

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | NOVEMBER 2013

# TOASTMASTER®



## Speechwriting Secrets

7 tactics, tips and tools you  
can borrow from the pros.

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# On Empowerment



Whenever I meet committed Toastmasters, I often ask this question: "What is the passion that has kept you in Toastmasters all these years?" A surprising number of members reply that it's the joy of seeing people grow, and even transform. This answer reflects their belief in personal empowerment, both in others and themselves.

As is often the case, we see changes in others more clearly than we see them in ourselves.

I have long believed that Toastmasters have the unique insight to use public speaking in a supportive environment as a means of achieving personal empowerment. Self-confidence is the byproduct of an empowered person and an essential quality in a leader. Once acquired, this sense of empowerment and all its benefits show up in every aspect of our lives—in our professional career as well as our personal relationships.

That's why the new Toastmasters Club Mission Statement says, "We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members

**Self-confidence is the byproduct of an empowered person and an essential quality in a leader.**

are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth." Webster's dictionary defines *empower* as "to give power or authority to ... to give ability to; enable; permit."

By way of illustration, I play badminton on Sunday nights with a group of Toastmasters. A frequent partner of mine, who is a more experienced player, often coaches me on how to improve my game. He does so in such a positive and encouraging way that I feel empowered playing with him. When my game improves, he readily affirms my improvement with generous compliments. This creates a benevolent cycle of feedback and improvement.

If he had used the tone of a marine sergeant instead, giving me feedback via barking criticisms, I would not have felt empowered, even though my game may have improved sooner or later. Even international presidents need to feel empowered now and then.

Does this anecdote remind you of the Toastmasters philosophy of constructive evaluation in club meetings, and more broadly, the supportive culture of Toastmasters? Many of you have recently started your leadership journey in Toastmasters, either as a club or district officer. Please remember that while you empower others, you are also empowering *your team* to achieve shared success in the year ahead. **T**

**GEORGE YEN, DTM**  
International President

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P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



### WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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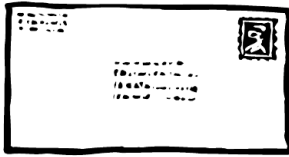
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## Pearls of Wisdom

We each have a story to tell, and some of these stories have changed the course of history. I imagine a speech being akin to a pearl within an oyster shell—as long as it stays there, it grows. Take, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. It didn't just happen, it was nurtured. Every word was carefully crafted, and the speech changed the direction of a nation. Lest we forget, a pearl will be eternally trapped within a shell if it is left to its ultimate demise.

The Toastmasters program gives us the opportunity to open up and share our treasure, even if that treasure is only a grain of sand. The more I learn in Toastmasters, the more I realize that turning a grain of sand into a pearl is a lifelong quest.

**JOHN WALKER, CC**  
South Shore Toastmasters club  
Saint-Lambert, Québec, Canada

## Practice, Practice

I love Table Topics and the chance to practice speaking in public. When I got an invitation to join a panel at the Scottish Parliament, I jumped at the chance. The subject was a bit dry: the issues around

switching current accounts from one bank to another. However, I think we have all dealt with trickier questions in Table Topics.

I felt my experience and enthusiasm for Table Topics in club meetings really helped me. I used my listening skills while others introduced themselves, and made evaluation notes of things to incorporate into my own introduction.

The panel discussion at the Scottish Parliament lasted more than an hour. As I sat in front of the audience, I felt relaxed and confident. Thank you, Toastmasters.

**SIMON MACLAREN, CC, CL**  
Capital Communicators club  
Edinburgh, Scotland

## Pursue Your Goal

I couldn't agree more with Craig Copeland's article "How to Turn Resolutions Into Reality" (June). One of the great benefits I got from Toastmasters is in knowing how to set a goal and achieve it step by step. After I served as club president in 2002–2003, I decided to achieve a DTM by 2010. To make this dream come true, I set a goal of achieving at least one education award, no matter whether it was in the communication or leadership track, each term. I always looked on the bright side, cherished every education award I earned and shared my experiences with members who consistently helped and encouraged me.

Walking slowly but steadily toward my goal, I finally made it happen in 2007, three

years ahead of my original plan. From then on, I asked each president of our club to write down his or her resolutions, and I encouraged every member to do that too.

**BRUCE YANG, DTM**  
Taichung Toastmasters club  
Taichung City, Taichung, Taiwan

## Money Matters

While John Cadley's confession about his financial ignorance ("Smart Money," May) brought more than one smile and chuckle throughout, humor works only when it reflects truth. His statement about "the big Wall Street firms that have driven us to the brink of the fiscal cliff" is ignorance that can't be allowed to pass. The fiscal cliff is a U.S. government finance issue that has absolutely nothing to do with Wall Street.

Both institutions offer plenty to malign—why confuse the rest of us with such off-base jabs?

**JIM MARTELL,**  
Northwest Perimeter Toastmasters  
Atlanta, Georgia

## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Write it in 200 words or less. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org). Please note: Letters are subject to editing for length or clarity, and may be published in both the print and electronic versions of the magazine.



## Call for Presenters

at the 2014  
International Convention in  
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Are you a professional speaker?  
If you have a proven ability to  
successfully speak to large audiences  
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[www.toastmasters.org/CallForPresenters](http://www.toastmasters.org/CallForPresenters)  
before November 15, 2013.





# Companions in Immigration

How I gave voice to a shared journey.

BY J. DEBORAH BOGDON, ACG

The judge and I had tears streaming down our faces as we hugged each other. He had just thanked me for addressing 70 new United States citizens who had been sworn in. I was surprised by how moving this moment was.

I was at the naturalization ceremony, in Las Vegas, Nevada, to surrender my green card and update my status to citizenship. Given an impromptu opportunity to speak to the group, I knew I had to take advantage of it—to give voice to our shared journey. Because of my Toastmasters training, I was able to deliver the speech. And I'm so grateful I did.

When I was growing up on a small Canadian farm, 180 miles northeast of Regina, Saskatchewan, delivering a speech for any reason would have given me nightmares. Even after earning four degrees, I had not overcome the paralyzing fear of public speaking.

When I entered the United States, I joined Southeast Toasters in Lincoln, Nebraska, determined to overcome this phobia as I launched a new career. As director of career services at a Nebraska college, I had a variety of responsibilities, including training student workers, giving class presentations and hosting career fairs. In Toastmasters, I gained impromptu speaking and leadership skills, and the confidence to give evaluations with positive feedback.

I remember the first speaker evaluation I received. I expected to be slammed for my amateurish effort; instead, a helpful recommendation sandwiched between two recognized strengths gave me the courage to go on. Friendly faces and humor were trademarks of my Toastmasters club, and they were exactly what I needed amid the stress of my move to a new country.

On the day of the naturalization ceremony in Las Vegas, I was one of the last to check in. I heard each person ahead of me decline the offer to speak. When I saw the diversity of our new citizen group, I had an overwhelming urge to welcome them to the U.S. Although we had come from different backgrounds and different countries, we were connected by this shared journey. We filled out the same forms, sent in our hard-earned money, and waited anxiously for approval to live in the U.S. My heart went out to each individual as I thought how




*J. Deborah Bogdon celebrates her U.S. citizenship with the judge who swore her in at a naturalization ceremony.*

much more difficult it must have been for those whose primary language was not English.

I accepted the offer to speak and created an impromptu three-minute talk while standing in line. Thanks to Toastmasters, in a matter of minutes I had mind-mapped my message.

After the judge introduced me, I shared with the new citizens how my son and I came to the U.S. in 1996 for a job in Nebraska, and how we stayed because of the people. I spoke from my heart, and concluded my message by wishing each new citizen every blessing and much joy in the U.S. I thanked the judge for the opportunity to speak, returned to my front-row seat and took in the enthusiastic applause in the courtroom.

Subsequent to that eventful day, I began pursuing my passion as a family therapist. I now work as an addictions counselor at a world-renowned treatment center in California. Whenever I can, I arrange my travel schedule to include a return visit to my friends and mentors at Southeast Toasters. My Toastmasters and citizenship journey was my epiphany to live an abundant life while articulating hope and healing to others.

Memories like the one of my courtroom speech continue to give me joy every step of the way. 

**J. DEBORAH BOGDON, ACG**, is a member of Redlands Community Toastmasters in Redlands, California, and a contributor to the book *Heart of a Toastmaster*.

## HOW HAS THE TOASTMASTERS PROGRAM HELPED YOU?

*Do you have a story to share about overcoming obstacles and lessons learned? Please share it in this column using 700 words or less. State your name, member number and home club, and send it to [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org) with "My Turn" in the subject line. Please note: Articles are subject to editing for length or clarity, and may be published in both the print and electronic versions of the magazine. For more information, visit [www.toastmasters.org/WriterGuidelines](http://www.toastmasters.org/WriterGuidelines).*

# AROUND THE GLOBE

## In Brief

### SEND YOUR FEEDBACK

Have you seen the digital edition of the *Toastmaster* on the iPad, or noticed the redesigned print edition? Please send your feedback to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org), and state your name, member number and home club.

### HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Show your appreciation to fellow members and leaders with gifts from the Toastmasters Online Store. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/apparelgifts](http://www.toastmasters.org/apparelgifts) to see the selection.



### ENTER THE VIDEO BRAND CONTEST

Does your club need help transitioning to the updated brand? If so, enter Toastmasters' monthly video brand contest to win branded banners, lecterns and marketing materials. The contest ends January 31, 2014. Learn more at [www.toastmasters.org/brandportal](http://www.toastmasters.org/brandportal).

### PLANNING A SPEECH CONTEST?

Ensure that your contest is a success and contestants are eligible to compete by using the most up-to-date speech contest materials. You can download them from the Toastmasters Online Store for free at [www.toastmasters.org/digitalspeechcontests](http://www.toastmasters.org/digitalspeechcontests).



