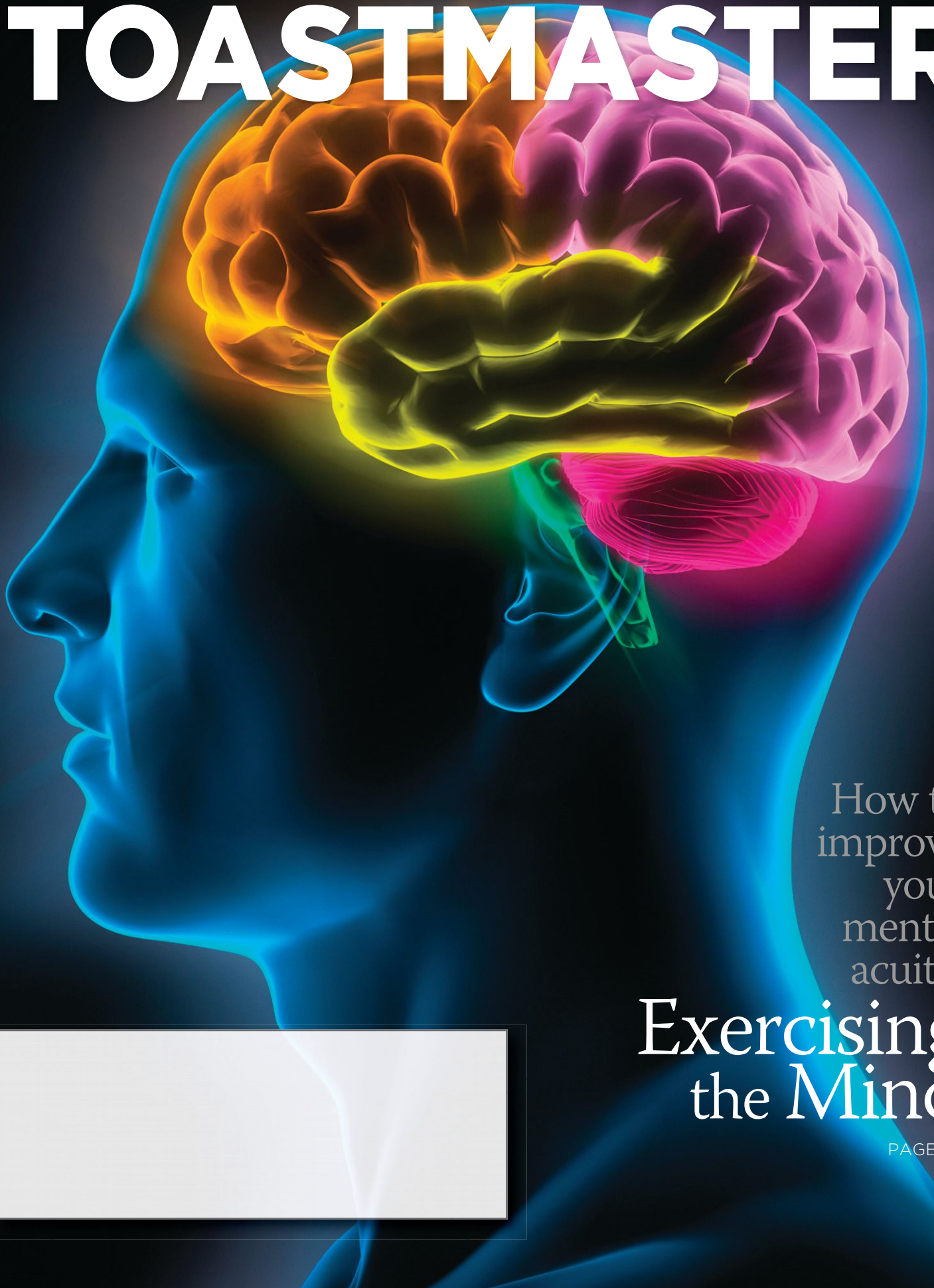


THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | SEPTEMBER 2013

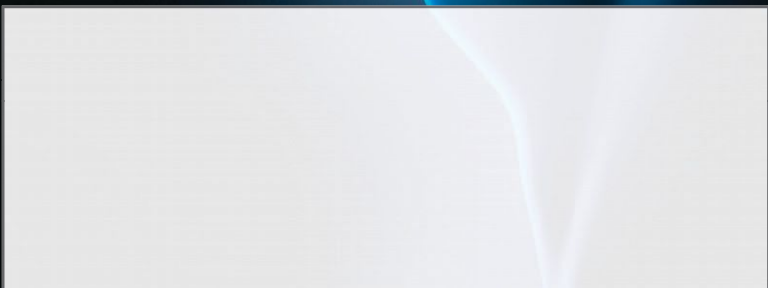
TOASTMASTER®



How to
improve
your
mental
acuity.

Exercising the Mind

PAGE 22





That Moment in Time

*Give me one moment in time
When I am racing with destiny
Then in that one moment of time
I will feel, yes, I will feel eternity.
You're a winner for a lifetime
If you seize that one moment in time
Make it shine.*

— WHITNEY HOUSTON'S VERSION OF "ONE MOMENT IN TIME,"
BY ALBERT HAMMOND AND JOHN BETTIS



These words were sung by Whitney Houston in "One Moment in Time," a song recorded specifically for the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. It captures the spirit of the athletes—and of Toastmasters as well. Twenty-four years ago, after 20 years of achieving and losing the American dream in New York City, I returned to Taipei, Taiwan, where I grew up. Upon my return, I walked into Prestige Toastmasters club. And in that

one moment in time, the world of Toastmasters opened up before me. Like meeting a soul mate for the first time, I wondered, Where have you been all my life?

In that midlife romance, I discovered many passions that came to brighten my life (besides marrying Jorie Wu, DTM, PDG). Under the umbrella of communication and leadership, my eyes opened to the magical beauty and power of language in general, and English in particular. I also discovered and experienced the meaning of "servant leadership," which turned my prior understanding of leadership upside down.

Through learning by doing, I began to understand the profound paradox of "the more you give, the more you get." In the process I was transformed from a "taker" to a "giver"—an experiential learning that is not possible through other means.

Immediate Past District 76 Governor Kazuko Kawauchi, DTM, of Japan, called Toastmasters "jin sei dojo," or life's practice field. "Dojo" (or "dao chang" in Chinese) is a place where practitioners of ancient martial arts, like judo or tai chi, master their crafts. So Toastmasters is the "dojo" where we develop the critical skills of listening, speaking and leading, which constitute our calling as human beings.

We all have seized our "moment in time" when we joined Toastmasters. Each time you give a speech, take on a meeting role or serve as an officer, seize that moment in time to be more than you thought you could be—and shine. **T**

GEORGE YEN, DTM
International President

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Since 1924, Toastmasters International has been recognized as the leading organization dedicated to communication and leadership skill development. Through its worldwide network of clubs, each week Toastmasters helps more than a quarter million men and women of every ethnicity, education level and profession build their competence in communication so they can gain the confidence to lead others.

By regularly giving speeches, gaining feedback, leading teams and guiding others to achieve their goals, leaders emerge. They learn to tell their stories. They listen and answer. They plan and lead. They give feedback—and accept it. They find their path to leadership.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE
www.toastmasters.org

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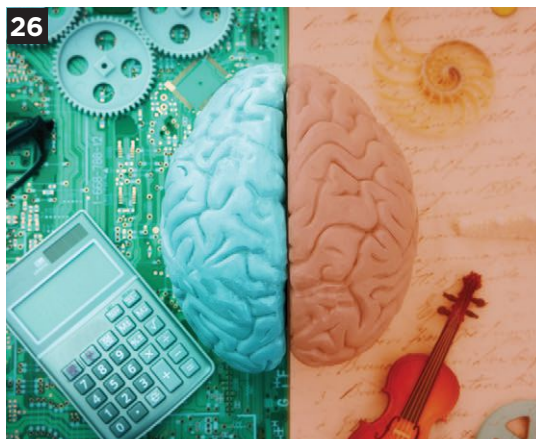
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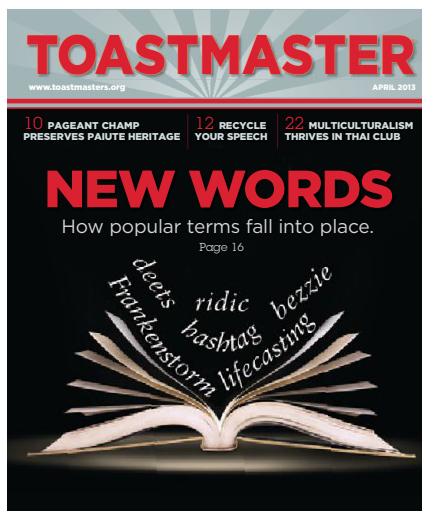
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“I take solace in the words spoken by an Oxford grammarian who said no one can be expected to speak grammatically correct English all the time.”

— MERVYN DEAN

Go Global

Unlike other speeches I have given, one speech in particular tugged at my heartstrings. I wanted to share it with a wider audience.

I thought of entering it into a writing contest, and then I remembered Nicole Sweeney Etter’s article “Recycle Your Content” (April). While Nicole’s advice to “tell it live” and “become an expert” sounded appealing, I liked her idea of posting a speech online. Why not go global?

I converted my speech into a personal essay and sent it to a website devoted to wellness. The editor emailed me the next day, with only one suggestion: Change the title. Days later, my essay went live to a worldwide audience.

Thank you to Nicole Sweeney Etter and the *Toastmaster*!

JOANNE GUIDOCCIO, CC
Agvantage Toastmasters
Guelph, Ontario,
Canada

Relishing the Recap

I feel so validated after reading Howard Scott’s article “Feedback with a Recap” (June). I’ve been doing this kind of thing for our club, Key West Toastmasters, for many years.

I started writing recaps when I was club president. My original idea was to keep those who were absent from the meetings in the loop, but many members who attend the meetings say they also look forward to the recap.

If your club president or other club officers aren’t interested in doing recaps, see if someone else in the club would enjoy being the “recapper.” I enjoy doing it and it’s so nice when members mention how much they appreciate it.

PHYLLIS MAY, DTM
Key West Toastmasters
Key West, Florida

Grammar Note

My wife is a member of the Bay of Islands Toastmasters club; and although I am not a Toastmaster, I read her *Toastmaster* magazine. I found the April article “Grammar Faux Pas Reconsidered” by Jenny Baranick interesting. She said the editors of *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* did not know why split infinitives were deemed unacceptable.

