

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JULY 2014

# TOASTMASTER®

## Add Story to Your Slides

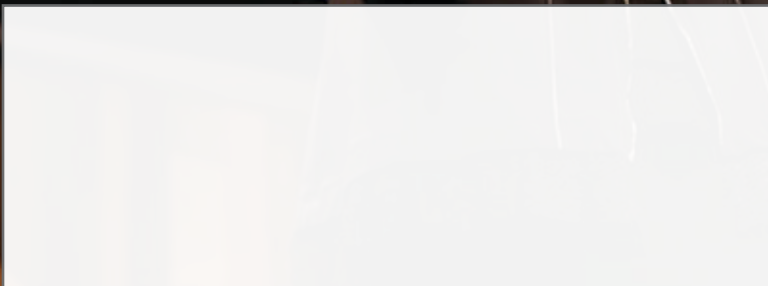
Tips from leading  
presentation expert  
Nancy Duarte.

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## The Social Media Edge

Expand your skills and  
extend your message.

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# Humor and Leadership



*“A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs, jolted by every pebble on the road.” — Henry Ward Beecher*

A few years after I gained self-confidence as a Toastmaster, I set my next goal: to develop my sense of humor. After I completed the *The Entertaining Speaker* manual and applied humor to my other speeches, friends started telling me how much funnier I had become. “You were so stiff and serious before!” they would add.

Not only did humor make my Toastmasters experience fun and enjoyable, but unbeknownst to me it also helped me along my leadership journey. What is the connection between humor and leadership? I believe there are three C’s critical to leadership: *communicate, connect and collaborate*. We all know that communication is essential. Less obvious is the importance of connecting with others, without which we cannot collaborate—in other words, build a team.

Humor is one of the important tools we use to win friends and influence people. It is an icebreaker that relaxes people and establishes common ground for building trust, without which true leadership cannot exist. Humor is humanizing and reduces the distance between the leader and follower.

Robert Half International, a leading staffing agency, surveyed nearly 500 professionals, and 91 percent said a sense of humor is important for career advancement, while 84 percent said people with a good sense of humor do a better job.

Michael Kerr, an international business speaker and the president of Humor at Work, expressed it well when, in a 2013 *Forbes* magazine article, he said that “people who take themselves overly seriously are often, ironically, taken less seriously by the people around them.”

American comedian Steve Allen once noted that humor helps us develop sensitivity to the environment which enables us to see the humor that more serious people will miss. In other words, humor enhances our awareness not only of the world we live in, but, equally important, of ourselves. Self-deprecating humor, especially, enables us to see our fallacies and follies.

Central to our Toastmasters philosophy is “learning by doing”—and that Toastmasters is a safe place to fail. Humor relaxes our attitude toward failure and therefore is a key ingredient to Toastmasters: Where Leaders Are Made. **T**

**GEORGE YEN, DTM**  
International President

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P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690 U.S.A.  
+1 949-858-8255 • Fax: +1 949-858-1207 • Voicemail: +1 949-835-1300  
[www.toastmasters.org/members](http://www.toastmasters.org/members)

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**  
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“With the 2014 International Convention being held in Kuala Lumpur, this is a good year to celebrate, and show our respect for, the word *international*.”

— Richard Schreiner, DTM

### Practicing Bilingualism

As a sponsor and member of the Profesionales Bilingües club, I found the article “Presenting in Your Second Language” by Denise Graveline (April) to be particularly on-point for me. After completing the entire Toastmasters communications program in English, I repeated the *Competent Communication* manual in Spanish. Suddenly, I was an adult with the vocabulary of an adolescent. It was a challenging, yet exhilarating and rewarding experience.

As the article suggests, I learned to “keep it simple.” I also learned to evaluate my speeches to avoid jargon, regional linguistic oddities and metaphors unknown to my audience.

With the 2014 International Convention being held in Kuala Lumpur, this is a good year to celebrate, and show our respect for, the word *international*.

