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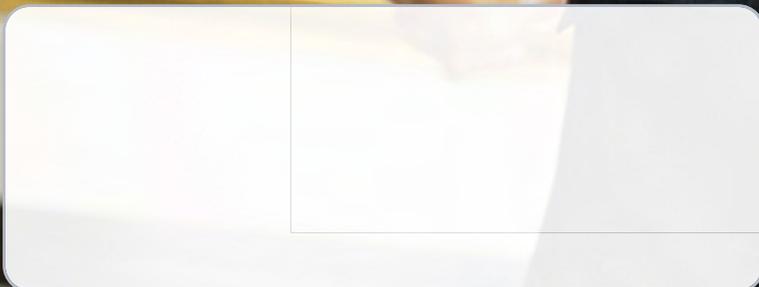
May 2011

**The Art of
Complaining**

**Bahrain Club
Enjoys Rich
Rewards**

**What to Do at the
Interview**

**Tips for landing
your first job**





IQ versus EQ

"I have found... that the most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence." – Daniel Goleman

Many years ago, I heard a Toastmaster comment on how this organization teaches us emotional intelligence (EQ) and how important it is in the development of highly effective leaders. I ran to my nearby bookstore and began the long journey to understanding emotional intelligence. Some say that IQ (intelligence quotient) might get you a job, but your EQ is what enables you to *keep* it.

When Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and author of the 1995 bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence*, compared cognitive skills, technical skills, IQ and EQ, he found that emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important as those other qualities for jobs at all levels. This is never truer than in the leadership roles we fill at the club, area, division, district, Board and international levels.

Goleman outlines five components of emotional intelligence:

Internally focused

1. **Self-awareness** begins our EQ development. People with a high degree of self-awareness are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are able to talk about them.
2. **Self-regulation** flows from self-awareness. People with this trait are able to control their impulses and/or channel them in a specific direction.
3. **Motivation** relates to possessing a passion for achievement for its own sake, not because someone requires it of you. This is the principal ingredient for developing effective leadership.

Externally focused

4. **Empathy** takes into account the feelings of others when you make decisions. This is different from "taking on" everyone's troubles.
5. **Social skills** are the culmination of the previous four traits and include the ability to build rapport with others, foster cooperation and inspire participation.

Take a moment and consider how these traits relate to you and your Toastmasters opportunities. We can boost our emotional intelligence, but not through the traditional training programs that target the rational part of our brains. We are able to become more effective, emotionally intelligent leaders only through extended practice, feedback from colleagues and our own enthusiasm for making the change. We in Toastmasters have the opportunity to develop EQ through our ongoing supportive learning environment while we fulfill our various roles.

Sounds just like what we do best, doesn't it? Let's build our EQ together in Toastmasters!

Pat Johnson, DTM
International President

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Bahrain Corporate Club Enjoys Rich Rewards

Gulf Petrochemical Industries offers pay increases to members who reach goals.

By Dean Sheetz, ACG, CL

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A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise...

- To attend club meetings regularly;
- To prepare all of my speech and leadership projects to the best of my ability, basing them on projects in the *Competent Communication* manual, *Advanced Communication* manuals or *Competent Leadership* manual;
- To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments;
- To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations;
- To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow;
- To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so;
- To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy;
- To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers;
- To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters educational and recognition programs;
- To maintain honest and highly ethical standards during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities.



Members of First Toastmasters of Lithuania

Lithuanian Club Conquers Challenge

When the officers in our club in Vilnius, Lithuania, challenged us to organize our first official speech contest, we could hardly find volunteers, judges, timers or guests. Everything seemed too complicated or too scary – for no reason. Fortunately, acquired habits of leadership helped us do the right job. Very slowly we covered the contest roles, signed up speakers and started public relations efforts.

By the day of the event, things had completely turned around. People ended up giving better speeches, becoming better friends and, best of all, showing guests the activities of our club. We drew a few potential members that day! The event changed all of us, lifting our attitudes, spirits and self-confidence.

Remigijus Gineitis, CL • First Toastmasters of Lithuania • Vilnius, Lithuania

Speaking Up for a Cause

The article by Julie Bawden Davis that showcases Kyle Bryant's speaking skills ("Kyle Bryant: Cycling for a Cure," February) is truly inspirational. Rather than feeling sorry for himself, Bryant has become the champion of a cure for his rare genetic condition.

Surviving a pulmonary embolism gave me the opportunity to speak before an unknown audience: the Internet. When the Vascular Disease Foundation contacted me to produce a video about my experience, I was naturally nervous. However, I am

confident that my training with Toastmasters enabled me to do my best.

All of us can speak for a cause and ultimately a cure. Will you accept the challenge?

Debi Meeks, CTM • ACLI club • Washington, D.C.

Aspiring to High Office

I've served in various Toastmasters officer roles, including club president and division governor, but I never knew what the international officers actually did and what their qualifications to serve were.

I want to thank Past International President Ted Corcoran, who taught me so much about the role of our international officers ("A Call for Strong Leaders," November). I learned about the role of the Board, candidates, nominations and elections. I now have a dream! As the Chinese proverb says, "The soldier who doesn't want to be a general is not a good soldier." Who says I can't become Toastmasters' International President or a member of the Board of Directors in the next five or 10 years?

Joseph Hu, ACB, ALB • Lighthouse Shanghai Toastmasters
Shanghai, China

A Voice Heard

I was thrilled to see my home club, Hear Me Out, mentioned in the article "What's In a Name?" by Craig Harrison (March). My experience with the club name was a complicated one. I reluctantly suggested the name as this Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender-focused club prepared

to charter, despite the negative connotations I assigned to the phrase. It took me nearly a year to appreciate the phrase "hear me out" as assertive, not argumentative.

A GLBT-focused club provides an opportunity for its members to exercise personal and professional development in an environment in which their life experiences have relevance, one in which the incidental mention of a same-sex partner or a cultural event will not raise some eyebrows and furrow others. To deny a member of any other club permission to mention her spouse, education or faith journey would be an appalling disservice to the entire club. Thank you, Toastmasters, for helping me to grow, and thank you, my fellow Toastmasters, for hearing me out.

David Whitner, DTM • Hear Me Out Toastmasters • Kansas City, Missouri

No Need for Perfect Words

In response to the article "Cutting out Filler Words" (February), I believe a major reason speakers use filler words is because they are trying too hard. For any subject, there are usually several ways of saying the same thing. If you are always looking for the "best way" (assuming there is one), then you will invariably find yourself inserting "ums," "ahs," "you knows" and other distractions. Sacrificing fluency while searching for the best word or words just isn't worth it. So go with what you have.

If something comes out of your mouth that you think you could have said better, simply start your next sentence with, "To be more precise . . ." then say it better. This technique will not only keep your speech fluent, it will make you appear to be the master of your subject, not its apprentice.

Philip Yaffe, ACB, CL • Claddagh Toastmasters • Brussels, Belgium

Do you have something to say?

Write it in 200 words or less, sign it with your name, address and club affiliation and send it to letters@toastmasters.org.

How my club helped me succeed in college.

An Education of the First Degree

I attended my first Toastmasters meeting in July 2006. A co-worker recommended I check out the organization after I mentioned that my dream job was to become a motivational speaker, but that I felt too bashful for such a pursuit.

I visited a meeting of Talk of the Town Toastmasters in New York City. As I entered the room, the atmosphere was warm, friendly and supportive. After I introduced myself, I remember thinking that this club might open up a whole new world for me.

Indeed it did. I have been in the Talk of the Town club for nearly five years now. The positive learning environment and the supportive feedback I receive from my fellow club members have inspired and enlightened me. Toastmasters helped me persevere to the finish line in my long journey to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration. I achieved my B.A. in 2007, at the age of 42.

Simply stated, Toastmasters helped change my life.

Taking the Plunge

I vividly remember my Toastmasters beginnings, when I joined Talk of the Town – a month after I attended that initial meeting – and received my *Competent Communication* manual. The following month, I delivered my Ice Breaker. Feeling safe with this group, I stood behind the lectern and a warm, comfortable feeling came over me. To my surprise, the shyness and timidity I had experienced most of my life began to disappear. During the speech, I imagined myself possessing the oratory skills of famous female politicians such as Barbara

Jordan and Shirley Chisholm. In addition, my posture changed as I stood upright and faced the audience.

After I finished my Ice Breaker, the positive feedback from the audience was incredible. I realized that I actually *enjoyed* public speaking! I couldn't wait to attend the next meeting and found myself counting down the days to my next project speech.

The Toastmasters educational program had an enormous impact on me. My self-confidence grew rapidly and I discovered that participating in the various leadership roles, such as Toastmaster of the Day, Sergeant at Arms and Topicsmaster, dramatically improved my communication skills.

You Can Do It Too

I wholeheartedly encourage all Toastmasters to take advantage of the educational program. Furthermore, participating in the leadership track enables you to develop valuable career-building skills. For example, while serving in the role of vice president education, I gained critical leadership skills in the areas of team building, time management and strategic planning.

My journey to receive my bachelor's degree was a long one: It lasted 10 years, while I worked full time as a professional and attended classes part time. However, after many grueling hours of study and countless stressful workdays, I graduated. What was my secret to success? Toastmasters. Its positive impact helped me endure and overcome many obstacles. During difficult times in my life, club meetings became a place where I could disconnect from my daily stresses. In fact, whenever



I attended our meetings, the synergy in the room swept me off my feet. My fellow members taught me how to remain focused on my goals in order to achieve success.

That lesson was vital, because my goals expanded. At that point, my education ambitions stretched beyond a bachelor's degree. After enrolling in graduate school in March 2008, I achieved a master's degree in Adult Education. I finished in the summer of 2010 at the age of 45. With that journey, too, Toastmasters made all the difference. As I approach the next plateau in my educational journey – achieving the Advanced Communicator Gold award – I must say that Toastmasters has indeed been a life-changing experience. ▣

Kimberly M. Taylor, ACS, is a member of Talk of the Town Toastmasters in New York City. She is the founder of Teachers for Technology, LLC, an education technology consulting firm. Reach Kimberly at Kmtaylor_1@yahoo.com.