My understanding is that in many languages, such as Latin and Greek, the infinitive is a single word that cannot be split; but early English grammarians transposed the classical indivisibility of the infinitive. True? I don’t know, but it seems credible.

I was told the reason you shouldn’t end a sentence with a preposition lies in the “pre-” prefix. The preposition comes before another word (a “pre-position”), and so should never be at the end of a sentence.

I take solace in the words spoken by an Oxford grammarian who said no one can be expected to speak grammatically correct English all the time.

MERVYN DEAN
Husband of Toastmaster Sherry Dean, CC
Corner Brook, Newfoundland,
Canada

Oldest Clubs

I was fascinated to read about the six oldest existing clubs established in California between 1924 and 1930. They were numbered one to seven, with club number four missing (May, Around the Globe). The number four was reassigned in 1995 to my club in southeastern Ireland. These clubs, in the single digits, share an illustrious past. My club has 30 lively members, and I suspect it will still be around in 60 years.

ULICK STAFFORD, DTM
Enniscorthy Toastmasters club
Enniscorthy, County Wexford,
Ireland

Proud of our Past

In the July *Toastmaster* magazine, these features in the Around the Globe section were all fascinating to me: From the Archives (with a photo of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan), Dr. Smedley Says, and Learning About Our Past International Presidents.

The rich heritage of Toastmasters International is truly inspirational. By respecting our past, yet balancing that with always learning, growing and changing, the Toastmasters organization and the *Toastmaster* magazine are always teaching.

It makes me proud to say, “I am a Toastmaster.”

PAM MARTIN, ACB, CL
Speaking Up Toastmasters
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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. 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.



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Starting a New Chapter

How I turned the page on old attitudes and became a better leader.

BY CHRIS CORPUS, DTM

In every great story, the main character is faced with a problem. Overcoming this obstacle requires making a big change. In the beginning, the character has zero desire to change. This protagonist may want more in life, but not at the cost of leaving behind his or her comfortable status quo.

How closely this pattern can resemble what happens in our own lives. How often have we found ourselves facing opportunities we want but not wanting to make the change required to achieve the goal?

I never wanted to join Toastmasters. I didn't think I needed it. I had worked as an actor and broadcast journalist, both of which required plenty of time in front of audiences. I thought I had all the skills I needed to speak in public. Ah, the comfort of the personal status quo.

Of course, the reality was and is that no one has *all* the skills he or she needs. I had recently begun a new job, and a new Toastmasters club formed at my workplace. While I pompously thought my speaking skills were fine, I did want

to get to know my co-workers better. So I joined, and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Despite all my previous bravado, I was sweating and shaking when it came time to give my Ice Breaker. In that first speech I realized I truly did need help. As I progressed in the Toastmasters program, I found myself practicing a newfound humility, which made me more grounded as a leader.

For me, my greatest period of growth and change came from serving as an area governor. The decision-making processes and leadership skills necessary to properly serve the clubs helped me in my professional life as well. For one of my jobs, I'm the volunteer services

coordinator at the Aquarium of the Pacific, a large public aquarium in the Los Angeles area. In that capacity, I help facilitate and manage over 1,000 volunteers at the aquarium. Learning how to better engage and motivate club members helped me further develop skills to engage and motivate this large group of volunteers.

Volunteers are interesting to work with, because they don't *have* to do the work we need done. To be successful, I have to convince potential volunteers of the importance and purpose of the work they would be doing. If they don't

believe in their work, then the results could be far below the aquarium's standards.

Improving verbal and nonverbal communication was critical to my success in connecting with the volunteers at work and at my Toastmasters events. Both sets of volunteers had to see that I was planning ahead well, providing the tools they would need for success, and that their work had purpose. When I fulfilled those needs, the results were amazing! We saw record attendance at my area speech contests and record hours served by volunteers at the aquarium.

As a Toastmasters leader, I achieved a greater understanding of a vital leadership skill: putting my team members' development ahead of my own ego. That was the key that began opening more doors for me and my career.

While every great story begins with a character who does not want to change, every great story ends with that character taking on the change that is needed for success. We all have our goals and dreams. What change will you make to achieve those dreams? **T**



The author, Chris Corpus, DTM (left), and 2013-2014 International President George Yen, DTM, test the waters at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California.

CHRIS CORPUS, DTM, is secretary of the Aquarium of the Pacific Wavemakers club in Long Beach, California. He also owns a boutique bakery with his wife, and this year he is producing his first feature film.

AROUND THE GLOBE

In Brief

MEET THE BOARD

Let's welcome our new Board of Directors. Read about them at www.toastmasters.org/MeetTheBoard.

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

Toastmasters International is seeking great speakers for the 2014 International Convention in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. If you possess professional-level speaking skills, apply at www.toastmasters.org/CallForPresenters after September 1.

CULTURAL PROTOCOL

Do you have ideas for the International Interpretations section (below, at right)? Email us at magazine@toastmasters.org and share the customs, common gestures or idiomatic phrases of your culture.



WATCH THE NEW TIPS VIDEOS

Two new videos are available as part of the Toastmasters Time-Tested Communication Tips series at www.toastmasters.org/Videos. Gain helpful advice for rehearsing your speech and impromptu speaking.

VISIT THE HALL OF FAME

See monthly DTM awards and club anniversaries of 20 years or more at www.toastmasters.org/HallofFame.

MEMBER MOMENT



A Life in Words



Thuong Vuong-Riddick, ATMB, is an author who emigrated from Vietnam to France, and then to Canada. She has taught French- and Quebec-related literature, as well as

the French language, at universities in Canada.

She is the author of *Two Shores/Deux Rives*, a dual-language collection of poetry, and *The Evergreen Country*, a memoir about her life in Vietnam. She is currently writing another poetry collection and a memoir in French about her time in Paris. Her books are studied by students in some Canadian and American colleges.

When Vuong-Riddick's publisher pointed out that she needed to improve her English skills, she joined the North Delta Power Talkers club in North Delta, British Columbia, Canada.

How do you use poetry to communicate?

Through condensed language and few words, poetry can describe a life, a generation or even a century in only a page or two, with the use of literary devices such as repetition, inversion and incantation. Borrowing forms and expressions from different sources can lead to stunning effects.

How has Toastmasters helped you in your profession?

Toastmasters put me more at ease with the English language. As a writer I have to do readings and answer questions. Table Topics helps with that. The *Toastmaster's* articles about introverts and public readings have helped too.

What is the most useful thing you have gained from Toastmasters?

Confidence. Also, the importance of humor, organization and evaluations.

INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

What's the Point?

Imagine you are giving a speech exhorting your listeners to meet their goals. You look at the audience members and say encouragingly, "You can *do* this! You and you and you"—pointing at people to reinforce your ... point.

Before incorporating such gestures into your speech, consider the cultural setting. In many countries, it is considered rude to point at people. In Malaysia and China, for example, it is considered impolite to point at anyone with your forefinger. When you must indicate someone or something, use your entire right hand, with the palm out, say Terri Morrison and Wayne Conaway in *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands*, a book that offers valuable tips about cultural protocol around the world.





SNAPSHOT

Twice a year, Marie-Josée Lambert from Morin-Heights, Québec, Canada, visits the Collège Eddy Pascal in Carrefour, Haiti, to work with teachers and children while following up on her sponsorship project.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

KAREN TWICHELL, ACS

This month, Accredited Speaker Karen Twichell, ACS, shares lessons learned. She is a member of the Rancho Speech Masters club in Rancho Santa Margarita, California.

What is your best advice for using visual aids in a speech?

First and foremost, visual aids must contribute to the quality and value of a speech. They must never be used simply as a crutch. To be effective, they must be presented flawlessly. Visual aids, computerized or otherwise, must be clearly visible to the entire audience. When you use aids like PowerPoint, you must take extra preparation time to ensure that all equipment works perfectly, so no interruptions occur during the presentation. Using your own equipment is the only way to be sure your presentation will go as planned. Often, eye contact and body language can be a more effective way of conveying one's message.



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Should a speaker's viewpoints be judged as part of an evaluation?

"A member at our district conference gave a speech about his dog. If the judge didn't like dogs, but the speaker did, it would have been inappropriate if points were deducted because of the difference of opinion. An evaluator should judge the *delivery* of a speech, and not the opinion of the speaker."

TIM MANSON, DTM

Lonestar Toastmasters, Killeen, Texas

"An opinion should not be criticized. The *way* a speaker presents his opinion is what should be evaluated."

SHELIA SPENCER-CHOLEWA, DTM

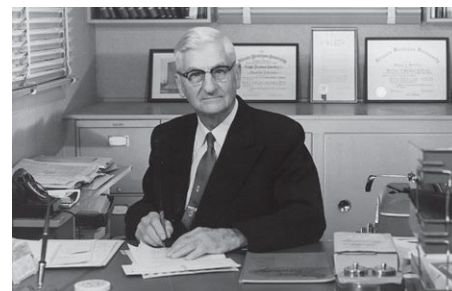
*Advanced Expressions Toastmasters
New York City, New York*

"An evaluator once told a speaker, 'I disagree with every point you made, but you delivered a fine speech. You stated your case.' Politics makes for strange Toastmasters friends."

DON WADLEIGH, ACB

*Burlington Area Toastmasters
Burlington, Iowa*

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



"Any personal characteristic or habit that makes the speech more effective is a good mannerism."

DR. RALPH C. SMEDLEY
1878-1965

TOASTMASTERS FOUNDER

AROUND THE GLOBE

LEARNING ABOUT OUR PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



TOMMY B. RICHARDSON, DTM

*Past International President
1988–1989
Zionsville, Indiana*

What inspires you?

What inspires me continually changes as I mature in life. Early inspiration came from external goals (e.g., career challenges). But, even in my early years, two things were always of primary importance: my family and inspiration through knowledge—each day presented an opportunity to learn and grow.

My approach to personal growth focuses on the whole person (spiritual, relationships, mental, physical and career). Today, I'm inspired not as much by my own growth but by seeing the growth in others (my family, clients I coach and athletes I work with). My personal motto is: There is no finish line. So, I will continue to be inspired by family, learning and growing.

