

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JANUARY 2023

TOASTMASTER®

The Year Ahead

SET BOLD GOALS AND GO THE DISTANCE

Find out how far your plans and dreams can take you.

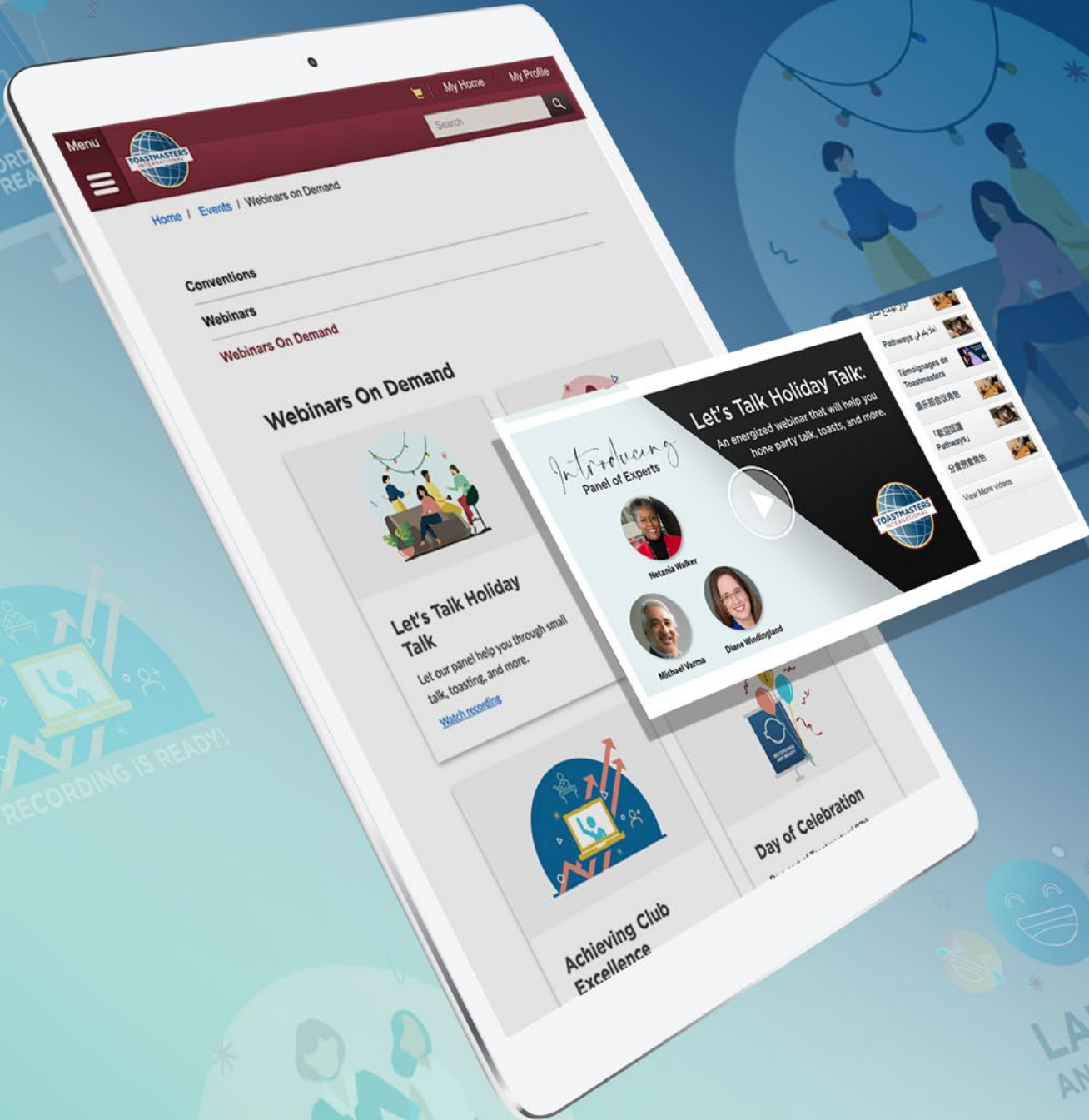
ALSO INSIDE:

**Your Future
Self Awaits**

**Invite Friends
to a Meeting!**

Catch Up with Webinars On Demand!

Inspiring communication topics range from humor workshops to celebrating women to honing holiday talk/small talk.



Watch/re-watch recordings at:
www.toastmasters.org/WebinarsOnDemand

Publisher
Daniel Rex

Managing Editor
Laura Amann

Senior Editor, Executive & Editorial Content
Paul Sterman

Senior Editor
Stephanie Darling

Assistant Editor
Laura Mishkind

Digital Strategy and Engagement Editor
Shannon Dewey

Graphic Designer
Susan Campbell

2022-2023 OFFICERS

International President
Matt Kinsey, DTM

International President-Elect
Morag Mathieson, DTM

First Vice President
Radhi Spear, DTM

Second Vice President
Aletta Rochat, DTM

Immediate Past International President
Richard E. Peck, DTM

Chief Executive Officer
Daniel Rex

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Louisa Davis, DTM Region 1	Anwasha Banerjee, DTM Region 8
Jesse Oakley III, DTM Region 2	Jeff Sobel, DTM Region 9
Michael J. Holian, DTM Region 3	Jean Gamester, DTM Region 10
Kimberly Lynne Myers, DTM Region 4	Ali Shahbaz Ali Shah, DTM Region 11
Monnica B. Rose, DTM Region 5	Benjamin James McCormick, DTM Region 12
Dawn Frail, DTM Region 6	Gauri Seshadri, DTM Region 13
Elmer Hill, DTM Region 7	Helen He, DTM Region 14

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL®

9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, CO, USA 80112
+1 720-439-5050
www.toastmasters.org

CONTACTING WORLD HEADQUARTERS

For information on joining or building a club, visit:
www.toastmasters.org

Article submission:
submissions@toastmasters.org

Letters to the Editor:
letters@toastmasters.org

For general magazine questions:
magazine@toastmasters.org

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL MISSION:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

The *Toastmaster* magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, Colorado, United States 80112.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. The *Toastmaster* magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises.

Copyright 2023 Toastmasters International, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

Toastmasters International, the *Toastmaster* and the Toastmaster International Emblem are trademarks of Toastmasters International registered in the United States, Canada and many other countries. Marca registrada en Mexico.



The Tie Between Square Knots and Leadership

For the past 27 years, I've been a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America—a group that helps thousands of young people learn important life skills and, more importantly, gain the self-confidence to become effective members of their community as they grow into adults.

Scouting has some great lessons, including leadership ones, that can be applied to almost any organization, including Toastmasters. One of those is a concept called “recognizing lesser degrees of failure.” For those of you who like to use more positive language, another way to say that is “recognizing people for getting close to the goal without accomplishing it.”

The best way to demonstrate this is to tie a square knot—one of the very first skills we teach new Boy Scouts. The square knot is symmetrical and very strong, yet easy to undo.

To tie a square knot, hold two pieces of rope. Cross the left end over the right, and then cross the right end over the left, as if you're tying your shoes. That's a square; you can see it. Many new Scouts get the first step right but miss the second, resulting in what's called a granny knot. It's not symmetrical, and when I push the two ends together it does not easily come apart, so I have to actually come in and pull it apart.

Scouting has some great lessons ... including a concept called “recognizing lesser degrees of failure.”

And herein lies the lesson. We tell the Scouts, “Hey you got the first step right; you're really close to the square. Now we need to work on the second step.” We teach them to slow down and show them a different method. We tell them to do the first part and stop. Look down at the rope. One end of the rope is closer to your body, and one end is further away. Whichever end of the rope is closer, you're going to cross that closer to your body. Once they learn this step, they don't make the mistake again.

That's an important distinction, this skill of teaching people to get closer to their goals by encouraging them and showing them the next step. This is something we do all the time in our Toastmasters evaluations. Hopefully, we also do it with those who are developing their leadership skills.

If you can adopt this practice of recognizing people's efforts to get closer to their goal, or a lesser degree of failure, and encourage them to take the next step, I think it will serve you well.

Matt Kinsey, DTM
International President

Features



14 PERSONAL GROWTH:
14 Staying Motivated Through Tough Times

Experts offer tips on self-compassion, support, and perseverance.

By Greg Glasgow

20 PERSONAL GROWTH:
20 Meet Your Future Self—Today

New research in psychology can help you design your future and achieve your goals.

By Ryan Levesque, DTM

Columns

3 VIEWPOINT:
3 The Tie Between Square Knots and Leadership

*By Matt Kinsey, DTM
 International President*

8 MY TURN:
8 On a Mission for Mental Health

By Neshan Anantha Rajah, DTM

9 TOASTMASTER TOOLBOX:
9 Speaking Lessons From the Toolbox

By Bill Brown, DTM

28 FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT:
28 The Non-Glossophobes

By John Cadley

Articles

10 HUMOR:
10 Clowning Around
 Discover three easy techniques for adding some good-natured fun to your presentation.
By Don Colliver

12 PERSONAL GROWTH:
12 How to Achieve Your Bold Goals
 Toss the negativity and tap into your true desires.
By Sara Mayer, DTM

17 GOAL SETTING:
17 Ultimate Goals Checklist
 Personalize your objectives for the year ahead.

18 PERSONAL GROWTH:
18 Tips for Time Management
 Not enough hours in the day? Make time for what's important.
By Laura Amann

19 TOASTMASTERS NEWS:
19 Introducing Kevin Snyder, Accredited Speaker
 Toastmasters bestows its 90th AS designation at the 2022 Convention.
By Peggy Beach, DTM

24 CLUB QUALITY:
24 A Personal Invitation
 Attract, invite, and encourage guests by adding a personal touch.
By Megan Preston Meyer

26 LEADERSHIP:
26 5 Keys to Delegation Mastery
 How to shift from doing to leading.
By Linda Patten, DTM, and Christine A. Robinson, DTM

28 LEADERSHIP:
28 Past International President Ted Wood
 His large heart and long-term vision remain relevant today.
By Laura Amann

Departments

5 TOASTMASTERS NEWS:
5 News / Resources / Reminders

6 SEEN AND HEARD:
6 Member Moment / Traveling Toastmaster / Toastmasters News / Personal Growth



News



Changes Made to Accredited Speaker Process

Significant changes are in effect for the 2023 Accredited Speaker application cycle (January 1-January 31). Previously, the same Judge's Guide and Ballot was used for both Level 1 and 2. Effective January 2023, [Level 1](#) and [Level 2](#) will have unique ballots to support judges in making clear and effective decisions. Make sure to review the [handbook](#) and ballots, download the [current application](#), and submit all required forms to accreditedspeaker@toastmasters.org by 5 p.m. Mountain Time, January 31, 2023.

