful to the audience, what friends and family could do to help, such as cook a meal or offer a ride to someone recently diagnosed with cancer.

Even if you cannot choose the topic, personalize it. Make your speech interesting to you and chances are it will be interesting to your audience as well. Say you are giving a financial report; compare the net income to how many Hawaii vacations you could buy with the money earned.

■ **Organize your speech in a logical sequence**, such as following a time line. Not only will you be able to remember it better, the audience will be able to follow it easier. Having a logical path to follow will help alleviate the fear of forgetting your speech. Researchers at the University of Manitoba found that of respondents who reported excessive anxiety when speaking to crowds, 74 percent shared the fear of "going blank."

Before Speech Day

Preparation goes a long way to ease those pre-speech jitters. Just as you would not expect a large wedding to happen without proper planning and organizing, a good speech needs attention far ahead of the day of the event.

■ **Start early.** As soon as you know you have to give a presentation, start working on it. This is no time for procrastination. Think about your message. Get ideas down on paper, even if it is only a rough draft. If it's easier, start with an outline.

■ **Write your speech like every great speech, with a beginning, middle and an end.** Grab attention with the opening: a thoughtful question, a relevant anecdote, an appropriate quotation or a challenging statement. Transition smoothly into the meat of your subject, giving information in a clear, understandable format. End your speech with a powerful closing: a summary and conclusion, an appeal for action, or a relevant question, story or quote.

■ **Rehearse.** Once you have that great speech written, the three Ps are invaluable: practice, practice, practice. There is no substitute for hearing your own voice say the words out loud. Do it often: in the shower, in front of the mirror, in the car stopped at a red light. In her lighthearted article, "Blinking in the Spotlight," Rachel Brem, a postdoctoral fellow at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, writes about how many times she practiced a presentation she gave to colleagues at a symposium. She practiced at home, she practiced at work in front of her boss, she practiced at the hotel the night before the talk, making "eye contact with the empty sofa."

■ **Visualize success.** You can use low-tech means of visualization by simply closing your eyes. Picture yourself in front of your audience giving your speech to resounding applause. Or go high-tech with the latest sophisticated virtual reality (VR) computer programs. Some VR software is specifically designed for anyone who struggles with public speaking – even those who stutter. At George Washington University's Speech and Hearing Science Department, assistant professor Shelley Brundage, using software designed by Virtually Better, Inc. in Decatur, Georgia, researches the benefits of using VR. She explains,

"Practice the ending just as much as you do the beginning."

"A computer is connected by a video cable to a headset – currently about the size of a football helmet. Newer headsets are smaller, about the size of a camping-style headlamp – which allows images to be seen."

These 3-D images, complete with realistic sounds, can be programmed to be a "nice" audience – heads nodding, paying attention, making eye contact – or a more challenging audience – inattentive, cell phones ringing, people walking out. Participants see a virtual lecturer in front of them, complete with their own notes. Looking around behind them, they can refer to their own PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Brundage says the main benefit of VR software is that "it allows for practice in a controlled and safe

environment. A virtual audience tells no tales. You can turn it off and it's done."

■ **Discuss equipment needs with the event organizer** and make sure any necessary equipment is available. Reconfirm. If you rely on slides or computer-generated images, have a back-up plan. Know beforehand what you will do if equipment fails.

■ **Familiarize yourself with the setting.** If you can, physically visit the site beforehand. This will help you visualize your success. Know the layout of the room, stand on the podium, test the microphone. The more familiar the environment is the day of your speech, the better.

The Big Day

■ **Wear clothes that help.** Choose clothing that is comfortable and professional-looking. In *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies*, D.C. Barnlund (1968) says, "Personal apparel is a major source of information about the identity and character of others." He continues, "It seems plausible that clothing may affect self-attitudes as much or more than observer attitudes." Feel good about how you look so when those eyes are on you, you can be sure that nothing takes away from your message.

■ **Arrive early.** Build in leeway for delays. Assume there will be road construction, transportation delays, parking problems.

■ **Look outward, not inward.** Concentrate on the message. Remember how important it is for this audience to hear what you have to say. Replace every negative thought with a positive one. For instance, when you tell yourself you cannot do this, replace it with, "I can try my best. This is an opportunity for me to learn something new."

■ If appropriate, **prepare an introduction** for the emcee to introduce you. Give your pertinent biographical information to ensure the introduction gives a good lead-in to the content and tone of your speech. The introduction should give at least four pieces of information: what is the topic, why this subject, who is speaking, and why this speaker. For example, "Public speaking is an important topic in today's business world. Today, we have a long-time believer in the fact that everyone can learn to speak well in public. She has a Master's degree in communication from the University of Hawaii and has given numerous seminars on public speaking. She is here today to give us some pointers on our own presentation skills. Please welcome, Cheri Orator."

■ **Relieve tension.** When you get to the location, after checking the room, find a quiet place to gather your

thoughts and relax. The less outside stimuli, the easier it is for you to focus on your message. If it is not possible to isolate yourself for a few minutes, regroup mentally wherever you are, even in a crowd, and gather your energy. While you wait to give your speech, do these simple exercises. Clench your fists and hold for 3-5 seconds, then release. Notice how releasing your hands relaxes your shoulders and jaw. Repeat three times. Before the introduction, breathe deeply, inhaling slowly and exhaling completely. Do this three times.

- **No matter how nervous you are feeling, do not tell the audience.** Believe me, chances are people will not notice and, even if they do, they will probably empathize and listen more closely. Just start your speech with that attention-grabber the way you planned it, no apologies necessary.

- **Use visual aids relevant to your topic.** Research has found that when knowledge is shared by telling alone, message retention after three days is only 10 percent but increases to 65 percent when both telling and showing are used. Visual aids will help your audience remember your message longer, which means they will remember you longer, which is better for promotion and future opportunities for you.

- **Speak clearly and audibly.** No aahs or ums. Know when and how you are going to stop. Some speakers concentrate so much on the beginning of the speech, they forget the end is every bit as important and the last thing that you will leave with your audience. Practice the ending just as much as you do the beginning.

After Surviving (Whew!)

- **Seek constructive feedback for future speeches.** Toastmasters offers many different ways to give a helpful evaluation. One of the best is the WIN formula: Tell the speaker something about the speech that was Wonderful. Offer a suggestion for Improvement. End on a Nice note – a word of encouragement or a point of strength the speaker possesses. For example, “Mary, your opening anecdote was relevant and powerful. It made me want to listen to what else you had to say. I would have liked more elaboration on how to relax on the day of the speech, but I found the preparation suggestions most helpful.”

- **Think about what you liked about your experience and what you could improve on.** If possible, video- or audiotape your speech. Review the tape to learn areas of strength and those needing improvement.



“Soon, you will be dressing up your speeches with expressive body language, vocal variety and interesting anecdotes.”

- **Stick with Toastmasters International** to continue to improve your speaking and leadership skills. Former Toastmaster Linda Lingle, governor of Hawaii, credits Toastmasters for helping her develop her speaking skills early in her political career, giving her a chance to practice in front of a group whose members were all there for the same reason, to improve their speaking and leading abilities. Governor Lingle says, “I felt communicating with people is so important. Toastmasters gave me the chance every week to speak in front of people who were very supportive. Everyone who is in Toastmasters is there because they want to get better.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Speech is power, speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel.” The ability to speak well in public is something we can learn. Just as we learned to ride a bike – perhaps after a few hard-knock spills – we got back on, found our balance and, with a little momentum, found we loved the feel of the breeze through our hair. Maybe we even put playing cards on our wheel spokes for a little pizzazz. Soon, you will be dressing up your speeches with expressive body language, vocal variety and interesting anecdotes to make the ride a pleasant one for you and your audience. Who knows? That next promotion might be just around the corner. **T**

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Tips on making
the most of these
long two minutes
of Table Topics.