MEET MY MENTOR



Dan Darnall, DTM

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Mike Kotur, DTM, a member of the DSAGSL WORD Masters club in Saint Louis, Missouri, shares how he has benefited from his mentor, Dan Darnall, DTM, PDG, of the Maritz Toastmasters club in Fenton, Missouri.

Why did you join Toastmasters?

As an independent contractor in project management, I was focused on Toastmasters' leadership path, but through membership I also reaped the benefits of improved communications and professional networking.

Tell us about your mentor.

Dan is a senior director of information technology for Maritz, LLC. We encourage, challenge and support each other, and celebrate successes together. Dan's knowledge, coupled with his dedication to helping others, has energized our mentor/protégé relationship.

How does Dan give feedback?

At first, Dan and I met consistently as he gave me recommendations on how to approach the Toastmasters education program. He continually encourages me

as I strive to meet my professional and personal goals.

Dan is an encourager, a counterpart and a friend. Now we meet occasionally as we work on projects in community involvement, self-development and the higher standards within the Toastmasters program.

What have you accomplished while under Dan's guidance?

I served as club president and coached a club to earn Distinguished recognition. I also served as area and division governor and completed a graduate program in management and leadership.

What is your favorite thing about Dan?

He invests in people and supports them in their mission to develop stronger leadership and communication skills.



MIKE KOTUR, DTM (left), and his mentor, Dan Darnall, DTM, PDG.

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How to Improve Your
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Andrew Rader, Ph.D., CC: Modern-day Explorer

MIT aerospace engineer is astronaut finalist for commercial Mars One mission.

BY PATRICK MOTT

"Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensible to everyone."

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

How's this for a challenge: After getting thrown out of an airplane at several thousand feet elevation, take 40 seconds to memorize giant letters on the ground, and then—quick, now—create as many words out of the letters as possible while the ground comes rushing up at you.

Is this any place for a Toastmaster?

It is if you happen to be Andrew Rader, Ph.D., CC, aerospace engineer, pilot, astronaut "wannabe," tireless advocate for space travel, Canada's greatest know-it-all (more on this later) and enthusiastic member of the Lexington Toastmasters club in Lexington, Massachusetts.

For Canadian-born Rader, who earned his doctorate in aerospace engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), space travel has for many years been a personal goal, a source of study and his professional work. It also has been a subject of zealous promotion for Rader as he continues to speak to students, civic groups and other audiences from around the world about the benefits and adventure of long-distance space exploration (his doctoral specialty was the effects of long-duration space flight on humans). He credits his almost three-year Toastmasters membership with helping him get the word out in an effective way, while positioning himself to live out the space adventure personally. He also recently competed for a spot on a suborbital commercial space flight.

Rader's ultimate goal: to fly to Mars. He is an astronaut finalist for the commercial Mars One mission, which aims to send the first colonists to Mars in 2023.

Add Rader's many radio and television interviews, his numerous public discussions each month, and the online videos he has made on many subjects, and you've got a lot of talking going on. Toastmasters, he says, has helped smooth the way by increasing his confidence as a speaker and enhancing his personal presence.

Speaking Ease

Rader has always been interested in public speaking. He says, "We did something like Table Topics when I was in the Royal Canadian Air Cadets [a youth pilot training program], which I very much enjoyed—getting up in front of an audience, being given a topic and having to talk about it. I've always considered myself as someone with broad interests, so I really enjoyed having to think on my feet in front of an audience and talk."

About three years ago, Rader saw a poster for Toastmasters at his place of employment. "I went to meetings, met some really nice people and had a lot of fun," he says.

While Rader was already largely at ease with public speaking, his Toastmasters experiences provided him with fresh insights.

"Toastmasters really focused on technical details, specific things," he says. "The evaluation process really gives you a way to analyze the way you speak, and helps you look for specific improvements. But it's still a fun place where you meet so many like-minded people."

Technical Topics

The variety of people in his club was a key factor in helping Rader communicate complex topics more clearly to people with different backgrounds.

"You get feedback from those who aren't immersed in the same field," he says, "and

you get to practice reaching people about a certain subject in a particular way."

Which is something, he admits, not all scientists are adept at doing.

"I think a lot of them wouldn't necessarily appreciate that [public speaking] skill," says Rader. "There's a divide between the ability to focus on a specific technical task or math problem and standing in front of an audience. But I think the scientists

"One of the things that really motivates me is communicating science to students and inspiring them to be interested in science and space."

— ANDREW RADER

who stand out the most in our society, people like Carl Sagan, are really effective communicators."

Rader says the point of science is to communicate it to the public and have it pervade society and lead to improvements. "There's almost no point in doing science if no one knows about it," he says. "It's like a tree falling in the woods."

Competition Boost

Rader is not above a bit of savvy self-promotion to get the word out. He recently was one of 10 finalists (chosen from 3,000 applicants) on the Discovery Channel TV show *Canada's Greatest Know-It-All*. Contestants competed in hair-raising and brain-bending events such as skydiving, and scuba diving while developing a nonverbal language



While Rader keeps his eye on Mars as a possible long-term personal destination, he recently competed for a chance to go on a suborbital flight as part of a contest sponsored by the Axe Apollo Space Academy. The contest was promoted in 60 countries. Potential winners will be chosen based on votes collected from social media websites. They must attend space camp, where they will participate in a series of tests to determine their mental and physical aptitude. In the end, 22 winners will fly the mission, one at a time. The voting closed in August and space camp candidates will be announced by the end of October.

If Rader wins his few minutes in flight, he says he'll conduct experiments submitted by Canadian students. "One of the things that really motivates me is communicating science to students and inspiring them to be interested in science and space. So I want to perform an experiment on that flight. There's a lot you can do in that short amount of time." "I want to share why space and space exploration is important to everyone," says Rader. "For me, communicating that message more effectively came from my membership in Toastmasters." **T**

PATRICK MOTT is a Southern California-based writer and regular contributor to the *Toastmaster magazine*.

ANDREW RADER, PH.D., CC, earned his doctorate in aerospace engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is a member of the Lexington Toastmasters club in Lexington, Massachusetts. To learn more about Rader's space mission, go to his YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/AndrewRader.

Andrew Rader, wearing a space suit, delivers a club speech about his dreams of living on Mars.

to decode and defuse an underwater bomb. In another event, competitors collaborated to destroy a coffee truck several hundred yards away with a bowling ball cannon. As part of the educational aspect of the program, Rader gave a presentation in front of a large number of students at a science fair.

In the end, one contestant emerged as the winner—the brain of brains. It was Rader.

"Being in Toastmasters gave me the skills and confidence to pursue things like that," says Rader. "It gives you the confidence to be comfortable in front of a camera and know you have something to say that people will listen to."

Round-robin Evaluations

Maximize feedback and give advanced members an edge.

BY LINDA ALLEN, ACS, CL

When I was invited to participate as a storyteller for a Christmas event, I jumped at the chance. After I recovered from my excitement, I realized storytelling was out of my comfort zone.

I went to my Toastmasters club to prepare for the new experience. I practiced my story, and the members used round-robin evaluations to help me. With this group evaluation method, every audience member is invited to offer brief comments to the speaker, and each person tries to point out something different. Our club uses this type of evaluation often to coach members for contests and other opportunities, and it's been very successful.

I practiced my stories several times in my club using this evaluation technique. I gained confidence from other members' ideas. One member suggested I try to own the stage by expanding my gestures. Another noted that one of my gestures did not match my words, while other audience members didn't notice the mismatch. The round robin helped me to step out of my comfort zone with confidence, and at the Christmas event I entertained audiences ranging from pre-schoolers to grandparents.

Hearing from Varied Listeners

While evaluations for manual projects concentrate on core elements of good public speaking, round robins focus on the details and subtleties. The value of this technique is that the speaker receives diverse feedback. Each evaluator notices something different, which gives the

speaker an understanding of how a larger audience might interpret his speech.

Advanced Toastmasters clubs use round robins as a regular part of their meetings to help speakers prepare for high-stakes speaking events. The format varies from club to club.

My club uses the "PIE" evaluation method: praise, instruction and encouragement. We praise the good points, offer recommendations and encourage practice. We limit comments to a minute or a minute and a half for each member, and vary the advice. This reduces repetition and saves time.

The On Broadway Toastmasters club of Denver, Colorado, uses a similar format: commend, recommend and commend—but with three separate rounds of evaluations. In the first round, evaluators comment on what they found valuable, and what was effective in the speech. In the second round, evaluators recommend one thing to make the presentation even more effective. The round robin concludes with a final round of commending remarks for the speaker. "Even the 'commend' rounds can help you identify and uncover areas that worked for your audience. Often, these are things you didn't realize were effective or meaningful," says David Dye, CC, CL, a member of On Broadway Toastmasters.

Advanced Prep

The Prep Squad club in San Ramon, California, is an advanced specialty club that uses the round-robin method to prepare speakers for contests and more challenging speaking opportunities. Members are eligible to join if they have at least an ACB award. Speakers provide copies of their speech to the audience so they can follow along and jot notes. A round robin follows with in-depth feedback, including comments about alternate

phrasing, organizational changes, gestures and visual aids.

"Any member can jump in to offer a suggestion or contradiction. While this might not sound very Toastmaster-like, we don't hesitate to interrupt, build on, modify or contradict each other's comments," says club member Dennis Dawson, DTM.

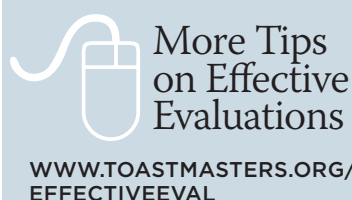
Each evaluator notices something different, which gives the speaker an understanding of how a larger audience might interpret his speech.

"Having the freedom to interject when the point first arises enables us to synthesize suggestions that would not occur to us as individuals."

Later, the speaker gives a revised speech, incorporating changes or practicing specific areas of concern.

Next Step Toastmasters in Santa Clara, California, attracts speakers who want to win speech contests and use their Toastmasters skills in their careers. Next Step incorporates the traditional Toastmasters club format with speeches followed by the standard two- to three-minute evaluation. A second evaluation period ensues with multiple one-minute evaluations.

The Evening Stars club in San Francisco, California, is for speakers who want to experiment with new and creative speaking styles in a safe environment. Members also try out pitches for startup companies and experiment with new approaches. Three or four evaluations are given immediately after the speech, with



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Give Yourself a Hand

Effective gesturing increases confidence and connection.