Applications that meet all requirements are reviewed by a panel of expert judges. Those who pass Level 1 are invited to present at the Toastmasters International Convention for the opportunity to earn the AS designation.

Call for Presenters

Do you have an amazing talent for capturing a crowd? Apply to be a presenter at an upcoming Toastmasters event! We welcome dynamic moderators, panelists, education speakers, keynotes, comedians, and others who have experience addressing large international audiences, be it in person or online. Use [this form](#) to submit a video and be considered today.

Expanding Cross-Cultural Intelligence

In the October 2022 issue of the *Toastmaster*, cross-cultural intelligence expert David Livermore, Ph.D., wrote an article with tips on how to become a culturally intelligent speaker. Livermore, who is founder of the Cultural Intelligence Center based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, partnered with the *Toastmaster* to promote the article as a [downloadable white paper](#) on his company's website. This collaboration will lead to more people around the world learning about Toastmasters and how to present to a diverse audience.

Resources

More Translated Materials for Members

You can now download and use the [Member Interest Survey](#) and the [Transform Your Talent flier](#) in Spanish!



Reach Out to Rotary Members

In May 2019, two long-standing organizations, Toastmasters International and Rotary International, formed a unique [strategic alliance](#), drawing from the strength of their many similarities and complementary differences. Toastmasters developed eight educational courses for Rotarians and Rotaractors, available on Rotary International's Learning Center, which can be accessed by their members in nine languages. Learn more about the alliance and how you can take part in this opportunity.

Reminders

Have a Great Story Idea?

The *Toastmaster* is always looking for compelling article topics. Here are the best ways you can share a relevant story idea or submit an article pitch.

- If you have a good idea or know a member or club that would make an interesting profile, but don't want to write the story, fill out the [story idea form](#).
- If you'd like to write a story or have it assigned to a writer, review the [submissions guidelines](#) and then download the article submission form provided.
- Do you have a personal essay to share about your Toastmasters experience? Submit a 700-word, first-person My Turn article to submissions@toastmasters.org.



A New Start

Kick off the new calendar year with some stellar club meetings! High-quality meetings are central to the Toastmasters experience—they inspire teamwork and help everyone improve their skills. Participation is key, so don't hold back from taking on meeting roles, even if you have little experience. Toastmasters' resources—and fellow club members—can help you learn everything you need to know about each [role](#). The best way to learn, however, is to do it!

Member Moment

Reading the *Toastmaster* Together

Zimbabwe group inspires others to gain knowledge from the monthly magazine.

Two creative Toastmasters have convened to host a monthly online meeting that functions much as a book club does—drawing inquiring individuals together to read, discuss, and learn. And in this case, the latest *Toastmaster* issue is the topic of discussion.

Toast and Read was created in 2021 by Viola Dondo, DTM, and Dorothy Chanakira, DTM, both of Harare, Zimbabwe. Each meeting begins with a toast to Toastmasters International. The agenda is simple—participants take turns reading magazine articles out loud then sharing opinions, thoughts on how the stories relate to their own lives, and how they might benefit others.

Dondo and Chanakira started the group to inspire people to read more, and discover the useful information and stories one might miss in the magazine. “Since the magazine is monthly, we thought we could meet every month and explore the gold we believe is embedded in the magazine,” says Chanakira.

“We wanted to remind Toastmasters that ‘leaders are readers,’” adds Dondo. “By reading either the magazine or any other good material [people will] develop as leaders.”

The meetings often feature guest readers or highlight special occasions. Division and Area Directors may visit. Former International President Richard Peck, DTM, visited and read one of his magazine “Viewpoint” columns, and the 2022 World Champion of Public Speaking, Cyril Junior Dim, visited and read his profile story. On World Poetry Day, the group read a magazine article on poetry and read some of their own poems to one another.

The duo hears from many members who enjoy the monthly reading sessions. “These sessions inspire them to read more,” says Dondo.

Laura Amann is managing editor for the *Toastmaster* magazine.



Dorothy Chanakira, DTM (top), and Viola Dondo, DTM (bottom), founders of Toast and Read.

Traveling *Toastmaster*



MOHAN MORAIS of Colombo, Sri Lanka, spots a herd of zebras in Masai Mara National Reserve near Nairobi, Kenya.



S.K. BRILLIAN, DTM, of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, shows off his Toastmasters cinch pack on Apharwat Peak near Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Toastmasters News

Women in Toastmasters Milestone

2023 marks 50 years since breaking down a major barrier.

This year marks a milestone in Toastmasters history: 50 years ago, membership officially became open to women. Hundreds of thousands of women have since followed in the footsteps of those first female members.

Helen Blanchard, DTM, helped blaze the trail for this transformational change. In 1970, she began attending a club in San Diego, California, and her fellow members urged her to apply for membership. She did so, deliberately choosing a name to disguise her gender; for application purposes, Helen Blanchard became Homer Blanchard. Three years later, the need for such surreptitious action was eliminated when Toastmasters International broke down the all-male membership barrier, in place since the organization's founding in 1924. In 1985, Blanchard became Toastmasters' first female International President.

Pat Johnson, DTM, Past International President, has spoken with pride of the women who served as early leaders in Toastmasters. When she was inducted into office at the International Convention in 2010, Johnson had her photo taken with Past International Presidents Blanchard (who died in 2013); Pauline Shirley, DTM, of Richardson, Texas; and Jana Barnhill, DTM, of Lubbock, Texas. (In total, seven women have now held the position of International President.)

"It was a huge honor to stand with these women and share our experiences," Johnson, of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, recalled in a 2020 *Toastmaster* magazine article.



From left to right: Past International Presidents Helen Blanchard (1985–86), Pauline Shirley (1994–95), Jana Barnhill (2008–09), and Pat Johnson (2010–11).

Before 1973, women had attended Toastmasters meetings for many years, but not as official members. In the late 1930s, a group of women had formed a parallel (but independent) organization of clubs: International Toastmistress Clubs. The women identified themselves as “wives and sweethearts” of Toastmasters members, and Toastmistress clubs were modeled after the Toastmasters program.

In the mid-1960s, Toastmasters clubs were allowed to form women's auxiliary Toastmasters clubs if they desired. Some clubs also sponsored

women as “honorary members,” and some women formed Gavel Clubs, open to those who don't qualify for regular club membership.

Then came the 1973 breakthrough, when the organization enabled all clubs to admit women as members. Among many other benefits, the move was a boon to membership numbers. Ten years after the new policy was put into place, Toastmasters International's membership had doubled.

Paul Sterman is senior editor, executive and editorial content, for *Toastmasters International*.

Personal Growth

What's Your Word?

In many places around the world, January 1 marks the start of a new year. For some, the beginning of the year gives them a chance to set new goals, make habit changes, and focus on the opportunity for success in the year ahead. Writer and researcher Gretchen Rubin takes advantage of this time for goal setting and looks forward to selecting a word for the year. She encourages her readers and podcast listeners to choose a one-word theme or short

phrase that sums up what they want to focus on in the new year. Rubin explains that when aims and goals are distilled into a single word or phrase, they're easier to remember, and therefore, to take action.

Looking for inspiration? Rubin has selected words like “upgrade,” “delegate,” “growth,” and in 2022, “salt.” She chose salt to keep in mind an appreciation for the small things that make life better, just as a simple pinch of salt can improve a recipe.

This January, take the time to consider how you want your year to go. Do your goals focus on career or personal growth? Do you want to achieve a Toastmasters milestone?

Look for the overarching theme in your goals and find your word—then tell us what it is! Email magazine@toastmasters.org with your one-word theme for 2023 and we may share it in a future issue.



On a Mission for Mental Health

Once bullied, I am now an advocate for fostering inclusion and empowering others.

By Neshan Anantha Rajah, DTM

When I was 13, I was bullied mercilessly by my classmates after a friend revealed a secret I had told him. The other students made fun of me for an entire year, including cyberbullying me on social media. I was both a racial and cultural minority and had come from a different primary school.

For three years I felt alone; I couldn't fit in anywhere and it affected me academically. I eventually left school, lost out on all my scholarships, and continued suffering from social anxiety following the death of my mother. But after seven years of therapy, I made a great deal of progress, and at the recommendation of my therapist I joined Monash University Toastmasters Club on my college campus, in Selangor, Malaysia. That was in 2016, and since then Toastmasters has opened up a new world for me.

At the club meetings I learned how to express my thoughts and feelings openly in a supportive community. The positive feedback and evaluations also helped me build back my confidence, and I soon began to participate in International Speech and Evaluation contests. I even advanced to the District level on my first try in both of those contests, thanks to my mentors, Aerina and Ronald, who inspired me.

Then, when the leaders of the club graduated, I became President and restructured the entire club. Within 12 weeks of my being at the helm, membership participation and retention doubled, intercultural sharing increased, and we received the President's Distinguished Club award for two consecutive years.

I eventually joined my mentors' Toastmasters clubs to learn from them and develop connections. I was helped by many friends from the Malaysian Toastmasters community, and I kept up with my past clubmates to pass on what I learned from my mentors.

Feeling more confident in myself, I wanted to start giving back and helping others who



might be going through the same things I did. With my Toastmasters training in hand, I began traveling to schools to talk about mental health. I started anti-bullying workshops and programs for kids to speak up about the issues in their

participating in these programs and figured out how to delegate work based on what I learned as a committee member in my Toastmasters clubs. I started a mental health support group as a speech project and later won awards for the impact it had on other communities.

Now I'm 26, and as an aspiring clinical psychologist I can see gaps in mental health advocacy in Malaysia, and I believe my personal experiences can add value to those encountering the same types of struggles I did. Bullying inspired me to become an advocate, as the healing process requires accepting our pain and transforming it into something else—to grow from our experiences and not be hampered by them. It's a choice anyone can make to empower themselves and others at the same time. Rather than letting it control you, you control your own journey and give meaning to your story.

I love Toastmasters for the community and fellowship, and the lifelong friends and corporate connections I made before graduating university. It has helped me see beyond myself in order to help those in need, and I learned

Bullying inspired me to become an advocate, as the healing process requires accepting our pain and transforming it into something else—to grow from our experiences and not be hampered by them.

lives. Then, in 2019, I started a program at Monash University Malaysia that provides long-term peer support. The Fireplace project helps students facilitate group support sessions and develop skills in communicative empathy. For my contributions in supporting diversity and fostering inclusion at Monash and beyond, I won the Vice-Chancellor's Diversity and Inclusion Award in October 2019. I enjoyed

how to use my voice to raise awareness. I would like to thank Toastmasters for the opportunities to grow. I became a Distinguished Toastmaster at a young age, and I'm proud of it! I want others to know it's never too early to start.