Dazzle in a Minute:

Conquer Table Topics Phobia

I have watched even seasoned speakers stand petrified when they are asked to speak during Table Topics in our club. In fact, I have often been one of those speakers. Table Topics has a way of making us realize how long a passing minute can be! However, over the last few years, I have amassed a sizable number of my club's Table Topics awards and have learned a few tricks along the way. Here are just a few:

1 Begin by greeting the audience: Many speakers focus so much on the topic they are given that they miss this essential step. Always remember to acknowledge the audience. Throw in a smile. In addition to making a great first impression, this strategy can buy you time to gather information on the topic from the vast confines of your mind.

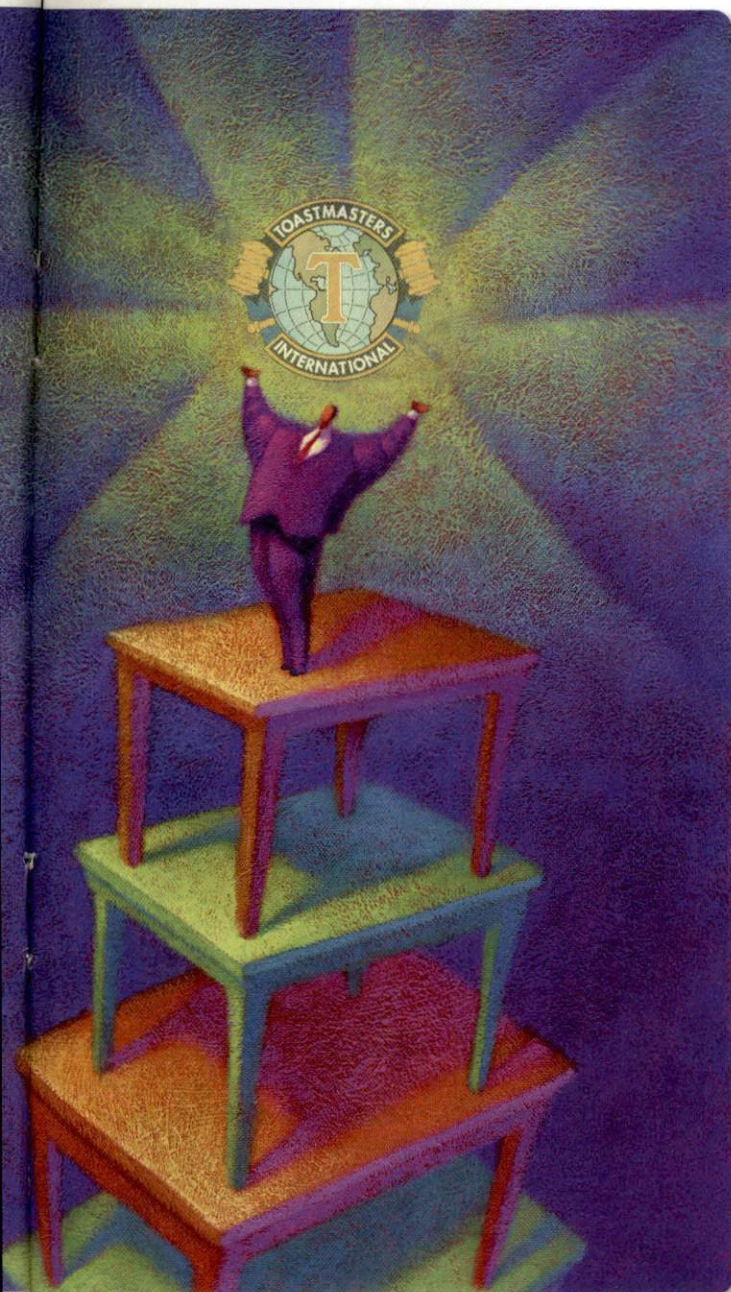
2 Buy yourself time: A common strategy is to repeat the question or topic. "What do I think of a flat tax rate?" Take a deep breath and speak slowly and clearly. Others include statements such as, "I never considered that question until now." Be careful not to get tiresome and monotonous by overdoing this step.

3 Stay informed: While it is impossible to be knowledgeable about every topic under the sun, a little preparation can take you a long way. This strategy can also make you more interesting as a person. Use the Internet, the corner bookstore and the local library to constantly build your knowledge on subjects that interest you. Even better, make it a point to find out more about subjects you are not familiar with. Stay on top of local, national and international news, politics, the economy, new trends, the latest movies, plays, music and books. I've often had the "coincidence" of being asked to speak about a subject that I recently read about. Follow this up with the next step:

4 Create a repository of topics: Build a list of topics you could use to challenge your club members when it is your turn to be the Topics Master. Then move to steps #5 and 6.

5 Cultivate a passionate opinion: Some of the most informed people can come across as lifeless data machines. Parrot-like, they use the same words they hear in a news bulletin, or they recount word-for-word an article they have read. The next time you stumble on an interesting article or even watch the news, make sure that you have not bought into the views of the person(s) who presented you with the information. The more passionate and original you are, the better your performance as a speaker will be.

6 Practice: This step is closely tied to steps #3, 4 and 5. You have a list of topics and you have an opinion on all of them. Now, practice as if you were asked to speak on one of them. Sooner or later, one of those



topics may surface at a Table Topics session near you.

7 Find Flow: With a mix of creativity and passion, a master speaker smoothly glides into a speech on a topic that has been presented to her only moments ago. She seems to have reached Zen. She gives the impression that she has somehow prepared for this topic for weeks.

For this step I have no advice. This usually happens when you diligently follow all the steps outlined here and add a lot of practice. It is the union of knowledge, creativity and experience.

8 Work your imagination muscles:

During Table Topics, we develop the necessary skills to think on our feet. For this, a fertile imagination is a vital ingredient. You could use your imagination to create a tall tale, contemplate the future or formulate an opinion on any subject. Once again, I have few words of advice for this step. It's *your* imagination. Use it any way you can.

When all else fails, use the following methods: These are strategies that have worked for me some of the time. A word of caution here: Do not use these strategies too often. Part of mastering Table Topics is to mix creativity and unpredictability. When used sparingly, these methods can be very effective during Table Topics sessions:

9 The Link Method:

Remember the game you played as a child: The person before you said 'candy.' Then you said 'candy, dragon.' Then the person after you said "Candy, dragon, car." Then the person after him said "candy, dragon, car, apple." Well, you get the idea. That was the memory game. You could use a similar strategy in Table Topics. This method has worked well for me a few times. If you are the fifth speaker in a meeting, then you create a story linking all the topics presented before your topic and make that your speech. This strategy obviously works best when you

are one of the last speakers in the Table Topics session.

10 The Segue: Table Topics are not carved in stone. You may be called upon to speak about a subject you do not wish to talk about. Then use "the Segue." It can be a subtle shift from the presented topic. It could also be a blatant statement, such as, "I don't have an opinion on the war with Iraq, but let me tell you what happened at my workplace today."