BY MATT ABRAHAMS

What do I do with my hands?" This is the question I am most often asked by my students at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. I jokingly respond that the only time we're not sure where to put our hands is when we're giving a presentation or when we're on a first date.

More seriously, the simple answer is: Put your hands where they will help you connect to your audience and avoid making you appear distracted or nervous. Yet effective gesturing is far more complex and nuanced. In this article, I will describe the benefits of gesturing and outline how to maximize the impact of your gestures.

Most people don't worry about gesturing while they are chatting with friends or conversing with co-workers. But when they are communicating in front of colleagues or classmates, they start to fret. For they know what many people know: The messages we convey through our body language are important. As research has shown, nonverbal communication is crucial. Presenting in front of others only highlights the importance of nonverbal cues while also provoking anxiety.

What do we get so nervous about? Getting our message across effectively; making sure we appear confident and competent; and wondering what the future consequences of our presentation might be. *Will I get what I want? Will I appear foolish? Will everything work out the way I intended?*

Your body responds to speaking in a very physiological way: Your heart rate and blood pressure increase, your breathing becomes more shallow, your legs become wobbly and you suffer from what I call plumbing reversal—what is normally wet (e.g., mouths) gets dry and what is normally dry (e.g., palms



Career coach and communications trainer Lisa Panarello, CC, gestures while presenting an education session at the 2012 Toastmasters International Convention.

and brows) gets wet. When you are nervous, your hands and arms tend to pull up close to your chest ... sort of like a boxer who is about to be pummeled by a battling brute. A tight, closed body position not only makes you appear defensive and nervous, but it makes your audience feel uneasy and doubting. These natural tendencies get in the way of confident, competent and connected speaking.

Establish a Base

So what can you do to counteract your innate tendencies? To begin with, your arms need a base—a place from which to start and return. Allow your arms to

If you gesture too low, the audience feels compelled to look at the movement rather than watch your face, which is where we typically look when people speak.

hang from your side as if a tailor were measuring you for a new jacket. You can gently rest your thumbs along the side of your leg. This position can feel quite awkward, but looks very comfortable and commanding. When you see a CEO or politician waiting to be introduced, that is how he or she stands.

Another base position is to lightly cup or clasp your hands at the level of your belly button. Avoid squeezing your hands too tightly or holding them at your sternum level; either of these actions cause your shoulders to rise and your elbows to touch your body, both of which make you appear tense.

When gesturing, you want to raise your gestures above your waist. Imagine you are submerged up to your waist in the shallow end of a swimming pool—all of your gestures need to be above the water. When you gesture this way, your audience feels comfortable, because they can focus on your face and still see your gestures in their field of vision. If you gesture too low, the audience feels compelled to look at the movement rather than watch your face, which is where we typically look when people speak. This makes your audience feel uncomfortable and distracts them.

Additionally, when you gesture, extend your arms away from your body—specifically, get your elbows unhinged from your torso. This reach most often will extend out at a 45-degree angle. Imagine each gesture is reaching outward as if to shake someone's hand. This extension allows you to fully use your gestures as well as connect to your listeners. Communication scholars call this connection “speaker immediacy.” You are immediately present and engaged with your audience.

When it comes to gesturing, you should avoid the following five habits:

1 Pointing at your audience.

Use an open hand with fingers extended. This is the Disneyland approach to gesturing. Employees of Disneyland are taught that pointing with a finger is rude and that in certain cultures, specific fingers have offensive connotations. So Disney employees gesture with open palms.

2 Scripting your gestures.

That is, try not to do exactly the same gesture the same way at specific points in your talk. Scripting makes you look stiff and reduces immediacy.

3 Gesturing too much.

The benefits of gesturing are immediately erased if the audience is distracted or confused by your arm waving. After you have completed your gestures, return your arms and hands to one of your two resting places for a brief break.

4 Using only one hand.

Don't gesture with the same hand all the time. Mix it up—use right-hand gestures and left-hand gestures alternately. You can also gesture with both hands.

5 Covering up when you count.

Many speakers count by showing fingers corresponding to the number being discussed (e.g., “I have three points to address”). However, speakers often cover up their fingers, so the count goes unseen. If you choose to display a count, raise your hand up and project your arm forward.

Gestures can and do make a big difference in how you connect with an audience and reveal your presentation prowess. At first, following some of the suggestions in this article will likely distract you and make you self-conscious, but with practice you'll develop a natural gesturing style that will allow you to reach your audience in an authentic and compelling manner. **T**

MATT ABRAHAMS is a member of the *I'm Feeling Chatty Toastmasters* in Mountain View, California, and is the author of the book *Speaking Up Without Freaking Out*. He teaches Strategic Communication at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business in Stanford, California, and is co-founder of Bold Echo Communication Solutions. To learn more, visit BoldEcho.com or NoFreakingSpeaking.com.



George Yen accepts applause, with 2012–2013 Toastmasters International President John Lau standing in the background.

Toastmasters' 2013–2014 International President is a business leader from Taiwan who is passionate about leadership and mentoring.

BY THE TOASTMASTER STAFF

The first Toastmasters club in Taiwan was established 55 years ago—and in 2000, the country's first district was formed. The election of George Yen as Toastmasters' 2013–14 International President marks another milestone: He is the organization's first International President from Taiwan.

Yen, who was elected at the International Convention in August, has been a member for 24 years. The Taipei resident is chairman of the board of Great Sequoia Corporation, which specializes in the management, manufacturing and trading of industrial

valves and fittings. He is chairman of the board of five related manufacturing companies in the fields of machinery and industrial products. The five companies are all international joint ventures.

Yen speaks four languages and holds a master's degree in international relations from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. He also is chairman of the CPYen Foundation, formed 12 years ago in honor of his father. The foundation's mission is to foster the art of dialogue and facilitate positive social change.

Over the years, Yen has held many leadership positions within Toastmasters. He is currently a member of Taiwan Toastmasters, a bilingual Chinese and English club in Taipei. His wife, Jorie Wu, DTM, a past district governor, and his daughter, Keli Yen, ACS, ALB, are members of the same club, which was co-founded by Keli.

As chairman of the board of six companies, what are your responsibilities?

I am primarily responsible for our corporate values, which coincide with Toastmasters' four core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence. These values are the soul of our corporate culture and the foundation on which all of our companies are built. It is worth noting that although four of the manufacturing companies are joint ventures with



George Yen tours the Aquarium of the Pacific, in Long Beach, California, with Immediate Past District 1 Governor David Kitchen, DTM.

companies in three countries (Japan, Canada and America), our companies all share the same values. It is the shared values, as well as the mission and vision, that brought the partners together.

You speak four languages. What insight do you gain from that type of multilingual exposure?

Languages offer a view into the mind and soul of a people—of how they perceive and experience their world. My mother tongue of Taiwanese represents a different shade of worldview from that of Mandarin (Beijing dialect) and Japanese, both of which I learned in school. My fourth language, English, represents a Western worldview.

Among the 145 Toastmasters clubs in Taiwan, about 75 percent conduct their meetings in English; the remaining clubs are divided among Taiwanese, Mandarin,

Japanese and Hakka, and a significant number are bilingual clubs. What is interesting is the Toastmasters format works in any language. We have a common humanity despite cultural and linguistic differences.

Tell us about your hobbies and interests outside of Toastmasters.

To balance my sedentary activities, I bike, hike and play badminton. Biking and hiking rid the body and mind of toxins that accumulate over time. Badminton requires total focus and split-second responses. These three activities help to clear the mind.

My claim to fame is achieving the Quadruple Challenges of Taiwan: biking around Taiwan (nine days); climbing Jade Mountain (the highest point on the Tropic of Cancer at 3,952 meters [12,966 feet]); climbing the stairs of the Taipei 101



(top) George Yen delivering a speech.



(bottom) George Yen, left, presents a corporate recognition award to Art Lofton, right, a vice president at Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems, as District 1 Public Relations Officer Chiu-hing Casey, DTM, looks on.

building (in 2006, the tallest building in the world); and swimming the Sun Moon Lake (3.5 kilometers [2.2 miles]). For our honeymoon in 1992, Jorie and I climbed Mount Kinabalu in Borneo (one of the highest mountains in Southeast Asia at 4,095 meters [13,435 feet]).

When and why did you join Toastmasters?

I joined Toastmasters in 1989 when I returned to Taiwan after 24 years in the United States. It was the lowest point in my life. I was divorced, unemployed and without friends. Toastmasters helped me rebuild my confidence, make friends and start a new life in Taiwan.

Through the Toastmasters speaking, evaluation and listening programs, I was able to articulate and reflect on my life. To borrow phrasing from UNESCO's (United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization) 1996 publication *Learning: The Treasure Within*: Toastmasters' program is a great way for "Learning to Know; Learning to Do; Learning to Be; Learning to Change; and Learning to Live Together."

"The Toastmasters format works in any language. We have a common humanity despite cultural and linguistic differences."

What aspect of Toastmasters do you like best?

We cannot learn and improve in a vacuum. Toastmasters, like life itself, is experiential—it's learning by doing. We learn and grow by observing and being self-aware in our interactions with one another. Therefore, what I appreciate most about Toastmasters is that it is a "practice field," or "dao chang," for personal growth.

How has Toastmasters helped you in your professional life?

Toastmasters has helped me in two fundamental ways. First, it has improved my ability to think and speak succinctly, which is an essential tool in my role as a business leader. Secondly, the Toastmasters values of integrity, respect for others, service and excellence formed the cornerstone of my business philosophy. These values provide the foundation for my joint ventures with Japanese, Canadian and American companies and the glue that holds us together as we overcome challenges.

In March this year, you were honored by the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs for your contribution to "international exchange and people-to-people diplomacy" through Toastmasters.

Tell us about Toastmasters in Taiwan and the organization's reputation there.

The seed of Toastmasters was planted in Taiwan by Past International President Bennie Bough, DTM, in 1958. He founded the Taipei Toastmasters club as a young U.S. Navy sailor stationed in the city. That club later had Taiwan's current Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Lin, as a member. The seed has grown to a district of 145 clubs. Since Taiwan became a district in 2000 (when my wife, Jorie Wu, was district governor), Toastmasters' profile has become more visible in Taiwan, especially with a club at Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hopefully, Toastmasters will gain even greater exposure in this country by having an International President from Taiwan.

What advice would you give to someone serving as a leader for the first time?

Use the opportunity to learn and practice the art of leadership. Be wary of the ego trap that comes with the role; humility is a key to your success. Above all, be able to rise above the self and observe your actions.