Neshan Anantha Rajah, DTM, is a former member of Monash University Toastmasters Club in Selangor, Malaysia.

Speaking Lessons From the Toolbox

Discover writing knowledge that applies to speeches.

By Bill Brown, DTM

Writing skills and speaking skills are different. Crafting an article is different from giving a presentation. But the disciplines I have learned from writing these Toolbox articles have helped me better hone my speaking skills. Perhaps they can help you as well.

First of all, don't wait until the last minute to start. I began my first draft of this article two weeks out from my deadline. That gave me time to do the editing that I desperately needed.

By my fourth major edit, I scrapped three whole paragraphs. Sometimes major edits are needed.

Procrastination, in my observation, is a habit of many Toastmasters. It was for me when I first started. And, in spite of good intentions (and lessons learned), I sometimes still find myself scrambling to put together a speech a day or two before my scheduled speaking slot.

And that often results in a message that is not as coherent as it could be. Your first draft is frequently a "stream of consciousness" presentation. Especially if you don't have a plan. Without one, your thoughts can easily wander.

In fact, as you start your writing, your first task is to figure out what you want to say. What is your overall message in one sentence? And what are your main points? That not only will keep you on track, but it will also make your writing go that much quicker.

A second lesson has to do with word count. I have a limit of 750 words. When I write my first draft, it usually comes in at 900 words. This one came in at 903. That requires some heavy editing (and sometimes serious surgery). That is why starting early is important.

When I first started in Toastmasters, my speeches during my practice sessions came in at nine minutes. My solution? Talk faster. Yes, you

do have that option during a speech, but your communication suffers significantly with that strategy.

Resist the temptation to rush your speeches. Talk normally and edit your speech to fit within the seven-minute limit. You will have a tighter, more effective message. The spoken word gives us the ability to add emphasis and emotion to our communication through vocal variety. Rushing severely limits this.



As you start your writing, your first task is to figure out what you want to say.

The third lesson is to keep it simple to understand. This can take many forms. The *Toastmaster* magazine is read by members in over 100 countries. If I use uncommon words or buzzwords, many readers might not understand what I am saying. That trains me to write with my readers in mind. Focus on your listeners and you will do well.

Another aspect of keeping it simple is to continue editing until the words sound right.

They should flow easily out of your mouth. When we speak without adequate practice, we all too frequently stumble over our words. This might be caused by a lack of familiarity with what we want to say. Or, perhaps, we accidentally created a tongue-twister that invariably trips us up at the worst possible time.

If our wording is too complicated, we may also create a mind-twister for our audience members. If they have to think too much about the individual words and phrases that we use, they don't have enough time or mental focus to think about our overall message. That is why I scrapped those three paragraphs in my fourth major edit. They complicated my message.

Reading your speech through once or twice is probably not enough. I find that, as I read an article I've written 10 or 11 times, I find problems that I hadn't seen before. Why did I just now see it? I had put the article down and come back to it later. Sometimes the next day. That is another reason why starting early is important. You have the luxury of coming back to it, sometimes many times, and testing the flow. It is as if you are hearing it as your audience will hear it, and that is the best perspective of all.

As I said, I have found that my articles have helped me become a better speechwriter and speaker. And these lessons can help you as well. So start early on your next speaking project. Take the time to edit. And take the time to make it something that is easy to present and easy for your audience members to follow. That will be time well spent.

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a member of Energy Capital Toastmasters in Gillette, and Evening Stars Club in Denver, Colorado. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.



Don Colliver

Clowning Around

Discover three easy techniques for adding some good-natured fun to your presentation.

By Don Colliver

As I began my Toastmasters Leadership Institute (TLI) workshop on using clown techniques for better speeches, my participants were scared! “But I’m terrified of clowns,” one woman exclaimed. But once they started practicing these techniques, they found themselves connecting with their audience like never before (and falling out of their chairs with laughter).

So fellow Toastmasters, let me relieve you of your coulrophobia (the fear of clowns). We’re not talking about the red-nosed character you’re imagining from pop culture. We’re talking about “clown presence”: a way of presenting that incorporates fun in an authentic, mutual, and joyful way. Related to “affiliative humor,” this state celebrates inclusivity and finds laughter in shared experiences. I learned this secret to audience connection as a Blue Man Group performer and professional touring clown, and now I use it as a trainer, coach, and professional speaker for Fortune 500 companies around the world. Stepping into your own clown presence will allow

you to find laughter in your speeches through an authentic connection with your audience.

Connect With a Wink

The clown does not exist without the audience, just like a Toastmaster. Sure, you practice in front of your mirror at home, but your speech truly comes alive in that magical connection with your fellow members in your club. Learning to play with this two-way connection is the key to adding this kind of humor to your presentations.

The clown term for this playfulness is *clin d’œil* (pronounced **clahn**-doi), the French word for wink. This “twinkle in your eye” communicates that “I know this idea is silly. You know this idea is silly. We both know that each other knows this idea is silly. Therefore, we can have fun and not take this idea too seriously.” Embodying this state says “we’re all in this together” and encourages a feeling of belonging and inclusivity, opening the door to a deeper understanding of your message. So how do you add

a wink to your speeches? Here are three easy techniques for incorporating inclusive clown humor into your next presentation.

1 Familiar Is Funny

Since humor relies on a shared experience, always learn some basic background about your audience to find what you have in common: age range, hobbies, experience with your topic, cultural background, etc. Use this information to create audience-specific opportunities for laughs.

For example, my audience knowledge helped me win the District 1 Tall Tales Speech Contest with my speech “Matt the I.T. Guy.” Since District 1 contains the greater Los Angeles area, I knew my audience would relate to traffic, so I structured my wacky story around the exits of LA’s vehicle-choked 405 freeway. The laughs of understanding were thunderous!

Your Turn

Use this concept at your club by referencing a shared Toastmasters experience, like the challenges of filling weekly meeting roles or following up on upcoming deadlines. You could reference this shared experience to playfully illustrate a point in your speech. Suppose you’re delivering a presentation explaining how your high-stakes product manager job involves coordinating many busy stakeholders and extremely complex delivery schedules. To add some familiar “funny-ness,” you could playfully suggest that your job is similar to trying to get meeting roles filled each week. Even though you and your audience know that this is not truly a valid comparison, you’re using a metaphorical wink that allows you to use this shared experience to connect with your audience, illustrate your point, and have some fun.

2 Own Your Groan

Dealing with our own personal foibles is something to which every human on Earth can relate. “Ugh, I wish I exercised more! Am I right?” Since the safest target for humor is always yourself, your own human imperfections are fair game. While you should never make fun of your audience, showing the confidence to laugh at your own minor imperfections allows your audience to relate to your humanity.

Your Turn

Many stand-up comedy sets begin with this technique of the comedian poking fun at something specific about their own physical appearance, and you can do the same. For example, some Toastmasters have said I bear a slight resemblance to an amped-up Jim Carrey, the Hollywood comedic actor. I could “own my groan” at the beginning of my speech by saying, “I know what you’re thinking, folks. I look like Jim Carrey after two pots of coffee.”

Another way to own your groan is by delivering a “dad joke,” which is typically a pun or inoffensive, corny joke used by a father that might embarrass his children. For example, “Why is no one friends with Dracula? Because

The expectation has been disrupted in a surprising way. Laughter ensues. And Groucho needs new pajamas.

Your Turn

You can use this method of creating and disrupting a pattern to add humor to your speeches by utilizing comedy’s classic Rule of Three. A sequence of three ideas is the quickest way to build and then break a pattern. The Rule of Three consists of reciting a list of three related ideas. The first two ideas set up a pattern and then the third idea breaks that pattern with a surprising and ridiculous exaggeration.

For example, you could explain your penchant for sweets in an Ice Breaker speech by

Finding your own clown presence will allow you to incorporate good-natured fun in your presentations in an inclusive, connecting, and hilarious way.

he’s a pain in the neck.” These groaners are clearly not intended to elicit an authentic laugh from the actual joke content. Instead, dad jokes receive giggles because the joke teller is willing to be the focus of the laughter. Being willing to own these groans can get your audience on your side by showing that you’re confident and comfortable enough to connect with them by having some fun at your own expense. A simple internet search will reward you with pages of dad jokes related to your topic (and plenty of eye rolls).

3 Play With Pattern

At its most basic level, humor occurs when a pattern or expectation is disrupted in a surprising way. Take the classic Groucho Marx joke from the 1930 Marx Brothers film *Animal Crackers*: “One morning, I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas, I don’t know.” The expectation created in the first line, or “setup,” is that Groucho shot an elephant while Groucho himself wore pajamas. The second line, or “punch line,” surprisingly breaks that expectation by revealing that the elephant was actually the one wearing Groucho’s pajamas.

reciting a list of three of your favorite treats. The first two could be actual candy products, creating an expectation that the pattern will continue with a similar tempting snack, which you will, of course, disrupt. “I really love sweets. I enjoy Oreo cookies, Snickers candy bars, and the occasional 2-pound bag of Domino Cane Sugar.” Breaking that expectation by using a ridiculous exaggeration as the third idea will often get a laugh from your audience.

I hope these tips help you add some humor and audience connection to your speeches. I also hope you’ve lost a bits of your trepidation toward our red-nosed friends! Finding your own clown presence will allow you to incorporate good-natured fun in your presentations in an inclusive, connecting, and hilarious way. So be funny! Your audience will appreciate it.

Don Colliver is a trainer and professional speaker living in the San Francisco Bay area in California. He recently released the book *Wink: Transforming Public Speaking with Clown Presence*. Reach him at www.winkpublicspeaking.com.

How to Achieve Your Bold Goals

Toss the negativity and tap into your true desires.

By Sara Mayer, DTM

The new year can bring excitement for the future, rekindle dreams, and be a time of ambition. It's a fresh start! Many individuals, families, and even companies reflect on the past year and set resolutions or goals for the upcoming one. But do New Year's resolutions really work? According to Inc. com, only 8% of people achieve the goals they set at the start of the year. What gets in the way of goal achievement and how can you set goals that stick? Do you want to be in that 8%?

Why Goals Fail

All too often we set goals from a negative mindset. The new year rolls around and we reflect on the past year and all the things we didn't complete. Things we had as resolutions or aspirations that have been on our list for years. *I need to lose weight; I should have saved more money; I want a bigger house; I didn't get that promotion at work.* Then we set our goals around these perceived shortcomings. This results in uninspiring goals that will fall by the wayside before February.