### MEMBER MOMENT



## Power Paddling



**Brian McMahon, CC, CL**, has had quite a ride in Toastmasters. A member of the Powerlink club in Virginia, Queensland, Australia, he says his Toastmasters training helps in many areas, including in the sport he is passionate about: dragon boating. A dragon boat is a long canoe-like boat with a carved dragon head in the front and dragon tail in the back.

Dragon boat teams comprise of 20 paddlers, a drummer and a sweep (who steers the boat). In July, McMahon participated in an international tournament in Hungary, as

part of a national Australian team that won gold medals in several races.

McMahon is a structural design specialist with Powerlink Queensland, a government-owned electricity company. An accredited facilitator, he also presents a program to employees based on Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

### How do you use communication and leadership skills when maneuvering a dragon boat?

The instructions given by the sweep on the boat must be clear, concise and audible. The same Toastmasters training that teaches us how to get to the point and project our voices also helps me deliver calm and clear instructions to the entire crew on the boat.

### Why did you join Toastmasters?

Mostly to improve my impromptu speaking skills. Consequently, I look forward to Table Topics. Although I still feel some trepidation before being called up, it is a terrific buzz to run with a topic and entertain the club.

### What do you enjoy about being a facilitator?

I like being able to help open people's minds to new ideas that can help them in their personal and working lives.

### INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

## Keyboard Diversity

When you type on a keyboard you're familiar with, your fingers know exactly where to go. Be prepared for the unfamiliar if you travel to other countries without your own laptop.

The most common keyboard layout is known as QWERTY, referring to the first six letters on the top left-hand side of the keyboard. But different keyboard patterns are used in different countries, writes Carlo Alcos on the Matador Network ([www.matadornetwork.com](http://www.matadornetwork.com)), a site devoted to travel journalism. For example, in countries like Germany and Austria, you'll see keyboards with the QWERTZ arrangement. In Belgium and France, notes Alcos, keyboards have the AZERTY layout.

It's not just the location of the letters that vary—the positioning of symbols and function keys can also lead you astray.





## SNAPSHOT

*Utrecht Toastmasters in Utrecht, the Netherlands, is a diverse club that has members from South Africa, Germany, Vietnam and India. The city of Utrecht is home to several colleges with international students, as well as a large expatriate community, which helps to create an eclectic club membership. Club president Leo Woning, ACB, ALB, is in the front row, center.*

## ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

### Rochelle Rice, ACS

#### ACCREDITED SPEAKER

This month, Accredited Speaker Rochelle Rice, ACS, shares lessons learned. A member of the Bryant Park Toastmasters in New York, New York, Rochelle spoke about discrimination against overweight women in the speech that earned her the Accredited Speaker award.

#### Why did you choose to speak about this topic in particular?

Outside of Toastmasters, I teach overweight women how to lead an active lifestyle through joyful movement. Focusing on the subject of size discrimination comes from my years as a professional dancer, when I never felt thin enough, good enough or just enough. Speaking about this topic touches my heart deeply and creates one of the greatest challenges for a Toastmaster: to speak from that poignant place of being on the authentic edge of tears—and not letting them spill over. A speaker's most genuine skill is being willing to be raw and vulnerable without making your audience feel uncomfortable.



## WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

### How do you avoid using crutch words?

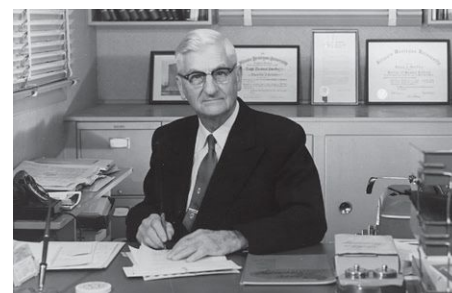
"Try saying crutch words under your breath or in your mind—just not out loud. After a while, you might completely eliminate crutch words."

**Pamela A. Lee, ACG, CL**  
Everybody Speaks club  
San Francisco, California

"Lots of sentences begin with crutch words like *and*, *so*, *now* or *but*. There's a simple way to avoid them: Observe punctuation. Quite often we start a sentence with *and* simply because our vocal inflection makes it sound like the previous sentence hasn't ended. As a result, we don't insert a pause. When we make a sentence sound complete—when that last syllable sounds final—we're more likely to start the next sentence as though the first word is important, rather than using a throw-away word or an *ah*."

**Marcia Roberts, DTM**  
Eyeopeners club  
Tucson, Arizona

Members contributed to the discussion on the LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Members Group.



"Speech is much more than merely standing before an audience and saying something."

**DR. RALPH C. SMEDLEY**  
1878-1965  
TOASTMASTERS FOUNDER

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



**EDDIE DUNN, DTM**

*Past International President  
1983–1984*

*Fargo, North Dakota*

## What inspires you?

It is inspiring to watch individuals come into our organization and with time, coupled with determination, discover the very essence of what our organization has to offer.

Perceptive members soon realize the organization is much more than simply a friendly environment in which to develop communication and leadership skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. They realize they are experiencing personal growth. Women and men discover how Toastmasters gives them the power to change their vision, their potential and their individual mission. This allows them to enjoy a richer, fuller and more meaningful life.

When members realize they have the power to change, they experience the full potential of Toastmasters membership. Observing those moments is not only gratifying—it is inspiring.



Find the *Toastmaster* magazine app on the Apple App Store

### MEET MY MENTOR



## Gilly Cutts, DTM

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Sally Maier-Yip, CC, a member of the London Cardinals Toastmasters in England, shares how she has benefited from her mentor, Gilly Cutts, DTM, of the same club. Cutts says she benefits too: "I sincerely believe that as the mentor/mentee relationship grows, it becomes a mutually supportive and encouraging experience."

### Sally, why did you join Toastmasters?

I am from Hong Kong, Cantonese is my native language, and I work in public relations. In 2008, while I was working in Singapore, my boss recommended that I join Toastmasters to improve my spoken English. When I moved to London in 2011, I joined the London Cardinals club where I met Gilly.

### Tell us about your mentor.

Gilly is a retired counselor. She shows members how to lead by serving others. People are drawn to her affection, elegance, sense of humor and heart-to-heart exchanges, in addition to her public speaking skills.

As club founder, Gilly is the soul and joy of our club. She encourages members during every step in the Toastmasters journey.

### How does Gilly give feedback?

She usually reads a draft of my speech and tells me how I can improve it. Once the speech is finalized, Gilly and I arrange Skype meetings and I practice while she watches. Then she gives me specific feedback, often using examples and vivid illustrations to make her point.

### What specific goals have you accomplished while under your mentor's guidance?

I serve my club as the vice president public relations.

For more information about mentoring, download the *Mentoring* module (Item 296DCD) of The Successful Club Series from the Toastmasters Online Store at [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org).



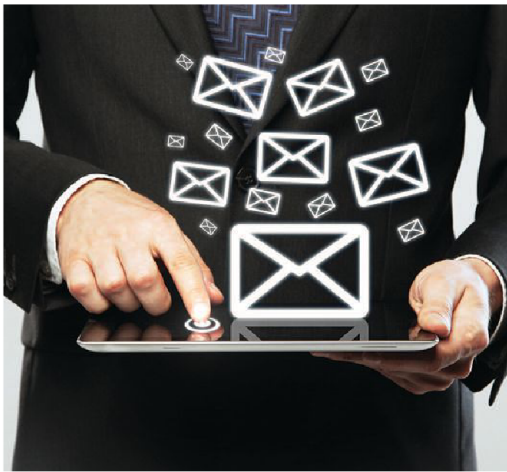
**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sally Maier-Yip, CC, and her mentor, Gilly Cutts, DTM.



## COMMUNICATION TIP

## Email Etiquette

Online communication, especially email, is the workplace norm. Read on to learn how to convey your thoughts clearly and effectively in the digital age.



- Be mindful of grammar, spelling and punctuation. For example, avoid using all caps (“This is IMPORTANT”) and excessive punctuation (“Thank you!!!!”), which look unprofessional.
- Type a clear and specific heading into the subject line to distinguish your message from other emails. Use a greeting, and address the reader by name. If it’s a professional message, include a courtesy title and the recipient’s last name.
- Keep the email short and to the point so your message doesn’t get lost in the verbiage.
- Use discretion when attaching large files to emails, which can clog up the recipient’s inbox. It’s preferable to upload your files to a digital dropbox, where the recipient can click on a link to download attachments.
- Click “reply all” to an email only if you can add something to the conversation.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

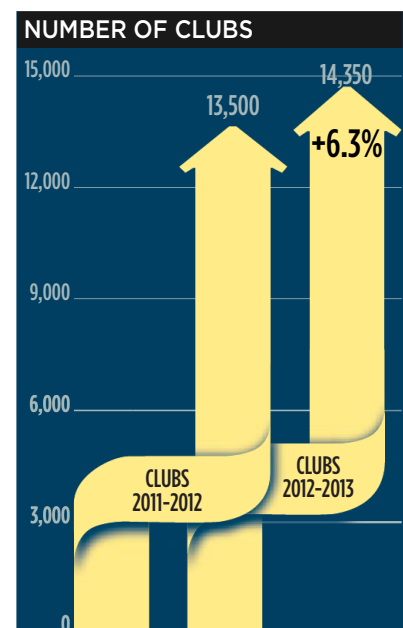
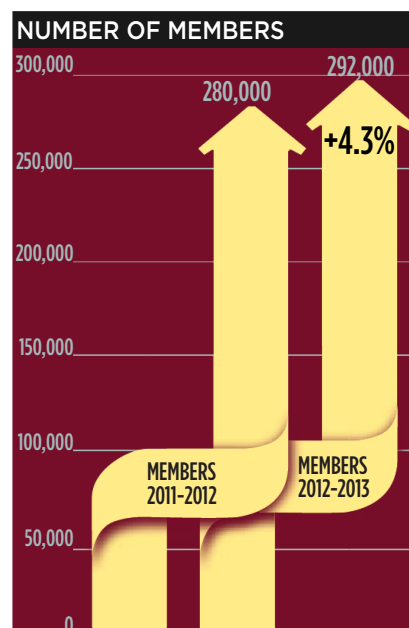


At the end of the 1991–92 Toastmasters year, District 27 had about 3,000 members in clubs from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, to Washington, D.C., to the southern tip of Maryland. The district had the highest percentage of Distinguished clubs in the world. In late 1992, some of its leaders, including District Governor Jo Condrill (shown holding the banner), gathered in front of the U.S. Capitol building to create a keepsake of that memorable year.