By Julie Bawden Davis

Standout speaker finds inspiration in mentoring.

Lessons Learned... *and Shared!*

In 1969, when Joel Weldon gave his second speech in Toastmasters, he received an evaluation that woke him up and positively changed the course of his life forever.

"The evaluator, Russ Backus, stood up and asked me if I had just given a spotlight speech," says Weldon. Backus meant that Weldon hadn't prepared ahead of time, suggesting he wrote the speech on the way to the meeting. "He was right," says the longtime member and 1989 Golden Gavel recipient. "I hadn't prepared for the speech."

A Lifelong Story

Look at Weldon's career and you might assume that he long ago obtained what he needed from Toastmasters, but Weldon will tell you otherwise. Being a Toastmaster quenches his constant thirst for self-improvement and allows him to help other members achieve their personal best.

"At every meeting, I still learn something that helps me become an even better speaker," says Weldon, a member of the CHATS Toastmasters in Scottsdale, Arizona. "But the most

carpenter." When he was in his mid-20s and he and his wife, Judy, were starting a family, a fellow church member asked Weldon to become a commissioned salesman.

"The guy said he'd pay me what I was worth according to my sales and, at the time, I didn't think I was worth very much," recalls Weldon. "Despite 1,200 sales calls during my first four months on the job, I only made one sale and \$48. At my first review, the manager told me I was the worst salesman he had ever seen. Then he handed me a record and told me to listen to it. When I told him I didn't dance, he explained that it was a motivational speaking record. It contained the presentation, 'The Strangest Secret,' by Earl Nightingale. Judy and I listened to the record many times over the course of a week. We absorbed the main message, which is that we become what we think about most of the time. I changed my thinking from what I *couldn't* do, to what I *could* do."

Weldon's change of attitude soon paid off when he became the company's number one salesman, landing himself a promotion and the opportunity to leave cold winters and snow behind for a new position in Arizona. After relocating, he gave a presentation at a sales meeting. "After I spoke, an attendee told me that my talk was the worst he'd ever seen. He then invited me to my first

"Knowing that Joel started so low on the totem pole made me realize that I could succeed at public speaking too."

– Jay Rader

Backus threw down the gauntlet, daring Weldon to do better. Weldon rose to the challenge and became a highly paid and recognized full-time professional speaker. Since 1974, when he placed third in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest, Weldon has appeared in front of more than 2,800 audiences and garnered a variety of awards, including induction into the Professional Speakers Hall of Fame and being named Legend of the Speaking Profession in 2006. A charter member of the National Speakers Association (NSA), Weldon regularly leads seminars and shares his expertise as a speech coach.

important reason why I stay is to give back to an organization that has given me so much. Without Toastmasters, I would never have the wonderful life I have today."

To inspire members, Weldon often shares his humble beginnings. Growing up in the 1940s and '50s as the child of a single mother, he was an anomaly for his generation. "Perhaps as a result of not having a father, I was extremely shy, had very little confidence in myself and did poorly in school," says Weldon, who grew up in New York. "I rarely spoke, but I was good at working with my hands, so I got a job as a

Toastmasters meeting. I went, which turned out to be the best decision I ever made for my career.”

Sharing His Gifts With Others

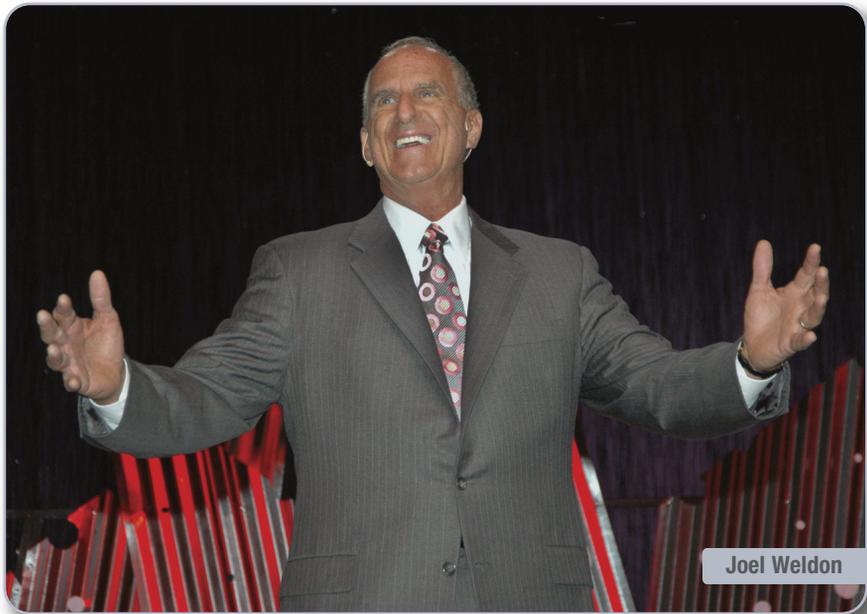
It's the stories about Weldon's struggles along the way to success that make him such an effective mentor for newer Toastmasters, says Debbie Waitkus, a member of both CHATS and the NSA. "It's great when Joel tells his own story and talks about how Toastmasters helped him so much, because it gives you the encouraging news that great speaking skills are a learned behavior," she says. "When you hear how difficult it once was for him to even open his mouth and how embarrassed he was at his first Toastmaster meetings, you can appreciate being in those shoes, because a lot of us have been there."

Weldon is considered the official mentor of CHATS and shares a "Mentor's Minute" presentation (about three to five minutes) at the closing of every meeting, with tips on being an exceptional speaker. For Jay Rader, who joined Toastmasters five years ago, it was Weldon's Mentor's Minute that kept him coming back when he wanted to run.

"Even though I was completely petrified at the prospect of public speaking, hearing Joel's three minutes of wisdom at the end of each meeting inspired me," says Rader, who is also a member of CHATS. "Just hearing him say that no matter how good of a speaker you are, you can still improve, made me realize that it's a process for everyone, and it only works if you keep on the course. Knowing that Joel started so low on the totem pole made me realize that I could succeed at public speaking too."

Mentoring Young People

Kathleen Tomes joined CHATS in 2003 when she was in her late 20s and also found Weldon's mentoring



inspiring and helpful. "When Joel stood up at the end of my first meeting and presented his Mentor's Minutes, I had an 'ah ha' moment," says Tomes, who now appears on television programs as a baby products expert as a result of her Toastmasters training.

"When he tells stories about his own life and struggles with speaking, you realize that he's just like you. Joel always says that a public speech is a private conversation held publicly, and practical advice like that helps you become a better speaker and quite frankly, a better person. I call Joel's mentoring advice...brilliant common sense."

Over his 41 years as a Toastmaster, Weldon has surprisingly not held a wide variety of leadership positions within the organization. Those who know him speak about how he effectively directs people and inspires them to bring out the best in themselves.

"Effective leaders say what needs to be said regardless of the consequences, and Joel is no exception," says Marc Leach. Now in his mid-30s, he met Weldon when he joined Toastmasters in 2001. "It's not always fun to hear the truth about your speaking ability, but if there are patterns holding you back, you need to know. Warm and fuzzy positive feed-

back doesn't advance speakers to the next level – Joel's straight talk does. He can be counted on to tell a speaker what he or she needs to hear."

People listen when Weldon talks, adds Waitkus. "He carries a wooden paddle in his briefcase. When he pulls it out, we all know that it's time to shape up our meetings," she quips.

When it comes to mentoring, Weldon is especially proud of having passed on the love of speaking to his daughter Jenny, a member and officer of CHATS, and three of his grandchildren, who have gone through the organization's Youth Leadership Program.

"When I see my 11-year-old grandson, Barrett, giving a PowerPoint Presentation titled, "School Funding Versus Prison Funding," in front of 400 people in the school auditorium, I'm in awe of how powerful and far-reaching the Toastmasters program is," says Weldon.

For more information about Joel Weldon, visit his website at successcomesincans.com. 

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer based in Southern California and a longtime contributor to the *Toastmaster*. You can reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.



Try these tips to land your first job.

What to do at THE INTERVIEW

By Jennifer L. Blanck, ACS, AL

Are you preparing for a job interview? Are you excited ... or maybe nervous? Not sure what to expect? Maybe you feel like everything is riding on the interview – the job, your career, your life.

For college students interviewing for their first jobs, and anyone who hasn't interviewed for a job in a long time, interviews can be an especially stressful and overwhelming experience. But they don't have to be. Focus all your energy and consider the following recommendations to give your best interview and present yourself as the candidate of choice:

Start Off Strong

Arrive at the location of your interview early – 10-15 minutes before the appointed time. That way, you can put that final polish on your appearance and be calm when you walk through the door. Greet everyone you encounter with a smile and a firm handshake.

Don't Assume Anything

People often assume that the interviewer remembers what's on their resume and cover letter. Don't fall into this trap. Ideally, the person has had the time to focus on your application before the interview, but all too often people are busy and this doesn't happen.

For example, your interviewer may have interviewed a number of people that day. Maybe the person received your application from a human resources professional just before meeting with you. Or perhaps they read your resume the week before and haven't revisited it since. If you assume the person knows what you have to offer, you will miss opportunities to present yourself as the strongest candidate possible.

When you greet the interviewer, offer a copy of your resume. The person will likely have your resume in hand and decline. Only insist if it's an updated resume with critical new information.

It Doesn't Have To Be About Your *Paid* Experience

You don't always have to have full-time work in the specific field to show relevant experience or skills. Internships or volunteer positions can provide the opportunities you need to gain experience and demonstrate interest. When discussing your skills, experiences and accomplishments, don't hesitate to use relevant anecdotes from all facets of your life. Even classroom activities, such as group projects, can provide good examples to employers of how you can contribute.