I've been there. I set my goals and then life got in the way and the goals were forgotten. I was working all the time, had thousands of unread emails, a packed calendar, and was not achieving any of my objectives.

I set out to learn from goal achievers in the workplace and was shocked at what I observed. Often they didn't have a magic system for goal setting and time management, they just outworked their colleagues. Yep, one person worked as much as one and a half or two employees would each week. They accomplished their goals in the office but had to put in a lot of extra work to do so.

I then set out to find the employees who were achieving goals without the hustle and overtime. These employees set bold goals—goals that were aligned with their true desires—and then planned their days, weeks, months, and years around accomplishing those goals. It wasn't about time management; it was about self and goal management.

I've spent the last 10 years studying productivity in the workplace. I found that most people believe they have a time-management problem when they really have a self-management problem. The truth is, none of us have more than 24 hours in a day, yet some of us achieve significantly more than others.

Each year, it's critical to have a process that allows for meaningful reflection on wins, hopes, and dreams. This year, start fresh and implement the process of reflecting, dreaming, planning, strategizing, and implementing to achieve your bold goals!

Reflect

Start with reflection from a place of positivity. Don't think about what you didn't accomplish. Ask these questions instead:

- What are you most proud of this year?
- What was your happiest day?
- When were you the most productive?
- What is your lesson for the year?
- When were you bold?
- What new thing did you try?

When asking positive questions, you create a positive expectation that you will be successful and that your goals are possible.

Dream

Time to toss out all the goal-setting rules and tap into your true desires, hopes, and dreams. They don't need to be specific, measurable, time-bound, or even realistic at this stage. Allow your mind to explore your primary aspirations. What you truly want is likely not easy or something you can accomplish in one year. Be bold!

Plan

This step should not be underestimated. You may have a list of tasks a mile long, but do you have a plan for your goal?





Sara Mayer, DTM

This is a step-by-step plan to bring your dream to life and take action. This is when you need to create measurable and specific deadlines. Now, if you are truly working on your dream, you will have gaps along the way. Maybe it's money or knowledge or connections that you need to develop to start on the goal. These are your first steps. Create an action item to learn how to get started. You don't need to have all the steps listed in perfect order; just jot down the first five to begin.

When you make an actionable plan toward your goal, you cut out the noise and become clear on your direction.

Strategize

The next and most important step is creating a strategy for achieving your goal, because we know life will get in the way. When you are

working on your big goals—your dreams—you may not know what to do. It's easy to fall back on what you do know, like doing the laundry or cleaning the house. When you focus on these tasks, you get further and further from goal achievement.

It's time to create a strategy for when you will work on your goals and handle everything that gets in the way. Think about what can be skipped. Is every social event necessary right now? Or are your goals more important? What activities, hobbies, and areas of enjoyment in your life do you not want to miss when it comes to these goals? With achieving objectives there will be some sacrifice, but you should not have to skip out on everything to make something happen. Instead, you prioritize.

When you want something to happen in your life, you need to make changes to get it done.

When you make an actionable plan toward your goals, you cut out the noise and become clear on your direction.

Achieving goals is no different. It takes sacrifice, planning, and dedication. Strategizing for each objective is the best step you can take to achieve your life goals faster.

Implement

It's time to implement and bring your goals to life. This is done by scheduling your goals first and conducting regular reviews.

- **Schedule your goals.** Your goals deserve a place in your weekly calendar. Start each week by reviewing your goal tracker, and then schedule time to work on the steps. Goal appointments are non-negotiable. If you get to the appointment and you are not sure how to do the task or how to move forward, think about who can help you, and reach out. This dedicated time will help create momentum.
- **Review your goals regularly.** Bring your goals to life with a regular review of each goal, your progress, and your insights on the goal-achievement process. Don't simply review the goal tasks; really think about the process. What is getting in your way, what are you afraid to move forward on, and what are you learning about yourself? This regular review on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis will keep your goals at the forefront of your life.

The new year is full of inspiration, and you can create a life you dream of and become a part of the 8% who achieve their goals and resolutions. It's time to reflect, dream, plan, strategize, and implement to achieve your goals no matter what comes your way.

Sara Mayer, DTM, is a strategic business consultant who believes you can set and crush bold goals without working double-time. Learn more at www.saramayer.com, and grab a copy of Sara's [Goal Reflection worksheet](#).



Staying Motivated

THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

Experts offer tips on self-compassion, support, and perseverance.

By Greg Glasgow

Longtime Toastmaster Frank Thorogood remembers well the most stressful time of his life. Thorogood and his wife had purchased a warehouse on the outskirts of Paris to use as a headquarters for their growing business selling English tableware, as well as renting some of the extra space in the building to other small businesses. One night a fire broke out in the area, partially destroying the building and putting an end to both ventures.

“It wasn’t burned down, but it was severely damaged,” Thorogood says. “And we spent 10 years arguing with the insurance company about getting reimbursed for our loss.”

It was the worst decade of his life, Thorogood says, but a few things kept him from becoming mired in the darkness. First off, he and his wife, Maggie, moved to Nice, France, some 575 miles away from Paris, where he started a new Toastmasters club in 2013: Toastmasters NICE, a bilingual French and English club. Forming new relationships and keeping his mind occupied were key to moving past the stress and pain. Then there were visits with a new granddaughter to look forward to.

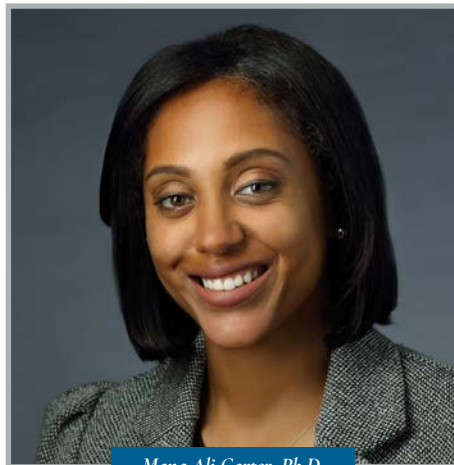
Most important, Thorogood says, was having his wife (a former Toastmaster) there to lean on during the difficult time.

“Whenever we’ve been in an emergency, we’ve always stuck together and fought in the same direction, which is very important,” he says. “She is very calm and positive.”

Not all struggles in life are as dramatic as destructive fires and thriving businesses that go up in smoke overnight, but everyone has battles, big and small, that can be tough to fight. That’s been especially true over the past few years as a myriad of challenges—from



Frank and Maggie Thorogood



Mana Ali Carter, Ph.D.



Tricia Downing

the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to political turmoil and soaring inflation—have taken their toll on pretty much everyone.

“Whenever we’ve been in an emergency, we’ve always stuck together and fought in the same direction, which is very important.”

– TOASTMASTER FRANK THOROGOOD,
ON HIS MARRIAGE

Whether it’s dealing with big challenges during uniquely trying times—struggling with grief or navigating new financial or caregiving challenges, for instance—or something small, like trying to fit in time to exercise or aiming to complete a new Pathways project, it can be difficult to keep yourself motivated.

What are the best ways to push through tough times? In addition to Thorogood’s tips for staying busy and staying connected, here is more advice from the experts.

Be Kind to Yourself

“When I talk to people about a lack of motivation, the first thing I do is try to normalize it,” says Mana Ali Carter, Ph.D., a psychologist at MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, D.C. “We’ve all had these moments where we feel a little less motivated, and it’s important to give yourself grace and bring compassion to that space.”

Not doing so, Carter says, can lead to a cycle where nothing gets done—a stressful workday leads to lack of motivation on another project, which leads to more stress about

that project not getting done. Putting things in perspective can help keep your projects moving forward.

It’s also important, Carter says, to realize you aren’t always in control. Don’t mistake temporary circumstances for a lack of motivation.

“Often people feel like they’re unproductive, or they feel like they’re not doing well, or they feel burnt out, and it’s easy to think that’s a function of wavering resilience, or wavering motivation, or your ability to handle stress well,” she says. “But if you really start to peel back the onion, you’ll see it’s often a function of the system that you’re in.”

Carter, for example, is a working mother with two young children. She has come to learn that when she feels anxious or unmotivated at work, it’s not because she’s bad at her job—it’s because her workplace isn’t set up to accommodate working mothers.

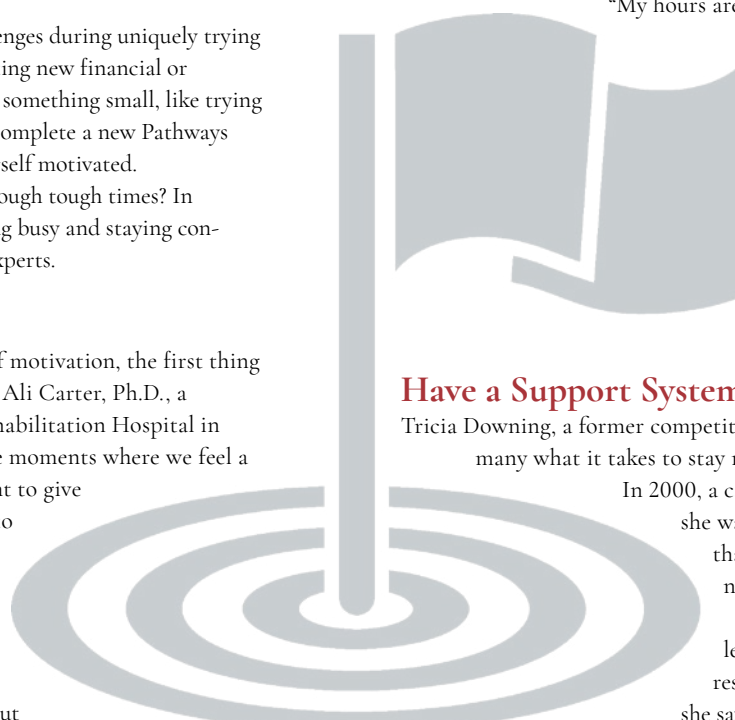
“My hours are 8 to 5—who’s going to drop my kids off and pick them up?” she says. “That just creates more stress. When we start to look at [lack of motivation] as being a function of external factors, we can mitigate some of the self-critical statements that come with feeling unmotivated.”

Have a Support System

Tricia Downing, a former competitive cyclist, knows better than many what it takes to stay motivated during tough times.

In 2000, a car turned in front of her while she was out riding, causing an accident that left her paralyzed from the neck down.

One of the most important lessons the Denver, Colorado, resident learned during her recovery, she says, is that life is like a bank. The



friendships she invested in prior to her life-changing injury paid off when she needed a support system to help her through her recovery.