I have often seen several master speakers use this technique very effectively. This way you can speak about any subject of your choosing. Be careful not to make this a habit. Remember that one of the main goals of the Table Topics session is to get you thinking quickly on the subject that you are presented with.

11 The Roast: Sometimes you could use a topic you are presented with to make good-natured fun of one or more of the members of your club. If a topic is frivolous enough, the Table Topics master himself could be a potential victim. I must caution you that you must use this strategy only if the target of your roast is a close friend or acquaintance (with a sense of humor). Poking fun at someone you do not know well may have disastrous results. On the other hand, if used cautiously, roasting could win you a lot of applause.

There is no single silver bullet to handle a Table Topic. There will still be times when you will be baffled speechless with a challenging topic. Nevertheless, you can have a much better strike rate with Table Topics using some of the strategies outlined here and creating a few of your own.

It's your turn now. Speak up! This is your time to dazzle. **T**

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Are You

Extrovert

How both types benefit from Toastmasters.

Are you an extrovert or an introvert? Perhaps you are a 'shy extrovert'? Whichever term most closely applies to you, there are several ways you can learn from and contribute to the learning atmosphere within your Toastmasters club. Before I describe those opportunities, I would like to define the three terms above (which are often misunderstood and mistakenly applied, even when people are talking about themselves.)

What is the difference between an introvert and an extrovert? How can someone be a 'shy extrovert'?

According to Carl Jung, a noted psychoanalyst who developed extensive theories of introversion and extroversion during the early 1900s, an introvert is someone who draws her energy from within (from solitary thought and exploration of 'gut feelings') while an extrovert draws energy from his surroundings (by tuning in to the people, physical details and sensations of the external world). Most people are neither complete hermits nor compulsive social butterflies; they fall somewhere between the two extremes and comfortably adjust their behavior to accommodate both solitary and group situations.

Since most of us are making these adjustments throughout the day, it is not always easy to determine a person's preferred mode. One personality type that is frequently misunderstood is the "shy extrovert" – someone

You an

Introvert?

By Shelia Spencer, DTM

who has a strong desire to participate in social activities but is held back by self-consciousness and lack of confidence in his or her communication skills. If this person actively pursues more communication skills, increased confidence will make it easier for them to feel and behave like a “natural” extrovert.

How do I know whether I am an introvert or an extrovert?

You may already have a strong assumption of where you fall on the introvert/extrovert continuum, but you can also test yourself using a variety of assessment tools (usually designed to correlate with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). One test is available at www.humanmetrics.com. Request the free “Jung Typology Test,” which consists of 72 brief questions. It will provide you with a percentile scoring for introversion/extroversion and three other key personality traits.

An even simpler way to determine whether you are more naturally inclined toward introversion or extroversion is to ask yourself: “Do I feel more refreshed and contented during moments of quiet solitude or when interacting with people?” While it is true that no man is an island, an introvert is usually a happy peninsula, while an extrovert prefers to surround himself by land on all sides.

So now that I know, what am I supposed to do about it?

Well, even though an introvert and an extrovert can't exchange personality traits, they both have a potential to learn behaviors that help them function successfully in each others' worlds. It is possible for a true introvert to behave in an extroverted way by attending a social event and voluntarily performing a highly visible role.

“While it is true that no man is an island, an introvert is usually a happy peninsula, while an extrovert prefers to surround himself by land on all sides.”



It can be a wise move for introverts to push themselves to step forward and attend more social functions, take on responsibilities that involve interacting with other people, and develop stronger interpersonal skills. This allows them to develop ease and finesse in addressing the activities of a broader social life, and usually helps their careers as well.

Extroverts may think they already possess all the social skills they need, but they still can benefit from developing some introverted strengths. Extroversion is very much a part of the American image, but it is not always encouraged in other parts of the world. Many cultures place a high value on the 'introverted' concepts of moderation, reflection, humility, tolerance and restraint. When interacting within these societies, an American extrovert does well to 'tone down' his naturally exuberant demeanor and adapt to the social behaviors of those around him.

It is wise for an extrovert to occasionally step back from his busy social life and learn to meditate or pursue a serene, solitary hobby such as gardening. These activities encourage the development of some healthy introverted behaviors (such as the ability to focus deeply, observe closely, reflect before taking action and maintain a feeling of inner peace and contentment, whether alone or in a crowd).

Why introverts benefit from Toastmasters.

Introverts are usually more comfortable writing their ideas and thoughts than they are expressing them aloud. Writing permits them to polish and refine until they feel comfortable with what they want to share. However, the world is usually impatient and wants answers right away.

Introverts need help and support in getting up to speed with the flow of conversation around them. Lunchtime chats in the company cafeteria don't always give introverts an opportunity to develop communication skills. Since no one is structuring the interaction, extroverts usually set the pace, while introverts are likely to remain passive observers.

However, the structure of a Toastmasters meeting assures that each participant gets a turn to speak (without being interrupted), and encourages them in this effort. Participating in Toastmasters meetings (especially in Table Topics) is a great way to strengthen the ability to 'think on your feet' and voice your thoughts. It provides introverts with an opportunity to develop these practical life skills.

How "shy extroverts" benefit from Toastmasters.

Shy extroverts are eager to find a way to overcome their feelings of isolation. When they seek out Toastmasters meetings, they hope to develop the confidence that allows them to pursue their dreams. Often they are motivated by the desire to gain more recognition and responsibility at work or in their community.

Smiles and applause from the audience are enormously encouraging for shy club members. Even more valuable is structured feedback that recognizes and develops their skill

and confidence. When these members become assured of their communication abilities, they develop a confidence that can easily extend to pursuits outside of Toastmasters. Then they can truly contribute to the world as they hope to do.

Even natural extroverts benefit from Toastmasters.

Effective public speaking is not only about having confidence. When providing constructive feedback, our speech evaluators don't just look for an assured delivery; they focus on organization, purpose and clarity of thoughts. Extroverts who have no trouble speaking up will learn how to think before they speak (something introverts already do on a regular basis!)

Extroverts benefit by developing more self-discipline in preparing their presentations. Whenever they serve as a meeting facilitator, they also learn to be more observant of other speakers, formulate insightful feedback and focus a positive spotlight on someone else. Rather than keeping their feet planted on center stage, they learn how to function as part of the ensemble of Toastmasters meeting participants. When they focus on both giving and receiving, they gain a deeper appreciation of the communication process.

What introverted or extroverted benefits are you bringing to your Toastmasters meetings?

Introverts who enter the Toastmasters meeting room for the first time are active observers; they are keenly interested in seeing what the meetings are all about, but they will not rush to volunteer for Table Topics. After they leave the meeting, they may spend a lot of time pondering what they saw, and if they perceive value in the meeting activities, they will return, determined to develop the skills they observed in others.

One of the greatest assets of an introverted new member is attentiveness. The positions of timer or grammarian are excellent ways for this personality type to immediately participate in facilitating a meeting while taking time to develop a comfort level that will enable him to volunteer for more visible roles.

As an introverted member continues to focus on observing and processing what he sees, he has the capacity to develop into a skilled evaluator, capable of not only perceiving the complexity of a speech but also providing well-formulated, tactful and inspirational feedback. If you are an introvert, realize that your club will greatly appreciate your participation in roles that draw on your powers of concentration and your clarity of expression. Your manual speech assignments will be enriched by your dedication to accuracy and to providing meaningful food for thought; your audiences will appreciate and remember the insight you shared with them.