"Paid or unpaid experience is irrelevant to me," says David Coffey, executive director of the Recovery Café,

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

When Answering Questions

When it comes to interviewing, the key word is relevance. You *always* want to respond to questions in the most relevant way. Don't tell your life story if the person asks about your background. Instead, mention only those experiences, skills and other qualifications that would apply to the job or organization. (See the

"Be concrete and concise in your replies. Share specifics about things you have done and relate those to how you can contribute to the organization."

accompanying article, "Answering the Challenging Questions," for examples.)

Be sure you listen to the entire question before answering. "Interrupting the interviewer with rehearsed chunks of information about yourself can be perceived as being rude and not answering the question," says Helen Hindmarch, Manager of People & Performance for Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in Sydney, Australia. "Always ensure you take the time to fully listen to the question being asked of you and ensure you do your best to directly answer the question."

You also want to be concrete and concise in your replies. Share specifics about things you have done and relate those to how you can contribute to the organization. Whenever possible, demonstrate your knowledge of the organization by noting similarities between your background and the job or the employer.

Never answer questions in a negative fashion, such as saying something bad about your current job, supervisor or organization. If you don't have experience in a specific area, don't lie, be defensive or apologize. Remember, you're being interviewed, so you have enough of what the employer wants. Instead, talk about how you're a fast learner and give a specific example of how you developed a new skill or knowledge base quickly in the past. Or offer ideas of how you would tackle the challenge.

Sample Questions to Ask Employers

Ask questions to show serious interest and initiative. You can also gain critical information about the job, organization, supervisor and colleagues by asking questions, as well as demonstrate your knowledge of the organization. Of course, you shouldn't ask a question that is obvious or for which an answer can be found on the organization's website.

Here is a list of useful questions to ask at a job interview:

- What are the most important characteristics someone in this position should have?
- What attracted you to your current position?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- What do you expect from your staff?
- What is your management style?
- How would you characterize the management philosophy of this organization? ... of your department?
- What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the staff that would report to me?
- How has this organization changed in the past, and where does it expect to go in the future?
- What is the top priority of the person who accepts this job? How will she or he be judged in 6-12 months?
- What opportunities are available for professional development?
- Why are you hiring for this position?
- What are the next steps in this selection process?
- What is the timeline for hiring?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

Taking Notes Can Help

Just as students take notes in their college classes, recording highlights during the interview can be helpful for many reasons. Notes can help you remember what was said when you evaluate the opportunity more objectively later. It also provides specific information to incorporate into personalized thank you letters. Just make sure your notes are brief and you maintain eye contact throughout the interview.

Having a notepad with you is helpful for other reasons. You can have your questions for the interviewer written down to help you remember them. (See sidebar for sample questions to ask.) You can also have a small list in the corner of the page of the points you want to make about your background, which will be the key relevant skills, experiences and accomplishments you want to share. But don't have your resume in front of you; you should know that information without prompting.

Be Yourself

"One of the most important recommendations for an interview is to be authentic," notes Emmy Yokoyama, country officer for the World Bank in Lima, Peru. "Otherwise, you could be lost in the middle of the conversation."

You want to be positive and enthusiastic, but your words also need to sound natural. If you're not being yourself, you won't know if you're the right fit. Remember, it's just as important for you to decide whether you fit in there as it is for your potential employers to decide. If they're uncomfortable with the real you, then it's a good indication that you should keep looking.

However, you want to be your most professional self at all times. Turn off all telephones and other noisemakers.

Stay focused on the interview and the interviewer.

"But don't be too formal," adds Yokoyama. "I remember a candidate who was too formal and looked nervous. I had a feeling he might collapse any moment and wanted to finish the conversation quickly. And now that we use video conferencing for interviews, it's important for candidates to keep in mind that their behavior can be amplified."

Final Thoughts

Never discuss salary during the interview. You always want to wait until you receive an offer before talking about money. You have more influence when you know you're the candidate of choice. If the interviewer tries to mention salary-related issues, you want to redirect the conversation to other topics so you aren't caught in a negotiation before you even have an offer.

Interviewing can be stressful, but you can channel your nerves and be your best by incorporating these strategies. Make the interview experience work for you, and get that job! ▮

Jennifer L. Blanck, ACS, AL, is Assistant Dean of Career and Alumni Services for the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She is the founder and current vice president education of the Georgetown Toastmasters.

Editor's Note: This story is a follow-up to Jennifer Blanck's article "Steps to a Better Interview," which ran in the September 2010 issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine. You can find the article on the Toastmasters website at toastmasters.org/magazine.aspx.

Answering the Challenging Questions

Jennifer L. Blanck, ACS, AL

Certain questions pose problems for people, even if they are expected. Here are some examples, along with recommended approaches to responding:

Q: Tell me about yourself.

This is a “starter” question – often asked at the beginning of the interview. Many people are overwhelmed by this question and answer in a very basic, literal or chronological way. On general questions like this, you especially want to consider what’s relevant and reply with that. Don’t mention where you grew up or where you went to college. Instead, give a summary statement of the skills, experiences and accomplishments you have to offer that directly relate to the job, employer or interviewer.

Q: What is your greatest weakness?

For many people, this is the dreaded question. As with all questions, you want to reply honestly, but you also want to present yourself as strongly as possible. Pick a weakness that is really a strength, or that is irrelevant to the position, or that shows you have learned something in the past and demonstrates your growth. Do not give a weakness that is key to the position.

Why does an interviewer ask this question? Sometimes because it’s expected, or she or he was asked it during an interview. The interviewer might want to see if you have prepared thoroughly for the interview or if you’re arrogant (“I don’t have any weaknesses”). Of course, some interviewees might reply with information that provides real insight into their candidacy.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years? ... in 10 years?

This can be a tough question if you haven’t done your research. Many people automatically think they have to answer with a specific position. You can, but you can also reply in other ways. You can talk about advancing in the overall field or taking on leadership roles at the organizational or industry level. Of course, your answer needs to be logical for you and for the job, organization or field in question.

Q: Do you have any questions for me?/Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

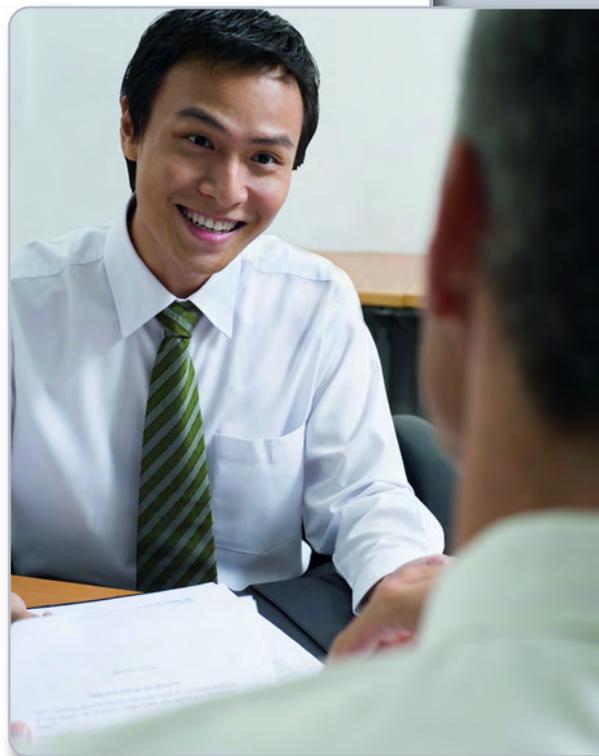
If you haven’t had the chance to ask questions, now is the time. If you haven’t addressed one of the key points you wanted to, now is also the time.

If you have asked all your questions and don’t have anything else to add, don’t just answer “no.” Instead, you could reply that the interviewer has answered all your questions and you appreciate the opportunity to interview. If you’re still interested in the job, mention you are even more interested in the position now and you hope to be joining the team, getting the job, advancing to the next interview round or moving to whatever the next step is.

Q: Why should I hire you?

This is the “million dollar” question and something to which you must have a ready answer. It’s the wrap-up version of the “Tell me about yourself” query. This is the time when you present a summary statement of what you have to offer the job and organization. The major difference in this answer is that you want to incorporate anything you’ve learned during the interview into your reply.

For example, you started the interview assuming your project management, research and analysis skills were the most important. However, during the interview, you realized that communications skills are also essential. Highlight your communications skills during the rest of the interview and the wrap-up.





How to Make a Great First Impression

By Kevin Eikenberry, ATMS

From time to time, we all have to meet new people. During those moments, you may not consciously think about the importance of making a good first impression. However, conscious or not, you *always* make an impression.

Sometimes, because of the person you're meeting or the situation you're in, you may want to make more than just an impression; you'll want to make it a *great* impression.

The good news is, you can make great first impressions happen regularly and almost predictably by following a few suggestions. Surprisingly, these suggestions may not be what you thought or have been taught.

Remember, since the impression is actually formed by the other person, the fact is, what they think is ultimately out of your control. Even so, using these ideas will give you a greater chance to create impressions that lead to further conversations, goodwill, new relationships and additional business, as well as greater job and life satisfaction. With those benefits in mind, let's look at how to make a lasting and good first impression:

- **Relax.** You want the new client, you want the job, you want the date – whatever the situation is, take the pressure off of yourself! Relax and just be yourself. Think about it: You can tell when people are anxious or nervous, right? Does it make you more attracted to them? No, it doesn't. However, you should remember that people you meet most often *want* to

like you. They simply need to feel comfortable knowing that you're comfortable too. So relax.

- **Smile!** Few things are more attractive than a real smile – it doesn't matter if you are young or old, smiles make a difference. Whether you've spent thousands on your pearly whites doesn't matter. Let people know you are happy to meet them before a word is said. The best way to do that is with a smile. The old line, "smiles increase your face value," is an old line because it's true.

- **Use a good handshake.** While I grew up taking this for granted, and have written about it in detail, this one simply can't be overlooked. A good handshake says things about you that words never can. As a rule, keep your hand open and make sure your handshake will be a *hand* shake not a finger or palm shake. Make your grip firm, and adjust it to the firmness of the other person's grip. Learn to give a great handshake. Practice it. Make it your habit.