**RICHARD SCHREINER, DTM**  
Profesionales Bilingües club  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### Irony Not Welcome

I was a bit dismayed when I read John Cadley’s “Vaccination Reservations” article (April). It serves as a thinly disguised piece of propaganda that questions the science of vaccine experts.

Good and ethical rhetoric is free of logical fallacies, and should present facts

as a means of supporting arguments. Cadley’s article presents itself as an exercise in irony, but instead perpetuates the same arguments that vaccine-hesitant people pose.

As someone who deals with crisis communication on a regular basis, I feel compelled to unveil Cadley’s attempt to present an ironic piece of writing as unethical messaging.

**CARLOS VELÁZQUEZ, ACB**  
Crystal City Evening Toastmasters  
Arlington, Virginia

### Grammar Surprise

I enjoyed reading “Becoming the Grammarian” by Lynn MacKaben Brown (March). Previously, one of my least favorite meeting roles was grammarian, but now it’s one of my favorites. In one meeting, I introduced myself as grammarian and, as Brown suggests in her article, informed members of my intent to focus on one grammar rule. I presented the word of the day, and commented on interesting and exceptional uses of English, but my focus was on “Southern speak,” as we call it in Tennessee. I told members I would listen for anyone dropping the *-ing* suffix from their words (e.g., *gonna* instead of *going to*). For the first time that I remember, not one person dropped an *-ing*, and the members all seemed pleasantly surprised when I informed them of this result.

Thank you for the article, and for Brown’s excellent suggestion.

**DON BITTICK, DTM**  
HCA Creative Articulators  
Nashville, Tennessee

### Building Awareness of Asperger Syndrome

At age 63, I was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome (AS), which is a form of autism. One sign of AS is having significant difficulties with interpreting non-verbal communication such as gestures and body language. Very often, AS is accompanied by an exceptional talent or ability. In my case, I have a high IQ, which allows me to compensate to a certain extent. I hold

down a demanding training-management job with a large transport company. I manage, despite having AS, but I have to work harder than any non-AS person performing the same job.

It is difficult for me to speak about this because of the prejudice and ignorance that surrounds AS. It is extremely difficult for people with this form of autism to make friends and keep up with everyday chit-chat.

I am in Toastmasters to develop my communication skills and manage my life, which is something non-AS people take for granted. Members of my club go above and beyond the call of duty to provide mentoring and other assistance to those who need it.

*Editor’s Note: The above letter is from a 14-year member who wishes to remain anonymous.*

### DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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



Have you checked out the digital *Toastmaster* magazine yet?

If so, please send your feedback to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org). Your opinion matters!

To find the *Toastmaster* magazine app, visit the Apple App Store, Amazon Appstore or Google Play store.



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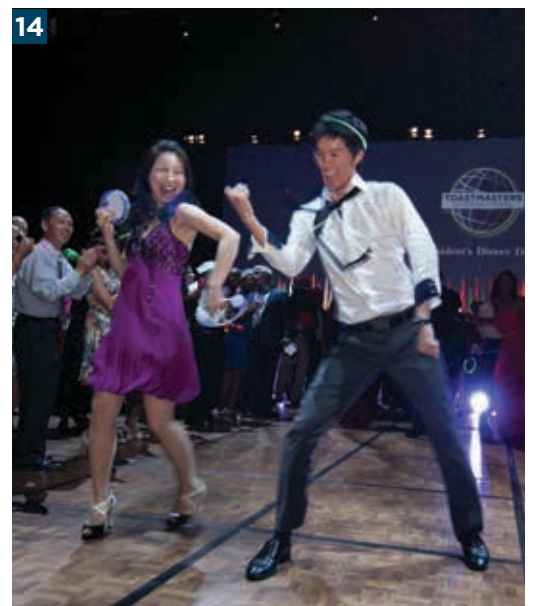
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TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



## 3 ways to enjoy the Toastmaster on the go!

See the July issue and past issues on these tablets:

- iPad (second-generation iPad and newer)
- Android (4.03 or newer)
- Kindle Fire HD

Simply download the *Toastmaster* magazine app for your tablet from the Apple, Google Play or Amazon app stores.

