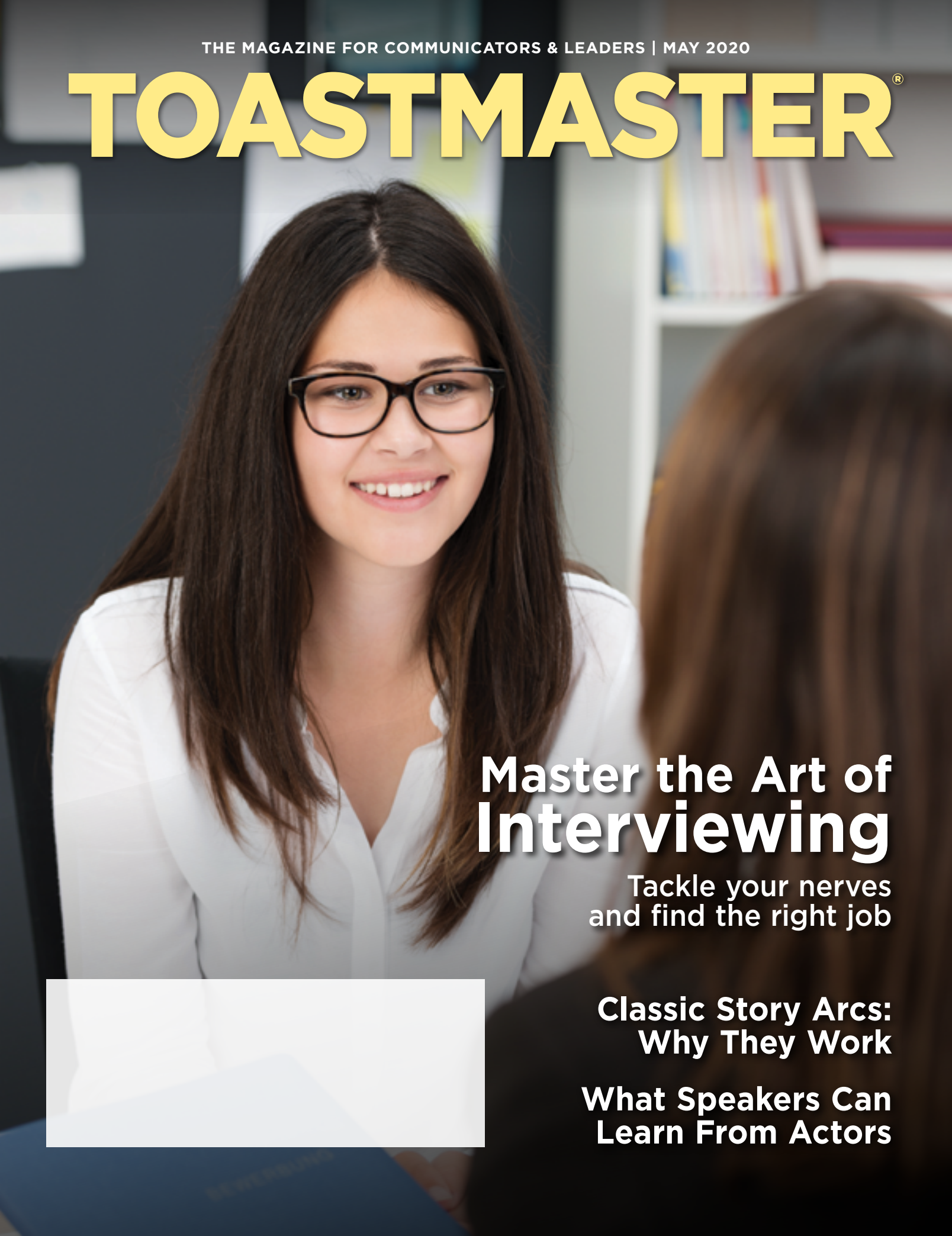
THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | MAY 2020

TOASTMASTER®



Master the Art of Interviewing

Tackle your nerves and find the right job

Classic Story Arcs: Why They Work

What Speakers Can Learn From Actors



How and Why We Thrive

President Ran Tao of the A.A.C.T.P Wuhan Toastmasters Club in Wuhan, Hubei, China, was concerned as the coronavirus epidemic spread through the city. Her first thoughts were for her club members: "We cannot stop servicing our members, even in this time. We are all in this together to face the difficulties." On February 7, 2020, in the midst of the crisis, the club successfully conducted its first online meeting and has never looked back.

Nilormi Das attended an online meeting of the Leeds City Toastmasters Club in Leeds, England, in March and found "the way people connected from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and places was beautiful."

Over the past months, this devastating pandemic has upended our personal and professional lives in countless ways. As Toastmasters, this is unsettling and isolating. We rely on one another for growth, support, and camaraderie. Communication is at our core; we thrive on it.

> Online meetings, speeches, and chats are giving us purpose and reason to smile with one another, even in this difficult time.

However, in these unprecedented times, members, clubs, and Districts have stepped up to find ways to stay connected and provide much-needed support to each other. Tales of courage, determination, and innovation abound as we tread uncharted territory.

While we are most comfortable fully engaged with in-person meetings and interaction, we are finding it is possible to thrive through our technological connections now. Online meetings, speeches, and chats are giving us purpose and reason to smile with one another, even in this difficult time.

Districts all over the world are now planning online District events and conferences for May and June. I recall my first Toastmasters conference. In September 2004, the then-Territorial Council of South Asia, including clubs in India and Sri Lanka, conducted its first conference in Bengaluru, India. I was one of the over 200 members who attended. I was mesmerized!

Meeting likeminded members from across South Asia, attending workshops and talks, participating in a speech contest, and receiving inspiration from the leadership of the Territorial Council was an exhilarating experience. I was hooked!

Toastmasters remains an exhilarating experience for me. It has always been a laboratory for experimenting and learning, and now it gives us an opportunity to become more creative as we engage online together.

Although our meeting spaces are virtual for now, rather than in-person, please keep reaching out, connecting, and supporting one another. It's how and why we thrive.

Deepak Menon, DTM
International President

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"What I found absolutely invaluable were the myriad of good ideas that various clubs had—ideas that I could take back to my own club."

—BOWMAN OLDS

An open platform for your tips, tactics, comments, and encouragement.

Parlez-vous Français?

When I was in college, I wanted to learn French, but could not do so due to procrastination, bad time management, and limited resources.

It has been rightly said "Better late than never." I have finally started learning French after 15 years. It is so much fun that I haven't missed practicing it even for a single day in the last two months. When I read the [February 2020] article "Brush Up Your French" by Carol Bausor, I related to the useful tips provided in the article. The tips (defining the objectives, spending small chunks of time to practice, etc.) are very easy to adopt, and we all can use them to learn anything new—language, instruments, and any other hobby or passion.

Shikha Nair
Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
Noida Toastmasters Club

Compelling Content

Following more than a few comments and posts on the Toastmasters International Facebook group, I felt compelled to cancel a meeting and read the latest edition of the magazine. Truth be told, I had stopped reading the magazine a few months after I became a member. I found it, for the most part, to be rather uninteresting. I was pleasantly surprised to find great content in the January 2020 edition. All of the articles had something of value to me as a member and as a Vice President Education. The feature article "In Command" by Mitch Mirkin was refreshing and inspiring. Mr. Mirkin did a great job of highlighting the achievements of Major General Laura Yeager while keeping the message about the value of Toastmasters. Thank you for including the article.

Stephanie Winn
Chattanooga, Tennessee, U.S.
Chatter Masters Club

Energy Reserve

As a classic introvert, it takes a lot of my energy to interact with people. The recovery time to recharge can be lengthy and consists of quiet time with literally no words heard or spoken. It's not that I don't like being around people, it just means that it sucks my energy quicker than perhaps it does to extroverts. With this in mind, why on earth would I join Toastmasters and subject myself to what drains me the most?

The answer is life. My job requires public speaking and interaction. My family and friends love to socialize, and I love to be with them. And finally, my voice needs to be exercised just like any other muscle.

[Through Toastmasters] I have learned techniques, such as controlled breathing, that minimize the rapid expenditure of my energy. I remind myself that the social moment is just for a short period and to enjoy it while I am there. Finally, I give myself permission to step away to regroup and rejoin the activities when I am ready. The bottom line is that leaving a little reserve in my energy tank is more comfortable and helps speed up the recovery time so that I can tap back in.

Deborah Jenkins
Sand Coulee, Montana, U.S.
Electric City Noon Toastmasters Club

New Perspective

As a therapist and new Toastmaster, I am delighted to share my observations and experiences from my first few months at Toastmasters. I am pleasantly surprised that the environment at our club is exactly the core conditions that therapy prescribes—warm, encouraging, non-judgmental, respectful, authentic—and the skills practiced are active listening, expressing, emoting, and body awareness. Little wonder that Toastmasters transforms people from the ordinary to the extraordinary as our International President, Deepak Menon, DTM, says in his February 2020 Viewpoint column.

Chitra TV
Bangalore, Karnataka, India
Kaggadasapura Toastmasters Club

Visiting Toastmasters Clubs

When I first joined Toastmasters, I belonged to a series of seven clubs in the United States and other countries.