An extrovert attending her first Toastmasters meeting may not even pay full attention to the Table Topics question but will eagerly step up and chatter away at the lectern. What a delight it is to watch her embrace the joy of speaking! Even

if she doesn't reach a clear conclusion (and may go over-time), she adds energy and lightheartedness to the meeting with her unexpected, uninhibited participation.

One of the greatest assets of an extroverted new member is enthusiasm. She serves as a great example of the deep satisfaction that can be derived from sharing your thoughts and feelings with your audience. The role of "Thought for the Day", "Joke for the Day" or other brief speaking assignment will allow her to take the lectern again at the next meeting. She can infuse this supporting role with positive energy while tailoring her subject matter to fit the purpose and the timeframe established for her meeting segment

As an extroverted member continues to focus on actively participating in the meeting, she has the capacity to develop into a skilled speaker, capable of not only taking center stage but putting it to good advantage through her colorful delivery. If you are an extrovert, realize that your club will greatly appreciate your participation in roles that draw upon your high energy and your confident approach to

the topics you choose. Your manual speech assignments will be enriched by your vivid delivery and ability to entertain while informing. Your audiences will appreciate and remember the passion you shared with them.

Both introverts and extroverts benefit from seeing each others' unique approaches to speaking and other meeting roles. It quickly becomes clear that active participation by all members creates a diverse, rich and fertile learning environment where we all play a part in each others' growth and satisfaction in our shared communication experience.

To learn more about introversion and extroversion, here are three excellent books that inspired me to write this article: *Type Talk* by Otto Kroeger and Janet Thuesen, *Why Should Extroverts Make All the Money?* by Frederica J. Balzano and Marsha Boone Kelly, and *The Introvert Advantage* by Marti Olsen Laney. **T**

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Introverts and Extroverts in Leadership Roles

By Shelia Spencer, DTM

and introverts. Doupsas, a member of the club's advisory board, participated in the study and shared her own test results with the others. "The Myers-Briggs is a great starting point for any team," she says. "I use it in corporate settings to discuss different leadership styles. To get the most effective team, it is important to understand the strengths and pitfalls of each."

Discussing their test results helped individual club officers learn how to take advantage of their own traits, but also, as Doupsas points out. "As a board, we were able to relate better and understand various interpersonal issues that had come up during the term."

In the case of the Midtown club, President Jennifer Kong scored as an introvert, while her sergeant-at-arms, Michelle Collier, tested as an extrovert. How did those traits affect their performance in Toastmasters club leadership roles?

Jennifer Kong had served the club as EVP prior to being elected president and says her introverted personality created an advantage: She spent time observing the club and the roles of the various officers before taking on a leadership position. "Taking time allowed me to understand the strengths and issues, define our goals and allocate our resources," she says.

Even before the Myers-Briggs project, Kong appreciated the diversity among her fellow officers. "The Distinguished Club Plan and other club goals are best accomplished by teamwork; you want a team that consists of different kinds of personalities, thinking styles and expertise that will complement your own. I learned the strengths and weaknesses of my team very quickly and utilized them to help make our club the strongest it could be."

As sergeant-at-arms, Michelle Collier frequently chaired committees for club events, such as the anniversary party and open house, easily attracting volunteers and guests for these events. When she became club president for 2005-2006, Collier knew she would have several extrovert strengths to bring to this role, especially when opening meetings as the Officer of the Day. "I'm comfortable interacting with members and guests in a very open and outgoing manner, which helps them feel welcome and encourages their participation," she says.

Collier admits that extroversion can sometimes create a challenge, because "It's very hard for me to turn down an opportunity to help someone, or participate in something new, which can create time management issues."

Kong and Collier say the biggest advantage of being two different personality types proved to be in learning from and relying on each other. Their leadership teamwork not only earned the Midtown Club a President's Distinguished Club award for 2004-2005, it also created a positive role model for future club officers. **T**

For one of her Advanced Toastmaster projects, corporate trainer Lynn Doupsas, ATM, invited the executive committee of her Midtown Toastmasters club to participate in a Myers-Briggs study. The results verified that the club's leadership team was spread widely among the 16 different Myers-Briggs personality profiles and contained both extroverts

Want a club Web site?

Use FreeToastHost.org

No need to design your own Web site. Now all clubs can have a professional-looking site that adheres to TI's branding guidelines.

Years ago, if the officers of a Toastmasters club wanted a Web site for their club, the options were not that attractive. They could increase their membership fees to pay for a quality hosting solution or get a "free" account, which would be loaded with advertising – most likely in the form of pop-up ads, banners and/or spam (Viagra anyone?). Then, the club needed a talented Web designer to create and maintain a site that gave both the club and Toastmasters International a professional image. It's no wonder that prior to 2004, fewer than 10 percent of Toastmasters clubs had Web sites listed on the main Toastmasters site, www.toastmasters.org. Enter **FreeToastHost.org**.

FreeToastHost.org is a Web-hosting service created by a Toastmaster for all Toastmasters. It is more than just a free hosting solution; it is a pre-designed Web site with many templates (colors and designs) to choose from. **FreeToastHost.org** is a suite of online tools and applications that were created to increase membership, retain current members and streamline many of the club's administrative activities such as scheduling, communication, document sharing, education, motivation and member management.

So, you are in charge of your club's Web site. You have used the Web before but certainly do not consider yourself a "Webmaster" – maybe a "Web tenderfoot" at best. You visit <http://www.freetoasthost.org> where you read the one-page introduction about the service. You click on the "register" link and fill out a

simple form. So far so good. Shortly after, you receive an e-mail from **FreeToastHost.org** notifying you that your Web site has been created and you are ready to "customize" it to your club. The e-mail provides very clear step-by-step instructions on how to use the Web-based interface to:

- Change your default password.
- Use the graphic Web page creator to create and update the home page, membership info page, directions page and contact page.
- Use the Web-based tool to start adding your members to the member database.

Within about an hour, you have secured your new Web site, customized the pages, added all your members and realized that your Web site is ready to announce. From there, once you have access to the administration area, you are in control and the real fun begins!

FreeToastHost.org provides an online Flash-based video, administrator and user manuals, detailed FAQs and a technical support discussion forum to help clubs get the most out of their new Web sites. Here are just some of the highlights of a **FreeToastHost.org** Web site. You can:

1 Have a professional-looking Web site customized for your club in about an hour. A club Web site will make it easy for potential members to get the information and confidence they need to join, which will increase membership.

2 Create an online community for your existing members. Through the use of the discussion boards and e-mail lists, your club members can keep in touch outside of the standard club hours. Needless to say, this is vital to effective meetings.

3 Streamline your role signup procedure. Whether your club assigns roles or allows its members to sign up for roles they choose, the online "duty roster" is the ideal tool for the job. This tool provides members with the ability to sign up for roles online for upcoming meetings. The roster can easily be e-mailed to the group and printed from the Web site. By using the online duty roster you will create a history file to see how many times each member filled each role.

4 Create an online membership directory. This is ideal for members to get to know and contact other members. Members can even choose to make their name and photo public for the public "meet our members" link.

5 Create custom Web pages. In addition to the standard Web pages provided with the site, custom Web pages can be created from scratch and linked to the site's menu.