## FACTS WORTH KNOWING

## Toastmasters Is Bigger, Better

The results are in. Toastmasters is helping more people than ever become more confident speakers and leaders. Membership now exceeds 292,000, spread among more than 14,350 clubs worldwide. This marks a 4.3 percent increase in members and a 6.3 percent jump in clubs from the 2011–12 program year to 2012–13.



**1+1 RESULTS** As a result of the 1+1 membership-building program that ended June 30, 2013, Toastmasters clubs gained **5,295** new members. To see a list of districts and clubs that drew the most new members, visit [www.toastmasters.org/1plus1](http://www.toastmasters.org/1plus1).

# Speed Up Your Speech Preparation

Ease the process by avoiding memorization.

BY MICHELE GUERIN, DTM

**H**ow much time do you devote to preparing a five-to-seven-minute speech? Days? Weeks? Do you write and rewrite your material? How much time do you spend practicing your speech, struggling to commit it to memory?

Wouldn't it be fantastic to be able to prepare a speech the day before you are scheduled to give it and to deliver it with panache and not have to memorize it word for word?

If you are now saying to yourself, *Maybe someone with a photographic memory can do that, but not me*, then read on—and believe me when I tell you, anyone can do it.

Three things bog down the speech-writing process. The first is consistently choosing speech material you are unfamiliar with. The next is writing out your speech word for word. The last is memorizing and practicing it word for word, trying to strictly adhere to your “script.”

Wouldn't it be fantastic to be able to prepare a speech the day before you are scheduled to give it and to deliver it with panache and not have to memorize it word for word?

## Research Not Required

Choosing a topic that is unfamiliar—one that requires research—automatically makes preparing for a speech time-consuming. Besides needing to research the information, you need to spend time studying and remembering the material because it is all newly learned.



*Not memorizing your speech involves some risk, but through practice you can master the process, wow your audience, and save time.*

In contrast, choosing a familiar subject or personal life experience as your topic shortens your preparation time. You already know the subject—you just need to decide how to present it. I am not suggesting that one never deliver a speech that requires additional background work; indeed, doing so is a valuable learning experience. But if you take

this approach with every speech topic, you set yourself up for excessive preparation time.

## No Need to Memorize

Writing your speech out word for word makes you feel the need to memorize it word for word. This is time-consuming and also wreaks havoc with your speech



delivery. How many times have we seen speakers flounder for words, having memorized their speech and then forgotten a word or two when delivering it. Suddenly, they are in front of the room at a loss to continue. They frantically check their notes, if they have them, to find where they left off, and then continue, hoping not to lose their place again. This situation breaks up the flow of a speech, risks losing the audience's attention and throws off the speaker.

Rather than word-for-word memorization, consider the information you want to include in the speech and create an outline of the material. You may want to memorize the opening and closing. For the body of the speech, you just need to know the ideas from your outline, and the telling of it will come naturally. Trust that you will know what is familiar to you.

Let's use a hypothetical example for practice. Suppose you decide to give a speech about how generosity and compassion can still be found in this world. You plan to talk about a time when your car broke down in a snowstorm, leaving you stranded at night in a strange town. A good Samaritan stopped and helped you make arrangements to have your vehicle towed to a service-station garage. You had to wait until morning to have your car fixed, so that same person offered you the hospitality of his home for the night. The next morning, he drove you to the service station and refused your offer of money for his hospitality.

### On to the Outline

Here's how you could outline your speech:

**1 The opening**—something that will immediately pull your audience in. For example: "Are you afraid of strangers? Have the words 'stranger danger' been ingrained in your brain, making you reluctant to trust anyone? Let me share

with you an experience I had that left me thanking God for the kindness of a stranger."

**2 First paragraph**—setting up the scene of your story and the circumstances. (Your car broke down in a snowstorm and you find yourself stranded.)

**3 Next main paragraph**—the body of the story. (A stranger stopped to help you with your car and followed up with a series of kind actions.)

## Memorizing your speech word for word is time-consuming and also wreaks havoc with your speech delivery.

**4 Next main paragraph**—the outcome of the story. (The good Samaritan took you to the garage and you made it home safely.)

**5 The closing**—something the audience will find memorable or that ties your speech back to your opening. For example, "So the next time your brain screams 'Stranger Danger,' trust your instincts, but also be open to the kindness of strangers and to the possibility that compassion, consideration and civility are alive and well in the world."

Notice, there is no speech written out. The outline comprises only ideas grouped together in the order you will tell the story. You know the story, so there is no need to write it out word for word. For example, when you talk about being stranded and then seeing a car approaching, you know what is going to happen next—there's no need to memorize the words to tell the story.

### Practice Without Memorizing

Now comes practicing your speech. Each time you practice it, it will come off a little differently, because you are not memorizing it. The wording may be a little different, and the gestures and body language may also be a bit different, but the storyline and information you share will always be the same.

Each time you practice, it is important that you time yourself. Ideally, the timing for the opening and closing of your speech should be kept fairly rigid, but there is wiggle room in the body portion. Taking note of the time when key parts of your speech begin allows you to mentally assess whether some on-the-spot editing is required to finish on time.

This is the beauty of not memorizing a speech word for word: It allows for much more flexibility in delivery. There is no "losing your place." Your words will be able to flow with the material. You won't be thrown off by forgetting a line or some small details (the audience won't know anyway). Just concentrate on your main points and tying it all together at the end.

You may be thinking, *This sounds a bit scary; I don't feel well prepared without a memorized speech.* But this is what Toastmasters is all about: taking risks in the supportive environment of our clubs to experiment and develop new skills.

Next time, don't do it line by line. Outline! Focus on your content, practice your delivery, be aware of your time, and go out there and wow your audience, knowing you now have the skill to prepare a speech with time to spare. **T**

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**MICHELE GUERIN, DTM**, is a member of Delaware County Toastmasters in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

# Victory Through Volunteering

Members who help at speech contests play a vital role.

BY RACHEL MCCALLUM, CC

Imagine you're attending an area speech contest. You've heard a lot of amazing speakers and can't wait to find out who won. You see the shiny trophies lined up and ready to be handed out. You feel the excitement in the air. The moment you've been waiting for has finally arrived.

"And the winner is ... the contest chair!"

OK, that's not quite right. Speech contest volunteers don't win trophies. But make no mistake: Their efforts at such events also represent a triumph. It takes many hard-working volunteers behind the scenes to plan a contest and ensure it runs smoothly.

Members are needed to create programs, arrange catering, secure a venue, collect money from attendees and perform additional tasks before the contest. During the event, there's a need for timers, ballot counters, sergeants at arms, test speakers, contest Toastmasters, and, of course, contest chairs.

**"As a contestant, your focus is personal; as a volunteer, your focus is on all elements of the contest."**

— AVIS FRENCH, CL

Without members performing the jobs to make a contest possible, there would be no trophies for speakers to take home.

While volunteers don't win prizes, they benefit in other ways. Helping at a speech competition is a rewarding opportunity to learn, grow and serve, say those who have volunteered at contests. Such experiences help you become a better leader.

### Essential Roles

Whether you're front and center acting as the Toastmaster or in the back timing contestants, every participant is essential to the event. Roger Brown, vice president education



*Taking on roles like that of the timer in a speech contest allows members to experience the next level of competition.*

for the UniMasters club in Lake Forest, California, has performed the roles of sergeant at arms and timer at division contests. He says, "It was a great opportunity to move out of the comfort of the club setting and experience the next level of competition in roles that are pretty critical to the contest."

Avis French, CL, also of UniMasters, knows speech contests inside and out. She has performed every possible supporting contest role. She says, "As a contestant, your focus is personal; as a volunteer, your

focus is on all elements of the contest. When you're a volunteer, you concentrate on doing your job correctly to ensure that the contest is properly run and that the winners are qualified contestants. There is much you can do to ensure that outcome."

French encourages the novice Toastmaster to attend a contest as a spectator and then serve as a volunteer before trying to be a contestant. "Being in a speech contest, particularly at the higher levels, is much different from presenting in front of your



fellow club members,” she says. “I think it is a good idea to be comfortable with the atmosphere of a contest before you try competing.”

### Extra Evaluations

Another educational opportunity comes from being a test speaker for an Evaluation Contest. You give a speech and then all the contestants evaluate you. All members benefit from having their speeches evaluated by a fellow club member—imagine how much you can learn being evaluated by members from a number of different clubs. Susanna Dussling, ACB, of Cy-Fair Super Speakers in Cypress, Texas, was the test speaker for her division’s Evaluation Contest in 2012.

“It was a lot of fun,” she says. “It was refreshing to present to a different group of people. It was also great to receive six different evaluations for one speech.”

Dussling says all Toastmasters can benefit from attending speech contests, whether it’s to watch, compete or volunteer.

“I volunteer to meet Toastmasters from other clubs,” she says. “It helps me to grow both as a speaker and leader. I glean ideas from others to bring back to my club to help it grow and prosper. By listening to contestants, I learn from their speeches, and it helps me to improve my own.”


“When you make an effort to step outside your comfortable club setting, you grow.”

It’s true. Everyone can improve by watching more advanced speakers. And with a diverse group of people competing, you can soak up information on a wide range of subjects. Speeches can cover everything from how to become a better leader to how to care for foster children.