What I found absolutely invaluable were the myriad of good ideas that various clubs had—ideas that I could take back to my own club. I was so preoccupied with visiting other clubs when I traveled that after I made my plane reservations, my checklist included looking for clubs available at my destination.

Bowman Olds
Montclair, Virginia, U.S.
Lake Ridge Toastmasters

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?
Write it in 200 words or fewer. State your name, member number, and home club. Send to **letters@toastmasters.org**. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity, and may be published in both print and online editions.

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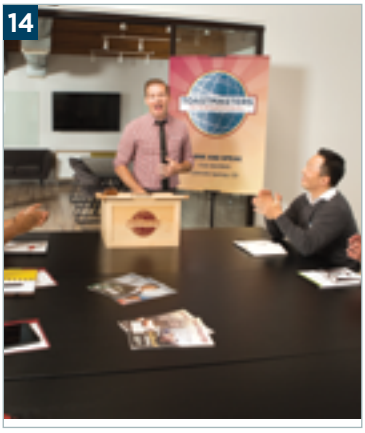
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Editor's Note: As of press time, the information contained in this issue is up to date; however, we recognize the world is rapidly changing, and situations are constantly evolving. As Toastmasters, we are working together to navigate these times. Please refer to www.toastmasters.org/COVID-19, as well as our digital magazine, www.toastmasters.org/Magazine, for more information, including valuable resources and tips for holding online meetings and staying connected. Together we will persevere.

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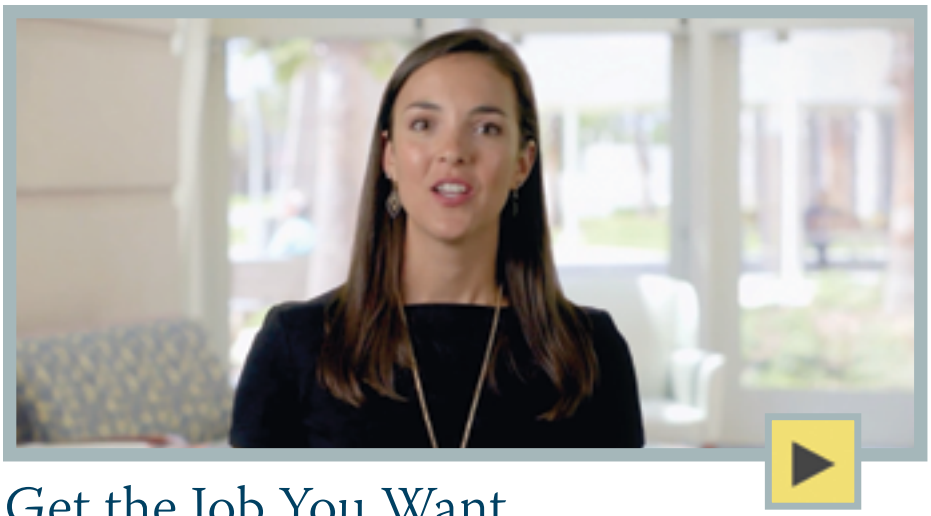
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- **View** collections of fun and interesting photos.
- **Access** valuable resources through hyperlinks.
- **Share** articles with prospective members, friends, and colleagues.



FIND MORE ONLINE THIS MONTH:



Get the Job You Want

Job interviews don't have to be daunting. With the right steps, you can find your confidence and master the art of interviewing. In this video, young professional Victoria McQuarrie gives one key tip to help you hide the nerves and give your best interview ever.



All the World's a Stage

Public speakers and theater performers captivate their audiences using powerful techniques. Watch actress Lili Wexu discuss warm-up methods and tips on sounding natural.

First Impressions

How do you grab your audience's attention? Hear from Toastmasters Toolbox author Bill Brown, DTM, as he shares techniques for opening a speech and making a good first impression.

WEB RESOURCE

Pump Up Your Toastmasters Profile

Did you know your profile on the Toastmasters International website is full of helpful tools? By logging in, you can easily manage your account information, including: your home/shipping address, magazine subscription preferences, email address, education awards, membership history, and much more. Take the time to update your profile, add a photo, and make yourself at home.

www.toastmasters.org/My-Toastmasters/Profile

This icon at the top of a page means an online extra is included with the article at **www.toastmasters.org/Magazine**.

Get social with us! Click, read, and share:

MEMBER RECOGNITION

Showcasing members, mentors, and clubs

Harry Hobbs, DTM, of Flin Flon, Manitoba, Canada, was honored by local Flin Flon Toastmasters for 50 years of service and dedication to Toastmasters International. Hobbs first joined Toastmasters in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, in 1969 and helped charter the Flin Flon club in 1977. A retired teacher and librarian, Hobbs is also a charter member of Talking Books Toastmasters, an advanced club in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.



Not long after she joined Toastmasters, **Trixie Hunter-Merrill, DTM,** of Greenwood Village, Colorado, was diagnosed with cancer. Members of her club, Eloquent Entrepreneurs Toastmasters, stepped in to help, taking her to doctor appointments and chemotherapy treatments, and helping her with meals and housework. While she thought she was in remission, Hunter-Merrill became heavily involved in her District and was a keynote speaker at two Toastmasters Leadership Institutes. Unfortunately, her cancer returned, but Eloquent Entrepreneurs was there once more, along with Spirited Speakers, DTC Speaks, I'm Just Sayin', and other members of District 26, and Hunter-Merrill was able to beat cancer again. She says, "Toastmasters has helped me reach new heights in my life I never knew I could. I think it may have even helped me beat cancer. I accomplished the goals I set out to: I earned my Distinguished Toastmaster and completed my Dynamic Leadership path! I am hoping I stay cancer free, but I know I will always be a Toastmaster!"



TALK TO US! Do you have a short story (aim for 130 words), fun photo, inspiring anecdote, or Toastmasters "Ah-Ha" moment you'd like to share? Mark your submission "Member Recognition" and email it to **submissions@toastmasters.org**.



Siddu Kappali (left) has enjoyed being mentored by **Manjunatha Hiremath,** of Hubballi, Karnataka, India, for more than two years. Kappali says Hiremath helped him through his Ice Breaker and encouraged him to take Club Treasurer and Club President roles. Kappali also says his speech writing and delivery have greatly improved due to Hiremath's direct, constructive feedback and encouragement.



Shortly after turning 87, **Gil Eakins** of Palo Alto, California, presented his Pathways Ice Breaker in the Presentation Mastery path. His speech featured life stories, including what it was like to join Toastmasters in 1997. Eakins says the organization has had a huge impact on his life by giving him the confidence and the ability to think on his feet. So he welcomed the possibilities he saw in Pathways. "I enrolled in Pathways because it offers a new challenge for me," Eakins explains. "I come to Toastmasters because it is a continuing challenge in my life and I enjoy encouraging new members to take the same Toastmasters challenge."

NEWS FROM TI

Make the Most of Your Print Magazine

The Toastmaster magazine, now in its 87th year, is a valuable resource for 97% of members, according to a 2019 survey conducted by the Research Team at World Headquarters. But what if you receive additional copies each month as a dual member? What do you do with them when you're finished reading? One way to use those extra magazines is to help bring new members into your club. Here are some suggestions:

- Take your additional magazines to your club meeting and distribute to guests or put them in a guest packet.
- Display them at your next open house or demonstration meeting.
- Drop them off at a library, hospital, or doctor's office waiting room. Be sure to ask for permission first.
- Donate your magazines to a local school or college's speech, communications, or journalism department.
- Arrange to ship extra magazines to an address of your choice. This can be done through your profile on the Toastmasters website.
- When leaving magazines behind, remember to cover your mailing address with a label indicating your club's contact and meeting information.

Resource Refresh

Are you ready to make your club's materials stand out? Toastmasters International has recently refreshed some of its branded resources. You can now download and use the revitalized meeting agendas, letterhead, email signature, table tents, and newsletter templates. They all come in navy and burgundy, and both A4 and letter size. Visit the Resource Library at www.toastmasters.org/Resource-Library to see all the options.

Also, don't miss out on the updated email banners, now available in burgundy and navy. Use the banners to add a pop of Toastmasters-branded color to your emails. Check out the Brand Portal webpage at www.toastmasters.org/BrandPortal.

Opt Out of Print

Did you know you can update your print magazine subscription preferences? Whether you're a dual member looking to receive just one issue per month, or you prefer to read the online magazine on your computer or phone, take this opportunity to opt out of your extra print editions or go paperless! Go to www.toastmasters.org/Subscriptions and log in with your Toastmasters username and password to make your selection.

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SNAPSHOT



Members of District 105, Division I in the United Arab Emirates, show their support and love of their Division by arranging themselves in an "I" formation for this photo. District 105 comprises 13 Divisions across Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Lebanon.



1 | **BARBARA SUGAWARA** *of Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, overlooks the colorful town of Guanajuato, Mexico, which was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988.*

2 | **PATRICIA DZIFA MENSAH-LARKAI, DTM,** *of London, England, poses in front of the London Eye, Europe's tallest cantilevered observation wheel, to celebrate her 10th Toastmasters anniversary.*

3 | **AJAY KUMAR MOHAPATRA** *of Pune, Maharashtra, India, paraglides with his magazine and an instructor in Pokhara, Nepal.*

4 | **DEEPAK TEKCHANDANI** *of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, is ready to take flight with his magazine to Ras al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates.*







View additional photos in this month's Traveling *Toastmaster* photo gallery at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

PICTURE YOURSELF HERE! Do you have photos with the *Toastmaster* magazine from any of your memorable past travels? Send images 1MB or larger to **photos@toastmasters.org**. Virtual voyage!