Who are some leaders you admire and why?

I would name two, one from the East and one from the West, and separated by 2,500 years. Lao-tse, the founder of the Chinese Taoist philosophy, espoused the values of simplicity and selflessness. I also admire Abraham Lincoln for his strength of character in overcoming a series of failures and life adversities to become such a respected American president.

What motivated you to seek leadership positions in Toastmasters and run for the office of International President?

To echo Albert Einstein: "I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious." I am passionately curious about what Toastmasters can teach me. After I started my first district leadership role as area governor, I never looked back. Being elected an international director in 2006 opened my eyes to the exciting global family that is Toastmasters (beyond District 67 on



George Yen and his wife, Jorie Wu, DTM.

the island of Taiwan). In those two years as director, I witnessed an excellent model of organizational governance, which I emulated in my own corporate boards. The opportunity to serve coincided with a time in my life when I was ready to get involved in nonprofit organizations.

You will be the first International President from Taiwan. What does that mean to you and to Toastmasters in your country?

To be the International President is a tremendous honor for me and for Toastmasters in Taiwan. This honor is magnified by the fact that Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, and as such, NGOs (nongovernment organizations) such as Toastmasters International, and people-to-people diplomacy, take on a greater significance. When governments cannot perform certain roles, it is up to the people to fill in the gaps.

How do you balance your job with your responsibilities as an international



George Yen and Jorie Wu are honorary members of the Taroko aboriginal tribe in Taiwan.



George Yen helps members of the Kaohsiung Toastmasters, in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan, celebrate the club's 50th anniversary.

leader for our organization?

The heart of management and leadership is team building and empowering others. I am proud to say that over the past two decades, I have built self-managing teams in each of my six operating companies. When things are going well, my main challenge is to get out of my team's way,

"I believe we can return to 60 percent retention within one year if all of us, around the world, work together to establish a stronger culture of mentoring."

and so Toastmasters is a wonderful way to divert my surplus time and energy. As CEO of these companies, I am mainly responsible for the bottom line; my primary focus is on strategic and policy

matters. I am happy to leave the day-to-day operations to others. Therefore, a measure of success for me is how much free time I have to devote to Toastmasters.

What do you enjoy about having your wife and daughter as fellow Toastmasters?

This family avocation triples our learning in Toastmasters, and gives us additional glue to bind our family together. Jorie and Keli, as students of dialogue and facilitation [key aspects of the CPYen Foundation's mission], greatly enrich our group learning as a family both in and outside of Toastmasters.

What are your goals for your year in office?

An area of great opportunity for our organization is member retention. Since 2009, we've slipped from about 60 percent retention to 57 percent. While a certain level of attrition is expected for any organization, it nevertheless merits attention. Fortunately, we can address this

directly at the club level. Recent research shows us that member satisfaction is greater when clubs have formal, organized mentoring programs. Let's encourage every Toastmasters club in the world to establish an ongoing program that assigns a mentor to each new member—and then ensures that the member receives ongoing mentoring throughout his or her membership.

Mentoring directly supports our tagline, Where Leaders Are Made, because mentors grow as leaders when helping others. I believe we can return to 60 percent retention within one year if all of us, around the world, work together to establish a stronger culture of mentoring.

If you had one piece of advice for every Toastmaster, what would it be?

Stick with it! Learning about communication and leadership is a lot like exercise or learning a martial art such as kung fu. It takes consistent, diligent practice, and over time you will be rewarded for your persistence. **T**

Say It with a Song

A different way to grab your audience's attention.

BY THOMAS HOPKINS, ACB, ALB

As Toastmasters, we are constantly on the lookout for new speech ideas. Songs can be an excellent source of material for speeches because of their storytelling nature, short duration and infectious melodies. Because of these properties, almost any song can be used to create or enhance a speech in interesting ways.

The short duration of a song cries out for a speech to convey the details of the song's story. I once wrote a speech based on the song "Saint John" by Cold War Kids. The song tells the story of a man on death row hoping for a pardon from the

governor. He ended up on death row after throwing a brick at a drunk college kid who was part of a group that was harassing his sister. The framework for a speech was already in place in the song.

The song has a tragic element to it, which is amplified by its mournful chorus. I only needed to add some additional details to the story to transform the song into a speech. I also took the opportunity to try and emulate the singer who sang with a drawl, which added to the entertainment value of the speech. But, perhaps the most powerful aspect of the speech was the chorus

line I sang to my audience as a break between the different parts of the story.

A Chorus Line

Choruses are meant to be catchy, with interesting rhythms and melodies. In fact, when most people think of a song, it's typically a chorus line that first comes to mind. For good or bad, depending on your taste and the length of time you are forced to listen to it, the chorus line may be the only part of the song you actually remember.

Try using a chorus line to your advantage by singing it as part of your speech. In addition to the rhythm and melody, just the fact that you're singing it will grab your audience's attention. By doing so, you will also inject into the speech whatever emotional tone or attitude the chorus projects. In my speech, a chorus line provided smooth transitions between each part of the story. Singing adds emotional impact in a way that simply telling a story cannot do.

Imagine a humorous speech in which the speaker describes a situation that made him want to appear to be cool, but

Singing adds emotional impact in a way that simply telling a story cannot do.

things didn't work out as intended. Now imagine the speaker singing a chorus line from the song "Bad to the Bone" by George Thorogood and the Destroyers during certain parts of his or her speech. The singing catches the audience's attention and also injects some humor into the speech.



Using Soundtracks

Soundtracks are another source for speech ideas. [A soundtrack can be recorded music synchronized to the images of a motion picture, book, television program or video game. Soundtracks are sometimes released commercially as soundtrack albums.] Soundtrack speeches use songs that remind the speaker of a specific time in his life. Typically these memories focus on childhood, a particular person or a romantic relationship. Soundtracks may be the most common types of songs that speakers incorporate into speeches.

If you have been a Toastmaster for a long time, you have probably heard someone give a soundtrack speech, or you may have given one yourself. This type of speech can work to your advantage because it will hold your audience's attention. Additionally, hearing a song's chorus may trigger feelings of nostalgia in audience members who recognize them.

Creative Use of Song Titles

Those looking for a challenge might consider a list of song titles by their favorite artist and write a speech that incorporates those titles directly into the speech narrative. In these cases the speaker doesn't sing. The titles are simply used as phrases in the sentences of the speech. For example, a speech about an old car might incorporate titles of some Beatles songs:

My wife keeps threatening to have my '67 Camaro towed out to the junkyard because she is tired of it taking up space in the garage. She affectionately refers to it as the "yellow submarine" because she feels in her words that "it should be rusting on the bottom of the ocean." I told her I wasn't getting rid of

it because I know that "with a little help from my friends" I will get that car up and running as good as new.

Once the audience picks up on what the speaker is doing, they will appreciate the difficulty of the speaker's challenge.

Tunes for Table Topics

Another use for a song is creating Table Topics questions. This is especially useful when you learn just before a meeting that the scheduled Table Topicsmaster can't make the meeting and someone else needs to fill that role. People have songs they enjoy listening to, so it's easy to recall a favorite. Try using it to craft part of a spur-of-the-moment question. Here are some examples:

■ Huey Lewis and the News sang about the heart of rock 'n' roll. What is the heart of rock 'n' roll, and is it still beating?

■ Ozzy Osbourne went off the rails on a crazy train. When do you board your crazy train, and what makes it go off the rails?

■ Steppenwolf was born to be wild. What were you born to be?

These examples don't require the responder to actually know the song, and you can use them to spur ideas for a vast amount of topics in a short time.

The next time you're seeking inspiration for a speech topic, think about some of your favorite songs. It's likely that you can transform one of them into an entertaining speech, or use a chorus to spice up a speech you're working on. **T**

THOMAS HOPKINS, ACB, ALB, is a member of DHS Toastmasters in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The Song-Title Technique

To inject humor into a speech—especially one about a dry topic—I sometimes use a technique that involves grouping song titles into themes. It can work with any well-known musician or group that has recorded a large number of songs.

Let's say you're going to make a training presentation. You have to teach a group of people something really complicated—a computer program, details of complex new legislation, medical procedures, whatever. You might begin by saying:

It may sound strange, but I feel the Beatles are here with us today—because they recorded some songs on how you may feel about learning [the topic of your talk]. The top three titles are:

- "The Long And Winding Road"
- "It's All Too Much"
- "Help!"

Fortunately, they also recorded some songs about how I feel. The top three are:

- "I Want To Hold Your Hand"
- "Ask Me Why"
- "We Can Work It Out"

This is a condensed version of Malcolm Kushner's article "Want To Be Funny? You Can't Go Wrong If You Name That Song," which was published in the March 2007 Toastmaster magazine.

Exercising the Mind

How to improve your mental acuity.

BY JUDITH C. TINGLEY, PH.D., DTM

Wouldn't Dr. Ralph Smedley be amazed to know that the organization he founded 89 years ago helps enhance the members' brain functions? Researchers in neuroscience are discovering new information about brain training. It turns out that a Toastmasters meeting is an ideal brain gym—one that gives our neurons a workout.

In Toastmasters, we not only learn to be leaders and good presenters, we also strengthen our ability to regulate emotions and reduce stress, to focus and avoid distraction, and improve our working memory. Brains work best when we're comfortable. That's been my experience in Toastmasters meetings over the last 30 years.

Use It or Lose It

Stuart Pink, third-place winner in the 2012 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking, alluded to the new brain science by making an analogy between physical fitness and mental fitness in his finalist speech, "Brainlifting." He suggests that we elevate our thinking to an Olympic level. Discoveries in the past decade have made such a feat possible. (Read Stuart Pink's article, "Brainlifting—A Crash Course in Creative Fitness," on page 26.)

The term *neuroplasticity* describes the brain's ever-changing structure and activity. Whether a brain is growing, declining or unchanging is dependent on things like an individual's genes and day-to-day habits and experiences.