- **Make eye contact.** In most parts of the world, this is incredibly important. Everyone has heard it, everyone "knows" it, but far too many people don't do it. This actually is good news for you – because when you do make eye contact consistently, you will stand out.

- **Be genuine and real.** Be yourself. Be natural. After all, you want people's impression to be of who you really are, not of some mask you have created.

- **Be interested, not interesting.** This turn of words is powerful. Often making a great first impression is equated with impressing people. While that is true, most think about impressing people as being about showing what we know, who we know or what we've done. You will make a more powerful and lasting impression when you don't try so hard.
- **Ask more, say less.** You will show your interest in the other person by asking more questions and talking less. When you ask, you are signaling your interest. Asking helps you learn about the other person, and who doesn't like it when people want to know more about them?
- **Be confident.** Being confident coupled with being relaxed leads to a projected self-assurance that is both interesting and attractive. Don't try too hard, and don't take confidence as your lone tip (notice I don't say overconfident or cocky); when you combine confidence with the other suggestions in this article, your approach will be more effective.
- **Be present.** Being present means not looking for the next hand to shake, not thinking about your own issues

or deciding how to move on. It is about being with the person you are meeting, for however long you are engaged with them in conversation. Many of the other tips on this list will happen naturally when you are truly in the moment with the person.

- **Remember, it isn't about you.** Make the encounter as much about the other person as possible, and you will make great first impressions most of the time. If you are especially nervous in networking situations or if you are reading these tips before an especially important meeting, remember this tip and apply it: It is all about the other person. As paradoxical as it may seem, making a good impression will come easiest when you focus not on yourself, but on the other person. **T**

Kevin Eikenberry is a former Toastmaster (ATMS) and a best-selling author, speaker, consultant and trainer. He is the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps organizations, teams and individuals reach their potential. Visit his website at kevineikenberry.com.

Success Secrets for Telephone Interviews

By Susan Berkley

Recruiters and potential employers use phone interviews to narrow their list of job prospects – and are ruthless about dumping the duds. A good first impression on the phone is the first step to a personal meeting that can lead to a job. Here's how to do it:

1 Conduct the call from a quiet place. Select a place where the caller won't hear leaf blowers, barking dogs, screaming children or kitchen noises.

2 Use a landline. Cell phone service is still unreliable and noisy. Be careful with Internet-based phone services, unless your interviewer insists on using a program such as Skype. If the option is yours, always make a landline your first choice.

3 Give the caller your undivided attention. If you are focusing on documents on your computer screen or desk while you are on the phone, you'll get a distracted tone in your voice that the person you are speaking with can hear.

4 Prepare for the call. If the call is the prelude to a job interview, review the company website.

Make notes and have questions ready. Have your résumé close at hand.

5 Speak enthusiastically. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, interviewers listen for vocal cues indicating qualities such as passion, professionalism and enthusiasm. Allow interviewers to get a sense of your personality. But don't be too casual. Calling the interviewer "dude" or "brother" are instant turnoffs.

6 Follow up. After a phone interview, send a thank-you message that summarizes the conversation and reinforces your best selling points. Be sure to use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

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Susan Berkley is the author of *Speak To Influence: How To Unlock the Hidden Power of Your Voice*. For more information, visit greatvoice.com.

How I kept *my* promise on my niece's wedding day.

Mastering the Ceremony

It hit me like a ton of bricks. I was spending a long summer weekend in my hometown of Catskill, New York, when my niece and her fiancé took me out to lunch. They asked me to be the *officiant* at their wedding. It was an honor to accept.

The wedding was three months away. For two months, I beamed with excitement and pride. Then the bricks hit me.

As I began to research wedding officiating in earnest one morning, the excitement turned to concern.

It's managing the input and wishes of people you've known and loved since birth. In my case, it was also like being the Toastmaster of the Day in your hometown... when the stakes are high.

What had I gotten myself into?

Seeking Reassurance from Toastmasters

Grappling with my growing uncertainty, I sought help from my Toastmasters club – Toastmasters Zug, outside of Zurich, Switzerland. A year earlier, a club member, Andrew Frazer, used a club meeting to re-

masters is a laboratory of growth," she adds. "You grow more if you experiment more."

Mikael Esselius joined the Boras Toastmasters, in Boras, Sweden, in 2007, a time when he was embarking on his career in change management and executive coaching.

"During my first year in Toastmasters, almost all of my speeches were related to my start-up consulting business," says Esselius, currently the division governor of the Nordic region in Continental Europe District 59. "Back then, it was important to



“Officiating a wedding is more than delivering a speech. It calls for communication and leadership skills – and a deft handling of psychological and spiritual issues.”

Then worry. Then complete angst. All in about 60 seconds.

If you mess up a speech or presentation, you bear the consequences. But if you mess up a wedding ceremony, the bride and groom live with it forever. This reality hit me so hard, it almost knocked me off my feet. Officiating a wedding is more than delivering a speech. It calls for communication and leadership skills – *and* a deft handling of psychological and spiritual issues.

It means appealing to the religious backgrounds of parents while also tapping into a potentially different spiritual awareness of the next gener-

ation. It's managing the input and wishes of people you've known and loved since birth. In my case, it was also like being the Toastmaster of the Day in your hometown... when the stakes are high.

Using club meetings to practice all types of speeches is a great idea. Meetings are a safe place to practice communication for any area of our lives, be it personal projects or career advancement.

"In your average business pitch, you can't afford to take big risks. In Toastmasters you can," says Florian Mueck of the Prestigious Speakers club in Barcelona, Spain. "Toast-

hear an important technical presentation he was to deliver to a client. He later told me that he left the meeting with greater confidence and with good advice on how to improve the speech. The work presentation, Andrew reported, went superbly.

develop my stories – stories that put emphasis on teamwork through change. Then as I secured clients, everything was so much easier to implement.

"There is no reason why you can't give a speech in a Toastmasters meeting that's also going to help you outside of the club and in your career."

As my niece's wedding approached, I decided to take this good advice and practice at a meeting. Toastmasters Zug met on the Monday before the wedding, and our vice president education cleared 25 minutes on the agenda for me to rehearse my officiant duties.

Rehearsing the Role

An officiant, quite simply, assumes the roles of a priest in a non-religious wedding, the Master of Ceremonies and (now the scary part) the one who's supposed to manage the ceremony itself. Delivering smooth and eloquent oratory is almost taken for granted.

As I began to practice at our club meeting, two members jumped in and played the roles of the bride and groom. Others performed the readings that family members would give. Not only were my club members helping me out, they were having fun in the process. While our club meetings seldom feel routine, this one was certainly out of the ordinary for everyone.

I hit a few snags that I would not otherwise have discovered until the actual wedding rehearsal – which would have been too late. At that point, the wedding party would be looking for leadership, not apprenticeship. We went beyond my allocated 25 minutes in the club meeting, because members empathized with the importance of my duties and gave me generous but candid feedback.

The biggest area for improvement was my transitions. I needed to smoothly conclude numerous pieces of oratory and then introduce a musician or family member who would do a reading. I needed to pause confidently, introduce enthusiastically and incorporate welcoming gestures with my hands as the contributor approached the wedding party.

I also realized that I lacked full confidence in the culminating moment in a wedding ceremony.



Against the backdrop of New York's Hudson River, the author proudly stands with his niece, Carly Rae Vincent-Lynch, and her husband, Terry Lynch.

The way I pronounced “You may kiss the bride,” just didn't sound right. So my club members encouraged me to practice it a few times, right then and there, and work in some pauses.

“You know this guy, right?” one fellow Toastmaster cracked. “Well, *smile* at the poor lad. *He'll* be more nervous than *you!*”

Indeed.

“It is my *greatest* pleasure (slight pause) to pronounce you husband and wife. (Pause.) And *you*, sir... (pause, smile)... may kiss the bride.”

The Closing Act

Then there was the matter of the ceremony's conclusion. I had thought about what I needed to do, but how would I actually do it? So I rehearsed motioning to the wedding party to follow the bride and groom down the aisle, and then motioning to the immediate family in the first rows to follow them.

Slowly, the whole thing began to feel ceremonial and, at the same time, natural.

My club members had given me a huge boost. Their enthusiasm and helpfulness during the meeting was beyond my expectations. I had not only tightened up the entire flow of my parts in the ceremony, I had gained all the confidence I needed.

That Friday evening, the *real* rehearsal went smoothly. Then

on Saturday, on the banks of the majestic mid-Hudson River in New York, the actual wedding ceremony went gracefully. Making such a special contribution to my niece's wedding is one of the great memories of my life. So many Toastmasters skills came together when I needed them: being a master of ceremonies, facilitator, orator and leader. We can hone all these talents in our Toastmasters meetings to prepare for real-life events.

A few times during the ceremony, I noticed my niece and her fiancé look to me with trust. This allowed them, I felt, to open their senses to the many other beautiful things happening around them, and within them. Afterward, during the reception, numerous friends and family members commended me for a job well done. Some even said I was “a natural.”

I was far from a natural. It was the preparation and practice that made things go smoothly. Nothing can help you avoid being hit by the proverbial ton of bricks on occasion, but your Toastmasters club can help you be prepared, and with a lot more confidence. **T**

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Customer Service

How to Complain **EFFECTIVELY**

Use your skills to tell the truth.

By Joann McCabeACG, CL

customer service, but there is no guarantee. You can encourage them to rise to the occasion by saying something like, “Your company is better than this; I know it is.”

“People are often very responsive to a comment like that,” Barlow says. “They also appreciate the fact that you appreciate things they do well. The companies that are top-notch in their fields live and die by the feedback they get. If people simply go away and don’t say anything, they have lost an opportunity. That is why most organizations of that caliber have empowered their front-line staff to handle things and to handle them quickly.”

A Different View

Another school of thought recommends that, rather than ask for something specific, you leave the resolution of a complaint open-ended and see what the company offers. Specific circumstances may warrant such a strategy but either way, it is important to be prepared with a solution that is acceptable to you.

