

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

### How to Apologize with Integrity

The article "How to Apologize Like a Celebrity" by Chris Witt (May) makes me think of what some other celebrities might do or say when they do something wrong. On the topic of truth and integrity, consider these insightful quotations:

The great American humorist Mark Twain said, "Always tell the truth. That way, you don't have to remember what you said." "The Buck Stops Here" was on the desk of Harry Truman, the 33rd president of the United States. "No legacy is so rich as honesty," wrote William Shakespeare. Oprah Winfrey once said, "Truth allows you to live with integrity. Everything you do and say shows the world who you really are. Let it be the Truth."

To me, the right way to say, "I'm sorry" is simple: 1. Sincerely apologize; 2. Tell the truth; 3. Learn from your wrongdoing; and 4. Move on.

Ching-Sung Chin, CTM • GEICO Toastmasters  
Chevy Chase, Maryland

### Talking About Family

Neil Chethik's article, "For Fathers: How to Communicate With Your Son" (June), was wonderful. For me, the timing was as fitting as could be.

My father passed away a decade ago and I have had some issues that I was not able to resolve before he died. But in recent years I have been better about some things surrounding our relationship. Last night I spoke as candidly as I have in some time with my father's only sibling, my aunt. She announced to me that she has primary progressive aphasia, and it is likely that by this time next year she will not be able to communicate with me at all.

Building upon this article and my conversation with her, I plan to learn what I can from her before the

chance passes forever. Thank you for the article. I will be forwarding it to others.

Alan Gurwitz • Community Toastmasters club  
Muskegon, Michigan

### Tell Him You're Proud of Him

What a great article by Neil Chethik ("For Fathers: How to Communicate With Your Son," (June). I immediately identified with the power in telling your son, "I'm proud of you." I am not yet a father, but I know how those four words can make me feel 10 feet tall and bulletproof!

I also loved the comment about how fathers and sons tend to talk easier side by side vs. face to face. I tend to engage face to face with my father, but it never goes as well as when we are side by side – watching a game, fishing or sitting at the bar. Rather than fighting it, I have learned to embrace it.

Thanks for the insight!

Ryan Jenkins, CC • Peachtree Toastmasters • Atlanta, Georgia

### Motives and Motivation

William H. Stevenson's article "History's Most Important Speeches" (May) was a revelation to me. Stevenson profiles the memorable oratory of such legends as Mahatma Gandhi, Susan B. Anthony, John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela. Each speech was about "an idea or an ideal such as democracy, justice or freedom." This vivid article caused me to question the often-used format of a particular Toastmasters speech: the motivational speech, in which the speaker describes overcoming personal adversity, and then urges the audience to do the same as a means of attaining success in life.

In the world of professional public speaking, this type of speech is most often used in a corporate setting, to stimulate employees to

work harder and increase company profits. What a contrast this purpose is to that of the great speeches of history – many of which have changed the world as the result of a call for justice. How many motivational speeches advocating personal success have stood the test of time and are included in history books?

Steven Montgomery • Metro New York Toastmasters  
New York City, New York

### A Round of Applause

I am not typically a letter-to-the-editor-kind-of-guy, but the quality and selection of the articles in May's *Toastmaster* demanded applause. I usually find interest in 20 percent of the articles, but this month found most an absolute delight.

Thanks to your crew.

Greg Pittenger • Dripping Springs Toastmasters • Driftwood, Texas

### Seriously, Though...

I just read Mr. Harrison's article "Turning the Tables on Table Topics" (February) in which he does a wonderful and clever job of telling us how to avoid answering Table Topics questions. In many clubs I see his advice being used again and again, which leads me to wonder if perhaps Table Topics has outlived its usefulness.

When I joined Toastmasters, Table Topics was considered an important and intentionally challenging aspect of the meetings, designed to prepare us for real-world impromptu situations. We were expected to take our questions and answer them to the best of our abilities. If, as Mr. Harrison suggests, our best approach to Table Topics is to pretend "You Came From Outer Space," then why even bother? We should either take the activity seriously or drop it entirely.

Bil Lewis, DTM • MIT Humor and Drama Club • Cambridge, Mass.