6 Download information. There is both a public and a "members-only" section for downloads. This is ideal for contest materials, group evaluation forms, timer/grammarians sheets and more. The public download area is for new-member or prospect information.

7 Plan ahead using the club calendar. This great Web-based calendar can show members and prospects all of your upcoming meetings and Toastmasters events.

8 Track both member and club goals. **FreeToastHost.org** provides two great online goal-tracking tools: one for club goals and one for member

goals. The vice president education (VPE) can update these goals on a regular basis and provide a way for the members to see the progress of the club. Members can use the member goal-tracking tool to update and monitor their own progress.

9 Create your own club FAQ. New members and prospects generally have the same questions. By creating an online FAQ (frequently asked questions), you are providing members and prospects with instant answers.

10 Streamline the mentor/mentee process. The online form allows members to sign up for

either a mentor or mentee role. These form results are sent via e-mail directly to the officer in charge of this program as specified in the admin area.

With FreeToastHost.org, your club can have a professional-looking Web site at no cost. It does not take a Webmaster to launch and maintain a **FreeToastHost.org** site, but it does take a club member who is willing to take the initiative and responsibility to keep it updated. You can be that club member and lead your club to success through increased membership, more satisfied members, and an overall more efficient club! **T**



By Sylvia Wilson, CL

How to add life and personality to your club's Web site.

Make Your Web Site Your Best PR Tool

Imagine that you have never heard of Toastmasters, but you would like to improve your speaking and presentation skills. Where would you look for information? Answer: on the Internet. For most people, the Internet has

become the most important resource for information gathering, so make your club's Web site your best PR tool. Follow these 7 steps for improving your club's Web site:

■ **Make your opening page a "selling" page.** First impressions count! Your opening page is the first impression the visitor will have of your club. Based on that first impression, they will decide in just a few seconds whether to browse the rest of your site or exit. So your opening page has to "sell" your club. Address the visitor directly by using "you." Don't focus on yourself (your Toastmasters club) but on the visitor. Make it clear why Toastmasters is relevant to them. For example: "Wish you could give better presentations? Does fear of public speaking describe you?"

■ **Give practical examples.** When mentioning the benefits of your club and of Toastmasters, avoid using vague or abstract terms, such as "communication skills," "personal growth" or "self development." Focus on practical examples, such as "improve your sales techniques," "increase your confidence in front of an audience" or "get better at job interviews." That way, people immediately know what you are talking about: They can picture a job interview better than "personal growth" or "communication."

Why not add a page of "member testimonials" to illustrate the benefits of your club? Information can include how your club helped members make new friends, gain self-confidence or get a better job. You can solicit these types of comments by asking

"How has your Toastmasters experience benefited you?" during Table Topics to get members thinking.

■ **Dispel doubts before they arise.** Have you ever listened to a salesperson and thought, "Yeah, this sounds great!" But once you've slept on it, you start having doubts and think, "But maybe..." A good salesperson dispels any doubts before they arise. Why not have a page of "objections?" Example:

Objection 1: "I am not smart enough. I don't have anything to talk about."

Reality 1: Everyone has topics to talk about. Think of all the things you talk about with your friends and colleagues.

Create a list of objections most people might have: "I don't have time," "I'll be nervous speaking before an audience," and then refute them. The University of Tennessee Toastmasters club has developed a great set of "Myths." Check it out for inspiration! (www.uttoastmasters.com)

▪ **Give your club some personality.**

Don't just vaguely talk about "we" or "our club" – tell people who you are. Create a page listing your officers with their name, photo and some personal details (profession, interests and Toastmasters-related anecdotes). Why not ask each officer to give their favorite quotation? A quotation says a lot about a person, and of course, using rhetorical devices is fitting for a speakers club. Alternatively, add pictures of your club meetings or contests, with brief comments; this adds life and personality to your Web site. Moreover, visitors will feel more inclined to come to a meeting if they feel as if they already know the people there. They will be meeting familiar faces instead of complete strangers.

▪ **Don't undersell yourself!**

Remember: Not everyone knows about Toastmasters International,

"For most people, the Internet has become the most important resource for information gathering, so make your club's Web site your best PR tool."

especially outside the United States. If you focus only on your club meetings and club members, for example, you might give the impression you are just a group of friends who meet to chat and give a few speeches. Toastmasters is much more than that, so make sure you include information about the Toastmasters educational program and awards. An easy way is to add links to this information on the Toastmasters International Web site.

▪ **"For companies."** If your club targets corporations, it is worth having a "For Companies" page. Individuals will be interested not only in improving their skills, but also in the social benefits your club offers: making new friends, being entertained

and enjoying the relaxed atmosphere at the club. So don't hesitate to market these aspects on your Web site. However, companies have a different approach: When they invest time and resources into something, they want a "return on investment." So the way you "sell" Toastmasters to companies may be different from how you market it to individuals. Having a "For Companies" page enables you to better customize your marketing focus.

▪ **Be accessible.** Make sure the information about where and when you meet is easy to find, at best on the opening page. Include a map, directions and information regarding public transportation. If guests can visit without giving prior notice, say so. Have a contact form visitors can fill out with questions and comments. Make sure these messages are sent to a member who reads these e-mails regularly. Also invite visitors to comment on the site itself. This will provide you with useful suggestions for improvement! 

Sylvia Wilson, CL, is vice president public relations and Webmaster for the Esprit de Corps club in Frankfurt, Germany.

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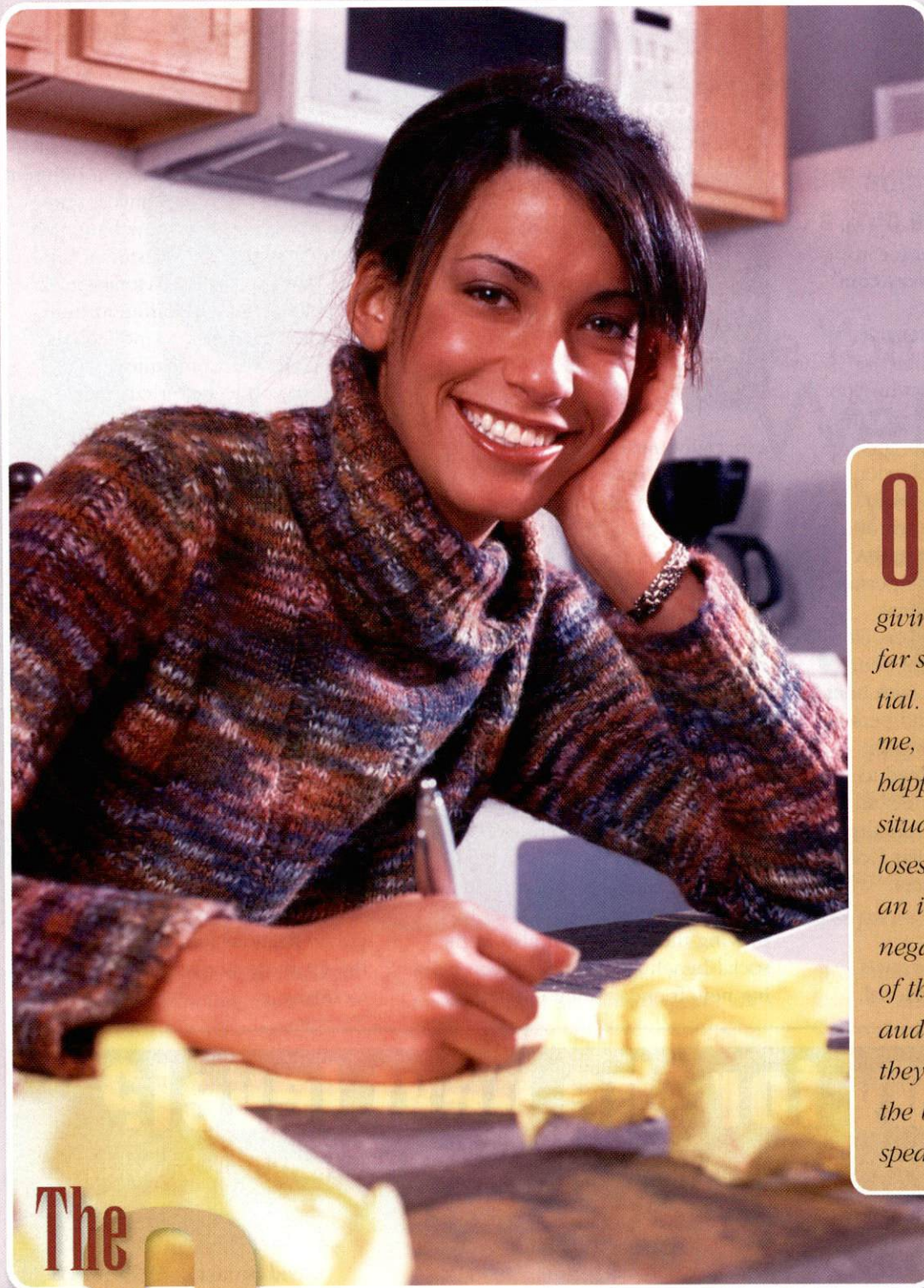
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Ask the right questions before your speech.