July Special Tablet Features

- Watch CEO Nancy Duarte's "Five Rules for Presentations" and her TED talk about transformative presentations.
- See the mime act that Tina Lenert performed globally for 25 years.
- See Jimmy Thai, DTM, a vice president of technology at SAIC, speak about leadership at a forum for executives at the University of California, San Diego, in 2013.

For more information, go to [www.toastmasters.org/magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/magazine).

# AROUND THE GLOBE

## MEMBER MOMENT



## The Gadget Guy



Greg Gazin, DTM, PDG

Greg Gazin, from Edmonton, Canada, demystifies technology for the average consumer. Through his writing, speeches and media appearances, he looks at a wide range of gadgets—everything from tablets to home automation devices. A three-time DTM, he credits Toastmasters with helping him get out from behind the keyboard: Gazin has spoken about tech-related issues on Canadian TV and radio shows, including *Edmonton's City TV*, *Global TV* and *CBC Radio*. He writes tech-themed articles for Canadian news websites and he helps entrepreneurs make gadgets fun for customers.

In March, Gazin shared his entrepreneurial and Toastmasters journey at the leadership conference DEXIO 2014 in Edmonton, Alberta, alongside author John Gray and ING Direct founder Arkadi Kuhlmann. Gazin, a past District 42 governor, belongs to three clubs in Edmonton. At the 2009 International Convention, he was awarded a Presidential Citation.

### How did you become interested in technology?

It began with seeing all the [pretend] gadgets in *Star Trek*, and

over time seeing things come to reality. But meeting Steve Jobs in 1986 and getting my first Macintosh computer sealed the deal.

### How has Toastmasters prepared you for live TV and radio interviews?

Table Topics taught me to think on my feet, fine-tune my message and put together a cohesive mini-speech. Working through *Competent Communication* showed me how to properly use props, gestures and vocal variety. I've come a long way since my first Table Topics response, which lasted 12 seconds.

### How have you used technology in Toastmasters?

For a *High Performance Leadership* project, I created a podcast for Toastmasters called *Toastcaster*. Episodes are available on iTunes and have been downloaded more than 380,000 times. When I was a public relations officer, I encouraged every club to create a website and enter it into a competition that involved judges and sponsors from the digital media industry. Seventy-eight clubs participated. And, during my year as district governor, to encourage the use of video we did a district-wide initiative to get members to make short YouTube videos about how Toastmasters has helped them.

### What is the best speaking advice you have received?

Don't bore people with facts and figures; they probably won't remember them or even understand them. Instead, engage them with compelling stories that they can relate to. They'll be more likely to share them. This is even true with [speeches about] technology. Don't spew facts; help people imagine how technology will make their life easier.

### You've attended four Toastmasters International Conventions. What in particular do you enjoy about them?

It is an eye-opening experience. I always go home inspired, educated and with a plethora of new friends and invitations to Toastmasters clubs around the world.

Learn more about Greg Gazin at [gadgetguy.ca](http://gadgetguy.ca).

Photo/Noel Bentley, CC, ALB

## In Brief

### CONVENTION BUZZ

Be sure to follow, join and "like" Toastmasters on social networking sites to stay up to date on convention announcements. [toastmasters.org/socialnetworking](http://toastmasters.org/socialnetworking).

### SPEAK EASY

Jock Elliott, the 2011 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, is the author of *Speak Easy*, a book with tips on preparing and delivering powerful

presentations. It's available for purchase on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

### TOASTMASTER MAGAZINE SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Do you have a story to share about lessons learned and overcoming obstacles? The *Toastmaster* magazine welcomes articles for the My Turn section. For submissions to any other part of the magazine, please

complete an article submission form at [toastmasters.org/writersguidelines](http://toastmasters.org/writersguidelines).

### COMING SOON

The Toastmasters website ([toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org)) is being redesigned, and the new version will soon be ready to launch. Stay tuned for updates!



## SNAPSHOT



Members from the New Horizons club in Amman, Jordan, applaud a fellow member during a segment of their “Happy Toastmasters” video. Creating the video was an initiative by Vicky Ferrer Mustafa, DTM, the District 20 governor and founder of the first club in Jordan. To watch it, visit [bit.ly/1kbnvBD](http://bit.ly/1kbnvBD).