“Even if I met somebody just for a week at summer camp, I stayed in touch with them for years,” she says. “I still have friends from elementary school that I stay in touch with. It’s really important to look at life as having that savings account—you’re always building up assets, because that’s how you’re going to get through those hard times.”

The friendships Tricia Downing invested in prior to her life-changing injury paid off when she needed a support system to help her through her recovery.

Downing also discovered the world of wheelchair sports, where she found a whole new support system of athletes who understood her situation.

“I was able to return to my passion,” she says. “That was the one thing that was going to get me out of bed in the morning—that was going to get me excited and able to move forward.”

Be Mindful About Goal Setting

It’s easy to lose motivation when you aren’t reaching your goals—but that may have more to do with the goals themselves than it does with your ability to achieve them.

“I find that the issue usually isn’t with the person; the issue is with the goal that they set,” says Carter, the Washington, D.C., psychologist. “People think goal setting is easy, but it actually is really hard.”

Carter, a panelist in a 2021 [webinar](#) on resilience hosted by Toastmasters and the American Psychological Association, says the key is to set smaller goals that are attainable, measurable, and well defined. Don’t make your goal “to become more fit”; make the goal “to walk for 10 minutes today.” Don’t shoot for finishing your entire report by some undefined date; shoot for finishing three pages by the end of the week.

“If you don’t have a realistic and attainable measurement, it’s hard to know if you’re actually moving the mark,” Carter says. “And moving the mark is what gives you confidence. If I can do a little bit, I feel like I’m moving along the way. But if I don’t have a rubric that’s realistic and attainable, it’s hard to know that.”

Measure Importance and Confidence

Two main factors influence motivation on any particular goal, Carter says—how important it is to a person to complete the goal, and how confident they are that they can do so.

“If it isn’t important to you, it can be hard to stay motivated,” she says. “If you’re feeling unmotivated, ask yourself: Are you doing something that’s consistent with your values? Are you doing this for you? Is this important to you? If it’s not important, then it’s okay to adjust your goals.”

That adjustment can involve reframing the end result. Staying healthy so you feel better may not be enough of a motivation, but what about staying healthy so you are around longer for your family?

Confidence is malleable as well, Carter says—lack of confidence often results in lack of motivation, and vice versa, but what if you could get extra training in an area that’s giving you trouble? Sometimes just the act of signing up for a course or ordering a book can boost your confidence as well as your motivation.

“People who don’t feel like they’re going to do well at something, whether that’s conscious or unconscious, that creates a lot of barriers to getting to the end goal,” Carter says.

Take It Step by Step

Downing, the cyclist who turned to other athletic pursuits after her accident, has a trick she uses on the days she doesn’t want to go to the gym and swim: “I allow myself to just get in my swimsuit, and go to the gym, and get in the water,” she says. “Once I do that, then usually I think, *Okay, you’re in the water, you might as well swim 500 meters.*”

For some people, she adds, “it might be, *Just put on your running shoes and go walk around the block, and if you still don’t want to do it, you can stop.* But once you’ve put your clothes on, you’ve gotten your shoes on, you’re probably going to want to keep going.”

But if there’s a day when you don’t want to keep going? That’s okay, Downing says. It’s important to forgive yourself for those times when you don’t feel as motivated.

“As an athlete, if you can’t forgive yourself for making a mistake, you’re just going to keep making mistakes,” she says. “It’s the athletes who can forgive themselves the quickest that [experience] the least negative effects on their performance.”

We all face challenges—both large and small—and times when persevering to reach our goals seems like an overwhelming task. Remember to be kind to yourself, lean on your support system, set realistic goals, do things to build your confidence, and be patient. You will move forward, one step at a time.

Greg Glasgow is a Denver-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine.

Tips for Time Management

Not enough hours in the day? Make time for what's important.

By Laura Amann

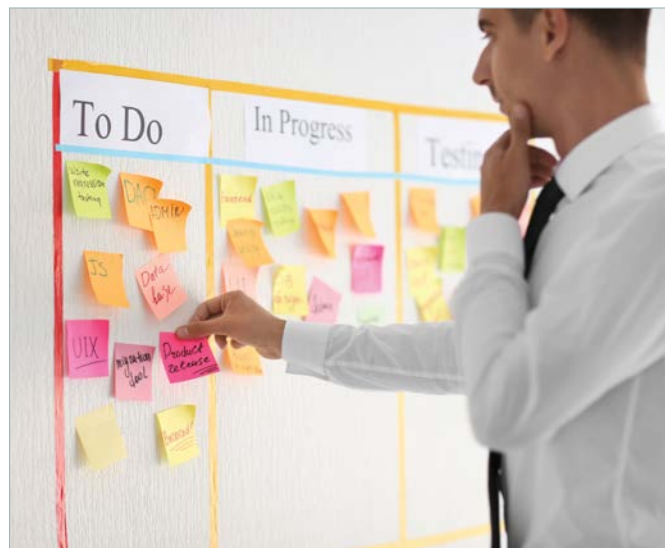
Often, a task ends up taking however much time you have, rather than how long it should take.



As the new year unveils in many parts of the world, it's a natural time to evaluate the past year and make goals or resolutions for the coming one. However, for many of us, almost inevitably, life starts up again, and we find ourselves six months down the road spinning in the same direction.

If you want to make time for what's important to you, not just what you have to do, read on. We've gathered tips from time-management experts and narrowed down some techniques to help you find a little extra time to use as you wish.

- **Create a time audit.** For a week or two, record every 30/60 minutes of your day to see where time goes. Are you spending more time than you thought on certain tasks? It's often very enlightening to see how much time you're on your phone or watching TV. (Productivity expert Laura Vanderkam has a downloadable [time-tracking sheet](#) on her website.)
- **Try a power hour.** Author Gretchen Rubin suggests making a list of small tasks that are easily procrastinated and taking an hour to knock through them. For instance, cleaning out a cluttered drawer, answering old emails, sorting a teetering pile of papers.
- **Batch similar tasks.** Set a time to just answer emails or make phone calls. Combine errands so you're not going out more than you need to.
- **Rate your tasks based on importance or difficulty and organize your day accordingly.** Many people recommend doing your most important or most dreaded task first to gain momentum and give you a sense of accomplishment even if the rest of the day is unproductive. (Mark Twain is alleged to have said: "If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.")
- **Create routines.** You gain freedom by establishing structure to your day—such as having morning, evening, and end-of-day routines (where you take 15 minutes to plan out your next day). Knowing what you're going to do when means you're less apt to forget something and better able to plan.
- **Set time limits to get things done.** Give yourself a chunk of time with no distractions. Or use the Pomodoro technique where you set a timer and break down tasks into 25-minute intervals followed by a short break. Each interval is known as a pomodoro (the



Italian word for tomato) after the tomato-shaped timer the technique's creator developed.

- **Similarly, challenge yourself to put a time limit on tasks.** Give yourself 10 minutes to write a memo at work or 15 minutes to clean the kitchen after dinner. Often, a task ends up taking however much time you have, rather than how long it should take.

If you're having trouble prioritizing your life, or you want to challenge yourself to try something new, here are two techniques to try.

Write a list of things you want to try in the coming year. You could rank it based on your age or the year (23 for 2023!). The ideas can be as big or small as you want, such as run a 5K, host a dinner party, take a writing class, go camping, make your bed every day, find a great pair of black pants. Post the list in a place where you can see it often and look for opportunities to tackle your list throughout the year.

Write yourself a toast. Imagine someone is giving you a toast in five years. What would you want that person to say about you? What will you have accomplished? What do you want to be most proud of? A similar task is to write next year's work performance review or write your family's holiday newsletter. Any of these exercises are a good way to analyze your priorities and think about not only how you want to live your life, but what you want to accomplish.

Editor's Note: A version of this article appeared in the January 2020 edition of the *Toastmaster magazine*.

Laura Amann is managing editor of the *Toastmaster magazine*.

Introducing Kevin Snyder, Accredited Speaker

Toastmasters bestows its 90th AS designation at the 2022 Convention.

By Peggy Beach, DTM

It was March 8, 2020. Toastmasters' 2022 Accredited Speaker (AS), Kevin Snyder, DTM, remembers the day well.

"Due to COVID, I got a cancellation notice for an event in October, and it was only March," the professional speaker remembers. "That's when I knew the pandemic was going to be an issue for a long time."

Initially, Snyder did not think his speaking style—energetic and animated—would go over well in the online world. "I had never presented virtually so I did not have any confidence that I could do that," he says. To stay busy, he spent most of the next two months working in his yard, making frequent trips to the local home improvement store, Home Depot. "I spent so



Snyder, who joined Toastmasters in 2012, is a member and Treasurer of Speaking Professionally, a District 117 online club.

His public speaking career has evolved through many years and audiences. A native of Durham, North Carolina, he earned a bachelor's degree in marine biology from the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. He later pivoted to a career in higher education by earning a master's degree and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of South Carolina and the University of Central Florida, respectively.

Snyder worked in student affairs departments on several college campuses before becoming dean of students at High Point University in North Carolina. Despite his affinity for helping college

"I enjoy taking a topic and making it relevant to an audience. There are many ways to engage."

—KEVIN SNYDER, DTM, AS

MORE ON THE Accredited Speaker Program

This program is designed for professional speakers who combine expert knowledge in a particular subject with mastery of the spoken word. These speakers can tailor their sessions to fit your needs for a District conference or other event. [See recipients and their areas of expertise.](#) Read about new AS program changes on page 5.

much time there, I was thinking about getting a job," he laughs now.

As the pandemic set in, Snyder realized he needed to broaden his presentation skills to match the new virtual world. After watching online presentations, "I decided to try it," he recalls. "I bought the equipment, got a coach, and developed my vision. I asked for help and became more comfortable online."

Buoyed by renewed confidence, Snyder was intrigued when Valda Ford, DTM, a member of District 117 and an AS, described the program to him. He had just completed his DTM and decided the rigorous program, requiring applicants to pass two levels of judging, was just the challenge he was seeking. Snyder applied in 2020, but didn't achieve the designation. However, he persevered, fine-tuned his presentation, and met success before a live audience in Nashville with his speech "[Don't Stop.](#)"

His performance was replete with a unique reverse poem, songs, funny and poignant stories, and reading a poem set to music he composed, which drew audience applause right in the middle of his speech.

students achieve, after two years in the job he began to miss speaking professionally. In 2012, he resigned from the university and began a full-time speaking career.

As an AS, Snyder's specialty topics include workplace wellness, personal development, and motivational leadership. He's energized by discovering shared experiences among diverse audiences. "I enjoy taking a topic and making it relevant to the audience," he says. "There are many ways to engage."