Disaster Researcher Puts Toastmasters Skills to the Test

From training to planning, clear communication is vital.

BY ANDREA CILETTI

I have learned firsthand that Toastmasters is a driving force not only in improving public speaking skills but also in developing everyday life skills. As a disaster researcher, I know that strong communication skills are essential in sending accurate messages and fostering good partnerships.

I work for the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance in Hawaii. The center increases the readiness of civilian and military counterparts and international partners to respond globally to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Our team accomplishes this through training, planning, coordinating, research, and information sharing.

Catastrophic natural events have a high human cost. Various reports in recent years have revealed some terrifying statistics—on average, disasters affect some 350 million people every year and result in staggering losses. In the face of such chaos, clear, accurate communication with people in threatened areas and with emergency responders is crucial.

Recently I helped facilitate training exercises in civil-military disaster response operations in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. These exercises bring people from various countries and positions together to share experiences and brainstorm solutions. My role required me to present in front of large groups of people and have individual conversations with high-ranking military officers and experienced humanitarian aid professionals.

Whatever your audience, figuring out how to organize your thoughts and capture the audience's attention can be daunting. Luckily, Toastmasters has



Andrea Ciletti

helped shape my career by giving me the confidence to communicate and connect with others. I've learned how to evaluate my target audience as I write speeches, which, in turn, has affected the information I share and how I share it.

> Accurate and timely communication saves lives. The best technology cannot help if the information isn't communicated clearly.

Simply put, accurate and timely communication saves lives. For example, in November 2019, Cyclone Bulbul smashed into Bangladesh. Early warning systems and government preparedness programs prompted the evacuation of over 2 million people before the cyclone made landfall, saving countless lives. However, the best technology cannot help if the information isn't communicated clearly. It's crucial that people know not only what is happening but what they should be doing. This is true in emergency preparedness settings and in Toastmasters club speeches. In both instances, I've learned to start with a strong purpose and use factual details. I also consider how the information is organized and delivered.

While I present often, my public speaking journey is far from over. I still need a home where I can practice and build my communication skills, which is why I joined Toastmasters two years ago. I remain a member for the opportunities to grow as a leader and a communicator. I am part of this big family dedicated to self-improvement.

In her book *Dare to Lead*, Brené Brown says, "You can't get to courage without rumbling with vulnerability." Every time I give a speech in my Toastmasters club, I ask myself *why am I doing this?* But I embrace the opportunity because it's only through vulnerability and practice that we gain strength and confidence. As we move past the edges of our comfort zone, we grow. Toastmasters provides an arena where leaders are made and we rise together.

ANDREA CILETTI *is a member of Phoenix Rising Toastmasters in Kapolei, Oahu, Hawaii. She is a disaster researcher and holds a lead faculty position at the University of Phoenix.*



The Final Push

District leaders help members transition to Pathways.

BY SHAELYN BERG

The homestretch is here. There are two more months until the traditional education program ends and Pathways becomes the sole education program available to members. When July 1—the first day of the new program year—arrives, be prepared for the transition.

If you're not there yet, you can still get on track. Many District and club leaders are providing help in a variety of ways. These include giving special presentations about Pathways at club meetings, discussing Pathways at training events, appointing members to District-created Pathways leadership positions, and holding workshops to help members practice navigating Base Camp, the online gateway to the Pathways learning experience.

"As we count down to the sunset of the traditional program, it's reassuring to see most Districts providing resources and support for clubs and members transitioning to Pathways," says Michelle Alba-Lim, DTM, a Pathways leader and Oregon resident who belongs to online and online/in-person clubs in the United States, Canada, and the Philippines.

The longtime Toastmaster leads a team of seven volunteers moderating a Pathways discussion forum on Facebook. She started the forum in 2017 for Toastmasters to ask questions or express thoughts related to Pathways. Through the forum—as well as her own extensive experience with Pathways—she has learned what many Districts around the world do to help their members with the education program.

> "As we count down to the sunset of the traditional program, it's reassuring to see most Districts providing resources and support for clubs and members transitioning to Pathways."
>
> —MICHELLE ALBA-LIM, DTM

A Past District 7 Director, she cited four Districts in particular who are doing excellent work—providing leadership, resources, and even their own Pathways webpage. These include:

- District 3 in Arizona (www.aztoastmasters.org/pathways)
- District 57 in Northern California (www.d57tm.org/pathways)
- District 62 in Michigan (www.62toast.com/pathways)
- District 73 in Australia (d73.toastmasters.org.au/pathways)

PATHWAYS RESOURCES

If you have questions about Pathways and Base Camp, don't be shy about asking for help. Contact your District Program Quality Director with questions or even a fellow club member enrolled in Pathways.

Here are useful resources:

- The Pathways webpage on the Toastmasters website: **www.toastmasters.org/Pathways**.
- For general questions about Pathways or Base Camp, you can contact the Club Quality and Member Support Department at World Headquarters. Email: **membership@toastmasters.org**; phone: +1 720-439-5050, extension 402.
- For questions about Pathways projects and levels, or for navigating Base Camp, you can contact the Education Services Team at World Headquarters. Email: **educationprogram@toastmasters.org**; phone: +1 720-439-5050, extension 403.

EDUCATION AWARD DEADLINES

Members must submit their applications for awards in the traditional education program to World Headquarters by June 30, 2020, to have the credit count toward the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) in 2019-2020. For awards requiring a leadership role such as club officer, District leader, or club coach, you can submit applications before the role has been completed, beginning June 1.

During the 2020-2021 Toastmasters year, members can continue to submit applications for Advanced Leader Silver (ALS) and Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) awards in the traditional program. Work may continue through June 30, 2021, to complete an ALS, if needed. In addition, the club coach provision to earn both a club support and District leadership credit will also be extended. However, only DTM awards, whether earned through the traditional program or Pathways, will count toward DCP credit in 2020-2021.

For questions, email the Education Services Team at **education program@toastmasters.org** or call +1 720-439-5050, extension 403.

These Districts provide Pathways-related infographics, short video tutorials, and an array of other useful materials, she adds.

"More importantly, these Districts have a dedicated Pathways help desk chair, guide, or coordinator who answers questions and provides training to clubs and members."

A Custom Approach

Like the personalized learning in Pathways itself, many Districts are customizing their strategies to meet members' particular needs. District 83 Director Lynda Starr, DTM, of Morris County, New Jersey, says her District takes a hands-on approach to helping members use Base Camp. District leaders frequently travel to club meetings to conduct how-to workshops for part of the meeting—or sometimes the whole session.

"We encourage members to bring their devices, like laptops and tablets, so we can walk them through it," Starr explains. "They show us what they normally do and then we navigate them through what to actually do."

Such training helps acclimate even longtime members to the Pathways learning experience, she says. "I think it's like anything else. You have to get comfortable with it."

Some Districts have created specific resources or channels of communication. In District 82 (Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, India), Pathways leaders created groups on the WhatsApp platform (a messaging application) to connect Pathways trainers and give members a place to ask questions and get fast answers. Sateesh Kumar Subramaniam, DTM, of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, says WhatsApp is particularly popular in his country and surrounding countries, which has made it a great avenue for communication among trainers in such a large District. A special group was created just for Club Vice Presidents Education and Presidents.

"We posted tips for them to help them get used to the content," says Subramaniam. "When a club had a question, we encouraged them to post it to the entire group so all clubs could see the answer."

In fact, this channel was so effective that the District chose to maintain it for a year longer than Pathways training was required within the District. This helped it to connect with members who were more hesitant to start in Pathways.

Subramaniam noted that members' questions have primarily revolved around navigating Base Camp. (There are a number of tutorials on Base Camp that can help answer questions about topics such as evaluation forms and working in projects.)

Adapting to Change

Mark Snow, DTM, of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, says his District treated the rollout of Pathways like a change-management exercise. This involved thinking of what could go wrong and how to prevent that from happening.

"Prior planning prevents poor performance," Snow says. He was the Pathways Chief Ambassador—volunteer members selected by the Pathways development team at World Headquarters—in District 69 and helped guide the Pathways rollout there.

District 69 has seen many of its members join Pathways, though some members are still resistant, struggling with change, says Snow. For clubs with lower adoption rates, he says he and other District leaders are working directly with those members to understand their difficulties and give them the tools they need.

Just as Pathways volunteers originally helped train District leaders, now club leaders and others are working out their own ways to help each other. Snow, who has a DTM in Pathways, says he often sees Club VPEs conducting mini-education sessions in club meetings or even sitting with new members after meetings to help them get started on Base Camp.

"Pathways is now tribal knowledge. Members can help each other." T

Shaelyn Berg *worked for the Pathways development team and is now a content developer at Kaplan Professional, an education services company. She is a regular contributor to the* Toastmaster *magazine.*

What to **Expect** at Your **First Toastmasters Meeting**

Visiting a club for the first time? Get ready to connect, communicate, and clap.