Wilma Koutstaal, Ph.D., a cognitive neuroscientist, describes a study illustrating neuroplasticity in her 2012

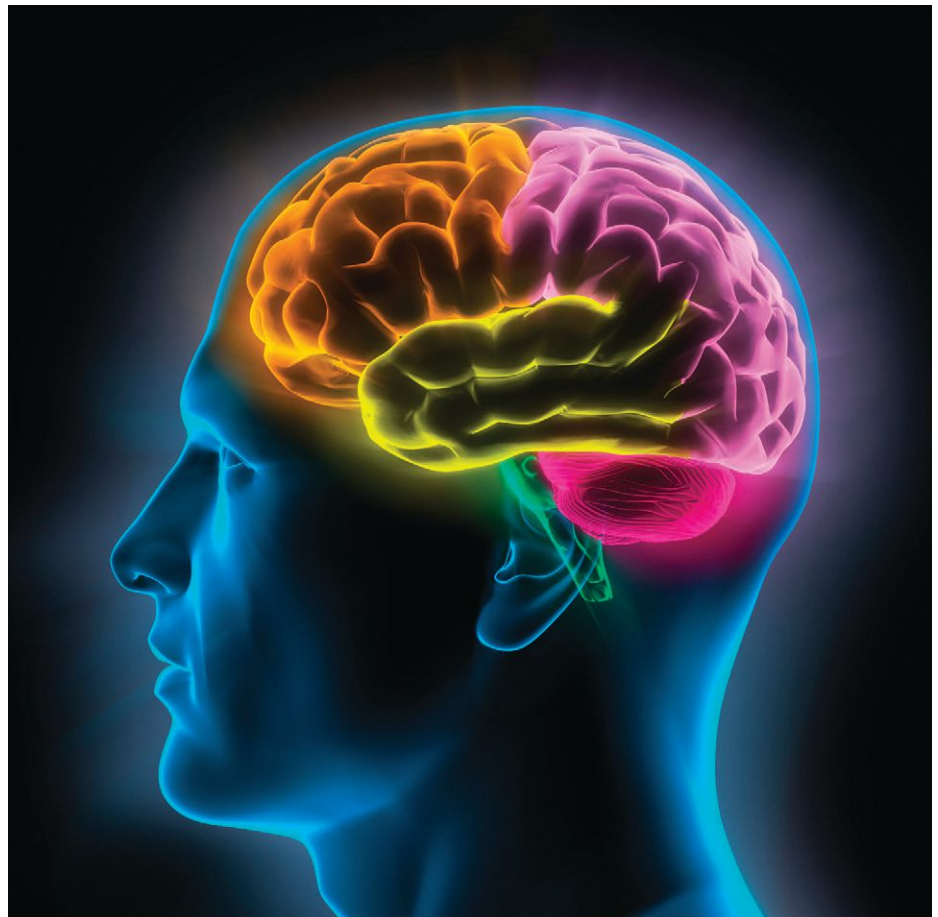
award-winning book *The Agile Mind*. All participants in the study initially had a brain scan to determine the structure of their brains. Half of the participants were asked to learn a three-ball cascade juggling routine in the three months that followed. They all succeeded at the task. The other half were told to live as usual and come back in three months. Next, all participants underwent a second brain scan. The jugglers' brains showed an increase in the number of neurons, particularly in areas connected to motion sensitivity and visual-spatial attention. The brains of the non-jugglers showed no change.

The jugglers were then told to abstain from juggling for three months. A follow-up scan demonstrated how brain growth shown previously in this group was lost after three months of no juggling. The adage “use it or lose it” describes it well. Brain fitness follows the same pattern as physical fitness. You may exercise regularly for years, but when you stop for a couple of weeks or a month—whoosh!—fitness is lost. Plus, getting it back is never as quick and easy as losing it.

I recently had to miss several months of Toastmasters meetings. Upon my return, during my first meeting back, I fumbled words and made errors as the timer. To lift my brain function, I quickly signed up to be the Toastmaster for the next meeting. Now that I understand neuroplasticity, I have a good answer for people who ask me why I've stayed in Toastmasters for 30 years. I tell them I remain in Toastmasters to keep my brain stimulated, growing and sending out new shoots.

While giving speeches, evaluating or being the Toastmaster or Table Topicsmaster doesn't have quite the same effect on the brain as juggling, it's still a workout that can activate many parts of the brain. The workout causes neurons to grow and build longer and stronger neural pathways. Opportunities for learning abound at every Toastmasters meeting, as members try out different roles and encounter new experiences.

I met with members of the Breathe In, Speak Out Toastmasters club in San



Carlos, California, which is sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals. These members confirmed the changes they observed in their own brain activity as a result of Toastmasters meetings. Here are some of their comments: “My ability to focus, pay attention and not be distracted has definitely improved”; “Storytelling keeps my working memory interacting with the past and present constantly”; “Intellectual stimulation is a big payoff in Toastmasters.” Several people said they notice an increase in their abilities to think creatively, which enhances their work performance in the technical environment at Novartis.

Reduce Stress and Regulate Emotions

One of the first, and most important, brain functions we face as new Toastmasters is the regulation of our

emotions; it's the key to stress reduction. Many new Toastmasters are anxious about their Ice Breaker speech, and they dread participating in Table Topics. We're the only mammals who stress ourselves with our own thoughts. Negative thinking, such as, *I'm going to forget everything*, often causes angst.

If you engage in negative self-talk, it means you're not yet regulating your emotions. Here are some ways to lift your brain away from stress into calm.

■ Imagine you have reduced the volume of your negative self-talk, sent it off to Siberia in a hot air balloon, or erased it from the chalkboard in your brain.

■ Block out the negative self-talk with repetitive realistic thinking: *I can do this and I'm learning from it*. Or, *Done is better than perfect*.

■ Briefly remove yourself from the emotional situation, if possible. Go outside and coax your mind to recall a memory of a previous speaking success or a good emotional experience. Or just focus intently on the moment: *Right now I'm walking calmly up to the lectern and preparing to shake hands with the Toastmaster.*

Stress is tough on the immune and cardiovascular systems, and it also impairs the development of neurons and neural connections. It limits agile thinking ability and leaves us with tunnel vision. We become stuck, forgetful and sometimes short of breath, or nauseous.

You can choose to regulate your emotions. If you implement a strategy to distance yourself, physically or mentally, from stress, you will start to build a new neural connection—a new habit—while your old habit slowly diminishes. Our ability to reduce stress may not show up right away, but over time it becomes noticeable at club meetings, in problem-solving situations, during interpersonal conflicts and competitive activities, and at work. Whew, what a relief!

Brain imagery shows that meditation can help regulate emotions and reduce stress. It also can improve one's attention span, the ability to focus, the working memory and other executive brain functions. To become a good listener, evaluator, Table Topics participant, speaker and more, we need to avoid distractions and increase our attention spans.

Strategic Allocation and Success

Research from the University of Washington shows negative results occur when we try to do more than one thing at a time. The study indicates that when we work on more than one task simultaneously, we don't devote enough attention to each task. Quality is sacrificed, despite many people's claims that multitasking can be done successfully. When we quiet our mind, avoid distractions and focus on one thing at a time, we become much more efficient.

The concept of strategic allocation of attention gained fame from what is now known as the marshmallow experiment, originally carried out more than 40 years ago by psychologist Walter Mischel at Stanford University. It was intended as a study of willpower and the delay of gratification, but researchers later determined it addressed the idea of allocation of attention.

The experiment went like this: 4-year-olds were tempted with a marshmallow, but were told if they waited to eat it until the researcher returned, they could have two instead of one. The children who were most successful at avoiding temptation were those who focused their attention on everything but the marshmallow. They looked out the window, closed their eyes, stared at the ceiling or crawled under a table—anything to avoid seeing and thinking about the appealing sweet. Later follow-up studies showed the avoiders were more successful later in life than those who focused intently on the one marshmallow—and ate it.

Working Memory and Exercise

Attention is tied closely to working memory, which is the ability to keep information current and up front in your brain for a short period of time while it's needed. Working memory can be improved by computerized brain-training, says Dr. Torkel Klingberg in the book *The SharpBrains Guide to Brain Fitness*. In Toastmasters, each person who serves a function at a club meeting must use working memory.

As an evaluator, you ask yourself the following questions: "What action did the speaker want us to take?" "Did I listen attentively to the speech or was I focused on the speaker's gestures because the objective of the speech had to do with body language?"

The grammarian focuses on everyone's communication throughout the meeting, paying attention to grammar and



Research shows regular aerobic exercise boosts brain function.

word use while still getting the gist of the speech content, Table Topics and evaluations. We do brain exercises almost every minute of every Toastmasters meeting—all the more reason to sign up for a specific job that involves a brain workout.

Learning expert Annie Murphy Paul, who authored several books on the topic, including *Origins: How the Nine Months Before Birth Shape the Rest of Our Lives*, points out that aerobic exercise is also an important way to improve executive function in healthy children and adults. According to her blog, "Research on older adults has found that regular aerobic exercise can boost the executive functions that typically deteriorate with age, including the ability to pay focused attention, to switch among tasks and to hold multiple items in working memory."

Brain Agility and Change

Just as we know that sitting in a chair all day is bad for our bodies, we know that repeating the same daily routes and routines, habits and thinking patterns is not



Members improve their mental agility as they learn and grow in Toastmasters.

good for our minds. We need incremental challenges, newness and change to have agile brains that adapt and adjust to new situations as they occur. A Toastmasters meeting provides that opportunity each time we lead or speak, act as a functionary or learn new information.

Now you know—if you didn't before—that Toastmasters is a great place to acquire improved executive brain function, in addition to leadership acumen and public speaking skills. You can be confident that you're getting mentally stronger and more agile. Keep it up and you'll reach that Olympic level that Stuart Pink suggests as a goal for us all. And thanks again, Dr. Ralph Smedley, for the creative thinking in founding Toastmasters. **T**

JUDITH C. TINGLEY, PH.D., DTM, is a psychologist and a member of the *U Speak Easy* Toastmasters club on Bainbridge Island, Washington. She's a freelance writer and speaker. Her blog is intelligentwomenonly.com.



BRAIN TRAINING—TRENDY, RIGHT?

Computerized games that brain-train for memory, attention, problem solving and flexibility in thinking are becoming trendy. However, Alvaro Fernandez, founder of SharpBrains, suggests we ask some questions before we jump into computerized brain-fitness programs. Are scientists, ideally neuropsychologists and scientific advisory boards, behind the program? What are the specific benefits claimed for using a program? What specific cognitive skill is the program addressing? For more information about brain-training programs, visit SharpBrains.com.

Wilma Koutstaal, Ph.D., in an email interview, says the best way to keep your brain fit, growing and agile is to frequently seek out new experiences, gain new skills, embrace change, eschew routine and move on to new challenges as soon as you get good at anything. For healthy, relatively adaptive people, Toastmasters may do as much for their brains as other types of training—at least right now while brain training is in its infancy and Toastmasters is in a stage of senior wisdom.