Snyder, who lives with his family in Raleigh, North Carolina, has presented two TEDx Talks and is the 2023 president of the National Speakers Association of the Carolinas. He jokes that working at Home Depot is no longer an option.

"I am humbled by becoming an Accredited Speaker," he says.

Peggy Beach, DTM, is vice president education for two North Carolina clubs and a frequent contributor to the Toastmaster magazine. Contact her at writereitorpeggybeach@gmail.com.

**Your future self will be
far different from the
person you are today.**

MEET YOUR Future Self—

Today

New research in psychology can help you design your future and achieve your goals.

By Ryan Levesque, DTM

You likely joined Toastmasters because you wanted to enhance your communication or leadership skills and become an upgraded version of yourself. Perhaps you were driven by a desire to contribute comfortably at meetings, capably lead a team, or exhibit ease during social gatherings.

No matter your goal, a growing body of psychological research provides insights and strategies to help you become your ideal future self.

Organizational psychologist Benjamin Hardy, Ph.D., has been called the world's leading expert on the application of future-self science. Hardy stumbled upon this field while writing the book *Personality Isn't Permanent*. He dove into the future-self scientific literature, resulting in his most recent book, *Be Your Future Self Now*.

Hardy cites top experts, including University of California, Los Angeles professor of psychology Hal Hershfield, Ph.D., whose research suggests that people who feel more connected to their future self make better choices in important areas like health, finances, and even ethical decision making. As Hardy summarizes it, "The quality of the connection you have with your own future self determines the quality of your life and behaviors now."

Hardy also references the work of social psychologist Dan Gilbert, Ph.D., of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gilbert's popular TED Talk "[The Psychology of Your Future Self](#)" begins with the commonsense claim that the degree to which human beings change slows down over time. "Your children seem to change by the minute, but your parents seem to change by the year," Gilbert explains. He then makes a more provocative claim: At every age, people vastly underestimate how much they will change in the future.

Examining data from 18- to 68-year-olds, Gilbert found that subjects erroneously predicted that their values,

personality, interests, preferences, and activities would remain largely static over the course of a decade. As he puts it, "Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they're finished."

The data is clear: Your future self will be far different from the person you are today. The good news is that discoveries emerging from the field of psychology can help you *shape* your ideal future self, and even *become* that future self—perhaps more quickly than you may realize.

A Dramatic Shift in Psychology

Historically, psychologists explored the problems, or pathologies, that plague individuals. In the 1990s, a new movement called "positive psychology" introduced research on well-being. Pioneers in psychology like Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi sought to identify the behaviors and mindsets of those who exhibit optimal well-being.

The positive psychology movement posits that people are driven more by their future than their past. The future you see for yourself—whether it's a future you desire, or one you wish to avoid—influences your behavior today. As Hardy explains, "We are pulled forward by our future."

Can You Shape an Uncertain Future?

In a single day, you make countless decisions that affect the "future self" you will become. Never mind major life choices, even seemingly inconsequential ones could have an enormous impact on our future. Who knows, maybe





taking public transportation to work one day instead of driving allowed you to avoid injury in a serious motor vehicle accident? Or maybe a podcast you *almost* listened to but skipped could have sparked a breakthrough idea to explode your business?

If you consider the unpredictability of life, you might wonder how you can even hope to shape your future. If you are feeling doomed to the whims of chance, here are a couple of ideas to consider.

First, the ultimate accuracy of your hopes and predictions for your future self is less important than *having a concern* for your future self. When you relate to your future self as a real person, as someone important to you, you'll be more likely to make choices today reflecting that care and concern. As Hershfield's research shows, people who feel more connected to their future self tend to make choices oriented toward long-term success rather than immediate gratification.

Second, your aspirations for your future self serve as a North Star to guide you. The more deeply and frequently you connect with your ideal future self, the more likely you'll make choices that align with that vision.

So, while you may not predict your future with perfect accuracy, the research suggests that having a concern for your future self and a clear ideal vision of your future will increase your likelihood of making choices that prioritize your future. It seems reasonable to assume the compounded effect of positive choices will increase your odds of achieving positive outcomes.

Get to Know Your Future Self

How can you develop a concern and vision for your future self? Hardy offers a simple way to begin: Write a letter to your future self. In your letter, share with your future self about the person you hope to grow into. "Make your vision clear and bold," says Hardy.

You can write to your six-months-from-now future self, or your 10-years-from-now future self. Hardy says actually doing the exercise is more important than the time frame.

"Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they're finished."

—DAN GILBERT, Ph.D.

A similar suggestion comes from David Robson, a science writer based in London, England, who has also written about the future self. Robson suggests, "Write a letter to yourself 20 years from now, describing what is most important for you now and your plans for the coming decades." He explains the exercise "encourages people to feel a greater sense of connection with their future self—and, as a result, primes them for positive behavioral change."

If you are keen to try this out, Robson adds you can amplify the effects by also writing a reply from your future self, as it will force you to adopt a long-term perspective.

It's Not Magic

At first glance, strategies based on future-self research might look like positive thinking or manifesting. However, there's nothing mystical behind them. Implementing future-self strategies does not eliminate the need to put forth effort to achieve your goals.

In *Be Your Future Self Now*, Hardy stresses the importance of fully committing to your future self. That, he explains, requires sacrifice, including a willingness to back away from distracting "lesser goals" that could take you off course. Hardy encourages readers to schedule their future self's priorities on today's calendar. By taking bold action today aligned to what's important to your future self, you can, as the title of Hardy's book suggests, "be your future self now."

Victor Frankl, MD, Ph.D., was an Austrian psychiatrist and author. In his classic book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl offers the following admonition:

"Live as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now!"

To state Frankl's idea another way, rather than wishing you had an opportunity for a "do-over," what if you acted from the start with the insight and perspective of your future self? Let's look at an example of this idea in action.

You have a presentation to deliver at work. You get up to speak, beginning tentatively. After several minutes, you finally get in the groove. Eventually, you finish and take your seat. You feel like it went "just okay." But you know if you had another chance to get up and give that presentation again, you'd nail it.

Can you relate to that example? (If not, can you find a parallel example? Maybe giving a speech at your Toastmasters club? Getting up to respond to a Table Topic®? Or attending a networking event?) Let's look at how you might apply Frankl's advice.

Start by thinking of your future self. In this case, however, it doesn't have to be your whiz-bang five-years-from-now ideal future self. Shorten the time frame and think of "future you" a few minutes into your speech—after you've warmed up. Now think of your post-presentation future self, wishing you had the opportunity to travel back in time and give it another go. Now give your future self that gift! Invite your confident post-presentation future self to step in and give that presentation. Be your future self and begin with an *already warmed up* energy.

To paraphrase Frankl, imagine you've already lived the moment poorly, and you have the blessed opportunity to come back and re-live it wisely. Then step boldly into action.

WOOP Yourself Into Shape

German academic and psychologist Gabriele Oettingen, Ph.D., warns against the insufficiency of popular approaches to positive thinking in her

book *Rethinking Positive Thinking*. Oettingen's research focuses on how people think about their future and the effect it has on their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. She popularized an aspect of her research (known formally as "mental contrasting with implementation intentions") into something she calls the WOOP method. It's a simple technique for dealing with the inner obstacles that can keep you from your desired future.

The future you see for yourself—
whether it's a future you desire,
or one you wish to avoid—influences
your behavior today.

WOOP is an acronym for Wish, Outcome, Obstacles, and Plan. The method first invites you to enter a quiet, reflective state, and bring to mind a deeply held wish for your life. Second, imagine the successful outcome—the impact it would have if that wish came true. Next, consider what inner obstacle might interfere with your attaining it. Finally, come up with an "if-then" plan to deal with the obstacle. In other words, if a specific situation arises, then you will take a pre-determined action to deal with it.

For example, consider a Toastmaster who wants to compete in a speech contest for the first time, but feels anxious. Using the WOOP method, she might make the following notes.

Wish—*I would love to compete in the club's upcoming speech contest.*

Outcome—*Win or lose, the process of preparation and practice will help me become a better speaker and increase my confidence.*

Obstacles—*My worries about competing could cause me to avoid preparing my speech. If I procrastinate too long, I might drop out of the contest.*

Plan—*If I feel nervous, I'll write in my journal for five minutes about why participating in the speech contest matters to me.*

Oettingen's WOOP method acknowledges that dreams don't come true just by wishing upon a star. By identifying inner obstacles in advance and creating a plan for dealing with them, you'll be better equipped to deal with them.

Measuring Progress Toward Your Future Self

Putting continued effort into implementing future-self strategies only makes sense if it actually improves your life. But how can you tell? Canadian business coach Dan Sullivan offers a best practice.

"The way to measure your progress is backward against where you started, not against your ideal."

Sullivan and Hardy co-authored *The Gap and The Gain*, a book about this simple yet powerful concept. The authors claim most people naturally measure themselves against their ideals. While that sounds like a



reasonable approach, they warn that it is an easy way to get discouraged. Rather than measuring the "gap," they recommend turning around and looking back at where you started. Measure your progress—your "gains"—and you'll be more likely to stay motivated, and less likely to feel discouraged and quit.

Let's apply their advice to your Toastmasters journey. Rather than counting the many projects you'll need to complete before you can achieve the Distinguished Toastmaster award, consider instead how your speaking skills have grown since you joined Toastmasters. Remember your first meeting? Table Topics? Your Ice Breaker speech? Measure how far you've come since then. Even if it feels like you're a long way off from where you want to be, you are further ahead than when you began! Turn around and look back at the starting line. Acknowledge and celebrate those wins—your gains—and fuel your motivation.

You may still have a long way to go to reach your ideal future self as a speaker or leader, or in any other domain of life. That's okay. Measure and embrace the gains you've made. Keep moving forward, chasing after your ideal future self.

As social psychologist Gilbert's TED Talk suggests, you will change more over the next decade than you realize. But as leadership expert and Toastmasters' 2012 Golden Gavel recipient John Maxwell warns, "Change is inevitable, growth is optional."

Your active involvement in Toastmasters is a sign of your commitment to growth. Why not add future-self strategies to supercharge your growth?

- Write a letter to your future self.
- Back away from lesser goals and schedule your future self's priorities today.
- WOOP yourself into shape.
- Measure your gains along the way.

Your future self will thank you!

Ryan Levesque, DTM, is a writer based in Massachusetts, and a co-host of the [Toastmasters Podcast](#). Find him on [LinkedIn](#) and at [WordsOnChain.com](#).

A Personal Invitation

Attract, invite, and encourage guests by adding your own touch.