BY MEGAN PRESTON MEYER

So you've decided to attend a Toastmasters meeting. Maybe a friend or colleague asked you to come along, or maybe your boss, ahem, *suggested* that you improve your presentation skills. Maybe you're launching your own business and have realized that being able to influence and persuade will win you even more clients. Whatever the reason—congratulations! You're taking the first step to improving your communication and leadership skills.

But first steps can be scary. In fact, the toughest part of the Toastmasters journey for most of us was literally that first step into the conference room, community college, or restaurant. Walking into a room full of people that you don't know, and that you know you might eventually have to speak to, publicly—the thought alone is enough to get your heart pounding, your palms sweating, and your mind racing. To free up a bit of brainpower so you can keep your fight-or-flight reflexes under control, here's a little glimpse of what you can expect.

There will be clapping. Lots of clapping. We Toastmasters applaud *everything*. When a speaker is introduced, we welcome them to the lectern. When they are finished, we thank them for their contribution. We also applaud Table Topics®, evaluations, and just about anything else that happens. The good news is, even though your hands may hurt by the end of the night, some of the applause will be for you.

That's because there will be an opportunity—even on your first visit—to participate. We won't make you walk into your first meeting and send you directly onstage (we'll let you take your coat off first), but you'll get at least two chances to speak.

The first opportunity will come right at the beginning. The Club President will open the meeting and ask you and any other guests in attendance to introduce themselves. It doesn't have to be much—maybe 30 seconds' worth. State your name, why you decided to check out Toastmasters, and how you happened to find that particular club. Done! And then we'll clap.

The Club President will make announcements and then hand the meeting over to the Toastmaster of the Day, who will lead the rest of the session. He or she will explain the agenda, introduce the speakers and evaluators, and make sure things run smoothly.

Then, the meat of the meeting. Several club members, some experienced, some just starting out, will deliver speeches they've prepared. You'll hear all sorts of different topics, from *My Summer Vacation* to *Mindfulness in Marketing*, but each speech will be crafted to fulfill specific learning objectives as laid out in Toastmasters' education program—the Pathways learning experience.

READY TO VISIT A CLUB?

- To search for clubs near you or online, visit www.toastmasters.org/Find-A-Club.
- Watch a video to see what happens at a Toastmasters club meeting: www.toastmasters.org/Membership/Club-Experience.
- Hear real Toastmasters testimonials at www.youtube.com/Toastmasters.
- Discover tips and personal stories in the *Toastmaster* magazine at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.
- For questions, contact World Headquarters at +1 720-439-5050 or email membership@toastmasters.org.
- Visit www.toastmasters.org/About for additional information on the organization.



Projects start out small, and then add in new skills, little by little, until you're communicating like a professional (or maybe you *are* a professional). In Pathways, you can choose from 11 different paths, depending on your particular goals, but each one starts with the Ice Breaker, a short speech in which you tell your new clubmates a bit about yourself. Main objective: Stand in front of the audience for four to six minutes and survive.

> You will sit down, half-mortified, half-ecstatically proud, hopefully high on the buzz of *having given your first miniature public speech*.

Back to the meeting. Each speech will be evaluated; the speech evaluator will offer constructive feedback on what the speaker did well (*Your speech was incredibly well structured*) and what they could improve upon (*Add variety by brainstorming transitions that don't start with: Fifthly, I'd like to point out…*). The rest of the evaluation team will offer feedback on every speaker—how many *ums* and *ahs* and filler words were used, how well each participant followed time limits, etc.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the session is Table Topics; this is the part that hones impromptu speaking skills, and this is where you'll get your second opportunity to participate. (You *can*, of course, opt out, but we highly recommend that you give it a try.) The Table Topicsmaster will introduce the overarching theme, and then call on people—usually, randomly—and give each participant a specific prompt.

You'll witness varying degrees of eloquence, and then it will be your turn. You will stand up and say whatever comes into your mind for at least one but not more than two minutes. And then you will sit down, half-mortified, half-ecstatically proud, hopefully high on the buzz of *having given your first miniature public speech*. And then we'll clap.

At the end of the meeting, you may be asked for your thoughts. Hopefully, you'll have been so impressed by the clockwork agenda, the brilliant members, and the inspirational atmosphere that you'll be ready to sign up on the spot. Great! The Vice President Membership will hook you up.

If you're not ready, though, don't worry—and don't give up. There are nearly 17,000 Toastmasters clubs around the world; if this one doesn't fit your groove, try another one in your area. Each club has its own unique vibe, so you'll find the one that's right for you.

Once you do, you'll settle in, deliver your Ice Breaker, and start progressing through the Pathways program. You'll ascend your chosen path, gaining confidence, eloquence, and style. You'll become an invaluable part of your club, greeting guests, and mentoring new members.

> You'll hear all sorts of different topics, from *My Summer Vacation* to *Mindfulness in Marketing*.

One evening, you'll deliver an artfully crafted, masterful speech, with a grab-your-attention hook and make-you-think arguments. Your body language will be spot-on, and you'll connect with the audience. You'll summarize succinctly, and end with a crisp, memorable close. You'll swell with pride as your final word hangs in the silence, and you'll wonder why on earth you were ever worried about going to that first Toastmasters meeting.

And then … we'll clap.

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The Anatomy of a Story

Perfect your narrative with time-tested themes.

BY JESSE SCINTO, DTM

An aspiring young singer takes the stage. As the music plays, her timid voice begins to soar. The skeptical audience quickly warms to the performance. As luck would have it, a well-known music executive is in the crowd that night. He offers to take her under his wing. She's been discovered.

If this sounds familiar, that's because it's the plot from the Academy Award-winning film *A Star is Born*—a film so popular it has been remade three times. Its appeal is rooted in the classic rags-to-riches story line, a compelling narrative that has been told for centuries in literature, music, and theater. Good stories follow familiar patterns that spark recognition in the audience, with universal themes that are inherently satisfying.

When you write a speech, how do you make it engaging? Professional speechwriters frequently note that storytelling is paramount. But they don't always say what goes into a good story.

As a lecturer in the strategic communication program at Columbia University in New York, New York, and an independent speech and presentation coach, I find that the elements seen in a strong story arc are also key to persuasive speaking. In Toastmasters, we weave stories—funny, somber, insightful, relatable—into our speeches for the same purpose: to persuade, inform, influence, or inspire.

The impact of a story begins in its bones—the basic structure that supports many varied narratives, such as the rags-to-riches story arc. As you prepare to write your next speech, use these points to perfect your narrative and become a more compelling speaker.

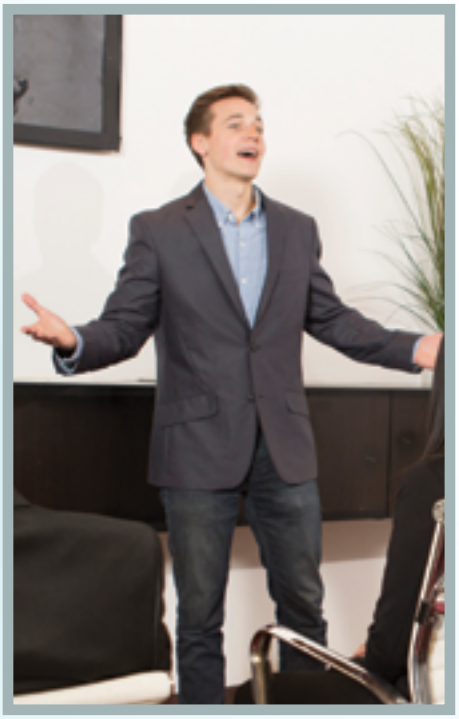
The Hero's Journey

In his groundbreaking 1949 book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, cultural anthropologist Joseph Campbell argues that the world's great myths and creation stories follow the same basic plot:

Life in the village is normal until one day an urgent problem arises—such as a menacing dragon. A hero accepts the challenge and goes on a quest to find and slay the dragon. Obstacles arise along the way, and the hero considers giving up. But in a moment of insight, the hero realizes what must be done to succeed. Our hero musters the resolve to slay the dragon and returns home triumphant, with new knowledge and experience. Order is restored.

Of course, it's not always a dragon. Sometimes the challenge is more personal or spiritual, such as a quest for self-knowledge or enlightenment. But the basic journey is there: a call to adventure, mounting difficulties, a moment of insight, climactic action, order restored.

Master storytellers use structure—or the strategic ordering of events—to propel a story forward. The underlying structure may go unnoticed by listeners or readers who are wrapped up in the







drama. But a well-structured story taps into audience expectations and stokes anticipation. It's the same for speech stories. We just have less time to get to the point—minutes, not hours.

In its most basic form, story structure involves a hero, a complication, and a resolution. And the "hero" is often you, the speaker. In addition, you should make the connection between the hero's journey and why it's relevant to the audience (more on that later).

Complication-Resolution Structure

The order in which you present the narrative—complication, then resolution—is critical, because the complication grabs the listeners' attention and makes them eager to find out what happens next. They want to learn vicariously from others' mistakes and avoid the same pitfalls—or follow the footsteps of a successful mission.