Over the years, I have observed many competent speakers giving speeches that fall far short of their potential. This has troubled me, because when this happens, it's a lose-lose situation. The speaker loses, because people get an inaccurate (and negative) impression of that person. And the audience loses, because they don't get to enjoy the best of what the speaker has to offer.

The

3 Biggest Speechwriting

A simple way to make your speech the best it can be is to ask yourself the right questions as you prepare the speech. For this article, I went to two first-rate speakers, who are also top speech coaches, to supplement the information I can offer you.

In my opinion, the three most important areas for most speakers to improve are:

- Having a premise that generates interest and keeps attention.
- Using a marketing message.
- Making the speech persuasive.

Get Started With the Right Premise

Patricia Fripp was the first woman president of the U.S. National Speakers Association and has won every major award in the speaking profession. She's also an in-demand speech coach.

Fripp says you need to answer these three questions before giving your speech:

- What is your premise – the proposition you're going to prove to your audience?
- When you state your premise, does it cause your audience to wonder, "How?"
- When you state your premise, does it cause your audience to wonder "Why?"

Here's an example from her own speaking career. She was giving a presentation to a group of pastors, about – of all subjects – speaking!

Speech Title: How to Design and Deliver a Charismatic Sermon

Speech Premise: Every pastor and lay preacher can deliver an even more charismatic sermon than that person already typically does.

"How" question that arises in audience member's mind:
"How can I do that?"

"Why" question that arises: In this case, the answer to the why question should be obvious. But if an audience member didn't inherently *want* to deliver even more

charismatic sermons, then the logical "why" question would be: "Why would I want to?"

I really like Fripp's starting-point questions for putting a speech together. Coming up with a premise is deceptively simple, because while the premise is simple, the process of coming up with a good one requires some thought. You need to have a premise that, right off the bat, is intrinsically interesting to your audience – and intriguing enough for people to ask "how?" and "why?" – and want to hear your answers!

(The one thing that will alert you that your premise needs work is a steady stream of the response "Who cares?" or a more polite variation of that question.)

What's Your Marketing Message?

Every speech has a marketing message. But most are so weak or poorly articulated that you barely notice them.

Your marketing message is simply an appealing request to your audience to take some kind of action, along with one or more convincing reasons that acting on your request is a good idea. Many people recoil at the thought of including a marketing message in their presentations. They say, "I'm not marketing anything! Why would I want to ask people to take action?"

Let me challenge that assumption. You may not be promoting a business or selling a commercial product, but you should be selling an *idea*. Otherwise, you're merely presenting a book report – an objective, uninspiring recitation of facts. If you are not marketing, you don't have a point of view and don't take a stand. Ultimately, the unspoken message to the audience with a presentation like that is, "I don't really care about my topic, or about you. I'm just presenting information to you because I had to give a speech."

Let's try adding a marketing message in a decidedly non-commercial topic and see what happens.

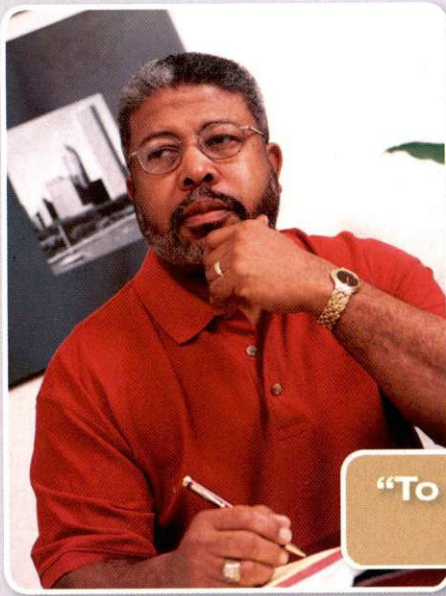
Topic: Everything you do affects our environment.

Questions:

- What action am I asking my audience to take?
- How can I make my request memorable?
- Why should audience members take the action I am requesting?

Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

By David Garfinkel



By working through these questions, you will have a much better speech. The action you could request (question 1) is to notice every time you are about to litter, and stop yourself before you do.

“An exceptional example is a speech I saw Alex Mandossian (a marketing expert) give,” he said. “He starts out by setting the stage with a strong emotional pull, and then launches right into a story that pulls you in emotionally.”

“Then, he immediately gets the audience involved by having everyone turn to a partner for a quick brainstorm, and have each person write something on a fill-in-the-blank form to keep them moving down a logical path.”

What about getting people to pre-commit to taking action?

“To give a truly compelling speech, you need to add a strong persuasive dimension.”

Answer to question 2: If you were giving this speech in the U.S., you could do a little research and discover that former Alabama schoolteacher Pat Mitchell, who goes by the name of “Auntie Litter,” says that in America, the cost of picking up litter each year has risen to nearly \$500 million. (That’s pretty memorable.) As for a convincing reason (question 3), you could simply ask audience members how proud they are to be part of a \$500 million problem!

To be sure, you’re not going to solve a national littering problem with one speech! But you could have an impact on your community, and who knows – your fellow Toastmasters might even become more conscientious about cleaning up after themselves at the club meeting.

Add Persuasive Power

Good structure, content and marketing message are important, but they really aren’t enough. To give a truly compelling speech, you need to add a strong persuasive dimension.

Speaker and speech coach Dave Lakhani, author of *Persuasion: The Art of Getting What You Want*, says to ask yourself five questions to supercharge the persuasive power of your speech:

- Have I created a powerful emotional hook that pulls people deeply into my opening story and engages them not only with the story, but with me?
- Have I asked the audience to take one or two physical actions that get them doing something related to my talk?
- Does my speech lead people down a path toward the only logical conclusion – which happens to be the one I want them to draw?
- Where in my speech do I ask people to “pre-commit” to take action?
- Do I have a strong call to action that is well thought-out and relevant to my audience?