— Judith C. Tingley, Ph.D., DTM

Brainlifting—A Crash Course in Creative Fitness

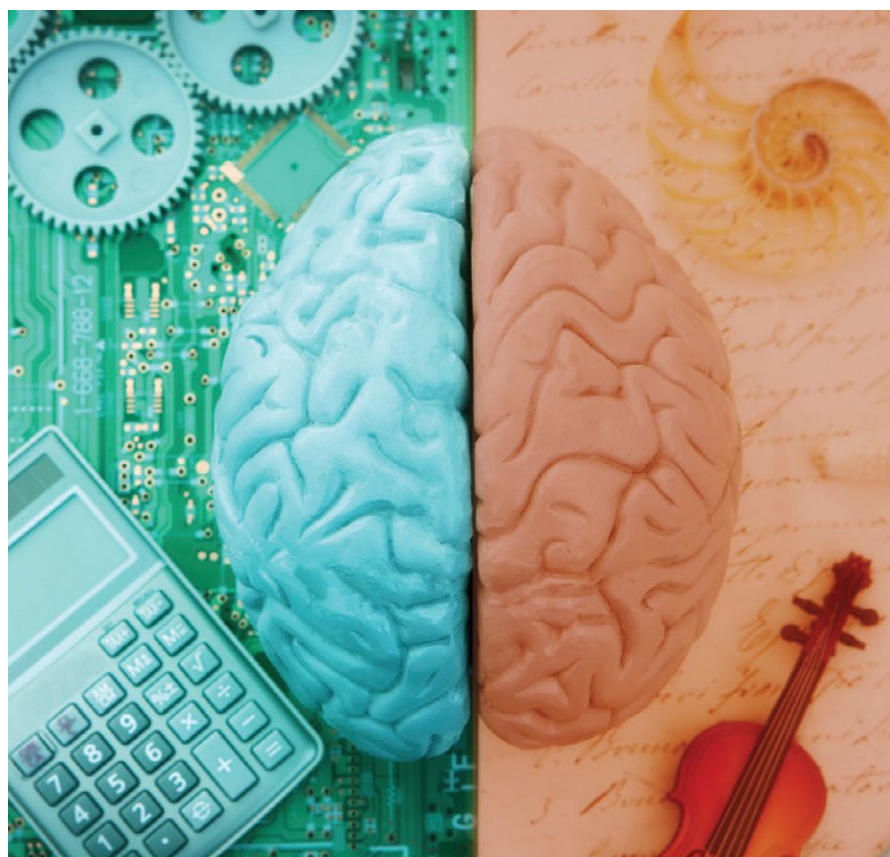
How brain exercises boost the ability to generate ideas.

BY STUART PINK, CC

It's an exciting time to think about thinking. Early next year, the United States will launch an initiative called the Brain Activity Map project to reveal some of the remaining secrets about the 3-pound universe that is the human brain. More than 40 million people are now members of Lumosity (lumosity.com), which features daily brain-training exercises in memory, attention and problem solving. Even the world of sports is jumping on the bandwagon, with José Mourinho, one of the world's top soccer managers, acknowledging the importance of brain training for soccer players.

When I selected the phrase “brainlifting” for my contest speech in the 2012 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking finals, I was referring to creative fitness—i.e., the brain's ability to think *creatively*, as opposed to logically, which encompasses most existing mental exercises (e.g., crossword puzzles, sudoku and chess). Not only is creative exercise beneficial to our cognitive development, it also involves essential skills needed in the 21st century.

A 2010 poll of 1,500 CEOs by IBM identified creativity as the number one “leadership competency” of the future. In his book *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, author Daniel Pink (no relation) points out that with the global population boom and the rise in computers and robots, the future belongs to people who possess “right brain” qualities such as inventiveness, empathy and meaning as opposed to “left brain” dominance of the Information Age. Unfortunately, the creativity of schoolchildren has been declining for more than 20 years now, according to students' performances on creativity tests such as the Torrance Tests



The left side of the brain is known for processing logical tasks, and the right side is adept at creative tasks.

of Creative Thinking. How much of this is due to an emphasis on standardization and rote learning in schools? And what can we do about it?

Brainlifting, or exercising our creativity, can provide the solution. We're all born with natural creativity and imagination. You only need to spend time with a child and a cardboard box to see that. I was once embarrassed by my 4-year-old son's desire to bring an old shopping receipt (or “Snakey,” as he called it) to show-and-tell

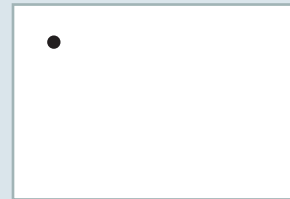
at his school. As I explained to his teacher that we did have “real” toys at home, it occurred to me that I feared her judgment more than I valued my son's creativity!

Somehow, in growing up, we suppress our imagination and conform to our adult world. But we must relearn how to think creatively. As with physical exercise, building up creative fitness takes time, even though you *can* see improvement immediately. Creativity is a numbers game, so the more ideas you generate,

Brainlifting Exercises

Try these creative exercises. Most of them could be adapted to form a Table Topics question at your next club meeting:

Look at the picture.
What do you see?



(Most people will say they see a black dot. They won't notice the significantly larger white space around it.)

Retell a famous fairy tale using only 10 words.

Select two unconnected objects at random—for example, an apple and a pencil. How many uses or inventions can you think of by combining them? How would you pitch your new invention to the public?

Pick a topic and ask a “what if?” question about it. For example, if the topic was “work,” you could ask, “What if we could choose our own hours of work?” Elaborate on what would be different if we could, and how it might be better.

Draw a portrait of yourself using only five lines.

—Stuart Pink, CC

the greater the chance of producing something really useful. No one knew that better than Thomas Edison, who managed to file more than 1,600 patents in his lifetime (not all of which were successful). He famously said, “Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.”

It is possible to group creative exercises under three broad headings (which overlap to some extent).

1. Making connections
2. Considering different perspectives
3. Using imagination

Make Connections

Making connections is one of the fundamental ways in which we learn. As we make new connections, they result in habits (e.g., how to perform a task at work). Once a habit takes hold, it can be difficult to make new connections. Creative exercises, such as thinking about how to connect random objects, can help overcome habits. For example: When a worker at 3M, a global science and technology corporation, made a connection between an ineffective glue and an ordinary bookmark, the Post-it note was born.

Consider Different Perspectives


Edward de Bono wrote the book *Six Thinking Hats* to encourage people to think from the different perspectives of objectivity, emotion, caution, positivity, creativity and control. One can create any number of different perspectives—e.g., how would a new project or product be viewed through the eyes of a manager, an assistant, a buyer, a seller, a teacher or a child? What if, starting tomorrow, your organization was run by Bono or William Shakespeare? How would things

be different? When being creative, it's important not to dismiss the seemingly ludicrous but, rather, to see what comes out of it.

When being creative, it's important not to dismiss the seemingly ludicrous but, rather, to see what comes out of it.

Use Your Imagination

Using your imagination is perhaps the hardest creative category to provide exercises for, but it is without doubt what makes us human. Throughout history, the pursuit of people's dreams and imagination advanced civilization, whether in air travel or in creating fundamental freedoms in our societies. Asking questions beginning with “What if?” is a good way to generate imaginative ideas. Keep a notebook or voice recorder nearby to capture ideas whenever they come to you.

Like physical exercise, mental exercise won't always be easy. But it's worth the effort. Anyone who tells you that you're not creative is wrong. Why not start brainlifting today? 

STUART PINK, CC, earned third place in the 2012 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. A member of Providence Toastmasters in Providence, Rhode Island, he is an elementary school teacher with a passion for creativity.

Dealing with Speaking Disasters

Turn the moment around to your benefit.

BY CHARLES DICKSON, PH.D.

A few years ago, I attended an interdenominational religious service in St. Petersburg, Florida. The speaker was a nationally known clergyman who had just finished making the point that it was good for people of different religions to get together, since they don't always agree with each other. He had barely completed this statement when a woman in the crowd jumped up, made some disparaging remarks about his talk and promptly walked out. The audience gasped in shock. But the mood was soon overcome by laughter when the speaker, Dr. Wallace Hamilton, quietly responded, "You see what I mean? It's just like I said. We don't always agree." A standing applause then followed the laughter.

It isn't easy to recover from a speaking disaster, but if you are well-prepared and have the right attitude, you can turn disasters into opportunities. There's a certain flexibility or low-key approach that can help you weather the storms that suddenly pop up at the most inopportune times. Such an attitude can make you appear relaxed and in control, even though you might feel you're about to come apart at the seams.

Take, for example, the female communications expert who was speaking to a group of 500 engineers, most of them male. Suddenly, her half-slip fell to the floor. She quickly picked it up, looked at the audience, and said, "A Freudian slip." The group roared and she was immediately back in charge of the situation.

With the exception of details, the clergyman and the communications expert both faced an interruption that threatened to derail a serious moment, yet each was able to turn the moment around to his or her benefit. Had the minister mumbled about ill-mannered people in church services or the communications expert complained about undergarment



Anyone who has ever been caught in public with spinach between his teeth or a price tag hanging from a piece of clothing can identify with public embarrassment.

manufacturers, each would have risked losing his or her audience and credibility.

Anyone who has ever been caught in public with spinach between his teeth or a price tag hanging from a piece of clothing can identify with public embarrassment. And moments like that can either make or break you as a speaker. How can we turn a speaking "oops" into an opportunity? Consider these points:

■ MAINTAIN GRACE UNDER PRESSURE.

It's not the embarrassing situation that matters. It's how you deal with it. You must deal with it quickly. If you show

your audience that you are not going to let the interruption derail you from your purpose, they will take your cue and become even better listeners.

■ CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

Connect with your audience. It's easy to get flustered and rush through the planned speech just to get it over with. But when the unplanned event happens, take time to respond to it. In doing so you will be showing your audience that you are with them all the time and are concerned with their needs.

■ **BE PREPARED.** If you need certain table arrangements, back-up microphones or other audio-visual equipment, let the meeting planner know well ahead of time. Then make a last-minute follow-up call to ensure your requests have been met.