### The Volunteer Spirit

Jeanette Salazar, CC, of Ziggurat 425 Toastmasters in Laguna Niguel, California, simply loves to serve others. She has volunteered at five speech contests.

Salazar says, “It makes me happy to see that I have some small effect on even a single person. It’s amazing how much one look, smile or gracious word can change someone’s day from gray to sunny in one moment.”

For volunteers like Salazar, no trophy is necessary. They derive satisfaction from simply helping their fellow Toastmasters. Get in the volunteer spirit and assist at your area, division or district speech contests. Meet new people and put a smile on someone’s face. You will gain more from participating outside your club than you may have thought possible. 

**RACHEL MCCALLUM, CC**, is a member of UniMasters in Lake Forest, California. She has served two terms as her club’s vice president public relations.

## Pointers for Contest Planning

If you are chairing a speech contest, remember these five key components to plan a successful event:

- **Book a venue.** Event space is a critical element in contests, say veteran speakers. Ideal venues offer low ceilings, a clear stage view and close proximity between the stage and the first row of chairs.
- **Handpick a team.** Running a contest effectively means that you must delegate roles and recruit volunteers. Select people who are dependable and experienced to fill key positions, such as chief judge, sergeant at arms and timer.
- **Create an agenda.** Early on, design a contest-agenda template and add the categories as they become available: contestants (remember that their eligibility must be confirmed), volunteer team, visiting officers, the program and timeline, sponsor credits and upcoming events. A timeline keeps your program on track from start to finish.
- **Communicate clearly and often.** A contest chair can never communicate too much with the contest team and contestants. Secure contacts’ email addresses and group them for frequent and clear instructions about contest location, time, speech titles and team roles. After the contest, send emails to the contest chair at the next level of the competition, with the winners’ complete contact information.
- **Generate publicity.** It’s vital to let other clubs and the community at large know about an upcoming contest. To publicize events, take advantage of free social networking tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube. Also, remember to publicize the contest winners with your local media.

— By Janet Reese, DTM

*This is a condensed version of an article by Janet Reese that appeared in the November 2010 issue of the Toastmaster magazine. Reese has chaired several speech contests.*

*Note: Contest chairs will find a helpful checklist located near the back of the Speech Contest Rulebook, which is available for free at [www.toastmasters.org/1171DCD](http://www.toastmasters.org/1171DCD).*



*In August, on a stage in Cincinnati, Ohio, Presiyan Vasilev mimed his futile attempt to turn a tire crank to change a flat tire in his championship-round speech, "Changed by a Tire."*

## Changed by a Tire

Bulgarian native makes history at World Championship of Public Speaking.

BY PAUL STERMAN

It had been a long road for the man speaking about the flat tire. Presiyan Vasilev's journey to the 2013 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking began 11 years ago, when he moved from Sofia, Bulgaria, to Chicago, Illinois. He eventually joined six Toastmasters clubs, where he persistently practiced his speaking skills and English pronunciation.

In August, Vasilev stood on a stage in Cincinnati, Ohio, delivering his championship-round speech, "Changed by a Tire." Combining self-deprecating humor with a message about reaching out to others, he triumphed over eight other members from around the world.

"I had so much fun delivering that speech," says Vasilev, ACB, in an interview. "It was a fantastic, indescribable experience." The 30-year-old sales professional is believed to be the first native of Bulgaria to win the World Championship of Public Speaking.

The championship capped off the 2013 International Convention in Cincinnati. This year's International Speech Contest drew 30,000 participants from 122 countries. The second-place winner was Kingi Biddle, CC, from Rotorua, New Zealand, with a speech titled "My Sitting Place." Shurooq Albanna from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, delivering the speech



"Finding the Pearl," won third place. She is the first woman from an Arab country to advance to the championship round.

### Driving the Message Home

In his speech, Vasilev described driving in Chicago one night when he discovered his car had a flat tire. In the trunk was an old tire jack. Painting a picture for the audience, the speaker mimed his futile effort to turn the tire crank, adding squeaky sound effects to complete the image.

Vasilev said he was too proud to ask anyone for assistance. His epiphany came when he finally relented and asked a gas station attendant for help. The large man turned the crank with ease. Tire changed. And lesson learned.

**"I believed reaching out was a weakness, but I discovered my weakness was in refusing to reach out."**

— PRESIYAN VASILEV  
in his championship speech

"That night I stopped to change a tire. Instead, the tire changed me," Vasilev said in his speech. "I believed reaching out was a weakness, but I discovered my weakness was in refusing to reach out."

Everyone needs to ask for help at times, he stressed, whether from family, colleagues, fellow Toastmasters or, if the occasion arises, a DJM—Distinguished Jack Master.

### A Passionate Participant

Vasilev dedicated himself to Toastmasters after joining three years ago. He is a member of six clubs in the Chicago area, participating in meetings several nights a week. Jeffrey Stein, CC, ALB, a fellow District 30 member, praises Vasilev's dedication.

"Our district has a lot of *very* talented speakers, but none worked as hard as he has the last three years," Stein wrote on the Facebook Official Toastmasters International Members Group.

When he first started as a member, Vasilev focused primarily on giving evaluations, not speeches. This way, he says, he could help others improve while also establishing for himself a strong foundation of speaking skills. Evaluating other members' speeches, notes Vasilev, gives you insight into what works and what doesn't. "If I could give one piece of advice to members," he says, "it would be this: Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate."

### Honing English Skills

In the wake of Vasilev's win in Cincinnati, several members on the Toastmasters Facebook site wrote that they were inspired by seeing a non-native English speaker achieve such success. Vasilev

*continued on page 28*



## 2013 CONVENTION IN REVIEW

More than 1,600 people attended the 82nd annual Toastmasters International Convention to enjoy keynote presentations, learn best practices in communication and leadership, and celebrate a new lineup of leaders.

At the Opening Ceremonies, keynote speaker Roger Love—a leading voice coach—gave members practical tips for improving their vocal power and influence, and led the audience through vocal control exercises.

The four-day program at the Duke Energy Convention Center, held August 21–24 in Cincinnati, Ohio, included 11 communication and leadership skill-building sessions. Additionally, introvert expert Susan Cain gave an insightful presentation when honored on August 23 as Toastmasters International's 2013 Golden Gavel recipient. She talked about how introverts can use their innate strengths to become great leaders.

George Yen, DTM, of Taipei, Taiwan, was installed as the new International President during the President's Dinner Dance. He is the first International President from Taiwan. A chairman of the board of six companies, he joined Toastmasters 24 years ago and is a member of four clubs.

Mohammed Murad, DTM, of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, was selected as the International President-Elect. Rounding out the 2013–2014 Executive Committee is First Vice President Jim Kokocki, DTM, of Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, and Second Vice President Mike Storkey, DTM, of Townsville, Queensland, Australia. Seven new members of Toastmasters International's Board of Directors were also chosen. For complete election results, visit [www.toastmasters.org/annualbusinessmeetingresults](http://www.toastmasters.org/annualbusinessmeetingresults).

During the Hall of Fame ceremony, 12 districts were recognized as President's Distinguished, doubling the total from last year. District 59 had the highest percentage of Distinguished clubs in the world. The other districts receiving President's Distinguished recognition were, in order of performance: 41, 85, 76, 82, 48, 81, 20, 89, 17, 79 and 27.

# Speechwriting Secrets

7 tactics, tips and tools you can borrow from the pros.

BY DENISE GRAVELINE

Presidents, politicians and CEOs often employ speechwriters, but what if you're not lucky enough to have a team of scribes at hand? You can save time, words and worry if you borrow speechwriting tips directly from the professionals. As a speaker coach, I turn to my colleagues for ideas and inspiration. Here are some of my favorite tips:

**1 Start strong and command attention.** In the book *Confessions of a Public Speaker*, Scott Berkun writes of how he plans ways to grab and hold the audience's attention throughout his speech. Take advantage of the moment right before the speech begins, when a hush falls over the crowd, Berkun says—that special moment is the only time a speaker has the entire audience's full attention.

*What defines how well I'll do starts with how I use the power of that moment. ...*

*Will you use that moment of full attention [to express] your message? Or will you spend it on thank yous, jokes and throat-clearing? Planning a strong start for your speech will help you command attention immediately, instead of wasting that precious moment.*

**2 Create a structure.** Daniel Pink was a speechwriter to former U.S. Vice President Al Gore. In an article on [www.fourhourworkweek.com](http://www.fourhourworkweek.com), Pink suggests imposing a structure on your speech right from the start.

*Give the speech a beginning, a middle and an end. You don't have to take the audience by the hand and walk them through each step. And you don't have to proceed chronologically. But having that structure in your head will give your speech a shape. And it will provide your audience some guideposts about where you've been and where you're going.*

The beginning-middle-end construction is just one variant on the classic rhetorical "rule of three," which grew out of the ancient oral storytelling







*Speechwriters suggest using vivid, descriptive language, and making notes and revisions as you read your manuscript aloud.*

tradition. That tradition is the way we shared information before writing it. Over time, storytellers found that they and their listeners could most easily remember stories structured in three parts, which is why so many fairy tales have triads in them (think three little pigs or three blind mice). The rule of three can help you create the same dramatic tension, release and conclusion you find in such tales, writes Christopher Booker in *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*.

*Much as we say “Ready, steady, go” to prepare and concentrate the runners at the start of a race, the process of three conveys the steady buildup to a moment of transformation which enables the hero or heroine to move on to the next stage.*

Andrew Dlugan is founder of the public speaking blog *Six Minutes*. In a post titled “How to Use the Rule of Three in Your Speeches,” he shares several classic and contemporary examples of the rule. One is Julius Caesar’s famous phrase: “Veni, vidi, vici” (I came, I saw, I conquered).

You can use the rule of three to structure a single sentence, or expand it to serve as the structure for each phase of a speech.