Building on the complication-resolution foundation, Hollywood screenwriter Robert McKee, an expert on structuring film scripts, explains additional elements in his book *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*. These include:

1 **Setup.** Describe the hero/main character in a life-as-usual setting. Provide a few key details to help the audience relate, but don't spend too much time here. You need to get to the action or risk losing attention.

2 **Inciting incident.** Describe the urgent problem that throws life out of balance for the hero. It can be something external, like getting a flat tire on a busy highway. Or it could be

TAKE YOUR STORIES ALONG IN PATHWAYS

The Pathways learning experience—also places a high value on storytelling in speeches. Here are a few tips from "Connect with Storytelling," an elective project available in all 11 paths in Pathways.

- **Use vivid descriptions.** Descriptive language that evokes specific imagery helps paint a mental picture for your audience. "A good storyteller's eloquent descriptions can transport [your] audience to another place and time."
- **Consider your tone.** When deciding on your story's content, be aware of the occasion and your audience. Share a story that resonates positively. "A story told at a wedding or funeral may be moving, funny, or both. The most important component in choosing your topic is relating it to the audience and the event."
- **Use expressive dialogue.** If dialogue is part of your story, share the words that are said. "Write it out in the format of a script with characters saying the lines. The best storytellers take on different roles as they tell a story."



Aaron Beverly, the 2019 World Champion of Public Speaking, shares An Unbelievable Story.

internal, like the realization that you're no longer happy in your career. The inciting incident generally comes early in the story, to hook the audience. It kicks off the journey.

3 **Progressive complications.** The hero's first attempt to "slay the dragon" may not succeed, which means they must try harder. Describe additional problems that crop up, whether external or internal (self-doubt, for example). Progressive complications hold the audience's attention, as they wonder how the hero will pull through.

4 **Insight.** Describe the breakthrough moment when the hero realizes what must be done to achieve success or to reach a new level of being. This insight informs the hero's next action.

5 **Climax and resolution.** Slay the dragon. Describe the action that finally brings the journey to an end and restores equilibrium in the hero's life.

6 **Lesson.** In a film or novel, the lesson may be left to the audience's interpretation. In a speech, we state it explicitly and relate it to the audience.

A Toastmaster's Tale

Aaron Beverly masterfully used these elements at the 2019 World Championship of Public Speaking® in his winning speech, An Unbelievable Story.

Beverly quickly set up the dramatic possibilities by reliving his experience at the wedding of dear friends, from both Indian and white families. Beverly, who noted he was the only black man at the festivities, enthusiastically donned the traditional attire for an Indian wedding (which he wore while delivering the speech).

Conflict and humor ensue as Beverly accepts the critical mission of protecting the groom's shoes from bridesmaids determined to steal them. If he failed, Beverly noted, the groom would pay a healthy ransom for his footwear.

He is certain of his success, noting over and over that he takes the mission very seriously. However, a number of obstacles are thrown his way, as the bridesmaids try many clever tricks to fool him into giving up the shoes. He manages to fend off every wily attempt until at last he is outnumbered by additional members of the wedding party, and the shoes are wrested from his grasp.

Beverly moves here into insight, resolution, and a lesson. "The context behind the game," he noted, "was really to help the families get to know one another better" and to welcome him into the culture and festivities of the day. He learned that open hearts and open cultures help us avoid the "impossible stories" that doom so many human relationships.

He asks the audience to practice "acceptance despite difference." His final call to action: "This is your mission—and I ask you to take it very seriously." Applause, cheers, championship.

Authenticity and Relevance

Core storytelling elements create even more spellbinding stories when applied to tales of personal experience—the most original content we can offer. Audiences crave first-hand accounts. They want to hear observations and insights from someone who lived through an experience. When we share openly, we show our humanity and allow the audience to identify with us.

The late Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs used these techniques in his 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, with the story of his painful yet invaluable self-discovery following being fired from the company he built. (See page 19 for an analysis.)

Unless the goal is mere entertainment, speech stories must have a purpose. Likewise, we should all be clear about our purpose and frame our stories for audience consumption. That means explicitly stating the lesson and relating it to the audience, a storytelling action that Toastmasters practice regularly, from the club to world championship levels.

I began this piece by describing a scene from *A Star Is Born* about an unknown singer who achieves success beyond her wildest dreams. My purpose? To illustrate the value of familiar patterns in stories. *A Star Is Born* is a story with wide appeal; we all want to have our talents recognized and be seen for who we are.

In your next speech, show your talent with a well-told story. Watch the audience lean in. T

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A Story Within the Story: The Ironic Twist

Many powerful personal stories include an ironic twist—an unexpected resolution that feels true to life. Listeners want to know what it's like to suffer defeat and rise from the ashes.

In his 2005 commencement speech at Stanford University, the late Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs gave a first-hand account of that twist—and how losing his company was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Here's a brief analysis of an excerpt from that speech:

SETUP – I was lucky—I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage to a $2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation—the Macintosh—a year earlier, and I had just turned 30.

INCITING INCIDENT – And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew, we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

PROGRESSIVE COMPLICATIONS – I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down—that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from [Silicon Valley].

INSIGHT – But something slowly began to dawn on me—I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love.

CLIMAX – And so I decided to start over. I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

RESOLUTION – During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, *Toy Story*, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed together at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

LESSON – I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful-tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love.

(Source: bit.ly/TI_Stanford)

What Can the **Speaker Learn** From the **Actor?**

Unleash the potential of theatrical performance.

BY ROGER HESSEL AND KAY RODE

Think of the last time you saw a live theater performance. Were you drawn into the world the actors created? Did you find yourself transported to another time or place? Actors are trained to compel and enthrall audiences. They learn to command the stage with their actions, interactions, and delivery of dialogue.

Speakers, too, must learn to command the stage and engage their audiences. That's why they can benefit by borrowing a few tricks from the actor's toolbox—from stage presence to verbal agility—in order to elevate their speeches from mundane to captivating.

As team trainers located in Germany—a country with a rich theater culture—we jointly conduct role-plays (where participants act out different roles) at two German universities. In our teaching, we draw from our own decade-long experience working in theater and as international negotiators.

When coaching fellow members at our two dynamic Toastmasters clubs in Bonn, Germany, we focus on six proven tips to help speakers turn a speech into a performance.

1 **Use a team to help you prepare.** Good actors don't merely pretend, they embody a character. For preparation, they make use of the power of imagination and are supported by a team of professionals: the playwright, stage director, fellow actors, and technicians.

Actors typically work together onstage whereas speakers are usually up there alone. But that doesn't mean you should be a "lone fighter," someone who selects speaking ideas, writes down the storyline, edits, and rehearses all alone. See what happens if you invite a few others into your process. Ask for advice from your mentor or a club member. Get some insight from a friend.

> How you say the words is as important as the words themselves.

"Require an impact check from your fellow Toastmasters," says Klaus Volker Roth, director of the D.a.S. Theater in Cologne, Germany, and member of Bonn International Toastmasters in Bonn, Germany. "Find a 'victim' for your rehearsal. Become a team player before you speak."

Actors understand they cannot excel by doing it on their own. By forming their own support team before a speech, speakers can ask for advice on questions such as "Where will I stand?" or "What can I change in my gestures and voice?" Small changes can make a huge difference in communicating your ideas.

2 **Practice stage presence.** Most professional theater actors train for years. Acting is highly physical: Hundreds of training hours are dedicated to body language, voice coaching, posture, and general fitness. Actors keep the audience on the edge of their seats via the tension of their bodies. Even when they look away, actors still connect with their audience through nonverbal communication.

Speakers can learn stage presence as well. Watch videos on effective body language or enroll in a course. Record yourself and see if your body language conveys your message. Connection with the audience is more than keeping eye contact. It is stage presence—using the expressiveness of your body, mind, and soul onstage in a manner that compels the audience's attention.

3 **Play with pace.** Next time you watch a live performance, pay attention to how the actors use vocal pauses, allowing the audience to digest what has been said. How you say the words is as important as the words themselves. Actors play with sounds and intonation. The duration and tone of the consonants and vowels allow them to add expression to the words' meaning.

Help your audience follow you. Vary your speaking pace in a way that conveys the points you are making. Don't be afraid to sometimes slow your speech when you want to emphasize points or focus the audience's attention. Don't rush with facts. Plan your gestures and words, then plan your pauses and stage movements. This will give your presentation a natural flow.

4 **Illustrate through vivid characters.** Some classical plays feature a messenger reporting to a king about a battle. The messenger portrays the dialogues among the warriors by mimicking



their voices to express their thoughts and feelings, taking care to accurately reflect their sound and look.

Likewise, speakers can bring characters in their speech to life. By changing your voice, you can capture different characters and convey different ideas. When crafting your story into your speech, your "role-play" will bring your speech to life.

"I must experience the emergence of the story so that others can experience it. Actors must have the ability to seduce themselves … You have to seduce yourself if you want to seduce the others," says Edgar Selge, an acclaimed German theater actor.

5 **Experiment playfully.** Toastmasters club meetings are a great place to try out new techniques as you turn the room into an experimental stage. What makes the message stronger or weaker? What type of speaker are you? Are you conveying your ideas in a way the audience understands?