■ **BITE THE BULLET.** When things go wrong in a presentation—and if you make enough presentations, something surely will—don't blame others; take the responsibility yourself. While a trouble spot may not be your fault, and can easily be traced to incompetence by someone else, take the blame yourself. Blaming others makes you look unprofessional and really doesn't get you off the hook. Audiences will remember the speaker who had them singing campfire songs by candlelight when the power went out. They don't really care who caused the outage.

The way you handle your next speaking engagement is a direct reflection on you and the business you represent. By following these tips, you can turn potential disasters into glorious opportunities, and thereby receive rave reviews. **T**

CHARLES DICKSON, PH.D., is an adjunct instructor at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, North Carolina, and has been a parish minister for 52 years.



Members of Sunshine Speakers in Orillia, Ontario, Canada, enjoy the company of service dogs in club meetings.

Canine Companionship

Can a dog like Bosley really open doors to new members?

BY GARY FLEMING, ACS, CL

Catherine O'Connor, CC, is hard of hearing. The first time she visited our club, members stopped to take a second look at the service dog by her side. The beautiful yellow Labrador retriever, named Bosley, brought smiles to members' faces as he made his way into the club's meeting room. At the time, no one could have imagined the new opportunity that Bosley presented to us that day.

Catherine was dealing with hearing loss when she joined the Sunshine Speakers in Orillia, Ontario, Canada, in 2008. Bosley was born in May 2005, and went to the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides School. In 2007, Catherine and Bosley became a team, and with Bosley at her side, Catherine became better able to deal with her daily hearing-loss challenges.

Service dogs undergo specialized training to develop the ability to remove barriers of communication and promote equity for those with disabilities. Bosley is loved dearly by Catherine, but his main function is to be of service to her. It is his job to lead Catherine to the source of a sound that she cannot hear. For Catherine,

what makes Bosley better than an amplified phone or alarm clock is his loving nature. He gives Catherine the opportunity to become more social as he quickly becomes the icebreaker in conversations.

All Ears

Bosley also gives Catherine the priceless feeling of peace of mind. With Bosley at her side, Catherine is safer at home, while traveling, at work and on route to and from Toastmasters meetings. If a cellphone rings, a fire alarm sounds, a car honks or Catherine's name is called, Bosley alerts her.

Catherine says, "He even taught himself to alert me to the sound of the toaster popping. He once told me repeatedly about someone stuck in an elevator. It took me a while to figure out why he was alerting me. I finally realized he was hearing someone calling for help from behind a wall."

I first met Bosley when the club's executive committee was strongly considering inducting him into the club as an honorary member. The club president, along with the other members, agreed it was a great idea. As club coach, I called Toastmasters

International World Headquarters to ensure we were not breaking any rules, as none of us had ever heard of this being done before.

Revered Retriever

During the next meeting Sunshine Speakers members voted unanimously in favor of inducting Bosley as an honorary member. We all felt strongly that Bosley should be honored in this way because he opened our eyes to the needs of residents in our community who might have difficulty participating in a club because of physical disabilities.

Service dogs like Bosley accompany their owners so they can participate in activities they wouldn't otherwise be capable of doing. Shortly after Catherine joined our club, another person with a disability joined, and attended meetings with her seeing-eye guide dog, Rita.

On February 13, 2012, Bosley was recognized by the Sunshine Speakers for his contribution to a positive learning environment that encourages sensitivity to others.

One may wonder how members and guests react to having a dog participate in club meetings. Bosley quickly developed a relationship with each member. He is polite and respectful when offering his paw for a handshake, and has learned to not interrupt a speaker. He gives feedback by wagging his tail during applause.

Bosley has a way of making everyone feel welcome. With astonishing sensitivity, his gentle greeting makes even the most reserved guest feel safe in what can sometimes feel like a scary environment.

I challenge you to seek out potential members who have disabilities, and determine ways in which you can make it easier for them to participate in Toastmasters meetings. **T**

GARY FLEMING, ACS, CL, is a member of the *Echoes of the Bay* club in Midland, Ontario, Canada. He fostered three pups for the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. Visit dogguides.com for more information.



Small-town News

You won't find this kind of stuff in *USA Today*.

BY JOHN CADLEY

With all this talk about the death of newsprint, I'm glad to say that my local *Pennysaver* publication is very much alive. I read it with far more interest than the national news sources for the simple reason that it's far more interesting.

For instance, my most recent edition includes a review of a local production of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The writer is almost as histrionic as old Tennessee himself:

The play reveals to the very depths the character of Blanche DuBois, whose life has been undermined by her romantic illusions. The pressure brought to bear on her by her sister, with whom she goes to live in New Orleans, is intensified by the earthy and extremely 'normal' young husband of the latter, leading to a revelation of her tragic self-delusion and, in the end, to madness. Catering provided by Cathy's Corner Café.

If I was going to have a nervous breakdown, I'm not sure I'd want it catered, but still ... you won't find some fancy-shmancy *New York Times* theater review telling you where you can grab a bite after the show.

Next is a headline announcing **Car Show Over Valentine's Weekend**. The lead sentence of the announcement says: *Love and exhaust fumes will be in the air this Valentine's Day, the opening salvo of the 105th Annual Car Show at the Oncenter Convention Center.* Love and exhaust fumes? How about carbon monoxide and gas masks? I hope they've been ventilating the place. I also like that word *salvo*, which means some kind of bombardment. Not exactly the right word, yet if some guy forgot to buy his wife flowers for Valentine's Day, who knows?—maybe she would shoot him with a cannon.

Flipping to the next page I see that the Syracuse Jewish Community Center is presenting an evening of "adult fun." Adult fun at the Jewish Community Center? This, I gotta see. Turns out a local comedy troupe will *transform the center into an intimate comedy club as the audience enjoys an evening of hilarious improv comedy recommended for those 18 years and older. Food flies during [the skit] 'Helping Hands.' The 'Irish Drinking Song' is sure to offend the weak of heart. Plenty of on-site parking available.* I bet there'll

be parking available. In fact, I'm betting the parking lot will be empty. People go to the Jewish Community Center for yoga classes, literary lectures and children's activities. I can't see how any of them would consider flying food and offensive Irish drinking songs to be a fun night out.

Then there are those wonderful brief announcements:

"Daddy/Daughter Dance for young ladies age 3 and up. For many of the girls it will be their first dance."

First dance? At 3 years old it might be their first time without diapers.

"Wanted: Old unopened wine, cognac, rum and whiskey bottles." If they're unopened, this guy doesn't want antiques, he wants booze.

"Will do almost anything." I love the small tedious jobs. Will you get my teenage son to clean his room?

"Experienced mother will care for your infant/children in your home." Probably because she's had enough "experience" with her own kids for a while and wants to get out of the house.

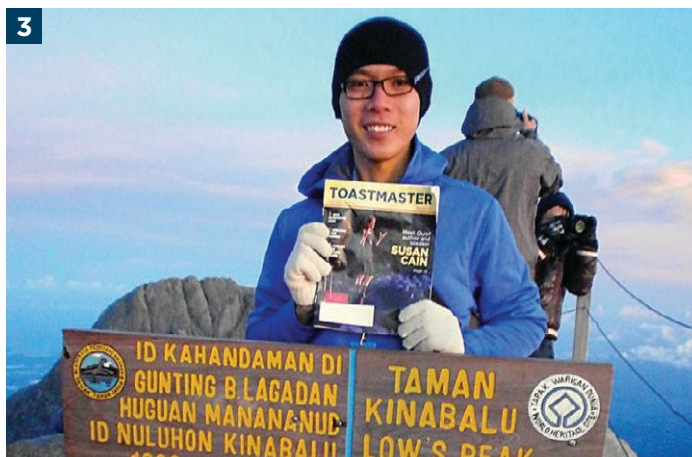
"Mansome: A Documentary: Explores question—'In the age of manscaping, metrosexuals and grooming products galore, what does it mean to be a man?'" I'd go to this just to see what manscaping means.

Then there are my personal favorites: the crime notices. I see that someone was arrested for "fourth-degree stalking." I didn't know there were degrees of stalking. Fourth doesn't sound too bad. Maybe the guy just rang the doorbell and ran away.

Another individual got in trouble for "false personation." I know false impersonation is when you pretend you're somebody else. Maybe false personation is when you do something illegal and your only defense is, "I'm just not myself today."

That's why I love small-town news. Civil war in Syria? Spying by the U.S. National Security Agency? Greece going broke? Political hanky-panky by the Internal Revenue Service? I'll take a dad dancing with his 3-year-old daughter any day. **T**

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



View more photos on your tablet or on our Facebook page: [Toastmasters International Official Fan Page](#)

1 | SUSAN NELSON FROM GRANGER, INDIANA, holds the Toastmaster while posing with children in Nairobi, Kenya.

2 | PAST DISTRICT GOVERNOR MIRIAM KOJNOK FROM SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, smiles for the camera before skydiving in Cloverdale, California.

3 | CHEE HOE CHOR FROM KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, scales the peak of Mount Kinabalu on the island of Borneo.

4 | WILLIAM MINDAK FROM SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA, snorkels in the waters of the Virgin Islands National Park on the island of St. John.



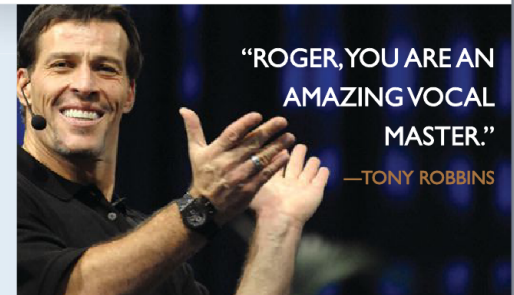
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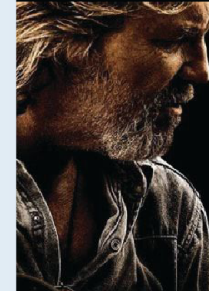
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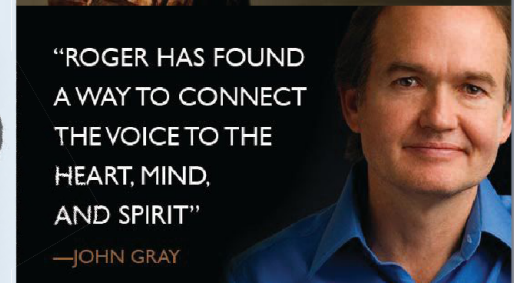
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VOICE VIBRANT
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A WAY TO CONNECT
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AND SPIRIT"**

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