**3 Don’t write down your own stories.** My favorite tip makes your task easier: If you plan to include a personal story or anecdote, don’t write it into your speech. You should practice it to make sure the delivery is crisp and it stays within the time allotted, but don’t write it out and don’t read it to your audience. It’s a story you should know well, and you’ll be far more engaging if you look at the

audience and just tell it, rather than reading a polished version. For the purposes of your text, just leave extra space and insert a note like: [TELL VACUUM CLEANER STORY HERE]. Use that as your prompt.

**4 To persuade, use concrete words.** A 2009 study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* suggests that you can use grand, vague terms to inspire your audience if the topic involves a far-off goal. But the closer your audience gets to making a decision, the more it will be persuaded by specific terms. Use concrete nouns and active verbs if your talk is intended to convince doubters, make a sale, present a position or persuade people to vote your way.

I often recommend that speakers describe something so clearly that listeners see it in their mind's eye. It's a subtle way to involve your listeners, and they'll

I often recommend that speakers describe something so clearly that listeners see it in their mind's eye.

remember what they can picture on their own longer than any slide you might use.

**5 Make 'em laugh.** Peggy Noonan, a speechwriter to former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, advocates using humor to win your audience over. Her advice in a 2008 *Wall Street Journal* column was aimed at a U.S. Republican presidential candidate, but it works just as well for a Toastmaster.

*A voter laughing is half yours, and [the listener] just received a line he can repeat next weekend over a beer at the barbecue or online at Starbucks. ... When two people meet, as they come to know each other as*



*Peggy Noonan, left, speechwriter to former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, advocates using humor to win your audience over. Daniel Pink, right, a speechwriter to former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, suggests structuring your speech right from the start.*



*neighbors or colleagues ... one of the great ways of making a simple small human connection is: shared laughter.*

Where can you find good examples of humor in speechwriting? Check out books written by Fred Metcalf. A speechwriter for the late British journalist and TV show host David Frost, and a humor writer for former U.K. Prime Minister John Major, Metcalf has written a shelf's worth of books on humorous quotations. They include *The Penguin Dictionary of Modern Humorous Quotations* and his series of books on humorous business, political, literary and sports quotations.

**6 End strong.** The ending of your speech makes a final impression on your audience—so make it a powerful one, says Craig Valentine, CTM, the 1999 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. “You can give a wonderful speech but if the ending is weak, your audience will walk away feeling like the speech wasn't very strong,” Valentine writes on his website,

[www.craigvalentine.com](http://www.craigvalentine.com). In a post titled “Closing Your Speech with Impact,” he outlines four tools to end strong.

- Before you close your speech, signal that you are closing. It provides a cue for the audience that the end is near. Valentine says he uses phrases such as “Let's wrap this message up” or “I'll leave you with this ...”
- As you move into your closing, touch again on each of the major points you made in your speech.
- It's OK to have a Q&A with your speech, but don't end with it. Have it about 90 percent of the way through your speech. “Your message needs to be the absolute last thing in [your audience's] ears,” Valentine writes.
- Anchor the end of your speech with a positive, powerful story that shows your audience your message will work for them.

**7 Read it out loud, then edit.** Fletcher Dean, who has written speeches for business, educational and motivational



speakers, advocates editing *after* you've read your speech out loud. In his book *10 Steps to Writing a Vital Speech*, Dean offers this tip:

*Close yourself off in a private room and read through the entire manuscript [aloud]. You're checking for several things: How long the speech is, whether you trip over any words, clumsy phrasing, sentences that are too long, and ways to improve the pacing. Keep a fresh red pen handy to make notes, rewrite, then read it aloud again.*

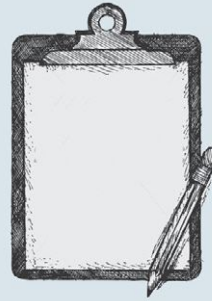
“One of the great ways of making a simple small human connection is: shared laughter.”

— PEGGY NOONAN,  
speechwriter for former  
U.S. President Ronald Reagan

You may find it useful to make an audio recording of your read-through, so you can be sure to catch all the areas that need changing. Once you've recorded yourself reading the speech, listen with the text in front of you and make changes as you go. A recording of your final version can help you practice, too—just listen to it over and over to learn your text without having to refer to it.

Use these seven tips from the pros to help you craft powerful and engaging speeches. **T**

**DENISE GRAVELINE** is a Washington, D.C.-based speaker coach and communications consultant who blogs about women and public speaking at [www.eloquentwoman.blogspot.com](http://www.eloquentwoman.blogspot.com). She chaired the European Speechwriters Network Conference in Brussels in September.



## Resources from Professional Speechwriters

One of the easiest ways to hone your speechwriting skills is to look over the shoulders, so to speak, of professional speechwriters around the world. Here are some resources to help you improve your speechwriting and make the process easier.

**Follow a professional speechwriters organization.** These groups offer a wealth of resources to help advance your speechwriting skills, including conferences and newsletters. Look on LinkedIn for the National Association of American Speechwriters Group, or explore the European Speechwriter Network and the U.K. Speechwriters' Guild, which hold joint conferences, publish newsletters and members' speeches, and offer workshops on speechwriting. Keep in mind that many professional groups limit membership to those whose primary work responsibilities include speechwriting. However, most speechwriting groups include some freely available material online, such as audio from their conferences or sample speeches.

**Turn to social media.** On Twitter, search for posts with the hashtag **#speechwriting** to see tweets from speechwriters. You'll find articles offering tips and insights, as well as commentary and criticism about recent speeches. Don't forget to post questions about speechwriting, using the hashtag to make sure they reach interested audiences.

**Read professional speechwriting articles and tips.** Ragan Communications, a publisher for communications professionals, has an entire section on its website about speechwriting. Its articles examine current speeches and speechwriting tactics and provide delivery advice. *Vital Speeches of the Day* is a magazine that publishes top speeches and offers a website ([www.vsotd.com](http://www.vsotd.com)) with links to speechwriting blogs, a free email newsletter and more.

**Stock your speechwriting bookshelf.** Many speechwriters have penned books to help us learn from their successes and mistakes. Fletcher Dean wrote *10 Steps to Writing a Vital Speech: The Definitive Guide to Professional Speechwriting*. Peggy Noonan offers advice in *On Speaking Well: How to Give a Speech With Style, Substance, and Clarity*. Max Atkinson, speechwriter to former British Parliament member Paddy Ashdown, authored the comprehensive guide *Lend Me Your Ears: All You Need to Know about Making Speeches and Presentations*.

— Denise Graveline

# Following an Advanced Path

These manuals will hone your core skills on the way to a DTM.

BY BILL BROWN, ACG, ALB

**Y**ou have just completed your 10th speech in the *Competent Communication* manual. The vice president education (VPE) of your club rushes up to you after the meeting, congratulates you and says, “Toastmasters International will give you two free advanced communication manuals. I need to know your choices *right now* so I can submit them with your Competent Communicator Award Application. Which two do you want?”

The euphoria of accomplishment swiftly changes as you are faced with making a decision about which manuals might be best for you. You blurt out the first thing that pops into your mind, but did you make the right decision based on your speaking and career goals?

As a three-time VPE, I have seen that scenario many times. And I have developed my own thoughts about the best route for members to follow as they

I believe *The Entertaining Speaker* is, for most Toastmasters, the best advanced manual to start with.

continue their course to a DTM. This plan has helped many Toastmasters navigate through the sometimes confusing waters of the advanced manuals. Perhaps it will benefit you, as well.

## Map Out Your Manuals

If you have a particular career situation or objective, you might want to begin with manuals such as *Technical Presentations*, *Speeches by Management* or *Public Relations*. Most members, however, are in



*Advanced manuals offer an opportunity to gain specific professional skills and earn an advanced communicator award.*

Toastmasters to build their general speaking skills. If that is you, I suggest you start with what I call the four “core skills” manuals, in the following order.

**1** *The Entertaining Speaker*. Every speech needs to be interesting, even the technical ones. Unless you work at an insomnia

clinic, you don’t want to put your audience to sleep. That means you need to make your speech entertaining. Recognize, however, that entertaining does not necessarily mean funny. You might only bring a smile to the faces of your audience members, or hold their attention in some other way, but that



is all they ask. I believe *The Entertaining Speaker* is, for most Toastmasters, the best advanced manual to start with. Fortunately, Toastmasters International has made that easy. Project 1, “The Entertaining Speech,” is included toward the back of the *Competent Communication* manual. You don’t even have to wait for your new manual—you can get started right away!

You might be tempted to start with the *Humorously Speaking* manual. After all, we all want to be funny, right? I suggest you hold off on that one for now. In my view, that manual is the most difficult one of all. Start with *The Entertaining Speaker*. *Humorously Speaking* will come in due time.

**2 Storytelling.** There is an old adage: Facts tell, stories sell. We all want to hear stories. Even engineers want to hear how a particular piece of equipment has worked for someone else. This manual will teach you how to tell that story effectively.

If you start with these two manuals, you will learn two of the most important speaking skills—and you will earn your Advanced Communicator Bronze award at the same time.

**3 Speaking to Inform.** Each of us, at one time or another, has to present some research or describe how something works. This, like the other two, is a core skill. My recommendation is that you do this manual next.

**4 Humorously Speaking.** After completing the aforementioned three advanced manuals, you are now ready to tackle the *Humorously Speaking* manual. Humor is an important component of any speech. In fact, professional speakers have a saying: “Do you need to add humor to your speech? Only if you want to make money!” Humor is not only important for professional speakers—it is key to *our* speeches, as well.

If you work through these four core skills manuals in this order, you build a solid speaking foundation. You also earn your Advanced Communicator Silver award (as long as you also deliver any two presentations from *The Better Speaker Series* and/or *The Successful Club Series*).

### Speaking at Special Occasions

Now it’s time to have some fun. After completing your first four advanced manuals, pick the two manuals that interest you the most. When I reached this point, I reluctantly opted for *Special Occasion Speeches* as one of my two options. It didn’t seem all that exciting when I first looked at it, but I now see it as one of the most important advanced manuals. Working through *Special Occasion Speeches*, I gained experience in situations that are quite common in the real world. You never know when you will be asked to present an award to a colleague, speak in praise of an individual or give a toast.