“Saying the right thing at the right time and place makes all the difference on how well your comments are received.”

These tips may help you along:

- **Think ahead about objections** and have a counter-response ready. Show you have thought this through and are not simply reacting to a situation. Allow time for discussion. Do not rush your presentation. Allow the other person to speak.
- **Tone is important:** Avoid sarcasm, name calling or personal attacks on the individual trying to help. Focus on the company and the problem. As Henry Ford once said, “Don’t find fault. Find a remedy.” Focus on finding a solution, not laying blame.
- **Choose your battles.** You do not want to be like the boy who cried “Wolf!” so many times that when a real wolf came, no one paid attention. When you have a legitimate complaint, you want someone to pay attention.
- **Remain calm and professional.** Be assertive but not aggressive. Think about how you can use the techniques you learn in Toastmasters – eye contact, vocal variety, pace, body language and word phrasing – to express your feedback clearly and effectively.
- **Use your Table Topics experience** to help you form a quick, concise complaint on the spot.
- **Don’t be afraid to use humor** when the opportunity arises. It can cut tension and helps keep the situation in perspective.

- **Call in a third party when necessary.** Government agencies or trade organizations may offer support if your complaint is unresolved.

The Tricky Business of Giving Feedback

One of the most difficult challenges is giving feedback to a boss, employer or anyone with whom you want to maintain good relations, such as a friend, colleague or family member. In these types of situations, it is best to start off very tentatively and consider the other’s response before proceeding. Barlow, the incoming president of the Global Speakers Federation, says, “I have found that the easiest way to talk to somebody who is in a position above you, or anyone with whom you want to be careful and maintain goodwill, is typically to start off very gently. Frequently that involves asking a question, ‘Are you aware that...?’ or ‘I’m just wondering, has it ever happened...?’

“Questions [help soften the complaint],” Barlow says. Then, if they give you any kind of negative feedback, an indication that they don’t want to hear this, then you just stop at that point. But if they say to you, ‘I’m interested in that. Tell me what’s going on,’ then you can really engage in a dialogue with that person.”

It is also important to choose the right time and place for these types of conversations. Make sure other people are not listening and the person isn’t rushed. Saying the right thing at the right time and place makes all the difference on how well your comments are received.

The Flip Side of Complaining: Receiving Complaints

Perhaps you work for a company that receives complaints. Employees who are Toastmasters are equipped with tools to handle complaints. They know how to articulate their ideas to be better understood. They know how to listen to customers and, therefore, can be effective at addressing complaints. Rather than shy away from difficult or uncomfortable situations, Toastmasters can use their communication skills to build the trust and rapport that are so important for customer service and loyalty.

Speak Up

The next time you are in a situation that warrants a complaint, use your communication and leadership skills to find a solution. The next time you buy a defective product, are underappreciated at work or experience poor service, speak up! Use your Toastmasters skills to complain effectively. 

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In a perfect world, we would never have to complain. The real world, however, is different. There is an appropriate time and place to express unhappiness with a situation, just as there is a right and wrong way to do it. In Toastmasters, we strive to improve our interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to deal with conflict. We can use these skills to effectively complain to someone – whether that person is in the service industry, the business world, our workplace or at home.

It often seems easier to remain silent – to not say anything about the undercooked steak at the restaurant or the rude receptionist at the doctor's office.

In fact, research shows that most customers do not complain, says Janelle Barlow, author of the book *A Complaint is a Gift*. Barlow says that's why it's important to make your feelings known. When people finally do voice their displeasure, "We really have to see them as the spokesperson for all the other people who are not saying anything."

Making a complaint is actually a gift to a company, she adds, because you're giving them information they might not get any other way.

One man delivered such a gift to Virgin Atlantic Airlines. After taking a flight from Mumbai to London, Oliver Beale was so appalled by the in-flight meals that he dashed off a letter to Virgin Atlantic – complete with photos of the offending foods. Beale described one custard-like dessert as "a sour gel with clear oil on top."

Rather than just grumble about bad airplane food, this passenger took action. And he got a response. Beale, an art director at an advertising agency in London, England, received a phone call from Virgin Atlantic boss Richard Branson himself. Furthermore, Branson personally invited Beale to the airline's catering facility to select food for future Virgin flights!

How to Protest a Problem

How can we complain effectively? What is the best way to solve a problem? Actually, many strategies are similar to the ones we use when creating and giving speeches: You need to gather information, support your arguments with facts, be specific, organized, clear and calm. Just as it takes time and effort to construct a great speech, it takes time and effort to form an effective complaint.

1 Gather pertinent information. If you feel your employer should pay you more, gather facts that support your argument. Comparative data, sales figures or

*Unfair compensation,
a defective product,
poor service.*

*What do these
have in common?
All are opportunities
to complain.*

customer praise letters can show how valuable you are to the company. All the information should be relevant to the point and promote your argument, much like how you choose information for your speeches.

2 Get to the right department or person as soon as possible.

Repeating a bad experience is frustrating enough without having to repeat it several times before you reach the person who can actually do something about it. Go up the chain of command if you feel

your complaint is not taken seriously.

3 Be clear and specific. What exactly is your complaint?

For example, if your complaint is about a delayed airline flight that led to you miss your meeting, now is not the time to complain about baggage fees. Focus on the delayed flight. Don't bring along your own excess baggage, so to speak.

4 Present your complaint in a logical, clear format. As with a great speech, start with a relevant opening that will help focus attention on your complaint. For example, if you receive poor service at your favorite restaurant, you might start by saying how often you frequent the establishment or how long you have been a customer. The introduction should lead into the crux of your dissatisfaction and include the relevant information you gathered beforehand. Be clear about why you are complaining and what you expect as a resolution to the problem. For instance, if you have a defective product, do you want it repaired or replaced, or do you want your money back?

5 Whatever your gripe, keep requests reasonable and appropriate. You are more likely to get that raise if it is within your job position's salary range than if you ask for an unrealistic amount.

6 Aim for a specific goal. State the ideal outcome but remain flexible. Maybe your boss cannot give you a 4 percent raise today but can agree to an immediate 2 percent raise or bonus and to revisit the topic in six months when you have had time to prove yourself. Ask for a specific result but stay open to alternate resolutions.

7 Show the benefits of your proposed outcome and how it fits into the broader picture of improving the company, individual or group. Barlow, the author, points out that most sophisticated, high-level companies have high-quality



FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT!

By John Cadley

Why drug warnings can be hard to swallow.

If You Experience Any of These Symptoms...

I am a worst-case-scenario person (WCSP). If I cut myself, I immediately think tetanus and lockjaw. A walk in the woods convinces me that lyme disease – in its most crippling form – is just a matter of time. Getting the flu takes me right to those obituaries that say, “He succumbed after a short illness.”

If I have to take prescription drugs, it's even worse. I don't have to imagine the worst that could happen because the drug company has written it all out for me. They're called “possible side effects,” and for a WCSP it's like reading your own death certificate. There's usually one benefit to the drug and 2,346 risks. I don't like those odds. For instance, I can get relief from arthritis if I'm willing to take my chances with unusual bleeding, itching, blisters, hives, swelling of 13 different body parts, difficulty breathing, back pain, yellowing of the skin, loss of appetite, lack of energy and painful urination. If any of these happen, I am to call my doctor immediately. Yeah, if I can crawl to the phone. I can imagine the conversation:

Doc: *How's the arthritis?*

Me: *Fine.*

Doc: *What's the problem?*

Me: *My face fell off.*

Of course, they caution you to talk to your doctor and your pharmacist before taking the drug. Specifically, you are to advise them if you are allergic to things like NSAIDs, naproxen and tamsulosin. As if you would know. You are also to tell them if anyone in your family has ever suffered from your particular ailment. I come from an Irish Catholic family. We don't talk

about personal things. As far as I know, the medical history for every one of my ancestors is that they “died and went to heaven.” One drug label advised me to tell the doctor if I was born with a heart defect. As a certified WCSP, I told him I was born with a *fear* of having a heart defect, and because anxiety is bad for the heart I could say that at some point I probably *would* get a heart defect. He looked at me funny.

A lot of these drugs have the same side effects: headache, nausea, dry mouth and diarrhea. But some are just plain weird. I can take a drug for type 2 diabetes with the possibility that I will experience jerky movements, numbness around the mouth and breath that smells fruity. I could also experience irritability. Well, yes, I suppose I could, especially if I were jumping around the room like a kangaroo without feeling my mouth and exhaling the odor of rotten pineapple.

The more drug warnings you read – and I read them all – the more they seem to be written by the same person, because the same phrases keep appearing to incite dread:

You should know ... that this stuff can kill you.

Seek immediate medical assistance ... if you hear angels singing, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.”

Do not let anyone else take your medication ... unless you want to see how they react before you take it yourself.

In clinical studies ... some volunteers reacted in ways we never thought possible and the results were so horrifying, we all had nightmares.

In case of an overdose ... don't try to sue, because it's your mistake, not ours.'

Talk to your pharmacist ... if you want complete reassurance from someone who's never taken the drug.

Call your doctor ... and have him quickly re-read the brochure he got from the drug rep to see if he can explain why you're growing a tail.

Now that these drugs are advertised on television we get the same warnings from a person who sounds like he or she has consumed a cookie jar of amphetamines. The first five seconds of the commercial show a happy person walking along the beach with a dog while the announcer says, “Now you can get relief from pain and get back to your life.” The next 25 seconds are a mile-a-minute compression of about 1,500 possible side effects where you can only catch a phrase or two:

“...rare but serious side effects have occurred ...”

“...if you experience a sudden loss of ...”

“...can result in coma and even death ...”

And this is all while the guy is still walking happily along the beach.

Given all this, I thought my only recourse was herbal remedies like bee pollen and peppermint. Mother Nature wouldn't hurt you, right? Wrong. Bee pollen can cause angioedema and peppermint can give you bradycardia. I don't know what those are, but I'm not about to find out. **†**

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Exceptional leaders encourage magnificence over mediocrity.