By Megan Preston Meyer

In today's data-driven world, it's easy to convert everything to numbers. Conversations about club growth can quickly turn transactional: "We need to attract x guests and convert $y\%$ of them in order to hit our annual membership target." Action plans are drawn up, spreadsheets are created, and recruitment campaigns are designed. These can all be helpful tools, as long as the overall focus remains on the end goal: building a vibrant, dynamic group of people who support each other along their path to improvement. Growing your club requires effort and intention—and a healthy dose of the human element. As you attract, invite, and encourage guests to join, make sure to keep things personal.

Personal Responsibility

One of the best methods a club can use to attract guests is to encourage members to bring people they know. Many members have already done so—and might even be Toastmasters themselves thanks to the invitation of a friend or family member. Since this is such a proven technique, why isn't it used more heavily? The answer may be a phenomenon called "diffusion of responsibility."

Singling out an individual to act prevents diffusion of responsibility. "If you tell one specific person—if they volunteer or are 'voluntold'—'you are bringing a guest to the next meeting,' they are pretty likely to do it, because there's a specific expectation on one person to do so." Instead of tasking *all* your members to bring a guest to the next meeting, try asking them, one at a time, to take on the personal responsibility.

Personal Touch

While personal recommendations and word-of-mouth are effective tools for attracting new members, Toastmasters International has high brand awareness, so you'll likely encounter guests that no one in the club has ever personally met—especially if you have a strong online presence. Vibha Talati, Vice President Public Relations for Carpe Diem Sharjah Toastmasters Club in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, recalls a recent visitor whose friend had suggested Toastmasters. "He didn't specifically tell him to go to *our* club. This person googled, and we showed up on the search engine results." To stand out online, be sure to keep your club's listing on [Find a Club](#) up to date, main-

One of the best methods a club can use to attract guests is to encourage members to bring people they know.

We've all experienced it. The Club President closes the meeting with a request for everyone to bring a friend to the next one. The entire group nods—and has the best of intentions—but when the gavel drops at the following meeting, everyone around the table is a seasoned member. "If you tell a group of people 'someone bring a guest next time,' everyone's going to think that someone else will; they personally don't need to do it," explains Mike Raffety, DTM, of Chicago, Illinois.

To fix this issue, Raffety suggests adding a new role to the rotation: a Guestmaster, whose sole responsibility is to bring a guest to the next meeting and to introduce

your own website or Facebook page, and highlight your club's personality.

Use your club's social media accounts, and engage your members as well. "One of the key things is to get your members to post activities on their own page, because then their network will see it," says Raffety. "Post a picture of a meeting or someone speaking on the club page and then tag their names (with permission) ... then it will show up on their feed, and their friends' feeds."

Make the most of the posts you're encouraging members to share by "showcasing what you're doing," says Talati. "Video, photos ... Many clubs are doing a really



good job, but they're not able to portray it [on social media]." She recommends showing the club's fun side, as well as its serious side. A recent post on the Carpe Diem Sharjah Toastmasters' feed highlighted a panipuri-eating contest held during the club's post-meeting socializing session.

of recruitment, but then the focus would be more diverse," says Eric Tan, DTM, a committee advisor for AIA Toastmasters in Singapore. He sees the club's narrower focus as an advantage. "Because we understand our company's direction, we understand what our fellow AIA consultants are looking for in terms of their

Use the communication and leadership skills you've gained at Toastmasters to become a role model—and then personally invite friends and colleagues to follow your path.

You can use social media for personalized communication, too. During her time as Vice President Membership, Talati made it her mission to reach out individually to each of the club's Facebook followers and earned a new member by doing so. "They say [social media] is not personal, but I say it's *always* personal. It has to be personal."

Personal Connection

Putting in the effort to make a personal connection with potential guests is always a good idea, and if you can target your messaging to reach them specifically, so much the better. This is especially relevant for corporate clubs. "If we were a community club, we would definitely be looking at a wider pool, in terms

self-development. It is easier for us to cater to them, to 'speak to them in their language' ... I think that puts us in a better position."

AIA also caters to their guests literally. Whether it's a coffee meeting with a colleague or a cozy family dinner, food and drink go hand in hand with personal connection, and AIA Toastmasters knows it. They are known for offering plentiful buffets because their meetings are held over the lunch break. "Why lunch time? Because, as [insurance] advisors, we need to make appointments and meet clients, so lunchtime is really our down time," explains Eric Tan (no relation), Vice President Membership. "That's where the food comes in. You don't need to worry about wasting lunch ... you can just come in and grab [some food] and enjoy the features."

This personal touch shows that AIA Toastmasters appreciates the time its guests—and members—devote to checking out the club.

They aren't alone in using food to foster connections. When asked about her club's recruitment tactics, Talati's first response was "We have yummy snacks." In addition to the infamous panipuri, "we have cakes, we have croissants, we have sandwiches, and we have tea and coffee." The refreshments add to a "party atmosphere" that makes meetings enjoyable for guests and members alike.

Personal Example

One of the most effective ways to attract guests to your club is to demonstrate just how much Toastmasters can do—and what it has done for you. Offering your own experience as an example to friends, family members, and colleagues can be a powerful motivator.

Sandra Phua, President of AIA Toastmasters, notes that in addition to their regular Toastmasters club meetings, "we work together with the training department of AIA, and we get our advisors who are Toastmasters members to share." Phua is one of those members.

These company-wide workshops are excellent recruitment tools for the corporate club, explains Tan, the committee advisor. "When [guests] see how confident Sandra is, and how credible she is as a speaker, it draws them in. When people see a role model they want to mimic, they want to follow their path." Use the communication and leadership skills you've gained at Toastmasters to become a role model—and then personally invite friends and colleagues to follow your path.

By setting an example, fostering connections, adding thoughtful touches, and encouraging individual action, you can keep things personal as you attract guests and gain new members. By keeping the human element at the forefront of your quest for club growth, you'll be able to hit your numerical targets—and build a vibrant club.

Megan Preston Meyer is a member of *TM International Club Zug in Zug, Switzerland*, and a regular contributor to the *Toastmaster magazine*. She is the author of the *Supply Jane and Fifo Adventures*. Learn more at www.supply-jane.com.

5 Keys to Delegation Mastery

How to shift from doing to leading.

By Linda Patten, DTM,
and Christine A.
Robinson, DTM

What's one of the most important talents of our best business leaders? They delegate.

Let's face it. You can't do everything by yourself. Even the most well-known leaders—such as American magnates Marc Benioff (Salesforce) and Warren Buffett (Berkshire Hathaway)—don't go it alone. They have teams. Sharing responsibilities is the cornerstone for keeping a group active, loyal, productive, and successful. That's true whether you are running a big business, a small company, are a "solo"-preneur, or leading a Toastmasters club. Somewhere along the line certain functions require delegation.

Delegation is a management skill that has been known to strike fear in the hearts of many leaders. Giving others the reins isn't always familiar or comfortable territory for leaders, especially if the manager is new to assigning work to others. As leadership development expert Jesse Sostrin, Ph.D., noted in an article for the *Harvard Business Review*: "One of the most difficult transitions for leaders to make is the shift from doing to leading." A survey of business executives by California's Stanford University found that more than one-third of respondents identified delegation as a "skill that needs improvement." Another 37% responded they were "working on it."

Delegation is easy to do but difficult to master. Simply put, the stumbling block is fear. Fear of making a mistake; fear of looking foolish to your colleagues. Fear the project won't be done on time. Fear of time wasted explaining when you could be doing the job yourself. To reduce that fear and gain confidence, consider these five delegation mastery tips. They can be used by anyone, from the most adept leader to the newest entrepreneur.

1 Select people who complete you.

When building your team, with internal staff or with outside consultants, find people whose skills complement your own. For example: someone with superior

social skills might make the initial contact with clients. Another team member, with strong financial skills, may create a business proposal. The whole team may provide input from various perspectives and raise and solve issues that lead to the manager's final approval. The mix of diversity and new ideas among the team contributes to innovation and growth. Everyone benefits.

Astute delegation gives the team a sense of ownership, pride, and positive self-esteem. They're likely to repeat this collaboration the next time an assignment comes along.

2 Let go so you can grow.

Sometimes, what to delegate is a clear decision.

For example, say you are at a stage of growth where your financial recordkeeping requires upgrading. Now the task exceeds your capability (or interest). To employ someone with accounting and financial skills then becomes a no-brainer.

However, sometimes the areas you know you could be delegating are the well-known ones within your comfort zone. They are easy to do. They bring an amount of joy and fulfillment. You hang onto them and then wonder why you're still too busy and feeling overwhelmed. Or you feel unmotivated because you're not feeling the challenge.

Through delegation, you create the space to grow into new areas of leadership for yourself, as well as develop the team leaders needed for your endeavor to thrive. Delegate tasks to those with the expertise or the desire to handle the job. Delegate the comfortable work that could be holding you back and be open to greater, more rewarding opportunities for yourself.

3 Trust and share.

To delegate effectively, you need to know and trust people. Provide everyone with enough responsibility to complete their task, and enough accountability to



circumvent coming back to you for every little decision. Delegation is a two-way street; it's not about unloading information and then leaving. The team needs a clear understanding of roles, duties, and deliverables.

everyone want to be the CEO of their company? Blakely shared some delegation advice at a Forbes Women's Summit for entrepreneurs in New York. "As soon as you can afford to, hire your weaknesses," she said.

based in nature, can teach others, and help formulate a plan of action.

Surprisingly, as we begin to delegate tasks, we often discover the people we train are better at the assignments than we are. Through this teaching and learning process, the precious time we think is lost turns into the pleasure of everyone learning something new. Imagine that!

Through delegation, you create the space to grow into new areas of leadership for yourself, as well as develop team leaders.

At the other end of the scale is micromanaging: making sure everything is done "right." Micromanaging has the potential for deflation and, in the end, serves no one. Responsibility and accountability are the mainstays for project completion.

4 Leverage your weaknesses.

Many trainers suggest using your strengths to improve your weaknesses. We say go with your strengths and leverage your weakest areas with people who are better at the task than you are.

Self-made billionaire and founder of Spanx Sara Blakely hired a chief executive officer to run her business. Many eyebrows were raised by her actions—after all, doesn't

"What you're not good at is usually what you don't like." The decision allowed her to focus on her strengths as a businesswoman and enjoy a good work/family life balance.

Make delegation work in your favor. If you are the inhibited type but love numbers, partner up with a "people person" to make the calls and do the presentations.

5 See training as an investment.

Busy leaders often feel they don't have time to teach what they know. They believe the fastest, most efficient way is to do the job themselves. They end up not delegating at all—a sure path to burnout as well as unhappy, underutilized teams. Start with easy-to-assign tasks that are repetitive, research-

Delegation is the crucible to bring form to a shared goal or idea. Your leadership gives you the freedom to influence project results. You are an agent of empowerment by cultivating others' talents. Together you turn a shared passion for a common purpose into a successful endeavor.