At a recent club meeting, a member asked me, “How do you prepare a eulogy?” His favorite aunt was in her last days, and she had asked him to speak at her funeral. Had he done the “Speaking in Praise” project in *Special Occasion Speeches*, he would have been much more comfortable in the role. Let’s face it. It’s tough to put together a speech like that when you are mourning a loss. This manual makes that task a little easier.

Five manuals down, one to go. Are you still wondering which one to pick? Consider the *Interpretive Reading* manual. This manual gives you an opportunity to practice your vocal variety. And it gives you a break from writing all of those speeches. I liked that idea.

With 15 advanced manuals, there are many paths to Advanced Communicator

Gold. The one I have outlined gives you training and experience in many of the core skills necessary to be an outstanding speaker. If you don’t already know which path will best prepare you to reach your speaking goals, give this one a try. What an entertaining story you will tell. **T**

**BILL BROWN, ACG, ALB**, is a three-time vice president education. He is a member of Second Stage Toastmasters and Challengers Toastmasters, both in Orange County, California.

## Revitalized Education Program Update

Toastmasters International is currently revising the education program to meet goals from the Board of Directors’ 2010 Strategic Plan. After the Revitalized Education Program debuts in the second half of 2014, both the updated and current education materials will exist side by side for a period of time to be specified by the Board. This will allow members to complete education awards already in progress. For the latest news, tune into a podcast with Past International President Pat Johnson and Toastmasters Chief Executive Officer Daniel Rex at [www.toastmasters.org/podcast](http://www.toastmasters.org/podcast).

You can purchase all 15 advanced communication manuals by ordering online at [www.toastmasters.org/shop](http://www.toastmasters.org/shop), or calling Member Services at 949-858-8255.



# The Gender Communication Gap

What we can learn from the differing styles of men and women.

BY CAREN S. NEILE, PH.D., ATMS

We had a longtime member in our club—we'll call this person "T"—who gave truly inspiring, thought-provoking speeches. There was only one suggestion this member consistently received through evaluations. A military veteran, T tended to deliver even the kindest messages in the authoritative tone of a drill sergeant.

Are you surprised to learn that T was a man? Probably not. After all, even in 2013 we still tend to associate men with powerful roles, bodies and voices, and women with—well, less power. Perhaps nowhere is this distinction as obvious in everyday life as in communication.

Throughout the past three or four decades, a great deal of research has been done on the communication styles of women and men, and the differences between them. Feminist linguist Robin Lakoff, widely considered the founder of the field of gender and language studies, claims women's communication patterns typically affirm their traditionally subordinate role in society. Does this mean women who want to be successful speakers should emulate men? Many people think so—because they tend to think that the male style is the norm.



## The Best of Both Styles

The truth is that men's typical speech patterns are necessary in some situations, while women's patterns are just as important in others. If we as speakers can employ the best of both styles, we can be successful communicators.

So what are these differing styles? Although study results vary, general differences between men's and women's speaking styles show up in five main areas: verbosity, word choice, topic, tone and nonverbal behavior.

**1 Verbosity.** Studies have long suggested that women converse much more often than men. But researchers note that social context is the key to who talks more. In fact, men tend to speak far more often than women do in the public sphere, writes New Zealand linguist Janet Holmes in her essay "Women Talk Too Much." "Evidence collected by American, British and New Zealand researchers shows that men dominate the talking time in committee meetings, staff meetings, seminars and task-oriented decision-making groups."

Men, however, are more often silent on the home front. How many times have you seen women happily engaged in conversation in the kitchen while preparing food, as men sit in silence on the sofa?

This kind of insight is vital for speakers. For one thing, speakers can take advantage of the surprise factor. When a woman *does* raise her voice in a venue typically dominated by men, her action will be seen as unusual. Depending on how she uses other communication skills, this element of novelty may cause people to pay closer attention to her, giving her an edge.

Likewise, men who master the art of intimate conversation have an advantage when it comes to dating, family connections and other interpersonal relations.

**2 Word choice.** Lakoff, the feminist linguist, says female speech tends to be more correct than that of males, both in terms of grammar (e.g., "whom" vs. "who") and pronunciation. Men tend to use more regional dialect, such as "settin'" rather than "sitting." She also reports that females tend to be more polite in their language, using fewer swear words (although this is changing among younger women in some locations) and more of the "please," "thank-you" and "you're welcome" phrases that most of us learned as children. In her influential book *Language and Woman's Place*, she states:

*Little girls are indeed taught to talk like little ladies, in that their speech is in many ways more polite than that of boys or men, and the reason for this is that politeness involves an absence of a strong statement, and women's speech is devised to prevent the expression of strong statements.*



## HE SAID, SHE SAID

When speaking to older people, and in formal situations, this approach can reap benefits. The key is to know when to use this approach. Hedging statements like the ones women typically use—like prefacing a remark with “I think,” “I guess” or “It seems to me”—may not convey authority in the boardroom, but they can be useful in defusing antagonism and promoting cooperation.

**3 Topics.** You’ve probably heard the acronym TMI—“too much information.” More often than not, it is a man who feels that a woman is over-sharing personal details rather than the other way around. In general, women tend to provide more information about themselves than do men, especially when it comes to sharing their problems, weaknesses or family issues with others.

Of course, revealing personal information is not always an appropriate strategy, particularly in a business setting.

**We still tend to associate men with powerful roles, bodies and voices, and women with—well, less power.**

But a speaker who can allow herself to be vulnerable in front of others possesses an interesting kind of reverse power—the power to make people feel empathy and connection. When addressing a group at a funeral, spiritual gathering or other emotional event, sharing intimate details may be an excellent strategy.

**4 Tone.** Research shows that women tend to use questioning tones more often than do men. This doesn’t mean they necessarily ask more questions. Women use the *question intonation* (ending statements with a rising rather than neutral tone), *tag question* (adding “you know?” or “isn’t it?” at the end of statements) and *weak directive* (an order or request in the form of a question, such as “Could you shut the door?” or “Do you mind getting



*Studies have long suggested that women converse much more often than men, but researchers note that social context is the key to who talks more.*

that file?”). In any case, the tone used for questioning tends to be less assertive than that which is used in a statement. A question, after all, usually denotes lack of certainty or control.

Even when women are not speaking in a questioning style, their voices are more often than not higher-pitched, and therefore perceived as weaker than those of men. Is this higher-pitched tone out of women’s control? Not according to David Graddol and Joan Swann, who say in their book *Gender Voices* that the difference between a typical male and female voice is as much due to nurturing as to nature. Not only did the researchers find an overlap in the genders’ vocal ranges—enabling men and women to speak at similar pitches in

the areas in which those ranges overlap—but Graddol and Swann also discovered that although the pitches of men’s voices vary with body size, those of women stay relatively constant. In other words, many females seem to be controlling the pitch of their voices.

I distinctly remember the day in third grade when I decided to speak softly—that is, like a “lady.” At the time, I felt this reflected who I wanted to be. It took me many years to allow myself to speak with more power, and now I often recommend exercises to my female university students to disengage the “muffler” on their vocal cords.

“We ourselves know of cases in the recording studio where a producer has



encouraged a man to adopt 'a more aggressive, harder edge' to his voice and a woman to 'soften her tone' in order to conform to expected vocal contrasts," write Graddol and Swann.

It's understandable that women who wish to speak differently than they've

**"Now that I'm warmer on stage, people respond to the message in my speeches much more positively."**

— TOM NEWBERY

been encouraged to in a male-dominant society must work hard to break themselves of the habit.

And so must men. Let's go back to "T," the Toastmaster whom I described in the opening to this article—the one who used a drill-sergeant tone. His real name is Tom Newbery, and he learned that voice modulation can be a big plus for a speaker. There are times when it's a good idea to take a gentle, non-assertive tone, such as when firing an employee, speaking to children,

expressing empathy or otherwise wishing to appear non-threatening.

"Now that I'm warmer on stage, people respond to the message in my speeches much more positively," says Newbery.

**5 Nonverbal behavior.** Men's gestures tend to be bigger and more commanding than those of women. They use more physical space, if only by virtue of often being larger than their female counterparts. According to Jenna Carpenter, a professor and administrator at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, men tend to stare more, hold their heads straight (women's heads tend to tilt) and maintain a neutral expression or poker face.

Body language, as we know, speaks volumes. In fact, it can be considered a more effective communication tool than oral language, because it is (a) subliminal, meaning people pick it up unconsciously, (b) more honest, because it is much more difficult to prevent the body from giving away one's true feelings than it is to lie with words, and (c) more memorable, because humans are visually oriented beings. As in the other examples, a speaker wants to maintain credibility but does not always want to exude power

over an audience. In other words, a range of physical gestures, from small to large and open to closed, belongs in the toolbox of the successful speaker.

Naturally, no man or woman uses the communication style considered stereotypical of his or her gender 100 percent of the time. Rather, these speech patterns express styles of looking at oneself and one's relationships that range from submissive and cooperative to dominant and individualistic. The ability to adapt our communication style to our message and our audience gives us tremendous flexibility and thus effectiveness, whether we are speaking on the podium, in the office or at home.

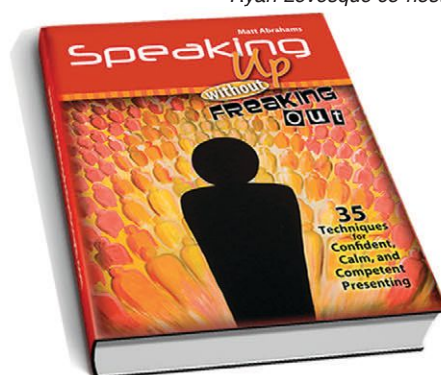
And that's real power—no matter who you are. **T**

**CAREN S. NEILE, PH.D., ATMS**, is a storyteller, educator and writer. A former Fulbright senior specialist (sent by the U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program to teach in universities abroad), she has published three books and presented across the country and abroad, including at two Toastmasters International Conventions.