The 10 Rules of Leadership

By Eric Harvey
and Steve Ventura

Having a leadership position and being a leader are not one and the same. Your position is something you were appointed to... something you became eligible for by being a good performer. In all likelihood, what you did yesterday, as an individual contributor, helped you get the title you hold today. And that's exactly what your position is: a classification, a title. Being a true leader, however, is significantly different.

"Leader" is a descriptor – a designation you must *earn* through specific actions and behaviors. It's based on what you do today and what you will do tomorrow – not what's printed on your business card or engraved on your name tag. Simply put, to be a real leader you must do the things that leaders do, and you must do them well. Those "things" can be summed up in the 10 Rules of Leadership:

1 Make What Matters Really Matter.

Jot down the things that are important in your organization. Chances are your list will include words and concepts like *policies and procedures, customer service, quality, profitability, teamwork, responsibility, ethics and integrity*. Next, circle the items on your list that *really* matter. (It's okay to circle all of them.) Finally, review your list, do a little self-reflection and answer the following honestly: Would an outsider who was unfamiliar with your organization know what truly matters to you merely by watching you? What behaviors could you cite as evidence?

2 Practice What You Preach.

Practicing what you preach means that you do what you expect from others. Your team members know that although they are employed by the organization, they

really work for you. So they look to you and at you for guidance and direction. Just as you have expectations of them, they have expectations of you. They expect you to be trusting and trustworthy, careful and caring, respectful and respectable, competent and committed. They expect you to walk the talk.

3 Communicate with Care and Conviction.

To be an effective leader, you must be an effective communicator. That means paying careful attention to what you say (the words you use and information you include) and how you say it (your tone, style and delivery). Also, you must confirm that others have heard the message correctly and then monitor their reactions (what they think, feel and do in response). It adds up to being considerate of your team members' concerns and expectations. And it

means communicating with others thoughtfully and respectfully.

4 Create the Involvement You Seek. If you want team members to act more like partners, treat them more like partners. It's just common sense. People tend to act according to how they're treated – according to what they perceive they are. It's simple: Expect team members to check their brains at the door, and that's precisely what many will do – they'll respond as mere “cogs in a wheel.” But provide them with real opportunities to participate and be involved – give them more of a voice in your daily operation – and they'll take more ownership.

5 Do Right by Those Who Do Right. When team members meet your expectations or go beyond the call of duty, make sure there is something in it for them. And that something needs to be more than just continued employment. Whether it's a special reward or a sincere “thank you,” the act of recognizing team members sends two messages: Good performance matters, and their contributions are known and appreciated. You don't have to be a psychologist to know that messages like those can positively affect employee motivation and satisfaction.

6 Provide What They Need to Succeed. With few exceptions, all team members want to be successful. It's tough for people to do a good job – to do their best work – when they don't have the tools (information, resources, training and support) they need. That's something your team members may be facing more often than you think. And as a leader, you need to do your best to do something about it. You need to make sure your people's achievements are happening because of how they are equipped, not in spite of it.

7 Confront Challenges With Courage. Leadership is not for the faint of heart. Along with your title come many awesome responsibilities – and an equal number of situations that can and will test your mettle. As a leader, you need courage to do what is expected of you, to do what you're there to do. You'll find temptations to take easier and less resistant paths. And you'll find people who – either unintentionally or purposely – create obstacles that will challenge your tenacity and resolve. Even the very best leaders must occasionally pass the courage test. The true measure of your leadership effectiveness is the ability to look in the mirror and know that you had the strength and courage to do what you knew was the right thing to do.

8 Let Differences Become Your Direction. If everyone were the same, we wouldn't have creative “oddballs” inventing new technolo-

gies and creature comforts to improve our lives; we wouldn't have “foreigners” buying our products and services; we wouldn't have the blending of cultures and ideas that afford us new and enriching experiences. And you wouldn't have individual employees bringing the varied skills, ideas and strengths you rely on for your organization's (and your) ongoing success. Diversity in the workplace (in all its forms) is not something to be feared or squelched – it's an advantage to be nurtured and encouraged.

9 Strive to Serve Others. A “customer” is anyone for whom we provide goods or services ... the target of our efforts and activities. In a nutshell, customers are all the people who depend

on us. As a leader, you have as many, if not more, customers than anyone else in your organization. With leadership comes a great deal of power and authority – the ability to direct, control and decide. Each of us must choose whether we will use our influence to serve ourselves – or those with and for whom we work.

10 Go Forth and Prosper. Clearly, the ultimate responsibility of those in leadership positions is to help their organizations, and the people who comprise them, be more successful. Your job is to take those you lead and serve to heights they likely would have great difficulty reaching by themselves. Exceptional leaders encourage magnificence rather than settle for mediocrity. They work on today's tasks with an eye on tomorrow's possibilities.

Things changed the moment you accepted your leadership position. The bar was raised. Requirements went up, responsibilities went up and

“Being a leader is based on what you do today and what you will do tomorrow – not what's printed on your business card.”

expectations went up as well. You're now held to a higher standard – which is exactly as it should be. That's not all. Along with your new title also came new functions, new tasks and a new definition of, and pathway to, “success.” Now you accomplish things through others. Now the way you make a difference is by helping *your people* make a difference ... helping *them* be successful. Now you must be as proficient in the business of leadership as you are in the business of your business. ■

Eric Harvey and **Steve Ventura** are authors, educators and business professionals. This article is based on their book *The 10 Commandments of Leadership* – available at walkthetalk.com.



Carol Caraway puts a Toastmasters lapel pin on Andre Bayne during a recent club meeting as Xiuli “Shirley” Wang (far left) and Susan Lawson (far right) look on. All are members of the Memorial City club in Houston Texas.

Filling club meeting roles will help you reach your goals.

By Beatrice Joyner, CC, CL

You, Too, Can Be a Leader

Many people join Toastmasters because they have seen how the organization helps people become better speakers. What is often hidden from view is how Toastmasters develops leaders.

Training tomorrow’s leaders is important to the survival of any organization, but few people recognize their leadership potential until it is thrust upon them. Toastmasters’ philosophy endorses the concept that the best way to learn leadership is to learn at your own pace. By serving in various club roles, club members learn to become leaders.

I’m one of those people who, at first, didn’t see the leadership benefits the organization offered. It took me some time. I did not join Toastmasters to be a leader – I joined to become a better speaker. I didn’t consider my meeting roles to be a means to improve my leadership skills; it just seemed a way to help out my club. I thought little of getting credit for meeting roles

in my *Competent Leadership (CL)* manual. My focus in my first year of Toastmasters was on completing the *Competent Communication* manual.

It wasn’t until I talked to the “eternal role assigner,” our club’s vice president education, that I changed my opinion about completing the CL manual. She and I had joined Toastmasters at the same time, but when she said she only had a few more assignments left to get her CL award, she grabbed my attention. I had no idea how easy it was to complete the 10 projects required for that award until we reviewed the roles she needed to fulfill. My friend could easily see her leadership progression in her manual.

In fact, the CL manual has an easy-to-follow guide – the Project Completion Record – to help you chart the projects you need to finish. This grid lists the projects and accompanying meeting roles needed to complete them, such as speaker, speech evaluator, timer and grammarian.

For example, Project One is “Listening,” and the four roles related to the project are: Ah-Counter, speech evaluator, grammarian and Table Topics speaker. You only need to perform three of the four roles.

Building Camaraderie with Club Members

Another benefit of working toward CL certification is that you get to know your fellow club members. Someone you don’t know very well may ask you to evaluate him in a meeting role. The evaluation forms guide you through the process by describing what qualities to look for in each role. For example, the evaluation form for Project One states, “Was the leader’s manner attentive?” Dealing with the unknown creates butterflies, but nothing makes them go away faster than being guided on what to do. A confident evaluation that helps and supports another member can be a great step toward forming a new friendship while developing leadership skills.

I offer words of caution to help you avoid my mistakes: You are responsible to know what project you are working on and see it as part of the larger whole. For example, you don't have to serve in all different meeting roles for every single project; as the CL manual explains, you can repeat some meeting roles in different projects. (However, you can only meet one project requirement each time you serve in that role.) Let's say you enjoy being a speech evaluator. Look at the Project Completion Record and you'll see that you have the option of serving in that role in Projects 1, 2, 3 and 8. The point is: Make sure you read the Project Completion Record carefully.

Here is something else I learned: Toastmasters International continually improves and updates the education manuals. I began working in the CL manual just two years ago. At that time you had to go back and forth between the grid and the projects to know

how many roles you needed to complete for each project; now all the information is listed on the Project Completion Record.

Remember what I said about not joining Toastmasters to be a leader? Well, Toastmasters has a way of making you one. Project Nine is "Mentoring," and the roles required to complete this project are "Mentor for a New Member," "Mentor for an Existing Member" and serving as an "HPL (High Performance Leadership) Guidance Committee Member." Keep in mind that you only have to choose one of those roles to complete the project.

Someone joined our club and quickly asked me to be her mentor. *Me? A mentor?* No, I'm a communicator; a mentor is a leader! But someone who didn't even know me was recognizing me as a leader. I agreed and she filled out the evaluation sheet. I completed Project Nine while helping someone become a better Toastmaster.

Look at the grid and you will see roles that may unfamiliar.

"Speaker" is there, but so is "Help Organize a Club Speech Contest" under Project Six. "Timer" is a critical role, but so is "Befriend a Guest" under Project Seven.

Study the Project Completion Record at your leisure; it gives you more than a list of roles – it helps you to understand the various things Toastmasters International can give you. You may be nervous as a speaker, but by the time you get to the role of "Help Organize a Club Special Event" (Project Six), you will have gained skills along the way to make it easier. You may find that when you complete this manual, you will be a stronger person in all the roles you fill in your personal life as well.

You may have joined Toastmasters like I did to become a better speaker, but watch out – Toastmasters will also make you a leader! 