I asked Lakhani if he could point to someone who embodies all five characteristics.

“Alex does that by asking powerful questions that get people to admit what they really want, and then getting them to agree that the best way to get that outcome is to take a defined action,” he said. “Finally, when they are committed, he demonstrates how a small percentage of the people who are really willing to commit to their success can in fact get the training and skills they need at a discounted price – which he names – by joining him outside the room.”

Dave Lakhani is a Toastmaster in Boise, Idaho. He says a common habit of struggling speakers is to only apply techniques they “like,” rather than “the complete recipe.”

“If you miss any of these steps, you lose your audience along the way,” he says. “Even if they politely pay attention, they are emotionally disengaged and very unlikely to take action.”

My Invitation to You

Like Fripp and Lakhani, I am a persuasion professional, so I know that at this point in the article, it’s time for me to invite you to take action.

Let me encourage you to answer Level 1 (premise) questions before every speech. If you want to get people to take a specific action, answer Level 2 (marketing message) questions. And when you feel exceptionally strong about something, go ahead and answer Level 3 (persuasion) questions as well.

The better you get at answering these questions, the more people will benefit from of your speech – and the more speeches you will get to give! **T**

David Garfinkel is co-author of *The New Art of Public Speaking*, available in bookstores and online at www.newartofpublicspeaking.com. He consults with businesses on effective persuasion in spoken and written messages. You can contact him at david@newartofpublicspeaking.com.

I Did It Anyway

By Kathleen Wesselink, ATM-B

*When first I reached the meeting door, a fear stepped in and said,
"Are you sure you want to go there?" But I did it anyway.*

*I was welcomed in with open arms and immediately asked to participate –
but I said, "I'm shy, I don't know why!"*

*"No problem," I'm told, "we all began with those same fears;
we just learned to put them in the rears."*

Next I'm asked to join. Hesitating, I think, How can this be possible? But I did it anyway.

*The excitement mounts when the basic manual arrives and that first speech I must face –
putting all those fears in their proper place! And I did it anyway!*

Now the challenges did not stop there – there's a role that needs filling; Would I be willing?

*Within a short time, it seemed, an officer's position was offered to me.
Would I accept the responsibility?*

You all were so encouraging, how could I be discouraging? So I did it anyway!

That comfort zone seemed so elusive – no room for backing down or that skeptical frown.

*It's time to move on, more mountains to conquer – a speech contest,
Oh me oh my! Not I! Oh, yes, I did it anyway!*

*Our division governor, Jeff, asks, "Would you like to take my place next year?"
to which I quickly replied, "I'm not ready – please ask Freddy!"*

*What joys I've had, what fellowships enjoyed –
and those fears are what kept me employed – because,*

Now I know that the sky's the limit – no telling where I may end, all because I did it anyway!

Kathleen Wesselink, ATM-B, is a member of Eclectic Image Club 8542 in Beldenville, Wisconsin.

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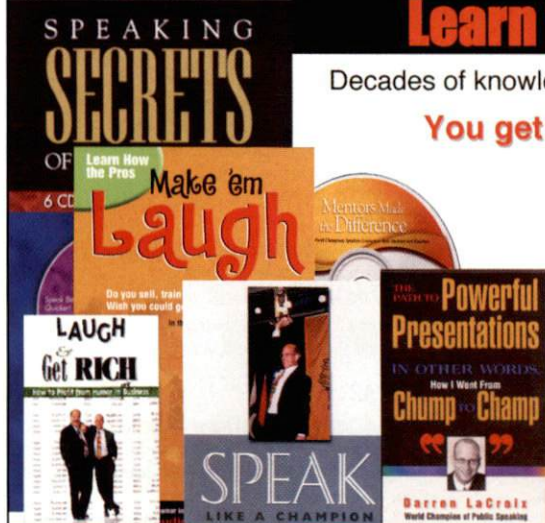
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 Raphael Eugene Quinn 6292-6, Saint Louis Park, Minnesota
 Ruth A. Halbach 851506-8, Weldon Spring, Missouri
 Christopher Merkle 9484-10, Cleveland, Ohio
 Wilbur S. Hyde 6741-11, New Haven, Indiana
 David A. Robbins 1430-14, Marietta, Georgia
 Sharon Lee Marchisello 8009-14, Atlanta, Georgia
 Victor R. Hernandez 3791-15, Magna, Utah
 Jesse L. Barber 2562-18, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland
 Pamela R. Claassen 908-21, Richmond, Canada
 Paul Anderson 3965-28, Warren, Michigan
 Elaine M. Moore 2628-33, Las Vegas, Nevada
 Jane M. Fry 4580-36, Rockville, Maryland
 Roderick J. Taylor 502-36, Rockville, Maryland
 Terry Wyatt 3437-37, Wilmington, North Carolina
 Jeffrey H. Kalbus 4695-40, Columbus, Ohio
 Paul A. Allard 788036-42, Calgary, Canada
 Paula Wilkinson 6860-44, Lubbock, Texas
 Patrice B. Ford 9440-44, Amarillo, Texas
 Carl J. Duivenvoorden 4502-45, Sussex, Canada
 Geoff Andrew 6376-51, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei
 Peter Alan Bunce 6178-52, Sherman Oaks, California
 Samuel L. Young 426-53, Springfield, Massachusetts
 Michelle A. DeDominicis 5177-53, Hartford, Connecticut
 Fred J. Haley 6482-55, Corpus Christi, Texas
 Lamanda J. Gaskins 9259-58, Columbia, South Carolina
 Doreen L. Hillier 7913-60, Waterloo, Canada
 James R. Watson 180-61, Ottawa, Canada
 Ronald A. Brown 3875-64, Kenora, Canada
 Ed J. Sykes 3267-66, Virginia Beach, Virginia
 William T. Griffin 3574-69, Toowoomba, Australia
 Ron M. Alexander 2505-70, Miranda, Australia
 Jan L. Vecchio 2618-70, Seaforth Sydney, Australia
 Sally Rippingale 585049-70, Surry Hills, Australia
 Lloyd Gayst 752498-70, Sydney, Australia
 Karen Stewart 5493-72, Hamilton, New Zealand
 Nomel I. Gilongos 8188-75, Makati, Philippines

Anniversaries

March 2006

25 YEAR

Civil Speakers 4438-F, Irvine, California
 Sundogs 4476-U, Whitehorse, Canada

Bellingham Evening 4470-2, Bellingham, Washington
 Sunrisers 4456-3, Tucson, Arizona
 Toastmasters of Sedona 4459-3, Sedona, Arizona
 AMYAC 4460-4, Sunnyvale, California
 Lunch Bunch 3640-9, Spokane, Washington
 Desert Empire 4440-12, Palm Desert, California
 Polk Street Speakers 4449-14, Marietta, Georgia
 Horizon 4465-14, Norcross, Georgia
 Collins Communicators 3154-19, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
 Ankeny 4477-19, Ankeny, Iowa
 The Communicators 4483-21, Victoria, Canada
 Hallmark 4467-22, Kansas City, Missouri
 Sunshine Valley 4469-26, Alamosa, Colorado
 West Suburban Speakers 2603-31, Waltham, Massachusetts
 The Success 4522-32, Fife, Washington
 Empire 4461-37, Winston Salem, North Carolina
 Toms River 4471-38, Toms River, New Jersey
 Hi-Liners 4457-39, Sacramento, California
 Wild Oats 2849-42, Regina, Canada
 Harris Semicons 2002-47, Palm Bay, Florida
 Richardson Icebreakers 4446-50, Dallas, Texas
 Advanced Communicators 4472-58, Greenville, South Carolina
 Goodyear 4447-60, Etobicoke, Canada
 Gateway 3138-69, Sarina, Australia
 Bray 4488-71, Bray, Ireland