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*Pete Weissman, CTM, CL, speaks from first-hand experience about the fast-paced world of professional speechwriting, having crafted speeches for prominent political and business leaders.*



## Pete Weissman: Writing for CEOs and Senators

A prominent speechwriter offers an insider's look at a unique profession.

BY THE TOASTMASTER STAFF

**W**hen Pete Weissman, CTM, CL, presented an education session at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention, he drew an audience eager to learn about speechwriting. Weissman did not disappoint. He spoke incisively, and from first-hand experience, about the fast-paced world of professional speechwriting, and shared tricks of the trade with the Toastmasters crowd.

Over the course of his award-winning career, Weissman has crafted speeches for prominent political and business leaders, including the chairman and CEO of The Coca-Cola Company. More than four years ago, he started his own firm in Atlanta, Georgia. It provides speechwriting and strategic-communications services to high-profile companies, foundations and associations. He has also worked in the White House and the United States Senate, as well as for various Fortune 100 executives.

When Weissman was writing speeches for the U.S. Senate, he joined the U.S. Senate Toastmasters club in Washington, D.C.

**Q: Being a speechwriter is an unconventional job. How do you describe what you do?**

**A:** I turn what a speaker wants to say into a talk an audience wants to hear. My job is to build a bridge between the speaker and the audience, so the speaker can share his or her ideas and personality in a way that will engage and persuade listeners.

When I've done my job, speakers say, "This sounds just like me," and audiences never knew I was there.

**What's the difference between writing your own speech and writing words to put in another person's mouth? How do you develop an ear for another speaker's voice?**



I find it's easier to write a speech for someone else because I can have a dialogue with the speaker and react to his or her ideas. When I write a speech for myself, I'm working alone without anyone to respond to.

To capture a speaker's voice, I listen to them when they're speaking without a script. I analyze their speaking style and determine if the speaker is more comfortable with stories or statistics, if they prove a point inductively or deductively, and if they are direct or go off on tangents. In general, it's better to write simply—with short declarative sentences that the speak-

**“When I've done my job, speakers say, ‘This sounds just like me,’ and audiences never knew I was there.”**

er can make his own—than to write in a highly ornamented way that the speaker may stumble over.

### **You've written for elected officials and corporate leaders. What's the difference between writing for senators and CEOs?**

The biggest difference is that in politics, speeches are used to develop policy, but in business, speeches are used to *announce* policy. In politics, the process of speaking and debating an issue helps shape the resulting law. In business, the policy is developed internally and then announced through a speech.

Another difference is the freedom each speaker has. A member of the U.S. Congress can say almost anything thanks to the “Speech or Debate Clause” in the U.S. Con-

stitution. For the CEO of a public company, however, there are times—like right before quarterly earnings are announced—when they can't talk about certain topics that might affect the stock price.

For both types of speakers, the stakes are high; they're just different. If a politician says the wrong thing, he could lose an election. If a CEO says the wrong thing, the stock price could fall.

### **What are the biggest challenges of writing a speech for a client?**

Getting access and handling revisions. To capture someone's voice and thought process, you need to spend time with that person. If a speaker is too busy to provide access, the speech won't be successful.

Another challenge is when there are many different people weighing in with suggestions and edits to the speech draft. Sometimes in companies there is a battle between executives to shape the company's position. The speechwriter can get stuck in the middle of it.

On the positive side, a speech forces an organization to be clear about its priorities. Often, the speech becomes the vehicle that helps the organization gain the clarity it needs to be successful.

### **How quickly have you had to write a complete speech? What has been your most harrowing experience as a speechwriter?**

When I worked in the U.S. Senate, there were several times when we had to schedule a press conference with just a few hours notice. Other times, we learned that a key bill would be coming up for debate on the Senate floor later that same day. When time is tight, you draw from past speeches and move quickly.

The most harrowing experience was when my senator was defending her bill on the Senate floor. Another senator

attacked the legislation by quoting from a study. I was watching the debate on TV from my desk one block away from the Senate chamber. I thought the study he cited sounded odd, so I looked it up online. I found that the other senator had misrepresented its findings. The study actually supported our bill.

Well, I couldn't let that stand, so I quickly drafted a rebuttal. I was the only person who knew the truth, and I had to get my speech to my senator quickly. The vote would be called at any minute, and by then it would be too late. I ran through the underground tunnels that connect the Congressional office buildings to the Capitol building. I had a few mishaps along the way, but I got the speech to the senator just in time for her to include it in the Congressional Record. While her bill didn't win that day, I consider it a small victory for truth.

### **How would you suggest someone get started in this career?**

Clients and employers will want to see what you've written for others, so build your skills, practice writing speeches and then volunteer to help a speaker.

First, immerse yourself in great speeches. Read Lincoln, Churchill, Kennedy and King. Read [the magazine] *Vital Speeches of the Day* each month and analyze the speeches. How did this speaker get attention? How did that speaker prove her point? How did this speaker use a theme?

Learn rhetorical devices like alliteration, anaphora, metaphor, parallelism and triads. These are the classic tools that speakers have used to engage audiences for centuries, and they really work. Learn how to write a sound bite that echoes in listeners' minds.

Read books like *10 Steps to Writing a Vital Speech* by Fletcher Dean; *Speak Like*

## Q&A WITH PETE WEISSMAN



*Pete Weissman advises audience members pursuing a career in speechwriting to learn how to write a sound bite that echoes in listeners' minds.*

*Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln, or The Sir Winston Method, both by James C. Humes; The Political Speechwriter's Companion by Robert Lehrman; and How To Write and Give a Speech by Joan Detz.*

Practice being persuasive. Read an op-ed column in the newspaper and turn it into a short speech. Notice how you have to make the same points differently to write for the ear. Listen to a speech by a political leader and then write a short rebuttal speech.

Once you've built up your skills, volunteer to write speeches for others. Find a local charity that is having a gala or awards program and volunteer to write the remarks or the emcee's script. Find a local politician who is in sync with your views and volunteer to help write a speech or two.

### **How has your Toastmasters training helped you with your career?**

I'm good with words, but it's hard for me to describe all the ways that Toastmasters has helped me become a

better speechwriter, speaker and leader. I joined Toastmasters back when I lived in Washington, D.C. I was a proud member of the historic U.S. Senate Toastmasters club. [The club was featured in the December 2010 *Toastmaster* magazine, in an article called "Levity on Capitol Hill."]

I was a club officer, contestant in the International Speech Contest, and I even taught at Toastmasters Leadership Institutes. I couldn't imagine writing speeches for others without giving them myself. When one of my clients is preparing for a speech, I know what she's going through, and I know how to give helpful feedback. I've made so many friends through Toastmasters over the years, and speaking at the 2012 International Convention is a highlight of my career. **T**

*For more information about Pete Weissman, visit [www.peteweissman.com](http://www.peteweissman.com) or follow him on Twitter @PeteWeissman.*

## CHANGED BY A TIRE *continued from page 15*

"I knew I had good content and a good message, so I thought, What if I lose the audience by mispronouncing just one word? What a pity that would be."

— PRESIYAN VASILEV

says he worked determinedly over the years to improve his English skills. For example, when he wrote out drafts of his Toastmasters speeches, especially as a new member, he spelled out the phonetic translations of practically every word. It was important to the Bulgarian immigrant that audiences be able to understand everything he said, particularly as he advanced through the International Speech Contest.

"I knew I had good content and a good message, so I thought, What if I lose the audience by mispronouncing just one word? What a pity that would be."

The 2013 speaking champ says he will forever be grateful to Toastmasters for helping him tap into his potential. "The moment I discovered Toastmasters, I thought, Where have you been? Why didn't I join earlier? What if I had joined five, seven, 10 years ago—how much better would I be now?"

"But what I discovered is you can always catch up." **T**

*To purchase online streaming video or a DVD of the World Championship of Public Speaking and International Speech Contest Semifinals (on demand only), visit [www.toastmastersondemand.com](http://www.toastmastersondemand.com).*

**PAUL STERMAN** is senior editor of the *Toastmaster* magazine.



*Presiyan Vasilev is believed to be the first native of Bulgaria to win the World Championship of Public Speaking.*