You also need to give yourself permission to be more or less expressive when appropriate. Be aware when you are presenting in a culture where extroverted behavior is not well regarded. For example, we have worked with colleagues and delegations from China, South Korea, and Japan who tend to not express emotions outwardly in a work setting and prefer to stay professional and more subdued. Just know your audience.

> Good actors don't merely pretend, they embody a character.

Don't be afraid to evoke colorful pictures or describe certain smells. You may have to overact. You may think, *Now I am going over the top. I look stupid.* But your teammate or mentor might give you the opposite feedback, saying you conveyed the tone perfectly and made the situation clear enough for those in the last row. However, if you are an outgoing, broadcasting person, you may need to underact to bring your message across.

With a wide range of options, you have the tools to make words exciting. Find your role.

6 **Feel the words.** The ultimate test for any speech is how it sounds out loud. Does it sound like a speech or a piece of text? Practice out loud to get into the conversational flow. If you're struggling to make the words sound natural, try recording your voice first and then write the words down, rather than writing first and then speaking. Your speech may sound more natural, for we speak differently than we write. It is hard work—ask any playwright.

Do as Actors Do

Although the craft of being an actor is different from that of the speaker, theater matters for public speaking. A leading European bank trains its managers using Shakespeare comedies, because in a high-speed, ever-changing world, role-playing boosts agility, imagination, playfulness, partnership building, and humor. We perform different roles every day. The charismatic lawyer plays two roles in court, one to convince the judge and one for the client.

To really boost your skills, take a class in improvisational theater. You will develop a fluidity in your communication, build confidence, and grow step-by-step. Simply telling a story isn't enough; you have to make it playful for the joy of everybody. In his comedy "As You Like It," Shakespeare famously wrote, "All the world is a stage and all the men and women are merely players."

These six tips transfer from the actor's stage to the speaker's stage and will enhance your presentation at your club, in your community, or at work. At the end, you listen to the applause, look at the audience, and know you have performed as a professional actor. T

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Master the Art of Interviewing

Learn how to tackle your nerves and increase your chances of getting the right job.

BY JENNIFER L. BLANCK, DTM

You might be pretty good at job interviewing. You may have even searched for information on how to make yourself stand above the crowd. In today's competitive environment, that's a good start, but it's not enough.

The key to success lies in four steps you can take before your next interview. They will help you answer the tough questions better, decrease your nerves, and increase your chances of getting the right job for you. These steps aren't revolutionary; however, most people skip at least one. By completing all four, you'll be on your way to giving your strongest interview ever.

Step 1: Know Yourself

Sound simple? It might appear easy, but this first step involves critical reflection and self-awareness. In fact, this step demonstrates a key skill that employers are seeking these days: emotional intelligence (EI).

EI is often described as the ability to identify, assess, and influence one's own feelings and those of others. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2018 lists EI as a skill experiencing "an outsized increase in demand" in organizations worldwide.

How do you hone your emotional intelligence? Take the time to think about your feelings and how they drive your actions. Reflect on your true priorities. Be aware of your emotional responses—and those of others—and how your actions affect those around you. Listen attentively. EI helps you with interview preparation and every part of the job search and the job itself. Many people might call EI a "soft skill," but Paul Binkley, executive director for career and professional development for University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, calls it a "success skill."

Catherine Stace, career services manager for the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, agrees. "Employers often tell me that they don't select candidates uniquely on their technical skills," she says. "They connect performance abilities to employees who have personal and social awareness skills." Both Stace and Binkley encourage job seekers to demonstrate EI competencies to an employer throughout the interview process. They also emphasize the importance of EI for navigating increasingly global and complex work environments.

By tapping into your emotional intelligence, you can understand and articulate your values and priorities. Your values can be lofty (e.g., I want to make a difference) or very practical (e.g., I want a short commute). They can include an interest in developing specific skills, making more money, being entrepreneurial, or working on a particular issue. Once you've identified your values, you need to prioritize them. Which ones are most relevant to your job?

After values and priorities, you'll want to consider strengths and interests. Jan Fischoeder, head of career office Berlin, IUBH University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, Germany, says, "You should consider your own strengths and weaknesses and how to present them. The crucial point in conveying your weaknesses is to present them as challenges or dynamic strengths. For example, if one has a problem delegating work to team members, it's good to mention that one knows about this problem and has developed an open communication strategy to meet this challenge.



"This, in turn, makes you come across as open to learning and having a thought-through personality."

Make a list in each category: priorities, values, strengths, and interests. Focus on those relevant to your job search and, more specifically, your upcoming interview.

Using your four lists, you'll be able to develop questions for your interviewer. Questions demonstrate your knowledge of the organization. They also show you're seriously interested in the position, have taken initiative, and understand how you could fit in the organization.

This is also the time to prepare concrete examples or anecdotes that demonstrate your relevant strengths, skills, and experience. "Too many people don't know their own résumé," says Binkley. "This may seem obvious, but many don't think they need to review what they included in their application. Remembering your résumé will help you offer different examples."

This preparation is especially helpful for behavioral-based interviews, where the interviewer looks at past performance in similar situations as the most accurate predictor of future performance.

You also want to think about your salary requirements. What do you want, and what do you need? Research the field and learn what is realistic for compensation. By doing this ahead of time, you'll be more prepared to handle any surprise salary questions.

> Knowing yourself ideally happens long before you ever apply for a job. And it's probably the step that most people skip.

Fischoeder notes, "Once you know your values, you are in a much better position to present your value in terms of salary expectations." Just remember, you want to avoid discussions related to salary until you have an offer, which is when you have the most negotiating power.

Knowing yourself ideally happens long before you ever apply for a job. And it's probably the step that most people skip.

Step 2: Know the Organization and the Job

It's time to learn more about where you're potentially going. Of course, you should have conducted extensive research on the job and organization before you submitted an application. Now it's time to revisit that research.

Even if you examined it before, study the organization's website. In addition to the obvious sections, review press releases, executive summaries, and even obscure pages. Leave no link unchecked. Know the organization's mission, vision, history, accomplishments, and current projects. Study the benefits. Consider if the organization's culture aligns with your values, such as an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, professional development, remote work, or flexible schedules.



Review all of the organization's social media channels to see what it's promoting and how it's positioning itself. Follow the organization to stay informed of the latest announcements. Examine the online presence of the supervisor and team members—including social media, blogs, profiles, and interviews—to learn about their background, and search for common interests.

Examine any other information you can find about the organization, such as employee reviews on www.glassdoor.com. Talk to people in the organization or field. The more you know, the stronger answers and questions you will have at the interview and the easier it will be to determine your fit with the job and organization.

This is also the time to double-check that your online footprint is professional. Make sure your LinkedIn profile is complete, has achieved the platform's "All-Star" status, and is consistent with the overall brand you want to communicate. "Your profile needs to be flawless," says Fischoeder. "It needs to have the full information of your CV without being a complete copy of it." You also want to make sure you've turned on notifications that tell employers you're job searching.

Remove any unprofessional or embarrassing text, pictures, or posts from your online sites. Employers conduct searches to see how you're presenting yourself, and some can access password-protected platforms.

Next, revisit the job description. Know exactly which job you're interviewing for. But don't just read the announcement, study it.

TIPS FOR COLLEGE GRADUATES

For graduates interviewing for their first jobs, interviews can be especially stressful. But they don't have to be. Consider the following recommendations to give your best interview and present yourself as the candidate of choice.

Think Beyond Paid Experience

Internships or volunteer positions can demonstrate experience and interest. When discussing your skills, experiences, and accomplishments, don't hesitate to use relevant anecdotes from all facets of your life. Even classroom activities, such as group projects, can provide good examples to employers of how you can contribute.

"Paid or unpaid experience is irrelevant to me," says David Coffey, executive director of the Recovery Café, a nonprofit organization in Seattle, Washington. "What I'm listening for is do they truly care about this or are they saying what they think I want to hear, and what was the situation and how did they handle it. Someone who has been in a challenging situation and responded in a creative, dynamic way is the sort of person I want on my team."

Make Connections

Stay in touch with people at any higher education institution where you received a degree or certificate, including faculty and career development professionals. Tap into the alumni network and connect with people in organizations and fields of interest.

Use online tools, such as LinkedIn, to expand your contacts. "LinkedIn is most effective if you engage with it," says Catherine Stace, career services manager for the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She recommends joining groups and promoting relevant professional articles. If you see someone sharing articles that align with your interests, thank them for the information, seek their advice, or comment on their posts.

Even with all the technology and online tools, it's still important to make a personal connection. "Online tools will help you find the door, but your communication skills will help you get your foot into that door," says Stace.

Employ Active Listening

An important emotional intelligence (EI) competency to use during a job search is active listening. Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal communication throughout the interview. Don't just focus on the questions being asked. What is the tone, and how is the interviewer responding to your answers? "Many people are thinking about what they're going to say next, but then they're not really listening," says Paul Binkley, executive director for career and professional development for University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. EI is also about adapting, so if you're picking up negative cues, adjust your approach and get the interview back on track.