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Bahrain Corporate Club

Enjoys Rich Rewards

By Dean Sheetz, ACG, CL

Gulf Petrochemical Industries offers pay increases to members who reach goals.

Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC), a multi-billion-dollar petrochemicals manufacturer in Manama, Bahrain, is a strong advocate of Toastmasters. In fact, the company is so supportive of the Toastmasters communication and leadership program that it offers a number of financial incentives to members of its corporate club.

For example, GPIC pays all membership fees, and the club hosts its own meeting venue on company premises. GPIC also pays for all items that members order from the Toastmasters International store, including shipping costs. In addition, GPIC covers all registration fees for Toastmasters workshops and conferences that the corporate club members attend.

But the most dramatic show of company support is this: Once members achieve the Competent Communicator award, they receive a five percent increase in salary. It is an outstanding and effective motivator to encourage members to meet their goals and make the most of their membership. Achieving Distinguished Toastmaster status brings another five percent increase.

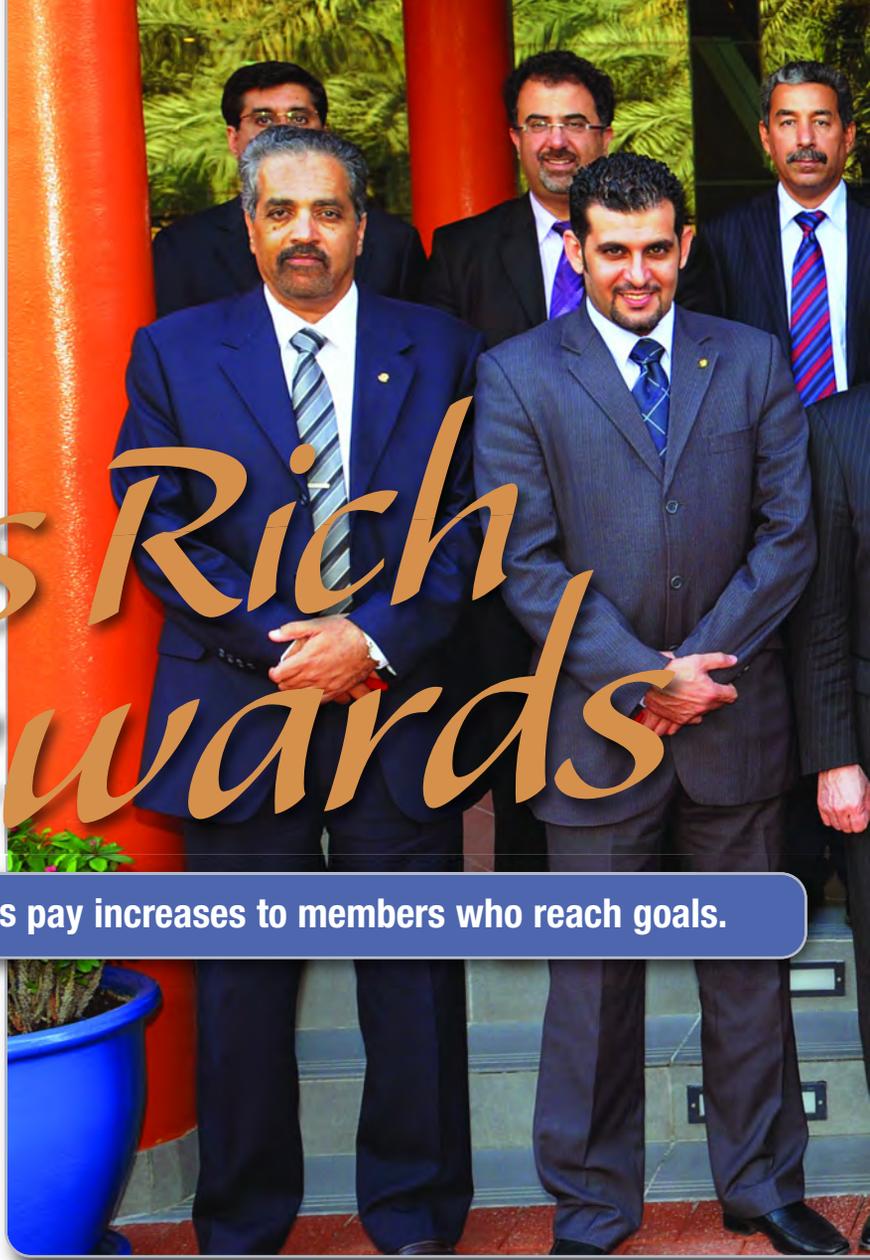
Members of GPIC Toastmasters say the club benefits them in many ways, but mainly with helping them perfect their technical and business presentations. "The experience gained

from the Toastmasters meetings enhanced the presentation skills and boosted the confidence of our staff," says Abdul Ameer Al Mulla, founding president of the club and its liaison to GPIC management. "This has boosted the company image when these individuals represent the company in conferences, workshops and meetings."

"GPIC Toastmasters opened the stage for me to communicate in a professional manner," adds Hassan Ali, a trainee utilities shift supervisor. "It also provided me with all the means to develop the hidden skills of communication."

The company's support for Toastmasters starts at the top. GPIC President Abdulrahman Jawahery is an admirer of the program who believes strongly in promoting public speaking and leadership training. His involvement is hands-on.

"Despite my extremely busy schedule as company president... I do not miss any opportunity to attend Toastmasters events," he says. "I have personally benefited immensely from the experience, not only in terms of honing my speaking skills, but in the wealth of knowledge I have gained and the golden opportunity it provides me to socialize with people from all walks of life."





Toastmasters International Executive Director Daniel Rex and International Director Theo Black met with executives of Gulf Petrochemicals Industries Company (GPIC) and District 79 officers during their January trip to Bahrain. Pictured in the bottom row, from left: Past District 79 Governor A. Imtiaz Ahmed, DTM; District 79 LGET Khalid Al Qoud, DTM; International Director Black, DTM; GPIC President Abdulrahman Jawahery; Executive Director Rex; and District 79 LGM Alex Ginete, DTM. Pictured directly behind Mr. Ginete is longtime District 79 Toastmaster Alaguthevar Ponnuchamy, DTM.

Money is Well Spent

Mr. Jawahery says money spent on the corporate club and its members is an investment in its employee training.

“The Toastmasters programs offer the best value available in the market to shape the personalities of our employees, help them develop their presentation and leadership skills and uncover their talents,” he says. “Our company has uncovered talents in our employees that we have nurtured and utilized – talents that would have remained hidden and wasted [if not for Toastmasters]. So it’s a benefit for both the employee and the organization.”

Mr. Jawahery not only supports Toastmasters in his company, but in his country and internationally as well. He supports the annual Toastmasters conferences held in Bahrain. In addition, Mr. Jawahery, company executives and members of the GPIC Toastmasters met with Toastmasters International Executive Director Daniel Rex and International Director Theo Black during their January visit to the Middle East.

With the company’s strong backing, the GPIC club has thrived. It has 50 members in the registration

process for this year, and at its peak had 70 enrolled members – a record for a Bahrain club.

GPIC club members say Toastmasters training transfers directly to the workplace. “Words cannot describe the huge improvement in my leadership and communication skills,” says club president Mahmood Ahmed Ghuloom, an instrument engineer for the company. “GPIC Toastmasters paved the way to my becoming a better engineer and boosted my confidence in how I do my job.”

A significant benefit of Toastmasters’ leadership training is the appreciation for “team spirit” in the workplace and the effectiveness of working in groups, say GPIC club members. “The roles I took up during the meetings enabled me to appreciate the importance of teamwork and gave me much-needed experience to progress in my career,” notes Mariam Al Mousawi, the club’s treasurer, who works in the Human Resources Department.

GPIC President Mr. Jawahery also encourages GPIC Toastmasters to improve their skills by taking leadership positions at the area, division and district levels.

Learning More about Colleagues

Club members say that Toastmasters enables them to interact with fellow employees in positive ways. By listening to speeches given by colleagues throughout the company, employees gain a better understanding of their co-workers' duties and are exposed to different ways of thinking. In addition, club members say they make valuable social connections across departments and disciplines, which enhances both their work and personal lives. The club provides a forum for members to meet on an equal footing, and this can be extremely valuable within a corporation.

Toastmasters skills should also be applied outside of work, say members. The company and its Toastmasters club reach out to the greater community around them: For the last two years, they have run a Youth Leadership Program for more than 80 of GPIC employees' children. Club member Mr. Almulla says, "Spreading the word about Toastmasters is an effective way to practice public speaking and leadership."

The management team at GPIC, which was formed 32 years ago and employs nearly 500 people, embraces the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The corporate club helps the company meet its goals in that area. "The Toastmasters program enabled us to

expand our CSR activities as part of our mandate to serve the society we work in," says Mr. Almulla, GPIC's electrical maintenance superintendent and acting training and development superintendent. "To date, we have trained hundreds of people all around the Kingdom of Bahrain." This enhances the company image and builds strong relationships between individuals and companies.

Currently, 58 Toastmasters clubs exist within Bahrain. While GPIC Toastmasters has a restricted membership, members from any club are always welcome as guests. GPIC Toastmasters, which holds meetings in both English and Arabic, frequently holds joint meetings with other clubs.

GPIC Toastmasters – boosted by the company's avid support – has managed to instill in its members a joy of achievement. Perhaps Ms. Al Mousawi, the club's treasurer, says it best:

"Public speaking is something that I had feared. Enrolling in Toastmasters has given me the chance to try and change this, and to overcome the barrier that I placed upon myself. It was a challenge, and I always enjoy challenges." 

Dean Sheetz, ACG, CL, is a member of Dubai Men's College Toastmasters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He also teaches in the school's business department. You can reach him at sounds.symbols@gmail.com.

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A job promotion brings new workplace dynamics.