## FACTS WORTH KNOWING

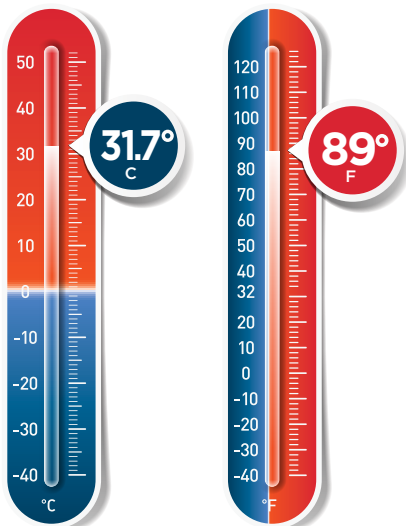
# 6 Things to Know If You Attend the International Convention

If you visit Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in August, the following facts will help you acclimate to your new surroundings.

### Language

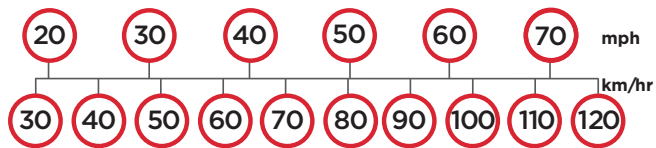
Bahasa Malaysia (Malay)  
but English is also widely spoken

### August average high temperature



### Weights & Measures

Metric system



### Sunrise & Sunset

7:10 a.m.



Estimated times during the event.

7:22 p.m.



### Tipping



Tipping is not customary. Most hotels and restaurants levy a 10% service charge and a 6% sales tax on bills. Bellhops and taxi drivers will happily accept a small tip.

### Money Matters

The unit of currency is the Malaysian Ringgit (RM). Foreign currencies can be converted at banks and money changers. Travelers are advised to bring a combination of traveler's checks, cash and credit cards.



## WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

### What advice do you have for creating slideshows?

“The best way to use PowerPoint is to show pictures, not paragraphs. Get rid of paragraphs, sentences and even bullet points. I try to stick with one word or phrase per slide and let the pictures—and my mouth—do the talking.”

**Mark Maloney, ACB**  
Chesterfield Toastmasters  
Midlothian, Virginia

“I recently did a presentation at my club on alternatives to PowerPoint and found that several programs—like Prezi, Haiku Deck and Google Presentation—are web-based and don't rely on a particular brand of laptop with a particular version of the program. As a teacher, I know that Prezi is more popular with children.

In addition, *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery* by Garr Reynolds is an amazing book that describes how to make your slides (no matter what program) more interesting.”

**Cheryl Keane, DTM**  
Emcees Toastmasters  
Coogee, New South Wales, Australia

“Try the Ignite format! It gives you a new way to use PowerPoint. The idea is to prepare 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds. It makes for a high-paced, exciting presentation. A lot of sample speeches have been done using Ignite and, just like there are TED conferences, there are Ignite conferences.”

**Melissa Triplett**  
Plus Factor club  
Saint Louis, Missouri

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

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“COMMUNICATION  
works for those  
who **WORK AT IT.**”

— BRITISH FILM MUSIC  
COMPOSER JOHN POWELL

## INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

### Unwrapping an Etiquette Issue

What do you do when you receive a gift? Do you open it in front of the gift-giver, or do you wait until later? Which is more polite? Many times the distinction is a cultural one.

For example, in countries such as China, India and Malaysia, people generally wait before they open presents, according to Terri Morrison, author of *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*, a book providing tips on cultural etiquette. In Malaysia, opening a gift immediately “would suggest that the recipient is greedy and impatient.”

But, according to Morrison, in countries such as Spain and the U.S., it is common for people to unwrap presents as soon as they receive them. Sometimes, as in Greece, gift-giving can be spontaneous.

“Greeks are very generous; if you compliment an object too enthusiastically, it may be given to you,” notes the author.