Katharine S. Brooks, executive director of the Career Center at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, recommends, "When you read the job description, note the characteristics or skills the employer is seeking and then match yourself to them. Be ready to tell stories that illustrate your skills—don't just tell an employer that, 'yes, I am a hard worker.' Instead, explain how you're a hard worker, as in, 'I noticed that your job description mentioned the hard work involved in this position. You might be interested to know that last year I worked on three projects simultaneously while also …' or any story that illustrates how/why you have the skills or knowledge the employer is seeking." Have two or three anecdotes for each skill or experience sought.

At this point, you should develop additional questions. Beyond the standard interviewing questions you have, what do you want or need to know about this position or organization? Write the questions down and take them to the interview. An interview can be stressful, so don't assume you'll remember all the questions you have.

In the corner of the page in small print, make a concise list of the key items about yourself that you want to mention. You can refer to this throughout the interview to ensure you've covered all you have to offer.

Step 3: Practice

Now it's time to practice. Interview styles and protocol vary worldwide. Stace, the McGill University expert, recommends conducting a regional analysis to understand cultural verbal and nonverbal norms. "In North America, we emphasize eye contact during an interview, but there are countries where direct sustained eye contact is not in their custom," she says.

Next, review typical interview questions and anticipate questions related to the job description. Just like Table Topics®, make sure you answer thoroughly but concisely. Focus on questions that challenge you. Research and try the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) or CCAR (Challenge, Context, Action, Result) techniques, especially for behavioral-based questions. "What we see now are more problem-solving interviews that include



situational questions, judgment calls, and case interviews," says Stace. Practicing with questions from different interview systems can help you add more clarity and depth to your answers.

As you practice, always answer in the most relevant way. (Of course, do this in the real interview too.) Don't share a fact, such as where you grew up, unless it matters. Brooks notes, "It's great to know your strengths generally, but you need to articulate them in a manner that speaks to the position and the organization. Bringing up strengths that aren't needed for the position will indicate you haven't done the research and don't understand the position."

If you can, demonstrate knowledge of the organization by paralleling what you've done and inserting examples of projects or approaches similar to what the organization is doing. Be concrete, positive, and naturally enthusiastic. Take a moment to think about your answers. And don't forget to smile.

It's important to practice out loud. "If you're a student, visit your career center for a mock interview," says Stace. "If you're not a student, there are many community organizations that offer interview skills workshops and practice sessions. If all else fails, ask a friend to find someone you don't know to conduct a mock interview."

Of course, your Toastmasters club meeting is also a perfect place to practice. Arrange a Table Topics session dedicated to interview questions or videotape yourself practicing with fellow Toastmasters. If you're interviewing via a web-based video platform, such as Skype or Zoom, practice with it. This will ensure you can use the system properly and understand what will appear onscreen, so you can prepare the most professional presentation not only by what you say but what is visible to the camera.

With video and other online-based interviewing becoming more popular with employers, it's important to practice with technology. "There's an interesting trend that involves the interviewee logging into a site," says Binkley. "Questions appear, and you're recorded giving your answers. No one talks to you. It's harder than a regular video interview."

Be concrete, positive, and naturally enthusiastic.

Today, employers are often using web-based platforms to interview candidates. "Everything has to be equal," says Binkley, "so even if there's someone in town, if others aren't local, employers are interviewing everyone using the same technology to avoid giving anyone an advantage."

Fortunately, there are also platforms like InterviewStream that allow you to record and play back practice sessions. There are applications that incorporate a timing bar or assess your posture, eye contact, smile, and number of fillers. Some systems offer the opportunity to talk to a coach. Or you can send the video to someone for critique and feedback.

Don't worry about memorizing answers word for word. Instead, work to reach a comfort level. You might be asked a tough question—one you never anticipated—but your research and practice will make it easier to handle.

Step 4: Make the Right Impression

Unless you're told differently, dress in standard business attire. Look polished. Bring extra copies of your résumé and, if applicable, samples of your work. Don't forget your sheet of questions, with the list of items you want to share about yourself.

Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your interview. Any earlier might be an imposition. You can arrive earlier to the general area, as long as you don't go into the office. Arriving extra early can help you regain composure if you've had a stressful day or travel experience. Visit a nearby restroom to put that final polish on your appearance. For video interviews, log on at least 10 to 15 minutes beforehand to ensure you won't be surprised by a last-minute software update or technology glitch.

Now you're ready. Take the time to go through each of these four steps and you will find yourself giving your best interview ever! T

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Toastmasters and Rotary **Team Up**

Both organizations tout benefits of teaming up to broaden members' opportunities.

BY PAUL STERMAN

Collaboration has always been a hallmark of the Toastmasters program: members helping each other through feedback, mentoring, and leadership-building. Now Toastmasters International itself is collaborating with another prestigious organization: Rotary International.

The Toastmasters-Rotary alliance, announced earlier this year, leverages the strengths of both organizations to help members grow personally and professionally. Toastmasters helps empower people to become better communicators and leaders. Rotary is dedicated to humanitarian service, aiding others through fighting disease, promoting peace, and supporting education and health efforts.

"Both of our organizations have a track record of transforming lives, though in very different ways," says Deepak Menon, DTM, Toastmasters' 2019–2020 International President. "When we put our two organizations together, we can make an even bigger impact on the world."

Toastmasters will deliver eight educational courses to Rotary in a phased rollout this year. Tailored to members of Rotary and Rotaract—a membership type for young adults—the courses will include speech assignments and peer evaluation, helping Rotary members develop and hone their leadership and communication skills.

Toastmasters members, in turn, can benefit from connecting with Rotarians —1.2 million members and nearly 200,000 Rotaractors in almost every country in the world. Through Rotary, they can gain more opportunities to strengthen their communication skills, expand their networks, and positively impact their communities, adds Menon of New Delhi, India.

Some Toastmasters and Rotary members have already teamed up in Toastmasters clubs founded by Rotarians. Rotary members say they benefit greatly from their Toastmasters involvement, pointing to the improvement in their communication and leadership skills—important attributes for members advocating for humanitarian causes. Rotary's motto is "Service Above Self."

"It's service, but if you don't have communication skills and know how to work with people, it doesn't work, and Toastmasters is key to that," says Neal Marsh, DTM, a longtime member of both organizations and a founding member of a Toastmasters club in Poughkeepsie, New York.

Toastmasters members say they are inspired by Rotary and its commitment to social issues. "There is a sense of camaraderie that permeates their attitude of 'being of service,'" says Linda Farley, DTM, District 53 Director. "They share the Toastmasters core values but with a Rotarian perspective."

Terry Beard, a Rotarian and founding member of a Toastmasters club in Portland, Oregon, has participated in many Rotary projects, including Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, and trips to Chile for humanitarian work. In a post published on the Rotary Voices blog, he wrote that Toastmasters helps Rotarians find their voice and "better share their Rotary story with the public."

"As we build our communication and leadership skills, we become better equipped to tackle the world's problems," he added.

The two organizations are both venerable institutions, with Rotary International founded in 1905 and Toastmasters International created nearly 20 years later. They are also built similarly—on a foundation of clubs, Districts, and regions. Their values share an emphasis on service and integrity.

Toastmasters and Rotary are urging their members to welcome and learn more about each other. Members are encouraged to invite each other to meetings, either as guests or featured speakers. Rotary International President Mark Daniel Maloney, of Decatur, Alabama, says members are also encouraged to hold an open house to meet and collaborate, as well as to participate in different club activities, such as a service project or public-speaking workshop.

"At Rotary, our vision statement says that we not only strive to make lasting change in communities around the world, but also *within ourselves*," notes Maloney. "Working with Toastmasters is an exciting opportunity to reflect inward and find new ways to grow."

How can you support the Toastmasters-Rotary alliance?

- Welcome a Rotary member to visit your Toastmasters club.
- Invite a Rotary member to be a guest speaker at your club.
- Consider opportunities to hold a joint Toastmasters/Rotary meeting.
- Learn more about Rotary International and visit a local Rotary or Rotaract club.

Learn more about the Toastmasters-Rotary alliance: **www.toastmasters.org/Rotary**

Find additional resources: **www.toastmasters.org/Rotary-Resources**

Read about Toastmasters clubs started by members of Rotary: **www.toastmasters.org/Toastmasters-and-Rotary**

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What a **Nice Gesture!**

Move your hands with purpose and precision to drive your points home.

BY JOEL SCHWARTZBERG

If you're a public speaker—thus in the business of emphasizing ideas—gestures can reinforce your most important points. You gesture during a presentation for the same reason you highlight a line in a manuscript: to stress something that stands out.

But not all gestures are effective. Some add no value, while others can convey the wrong impression. As a public-speaking coach, I've seen people use gestures effectively … and not so effectively. Here are five tips to help your gestures work for you.

1 **Keep your hands down.** Standing with your hands at your sides—i.e., not gesturing—feels awkward for most speakers. This is because when we speak aloud, our hands typically operate in reverse gravity. They rise unconsciously, stay up, and keep moving, which feels comfortable because nervous energy loves motion.

But keeping your hands down—not all the time, but as a default position—is critical, because a gesture has little value if it's constant. Gesturing has the strongest impact when the "up" motion follows a "down" position because there's a dramatic visual difference between "hands down" and "hands up."