Linda Patten, DTM, is a speaker, author, business coach, and District 57 Toastmaster of the Year 2020-2021. Her leadership experience spans several business sectors, as well as Toastmasters. For more information, visit www.dare2leadwithlinda.com.

Christine A. Robinson, DTM, is a member of Pitch Perfect Toastmasters in San Rafael, California. She coaches speakers and is the author of *Confidently Speaking: The Speaker's Guide to Standing Ovarations*. Learn more at www.confidentlyspeaking.net.

Past International President Ted Wood

His large heart and long-term vision remain relevant today.

By Laura Amann

Past International President Ted Wood, DTM, liked to joke that he went to his first Toastmasters meeting to get a friend off his back. However, that friend was certainly on to something. Wood, who was Toastmasters International President in 1986–87, ended up being a member of Toastmasters for more than 40 years, from 1966 until his death in 2007. Savvy and influential, he made vital contributions to the organization.

Heralding from Maryland and District 18, Wood was International President at a pivotal time in Toastmasters history: He was the first Black International President; he was preceded by Helen Blanchard, the first female International President; and succeeded by John Fauvel, the first non-North American International President (New Zealand).

At that time, Toastmasters was on the verge of crucial growth outside of North America and the British Commonwealth. And much of the credit goes to Wood, who began pushing the organization to think more globally and on a wider cultural spectrum.

“Ted and the group around him were at the beginning of some pretty phenomenal growth,” says Tim Keck, DTM, International President, 1999–2000, who counted Wood as a mentor and friend.

Keeping the Spirit Alive ... for Everyone

Wood’s presidential theme was “Keep the Spirit Alive,” and he lived by that spirit, appreciating the enthusiasm and dedication of members and leaders. “Our organization is as successful as it is because of the spirit of the individual member,” he noted.

Spreading the word was a big part of Ted’s vision for his term. The 1980s was a period of growth and opportunity for Toastmasters, and Ted wanted to share how the organization can change and impact lives in meaningful ways.

In a profile for the *Toastmaster* magazine at the beginning of his term, he stated, “[We need to] meet the needs of current members ... At the same time, we need to be planning what we are going to do in the future: Who will the members of the future be? What kinds of backgrounds

will they have? What kinds of businesses and corporations will exist?”

He saw membership potential among senior citizens, as well as with police, fire, and paramedic forces. And he spoke to those groups frequently.

He also saw the need for growth in underrepresented minorities, and he particularly championed encouraging more Black people to join Toastmasters. “There were still a lot of people at the time who thought it should be white male only,” Keck notes. “That all changed and Ted was in the forefront of that.”

Wood was involved in what was called the Black Caucus, an informal group of Toastmasters who wanted to encourage and mentor more Black members to pursue leadership positions in the organization, notes Eddie Dunn, DTM, International President, 1983–84.

At the time, the Caucus was somewhat controversial and seen by some as being exclusive and singling people out for their race. But Wood recognized that many in the Black community were critical of the organization and didn’t feel a part of it. “He was instrumental in persuading [those members] to pull back on the criticism and to become part of the organization by seeking and serving in leadership positions, not for self-glorification or because of their ethnicity, but because they earned it,” explains Dunn.

Keck agrees, “Just as there have been advocates for the advancement of women [in Toastmasters], Ted was that for Black members.”

Wood traveled extensively while he was in office, traveling approximately 16,600 miles altogether to visit Districts and talk to newspapers, city officials, and key business executives.

By the end of his tenure, membership had risen 6% to 131,129, with a new record of 6,072 clubs. Toastmasters was represented in 44 countries outside of the U.S. and Canada, with big growth in Australia, West Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, and South Africa.

The Value of Mentoring

One of Wood’s passions was for mentoring, and he served as a mentor, both formally and informally, for many members.



Ted Wood, DTM

Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, International President in 2005–06, was one of the people who benefited greatly from Wood's mentorship. Their relationship began after his District's finals of the 1991 International Speech Contest. Wood offered his guidance in getting Abayasekara to the next level, helping him achieve second place at the World Championship of Public Speaking the following year.

should listen. If he thinks I'm ready, and he's confident in me, then I should declare." Over the years, each time Abayasekara hesitated with running at the next level, Wood was there to remind him of how much the organization needed strong leaders and how much confidence he had in him.

"He taught me so much about leadership and about mentoring," Abayasekara reflects.

"Ted's joy came from what he was able to give and to contribute, and never from the glory that being a President has to offer."

—EDDIE DUNN, 1983–84 INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Wood then encouraged Abayasekara to think about leadership rather than try competing again. "He didn't mince words," says Abayasekara. "He spoke the truth as he saw it, but he always had the best interests of Toastmasters and the person he was mentoring."

The relationship continued, with Wood gently encouraging Abayasekara all the way to the role of International President. "Because of his influence, every time he spoke, I felt I

"A good mentor doesn't push his protege, he encourages and waits for the mentee to bring questions to the mentor."

He was also willing to tell hard truths, gently reminding Abayasekara if he ever overreached or didn't follow a protocol.

"Ted lived that code of conduct in his life. He was always truthful and always respectful."

Dunn, who served before Wood, watched him develop future leaders and saw the impact

he made. "Ted's joy came from what he was able to give and to contribute, and never from the glory that being a President has to offer. He was certainly a desired role model for aspiring leaders in our organization."

"He was really important in guiding me, and encouraging me in my Toastmasters journey," notes Keck, who worked with Wood on the Board of Directors. "He was a really good friend, and I wouldn't have gotten where I did without his insight."

A Toastmaster for Life

One of the reasons Wood was so passionate about mentoring was that he understood the impact Toastmasters can have on people's lives.

He had a lifelong career with the U.S. Department of Defense, and emphasized, "I can state unequivocally that two of the positions I've held in my agency came as a direct result of my involvement and leadership experience in Toastmasters."

He was a longtime member of four clubs in Maryland. Before pursuing leadership in Toastmasters, he participated in speech contests, making it to the regional level of the 1969 International Speech Contest. He was named Toastmaster of the Year three times and received a Presidential Citation for his contributions to the organization.

In addition to his involvement in Toastmasters, he was also a member of the National Speakers Association, the Communications Analysis Association, and the Human Resources Management Association.

After his career retirement from the Department of Defense, Wood and his wife, Inez, moved to Florida, where he started his own speaking business, Speak Up; founded Villa Toastmasters Club; and joined Winter Haven Toastmasters. Wood was also instrumental in helping The Bahamas regain Division status in 2000, after having lost it in 1998.

Wood died in 2007 after a long illness. His impact on Toastmasters, however, lives on.

"Ted Wood was and is the epitome of what one looks for in a great leader," says Dunn. "He typically talked the least and said the most when challenging issues were being discussed during Board or Executive Committee meetings."

Laura Amann is managing editor for the *Toastmaster magazine*.

The Non-Glossophobes

Want to know who's *not* afraid of public speaking? Don't ask Google.

By John Cadley

If you think Google can tell you everything there is to know, ask it to search “people who are *not* afraid of public speaking.” Research indicates that nearly 75% of people are afraid, so that leaves 25% who aren't. Who are they? Google won't tell you. It seems to assume you're really in that fearful 75% category and have simply made a mistake, which it is happy to correct by offering you 10 trillion sites on ... fear of public speaking!

That's what you really wanted to know, right? Well, step right up! We've got classes, seminars, coaching, therapy, retreats, hypnosis (!), and more books than you can cram into the New York Public Library, including ones that don't pull any punches, like Mike Acker's *Speak With No Fear*. Mike promises that under his tutelage you'll “go from a nervous, nauseated, and sweaty speaker to an excited, energized, and passionate presenter.” True enough, Mike—standing at the lectern is scary, but making it sound like a heart attack is not helpful.

Google's ignorance is not only alarming; it's insulting. Apparently, it doesn't know about the hundreds of thousands of Toastmasters who *have* overcome their fears to become self-assured, polished speakers. Are they among the 25% that Google's clutching global algorithms can't seem to find? I believe they are. I think Google is jealous. Google can only speak through canned, electronic voices. Google has no compelling message to share. Google doesn't know what to say until you ask it a question. Google has no body language. Google can't give an Ice Breaker speech. Google is a dud.

Even so, it's an inescapable reality that most people, even the pros, do experience some level of glossophobia (fear of public speaking), from mild anxiety to acute hyperventilation, requiring that the speech be delivered through a paper bag over one's head. For this latter group, I have to wonder: Why do it at all? If standing at the lectern feels like a near-death experience, why not just record your remarks and send everybody the link? The



famous investor Warren Buffett was so scared of facing an audience as a college student that he deliberately picked classes which required no speaking to the class. He did eventually work hard to overcome his fear, because when you're worth \$102.4 billion, you want to tell people about it.

I'm being facetious, of course. I know why even panic-stricken people strive to be better speakers. For one thing, there are the examples of

If standing at the lectern feels like a near-death experience, why not just record your remarks and send everybody the link?

people like Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Abraham Lincoln to show that a good speech can literally change history. You may not aspire to such heights, but even an above-average way with

words will help you persuade the car salesperson to throw in the undercoating for free. The American President Gerald R. Ford said that if he could go back to college he would concentrate on writing and speaking in front of an audience, because “nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively.” This, from a man who said, “If Lincoln were alive today, he'd roll over in his grave.” Say what you will, the man made his point.

It's curious. If public speaking brings so many rewards, why does it seem so threatening?

Well, that urban legend that people fear public speaking more than death itself actually has some truth to it. In your lizard brain—that pre-historic, instinctive, non-rational part of your gray matter that produces the fight-or-flight response—they amount to the same thing. Any caveman being watched by another caveman, or an animal, knew he was being stared at for one of two reasons—to be killed or eaten. So when you step up to the lectern and see thousands of eyes staring at you, your lizard brain says, “This might be a good time to get your affairs in order.”

Now, of course that's not true, but to change that perception you have to argue with a lizard. And that's the problem, isn't it? Like most struggles in life, the enemy lies within. The problem is the person in the mirror. Thankfully, that person can change. Anxiety can become excitement. Fear can become motivation. Self-doubt can become self-assurance. Just don't get too self-assured, believing your every word is a trumpet blast from heaven. That's a dictator, and instead of the audience scaring you, you'll scare the audience, resulting in what you *do* fear most: They probably won't ask you back.

John Cadley is a former advertising copywriter and currently a musician working in upstate New York. Learn more at www.cadleys.com.