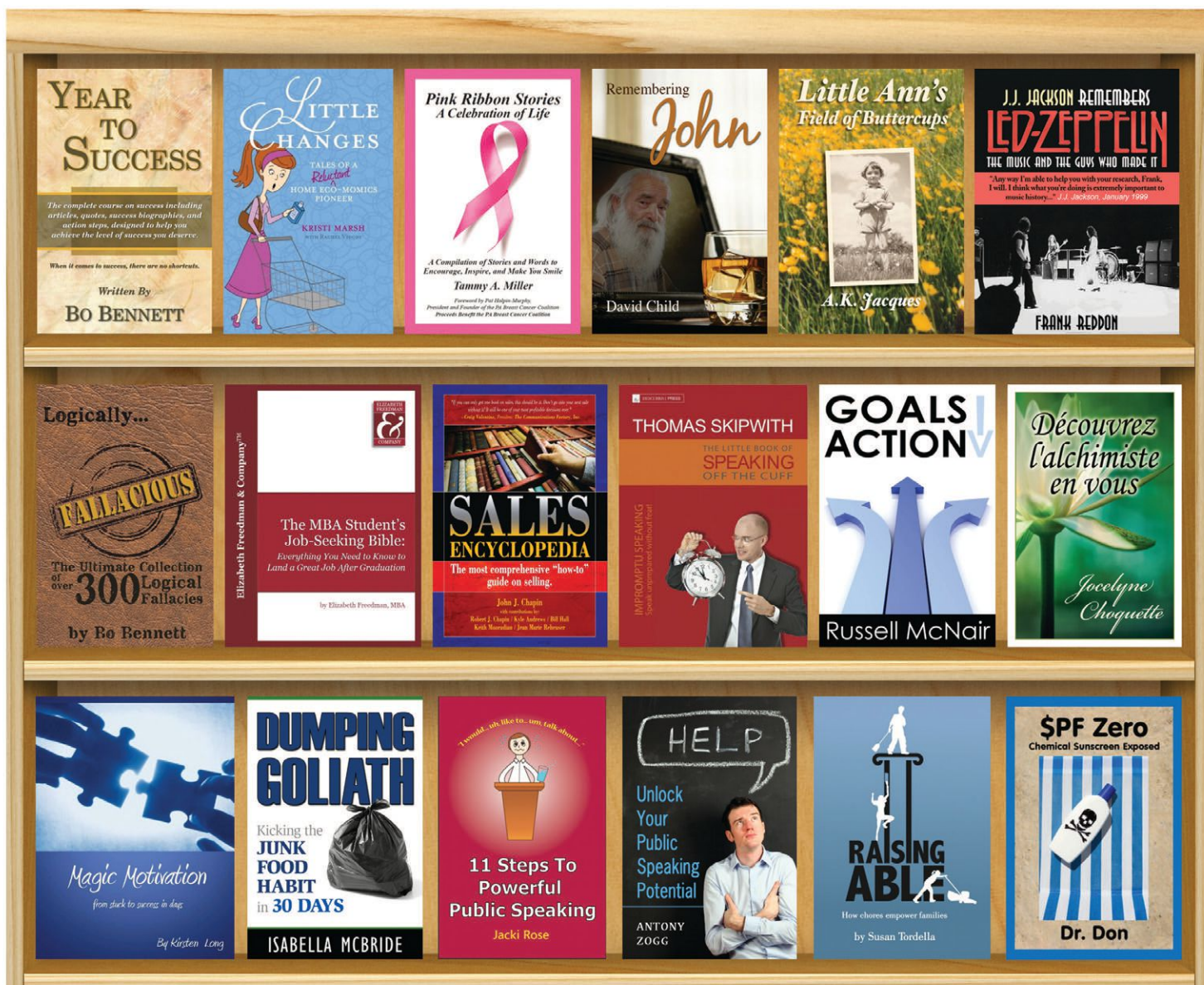
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# Addressing Gettysburg

How to write a speech old Abe would be proud of.

BY JOHN CADLEY

**B**oy, I sure wish Lincoln had never written the Gettysburg Address. The guy absolutely nailed his point, made it poetic, memorable and inspiring—all in 270 words. Or 272. Or 273. Or 250. Different reports of the speech gave different numbers, but that was in 1863, when people were still learning to count. The point is, Lincoln set a standard for speechwriting that stares every one of us in the face when it's our turn. How do you beat that? You don't. You're not Abraham Lincoln, and if you think you are, seek medical help.

These days it takes 270 words just to kiss up to everyone with words like *esteemed*, *honorable* and *distinguished*. And if you finish off with another 270, they'd feel cheated, like you hadn't prepared and were just trying to take the money and run. We've heard so much vacuous gum-flapping from politicians with nothing to say and TV hosts desperately trying to fill air time that when someone actually makes a point and *stops*, there's an eerie silence. Everybody feels awkward. Somebody *say* something! Otherwise, we'll have to *think*! Thinking is hard. Can't we please go back to the comforting sound of vacuous gum-flapping?

Still, if we can't beat old Abe we can at least learn from him. The first lesson, of course, is brevity. No, you're not going to knock 'em dead in 270 words, but at least try to wind it up before people start becoming dehydrated.

The second is to start with shared beliefs. Lincoln began by reminding his audience that "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation," which no one could disagree with. (Unless you wanted to get really picky and say, "My father didn't. He sold spittoons.") So right away he's got them nodding their heads in agreement. Maybe you could do something similar. One suggestion: Turn up the air conditioning just before you go on, then get up and say, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Sure is chilly in here, isn't it?" You feel their pain. They love you.

Another device employed by Lincoln was the "rule of three"—"We can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we

can not hallow this ground." Apparently there's something magical about using three words or phrases together. It started with Julius Caesar's famous "Veni, vidi, vici" (I came, I saw, I conquered). He'd just vanquished a powerful army, a pregnant Cleopatra was waiting for him to come home and go to Lamaze classes, and he'd developed painful bunions from conquering the known world. The guy was in no mood for lengthy speeches.

So how can you use the rule of three? How about: "Ladies and gentlemen, this speech will cover every aspect of our beauty aids business—the good, the bad and the ugly." Or, "This next point is important, it's essential, it's critical." Just make sure it *is* critical and not something like, "Let's all take five for a bathroom break."

Repetition of a key word is something else Lincoln used to great effect. In a two-minute speech, the 16th U.S. president used "here" eight times, subliminally invoking the hallowed ground of Gettysburg [a Civil War battleground]. So if you're giving a speech, say, informing your employees about an impending investigation by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, you would want to use the word "shredding" as often as possible.

And be sure to end your speech with a clear call to action. For Lincoln it was: "It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who have fought here have thus far so nobly advanced." In other words, don't leave me now, folks. This thing ain't over yet.

How might you call your audience to an equally clear course of action? The action can't be too hard or they won't do it. It can't be too important or they'll be afraid of being held accountable. Make it simple and easy: "So as we leave here today, let us remember that if we each stack our own folding chair against the wall, the work will go much faster. Thank you very much."

It's always worked for me. **T**

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**JOHN CADLEY**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York.





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**1 | DAVID LOCHTEFELD FROM COLUMBIA, MARYLAND,** *enjoys the sun on the island of Yap.*

**2 | SHUKLA DATTA (RIGHT) AND SUDHA DATTA FROM TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA,** *pose by the Merlion statue in downtown Singapore.*

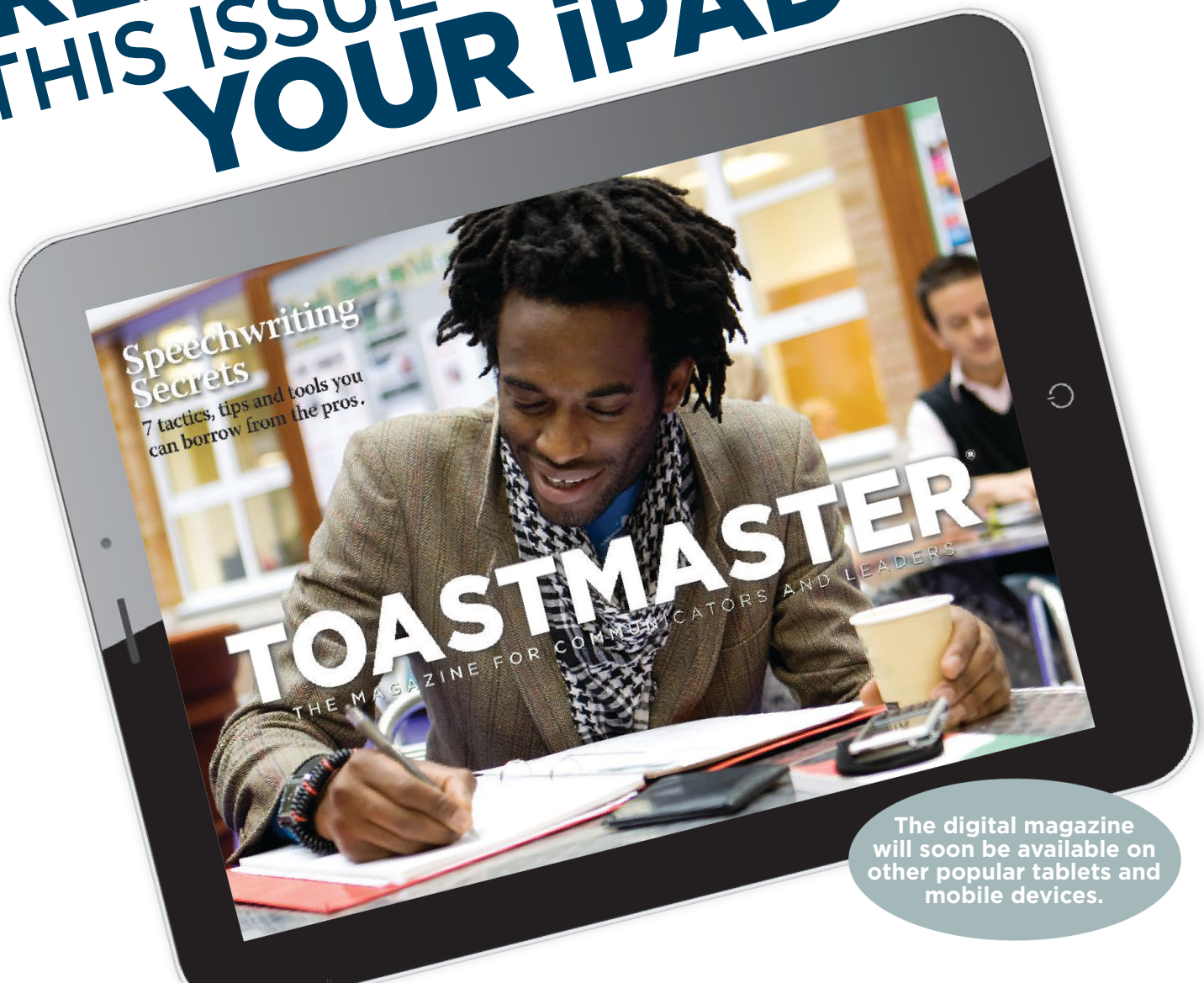
**3 | CINDY LIEBECK FROM IRVINE, CALIFORNIA,** *stands on the summit of Cirque Peak, part of the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California.*

**4 | MARGARET LYNCH FROM STERLING, VIRGINIA,** *smiles on a houseboat on Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe.*

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