Keeping your hands at your sides for most of your presentation conveys confidence and control, and will prevent you from making aimless, random gestures, which can be distracting. When my students and clients bring their hands down between gestures—something I remind them to do frequently—it injects new energy, purpose, and impact into those motions.

A client once said she gestures frequently "to keep the audience awake." But gestures are used to emphasize, not entertain. If keeping your audience engaged is a challenge, gesturing is not the best tool to fix it.

If you want to see a great practitioner of the hands-up, hands-down technique, watch Dananjaya Hettiarachchi's winning speech in the 2014 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® (bit.ly/TI_2014WCPS).

2 **Visualize making a point.** It's beneficial to imagine your gestures as literally *carrying your point*. Here's a way to visualize that concept:

- Your point is dense—like a heavy shoebox—requiring two hands, not just one.
- Your point is thick, so your hands need to be open, not closed.
- If your hands are upside down, you're dropping your point.
- If you clench your hands, you're squashing your point.
- If you drop your hands to your sides after a gesture, you've dropped your point again. Lower your arms with the same energy and intention you used when you raised them.
- Always "offer the shoebox." Stretch your hands outward toward the audience when delivering your most valuable points—indeed, your gift—to your audience.

3 **Commit to your gestures.** The impact of a gesture, just like the impact of your speech, relies on how strongly you commit to it. Too often, I see minor gestures where the speakers attach their wrists and elbows to their waists or torsos and leave their hands to do all the hard work. This may feel more comfortable, but these quarter- or half-measures produce a fraction of the impact.

Commit to active gesturing by utilizing your full arms and your hands in a fluid motion. This creates gestures that are powerful, arresting, and likely to significantly boost the impact of your key ideas.

4 **Keep your hands apart.** Clenching, pressing, or otherwise touching your hands together in front of you can make you seem closed off, because you're physically obstructing the path to and from yourself. Conversely, keeping your hands open and separated creates a visual impression that you're open to giving and receiving. Even counting on your fingers ("first," "second," "third") has little functional purpose except to give your hands another distracting opportunity to channel nervous energy. Your hands are like your eyes—keep them open to allow information to pass through.

5 **Avoid pointing and counting.** Finger gestures are not as impactful as the two-handed "offering a shoebox" gesture. Fingers are smaller and can also carry unintended meaning. Pointing, for example, can seem scolding, while a thumbs-up gesture can seem condescending or smug.

I've also seen speakers make these gestures directly in front of their faces, which hinders vital eye contact with the audience. Keep your fingers in place and focus your attention on your arms and hands instead. Use your gestures strategically and you'll add greater impact and energy to your speech. T

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First Impressions

What is your audience thinking as you walk to the platform to begin your presentation?

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

Who is this speaker? Can he tell me anything that I don't already know?" … "Why am I here? I have that major deadline, and I am behind schedule." … "Where's my cell phone? I'm going to use the time to check my email." … "Is she going to be as boring as the last speaker?" … "I'm hungry. When's lunch?"

Only on rare occasions is your audience anxiously awaiting your every word. Most of the time their attention is split. If you want them to take the desired action at the end of your presentation, you have to get their full attention. And you only have a few sentences to do it. That is why your opening line is one of the most important sentences in your entire presentation.

But how do you break the audience's preoccupation in just one to three sentences? There are many techniques that can be used to open a speech. I will share a few of my favorites. All of the options, though, have a few characteristics in common: They all introduce your topic, engage the audience, and start with strength.

My favorite technique is to open with a question, but not just any question. It is one that touches a need that the audience members are feeling. The question might start with "how many times have you …?" and would then describe a problem that you are about to solve. And it tells the audience that you are addressing something that they care about.

A variant of this is "raise your hand if …" I used this technique in a Toastmasters training session on speech evaluations. My first line was "Raise your hand if you joined Toastmasters to become a better speech evaluator." I said it in a way that suggested that I expected a "yes" answer. The audience members laughed. I then acknowledged that they joined to become better speakers, but one way to achieve that is to become a better speech evaluator. This tied the importance of the topic to their real objective. In addition, the humorous approach told them that this would not be a boring, academic presentation. And it got them participating, which continued throughout the presentation.

> When you begin your speech, you are, in effect, making a first impression. Make it a good one.

I also used the question technique in a recent Toastmasters Toolbox article. It began, "When you hear the words 'speech contest,' what are your thoughts?" And how did I begin this article? With a question.

A second technique that I enjoy using is the intriguing statement. I especially use it when I present a tall tale, where I immediately immerse the audience into the scene. In one tale where I was performing a James Bond-themed story, I began, "I'll never forget the day that I was mistaken for a secret agent. It was inevitable, I presume. After all, I do bear a striking resemblance to James Bond. Come back with me now to the day that changed my life forever."

If I was giving a speech on how I became a writer, I might start with "If fifty years ago you had told me that in the year 2020 I would be writing an article for an international magazine, I would have thought you were nuts. My high school English teacher would have thought you to be the greatest comedian alive."

Another technique that I use is the bold or shocking statement. In a segment of my training, I begin with "I am convinced that the seeds for bad speech delivery were planted back in the first grade." Let's say that you were speaking on improving your speaking skills. You might open with something like "90% of all speeches and presentations are boring." That might get their attention.

Those are some examples of how you could open a speech. Notice, however, what I did not say. One opening that I hear far too often is, perhaps, the weakest way to open a speech. Imagine, the speaker walks to the platform. The audience anticipates his powerful opening, and he says "So …" That is like beginning a speech with "um." Ugh! Speak like you have something important to say.

As the old saying goes, you only get one chance to make a good first impression. When you begin your speech, you are, in effect, making a first impression. Make it a good one. Get your audience's attention. Show them that they are going to get value out of what you have to say. Give them a reason to put down those cellphones and pull out their notepads. T

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Motormouth

My car talks too much.

BY JOHN CADLEY

I remember when a car knew how to keep its mouth shut. The only thing that wasn't essential to its actual mechanical functioning was a radio, which remained quiet until *you* decided to turn it on. In other words, you, the driver, were in the driver's seat.

Now my car talks to me, sometimes with words, sometimes with symbols, telling me—*me*, the driver—how to drive. I really don't need to start the day feeling like I'm traveling with my mother. Some other things I don't need: to open the door and have my dashboard tell me the door is open. Or to see a little red arrow pointing to the side of my car where the fuel cap is. To automakers everywhere: Trust me to know that if the gas cap isn't on one side of the car, it will be on the other. Really. I can do that.

As I drive, the screen in front of me displays how fast I'm going in big, clear numbers. Right next to it is a big, round speedometer with a needle that tells me … how fast I'm going. Please give my thanks to the Department of Redundancy Department.

On the other side of the speedometer is a tachometer, which measures my engine's revolutions per minute (RPMs). Why do I need to know this? Ostensibly, because if I "rev" my engine too high it will cause damage. I don't rev anything. I step on the gas to go, and I step on the brake to stop, and I expect the engine to do whatever revving is necessary to make that happen. I know RPM sounds impressive but for me it stands for Ridiculous Piece of Measurement.

Directly above the speedometer is something called an Eco Gauge, which tells me how I'm doing with fuel efficiency. If it goes to the left, I'm doing badly; to the right, and I'm being eco-friendly. I have no control over my fuel efficiency short of putting a sail on the roof, and I don't appreciate being put on an emotional roller coaster where every trip has me feeling either like a leaking oil tanker or Greta Thunberg.

> My car talks to me, sometimes with words, sometimes with symbols, telling me—*me*, the driver—how to drive.

I also have not one but two trip meters, so I can compare the mileage of Trip 1 with the mileage of Trip 2. I honestly, sincerely, genuinely do not know why this is valuable information. I've always had an extremely reliable measure of how long I've been driving—my back. If I can walk upright after taking two ibuprofen every four hours, I've gone about 300 miles. If, on the other hand, the ibuprofen has to be administered intravenously, I've foolishly gone beyond the limits of my physical endurance, and how that translates into physical distance doesn't really matter now, does it? The same with the little warning light that indicates my brake pads are wearing down. I've always relied on the smell of burning rubber to give me that information, and it's worked just fine. There's even a little alert that tells me the car ahead of me has moved forward at a stop light, as if to say, "It's green. Go!" Did I mention driving with my mother?

I do appreciate the yellow warning light on my side-view mirror when someone is in my blind spot. Great safety feature. Unfortunately, the light also goes on when someone is just passing me. When *two* cars are passing on either side, *both* mirrors start blinking like the instrument panel in a space capsule flashing *Abort! Abort!*—in which case I'm suddenly feeling very *un*safe.

Finally, there's the GPS, where I can see my progress on a map and hear directions in a pleasant female voice. The particular car I own gives you the option of changing that voice to someone more familiar, like a trusted friend or family member. One of the suggestions is—yup, you guessed it—*your mother!* You can even use your own voice. That would mean not knowing the location of a place and listening to yourself tell yourself how to get there. At that point I'm not in a car; I'm in *Alice in Wonderland*.

You can say I'm exaggerating but I know you've gotten in your car at least once, heard that annoying beep reminding you to buckle your seatbelt, and screamed, "Oh, shut up! I'm putting it on." I know you have. T

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Illustration by Bart Browne

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT – BO BENNETT, DTM



You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes that are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at amazon

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