20 YEAR

Whole Wheat 6144-6, Saint Louis Park, Minnesota
 West Beaverton 6129-7, Beaverton, Oregon
 Toasters III 6136-11, Notre Dame, Indiana
 Quay Speakers 6155-21, North Vancouver, Canada
 Northeast Earlybirds 6130-25, Fort Worth, Texas
 Afterburners 6191-25, Fort Worth, Texas
 Champion Speakers 6143-26, Fountain, Colorado
 Downtown Discourse 6137-30, Chicago, Illinois
 South Sounders 6153-32, Olympia, Washington
 Bon Appetit 6150-33, Las Vegas, Nevada
 Univ./Wi-Stevens Point 6141-35, Stevens Point, Wisconsin
 Chippewa Valley 6173-35, Eau Claire, Wisconsin
 Capitol Hill Speakers 6124-36, Washington, District Columbia
 Charlie Badgett Memorial 6156-40, Worthington, Ohio
 Daybreakers 6131-42, Regina, Canada
 Club 13 6161-42, Regina, Canada
 Articulate 6145-44, Lubbock, Texas
 Northeastern 6167-46, Parsippany, New Jersey
 Mesquite 6142-50, Mesquite, Texas
 Salesmastery 6178-52, Sherman Oaks, California
 Telesarians 6135-57, San Ramon, California
 West Michigan Advanced 6180-62, Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Lakeshore 6186-62, Grand Haven, Michigan
 Lunch Bunch 6187-62, Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Grand Blanc Area 6188-62, Grand Blanc, Michigan
 CMA 6133-64, Winnipeg, Canada
 Gold City 6134-69, Chapters Towers, Australia
 Calen Canefields 6164-69, Calen, Australia
 Wagga Wagga 6147-70, Wagga Wagga, Australia
 Ettalong Beach War Mem 6175-70, Ettalong Beach, Australia

D. L. S. Communicators 6172-71, Waterford, Ireland
 Aichi 6121-76, Kasugai City Aichi, Japan

April 2006

70 YEAR

Golden Gate 56-4, San Francisco, California

65 YEAR

San Gabriel Valley 200-F, San Marino, California
 San Mateo 191-4, San Mateo, California
 Summit 190-10, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
 John D. Ewing Toast 188-15, Caldwell, Idaho
 Haworth-Wichita 193-22, Wichita, Kansas

60 YEAR

Wordsmiths 374-6, Saint Paul, Minnesota
 Heartland 361-22, Topeka, Kansas
 Fort Collins 375-26, Fort Collins, Colorado

55 YEAR

Antlers 725-6, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Gresham 783-7, Gresham, Oregon
 Christopher 339-14, Atlanta, Georgia
 Old Capitol 164-19, Iowa City, Iowa
 Milwaukee Metro Spkrs 945-35, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Bangor 897-45, Bangor, Maine
 Poughkeepsie 921-53, Poughkeepsie, New York

50 YEAR

Duncan 978-16, Duncan, Oklahoma
 Elkridge 2045-18, Baltimore, Maryland
 Saturday Morning 2035-37, Charlotte, North Carolina
 Downtown Business Asc. 2076-49, Honolulu, Hawaii
 Pimiteoui 2068-54, Peoria, Illinois
 Speakeasy 291-78, Great Falls, Montana
 Queen City 1967-78, Dickinson, North Dakota

45 YEAR

Stillwater 2377-6, Stillwater, Minnesota
 O'Fallon 994-8, O'Fallon, Illinois
 Miracle Mile 2283-47, Coral Gables, Florida
 Richland 2500-58, Columbia, South Carolina
 Virginia Beach 3267-66, Virginia Beach, Virginia

40 YEAR

Greater Bossier 2251-50, Bossier City, Louisiana
 Exec TM 3622-52, Glendale, California
 Calliope Club 3510-59, Orleans, France
 Blacksburg 3351-66, Blacksburg, Virginia
 Newcastle 1121-70, Mayfield, Australia

35 YEAR

Carlsbad-Oceanside 47-5, Oceanside, California
 Thrill Speakers 871-26, Denver, Colorado
 Troy Toastmasters 2357-28, Troy, Michigan
 Great Eastern 3879-28, Toledo, Ohio
 Whaling City 1172-31, New Bedford, Massachusetts

Triple-Crown 176-36, Bowie, Maryland
Main 3519-69, Brisbane, Australia
Oamaru 1821-72, Oamaru, New Zealand

30 YEAR

Horace Mann 817-8, Springfield, Illinois
South Suburban 1399-26, Littleton, Colorado
Sunrise Center 3359-39, Citrus Heights, California
Power Speakers 3650-42, Edmonton, Canada
Osceola 1841-47, Kissimmee, Florida
Meridian 1220-60, Toronto, Canada
Trillium 3419-60, Mississauga, Canada
Wairoa 3047-72, Wairoa, New Zealand
Sandgroper 3432-73, Duncraig, Washington

25 YEAR

Agape 4489-1, Culver City, California
Columbia 4492-8, Columbia, Missouri
Las Cruces 4509-23, Las Cruces, New Mexico
Fostoria 4514-28, Fostoria, Ohio
EPA 4501-30, Chicago, Illinois
Paul Revere 4495-31, Worcester, Massachusetts
GEICO 4493-36, Chevy Chase, Maryland
Prairie West 4508-42, Kindersley, Canada
Henry Hudson 4507-53, Walden, New York
Downtown Charleston 4513-58, Charleston, South Carolina
Transformers 4500-74, Johannesburg, South Africa
Cagayan De Oro 4494-75, Cagayan De Oro, Philippines
Sultan 4503-75, Quezon City, Philippines

20 YEAR

Transtasters 3548-7, Salem, Oregon
Clackamas Stepping Stones 3697-7, Milwaukie, Oregon

Bluegrass Masters 6208-11, Louisville, Kentucky
Aristochats 4670-33, Las Vegas, Nevada
Arena Y Mar 446-34, Veracruz, Mexico
Early Riser 4496-43, Little Rock, Arizona
Rutland Area 6205-45, Rutland, Vermont
Articulators 6193-47, Longwood, Florida
Astrodome Area 244-56, Houston, Texas
Two Notch 6203-58, Columbia, South Carolina
Music City 3982-63, Nashville, Tennessee
Gympie Goal-Diggers 2756-69, Gympie, Australia
St Vincents Prvte Hosp 1865-70, Darlinghurst, Australia
Ingleburn 4213-70, Ingleburn, Australia
Bright Sparks 4491-70, Sydney, Australia
Bay 6194-77, Panama City, Florida
Intergraph 6206-77, Madison, Alabama
Thundering Heard 4484-78, Fargo, North Dakota

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2001-02
Lorraine Wong Myers
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Wallmasters of Tigard Toastmasters Club 4428-0

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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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