There is much to consider when it comes to cross-cultural gift-giving, even when conducting business. For example, in some countries offering presents is a common business practice, while in others the practice is rare. Even the *process* of giving gifts varies. In Saudi Arabia proper etiquette calls for giving and receiving gifts only with the right hand, according to Kwintessential, a company that provides international business assistance. Yet in Japan, you should always give and receive gifts with both hands.

According to a post on [Kwintessential.co.uk](http://Kwintessential.co.uk), “Understanding gift giving and the etiquette surrounding it can help international business people cement better relationships with foreign colleagues, clients or customers.”



*Gift-giving customs vary by country.*

## LEARNING FROM OUR PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS



**MICHAEL R. NOTARO, DTM**  
*Past International President*  
2011–2012  
Alameda, California

### A Memorable Moment

“In 2003, when I was lieutenant governor education, District 57 leaders held a club officer training. The first hour of [simultaneous] sessions went well. During the second round, I walked around the facility to check on the classrooms. As I rounded a hallway, an area governor burst out of a classroom in a panic: Michael, the speaker is a no-show! What do we do?”

We had no time to find a substitute, so I walked into a classroom full of restless Toastmasters and announced myself as the new teacher. I spoke and answered questions for the full class period. The next day, the no-show speaker called me to apologize, but I thanked him for giving me the impromptu speaking opportunity. In Toastmasters, when things go wrong, they often go right.”



## MEET MY MENTOR



# Scott Siegel

No one has the potential to influence a member's experience like a mentor. Scott Siegel is an account executive at Broadridge Financial Solutions and a secretary for the Cutting Edge Speakers club in Edgewood, New York. His mentee, fellow club member Madeline Sambolin, is a technical project lead in the finance information technology department at Broadridge. She shares how Scott has helped her in Toastmasters.

### What prompted you to join Toastmasters?

I am working on my master's degree in business administration management and leadership at Dowling College in Long Island, and many of the classes I take require students to give presentations. I wanted to be comfortable, and not fearful, of giving those presentations, and I wanted to learn how to deliver more interesting, thought-provoking speeches.

### What makes Scott an exceptional mentor?

Scott has been my mentor for the past year, almost since our club started in 2013. He puts his love of public speaking into his mentoring efforts.

Not only has he been a wonderful mentor to me, he has generously mentored all members in our club. Since our club was recently formed for employees of Broadridge Financial Solutions, most members are novice public speakers. Scott has helped all of us write our Ice Breaker speeches, and he continues to offer encouragement and advice through his one-on-one tutoring for any Toastmaster preparing a new speech. He even encouraged our group to take part in a district-level contest, and the excitement of the event attracted new members.

### How has Scott helped you?

Scott helps me write speeches and listens while I practice delivering them. He gives me excellent feedback while I practice, and he follows up with more feedback after I deliver a speech or perform a specific club role. His honesty allows me to learn and grow.

### What is your one favorite thing about Scott?

It's his wonderful wit that shines through in the humorous Toastmasters meeting minutes he writes and shares with us. We all look forward to reading them. Members often volunteer for club roles because they know they will enjoy reading Scott's descriptions of their performances in his recaps.

## NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

Do you know an exceptional mentor who has positively influenced you or other Toastmasters? Send a 200-word description and photo (1 MB or larger) to [MentorMoment@toastmasters.org](mailto:MentorMoment@toastmasters.org).



FROM LEFT: Madeline Sambolin and Scott Siegel

## COMMUNICATION TIP

# Culture-savvy Emails



Email is a fast and efficient way to communicate locally and globally. However, because of its ease of use, we sometimes forget to carefully review messages before pressing "send." Use these tips when emailing people in other countries.

**Do your research.** Research the email recipient's customs and show cultural respect by recognizing these customs in your message. Is it common to address others with *Ms.* or *Mr.*, or is *Frau* or *san* more appropriate? Which spelling is preferred: *organise* or *organize*? (The former is the more common spelling in countries like England and Canada.) Is time told on a 12-hour or 24-hour clock? These may seem like small differences, but your willingness to adapt to the recipient's customs (instead of vice versa) reflects cultural understanding.