By Devyani Borade

Becoming a Boss

Recently, something significant happened to me at work. I was promoted. I had been performing exceedingly well in my job over the last couple of years, so it came as no surprise when the decision was announced. I knew that my life would change in many ways: An advancement up the corporate ladder meant bigger challenges, bigger responsibilities and a bigger paycheck.

What I hadn't expected was the subtle, yet significant change in the office environment around me.

Advice abounds on how to deal with rejection – rejection at a job

interview, rejection from a love interest, rejection at a competition, etc. However, the opposite is not smooth sailing either, as I found out the hard way. Up until my promotion, my colleagues had been more than merely co-workers – they were friends. We had a great time at work sharing a laugh, a snack or a general moan about our bosses. We covered for each other in emergencies, discussed management decisions in detail and served as sounding boards for each other.

So when I was promoted, I didn't for a minute think it would

in any way impact this dynamic. I was wrong. Gradually, I started to realize that I was not getting as many e-mails forwarded to me as I used to. Conversations stopped when I approached a colleague's desk, people seemed to smile and joke in hushed tones around me, and the very body language of the team changed. I sensed that I was no longer a part of things and that the environment as I knew it would never be the same again.

If you find yourself in a similar situation, there are a few things you can do to handle it gracefully:

Rejoice in the Now

Don't forget the reason this paradigm shift has taken place – hey, you've been promoted! Get your co-workers together and celebrate this event. It doesn't have to be a lavish or flashy party. In fact, the lower key you keep it, the better. But a small celebration is good to release the tension and allow everyone to relax. Plus, your colleagues will be happier for you.

Accept the Change

There's no getting around the fact that things will change now. Yes, you may regret it for a while; you may even miss the open camaraderie that you shared with your colleagues. But a promotion also brings with it exciting new things to look forward to. So accept the fact that life is not going to be the same and move on. The sooner you do this, the easier it will be to deal with.

Speak Out

In your new role, you may find yourself in some sticky situations. Often, middle managers must bear the brunt of both the senior management's directives and the employees' grievances, and it can be difficult to keep everyone happy. It is therefore important to strike the right balance. Stick up for your team. If you think a new policy may be harmful to your team's overall output, do not be afraid to tell your organization's upper management. If you think management's idea for implementing a procedure is different but more efficient, advise your colleagues on it. Only if you are clear and vocal can effective communication take place in both directions.

Earn Their Respect

Avoid practicing favoritism among your team members. Often, employees feel threatened when they believe

others are being favored for the most important tasks – and they themselves are being passed over. Now is not the time to single out your friends at work. You need to treat everyone fairly and impartially. When your colleagues see that you are not being biased in your judgments, they will respect you for it. This ensures a build-up of trust. And trust is the best foundation for any relationship, especially one at work where people are often interacting only briefly.

Be Inclusive

One of the biggest complaints from office workers is upper management's secrecy and opaqueness when making decisions. As a new manager, don't be guilty of this! Including your colleagues as much as possible in the decision-making process – to the extent that it's practical – is a

“Accept the fact that things are not going to be the same and move on.”

great way of ensuring acceptance and teamwork. Share your thoughts and your reasons for doing what you are doing. Invite them to share their views and opinions as well. This doesn't have to be a time-consuming meeting – it can be done in short spurts of brainstorming sessions with groups of individuals. Also make sure you follow through on such sessions. Nothing is worse than promising to take colleagues' views into consideration and then renegeing on that promise.

Be Generous

Appreciation from anyone, be it a boss, peer or even a junior colleague, is the biggest motivating factor in the workplace. Everyone likes to be praised. Positive feedback helps boost productivity and is infectious.

If you have won a small victory at the office, make it a point to share the credit with your colleagues. Highlight any significant contributions or simply mention the names of a few key players to make team members feel worthwhile. If they feel they are adding value to the business, they will help you keep the momentum going.

Do the Best You Can

Nothing beats a good performance. When you've been promoted ahead of peers, there is bound to be a feeling of envy or resentment. It is natural for your co-workers to feel left behind. Usually, in a healthy office environment, such emotions tend not to linger over a period of time. However, a promotion that is backed by consistently solid performance in the new role is the best reply to critics. Show that you are

worthy of the job by doing it well. And ignore the bad vibes and barbed comments. Let your work do the talking!

Understand that these tips are not going to turn you into a successful boss overnight. Rather, using them will require an investment of time, energy and perseverance. It also helps to have a thick skin! Over time, you will learn to make the best of the new opportunity and allow the little things not to bother you. Then you will have truly become your own boss. **T**

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The distance between beloved leader and despised failure is shorter than we think.

By Mark Sanborn, CSP, CPAE

Why Leaders Fail

Headlines regularly inform us of the public downfall of leaders from almost every area of endeavor – business, politics, religion and sports. One day these leaders are on top of the heap; the next, the heap’s on top of them.

Of course, we think that such catastrophic failure could never happen to us. We’ve worked hard to achieve our well-deserved positions of leadership – whether at work, in our community or in Toastmasters – and we won’t give them up for anything! The bad news is that the distance between beloved leader and despised failure is shorter than we think.

Ken Maupin, a practicing psycho-therapist and colleague, has built his practice on working with high-performance personalities, including leaders in business, religion and sports. Ken and I have often discussed why leaders fail. Our discussions have led to the following “warning signs” of impending failure:

Warning Sign #1: A Shift in Focus

This shift can occur in several ways. Often, leaders simply lose sight of what’s important. The laser-like focus that catapulted them to the top disappears, and they become distracted by the trappings of leadership, such as wealth and notoriety.

Leaders are usually distinguished by their ability to “think big.” But when their focus shifts, they suddenly start thinking small. They micromanage, they get caught up in details better left to others and they become consumed with the trivial and unimportant. To make matters worse, this tendency can be exacerbated by an inclination toward perfectionism.

A more subtle leadership derailer is an obsession with “doing” rather than “becoming.” The good work of leadership is usually a result of who the leader is. What the leader does flows *naturally* from inner vision and character. Therefore, it is possi-

ble for a leader to become too action oriented and, in the process, lose touch with the more important development of self.

What is your primary focus right now? If you can’t write it on the back of your business card, then it’s a sure bet that your leadership is suffering from a lack of clarity. Take the time necessary to get your focus back on what’s important.

Warning Sign #2: Poor Communication

A lack of focus and its resulting disorientation typically lead to poor communication. Followers can’t possibly understand a leader’s intent when the leader isn’t sure what it is! And when leaders are unclear about their own purpose, they often hide their confusion and uncertainty in ambiguous communication.

Sometimes, leaders fall into the clairvoyance trap. In other words,
(Continued on page 30)

Why Leaders Fail

(Continued from page 27)

they begin to believe that truly committed followers automatically sense their goals and know what they want without being told. Misunderstanding is seen by such managers as a lack of effort (or commitment) on the listener's part, rather than their own communication negligence.

An underlying clarity of purpose – knowing what you mean – is the starting point for all effective communication. It's only when you're absolutely clear about what you want to convey that the hard work of communicating pays dividends.

“When leaders are unclear about their own purpose, they often hide their confusion and uncertainty in ambiguous communication.”

Warning Sign #3: Risk Aversion

Third, leaders at risk often begin to be driven by a fear of failure rather than the desire to succeed. Past successes create pressure for leaders: “Will I be able to sustain outstanding performance?” “What will I do for an encore?” In fact, the longer a leader is successful, the higher his or her perceived cost of failure.

When driven by the fear of failure, leaders are unable to take reasonable risks. They want to do only the tried and proven; attempts at innovation – typically a key to their initial success – diminish and eventually disappear.

Which is more important to you: the attempt or the outcome? Are you still taking reasonable risks? Prudent leadership never takes reckless chances that risk the destruction of what has been achieved, but neither is it paralyzed by fear.

Warning Sign #4: Ethics Slip

A leader's credibility is the result of two aspects: what he or she *does* (competency) and who he or she *is* (character). A discrepancy

between these two aspects creates an integrity problem.

The highest principle of leadership is integrity. When integrity ceases to be a leader's top priority, when a compromise of ethics is rationalized away as necessary for the “greater good,” when achieving results becomes more important than the means to their achievement – that is the moment when a leader steps onto the slippery slope of failure.

It is imperative to your leadership that you constantly subject your life and work to the highest scrutiny. Are there areas of conflict

between what you believe and how you behave? Has compromise crept into your operational tool kit? One way to find out is to ask the people you depend on if they ever feel used or taken for granted.

Warning Sign #5: Poor Self Management

Tragically, if a leader doesn't take care of himself – or herself, no one else will. Unless a leader is blessed to be surrounded by more-sensitive-than-normal followers, nobody will pick up on the signs of fatigue and stress. Leaders are often perceived to be superhuman, running on unlimited energy.

While leadership is invigorating, it is also tiring. Leaders who fail to take care of their physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs are headed for disaster. Think of having a gauge for each of these four areas of your life – and check them often! When a gauge reaches the “empty” point, make time for refreshment and replenishment. Clear your schedule and take care of your-

self - it's absolutely vital to your leadership that you continue to grow and develop, a task that can be accomplished only when your tanks are full.

Warning Sign #6: Lost Love

The last warning sign of impending disaster that leaders need to heed is discovering they are moving away from their first love and dream. The hard work of leadership should lead to fulfillment and even fun. But when leaders lose sight of the dream that compelled them to accept such responsibilities in the first place, they can find themselves working for causes that mean little to them. They must stick to what they love, and what originally motivated them, in order to maintain the fulfillment of leadership.

To make sure that you stay on the track of following your first love, frequently ask yourself these three questions: Why did I initially assume leadership? Have those reasons changed? Do I still want to lead?

Heed the Signs

The warning signs in life – from stop lights to prescription labels – are there for our good. They protect us from disaster, and we would be foolish to ignore them. As you consider the six warning signs of leadership failure, don't be afraid to take an honest look at yourself. If any of the warnings ring true, take action today!

The good news is: By paying attention to these signs and heeding their warnings, you can avoid disaster and sustain the kind of leadership that is healthy and fulfilling both for yourself and your followers. **T**

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