**Cater to the recipient.** If you plan a phone or video conference, schedule it during a convenient time for participants, especially if there is a large time difference. Avoid holidays that your client observes. Acknowledging time differences and holidays can help to build your relationship.

**Keep it simple and be patient.** Make your email easy for the recipient to read, especially if English is the person's second language. Avoid long and wordy sentences as well as metaphors and colloquialisms common to your culture. This will help to minimize confusion and prevent miscommunication. You may be accustomed to an email response time of a day or two; however, other cultures may practice longer response times, so be patient while you wait for a reply.

Sources: *Seapoint Center for Collaborative Leadership*, "Simple Tips for Cross-Cultural Communication via the Internet" and BBC, "Master the Art of Global Email Etiquette."



**1 | JOEL SCHAEFER FROM PAGET, BERMUDA**, poses with his rock climbing guide on Tonsai Beach in Thailand.

**2 | KIT-JUELLE FRANK-AMOROSO FROM CASTRIES, SAINT LUCIA**, views the two Piton volcanic spires on the island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean.

**3 | KYLE ZIEBA FROM PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**, observes the Perito Moreno Glacier in Santa Cruz, Argentina.

**4 | MAYUMI VAN DER POL FROM NAKUSP, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**, visits the Monument to the Discoveries in Lisbon, Portugal.



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



**PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine in your exciting surroundings. Email your high-resolution image (at least one megabyte) to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org). Bon voyage!



# Telling Stories of Survival

How Speechcraft helped abused women heal and grow.

BY JULIA LAWR, ACB

For many years, I have volunteered at a shelter for abused women and their children in Barrie, Ontario, Canada. One year, I attended the shelter's annual meeting, and heard some of the alumna speak about their experiences. Although their speeches were powerful and moving, I thought the women could benefit from Toastmasters.

The outreach survivors program provides ongoing support to women who stayed at the shelter in the past but who are now settled in the community. Knowing that Speechcraft is a wonderful tool for teaching what we do best in Toastmasters—practicing poise, impromptu speaking, prepared speeches and evaluations—I offered to facilitate a Speechcraft program for women in the outreach program. The idea was well-received. I and Vaike Rosalea, ACS, CL, a member of the Barrie Toastmasters, presented the Speechcraft sessions at the shelter's outreach center.

During our first session, in 2011, participants were extremely nervous but were eager to learn new skills. We took a moment to consider and record participants' goals:

- Step out of my shell
- Tell my story of survival
- Hold people's attention when I speak
- Get to the point
- Paraphrase, and stay on track

## Working Within a Comfort Zone

To create a warm and supportive, yet professional, atmosphere, we encouraged participants to share only what they were comfortable sharing. How they shared the stories was important, too. Many of the women were uncomfortable speaking formally, so we encouraged them to speak in a way that was natural for them.

One woman delivered her first speech and her first few Table Topics responses while sitting in her chair. But after a few sessions she was standing and speaking from the front of the room. She was gesturing while she spoke, and engaging her audience.

Evaluations were another challenge. All the women were comfortable with being evaluated, finding the process to be one of gentle guidance. However, they found it difficult to evaluate



*Julia Lawr helped lead Speechcraft for female survivors of abuse.*

others—to suggest to speakers how they could improve. To help with this, Vaike led an evaluation session where the women evaluated speakers as a group. Vaike distributed worksheets with key items to look for when giving an evaluation, such as speech development, content structure and the use of supporting material.

Each woman was asked to give feedback on one key element of the speech. Each of them did, and several offered gently phrased suggestions for improvement.

## Branching Out

After only a few sessions, the Speechcraft participants were asked to speak on behalf of the shelter at a public event held in commemoration of the Montreal Massacre. The event is in remembrance of 14 women who were

killed in 1989 on a Montreal campus.

Each participant rose, in turn, to speak about survival—an intensely personal and unnerving topic—to an audience of a few hundred people. They received a standing ovation!

During our final Speechcraft sessions, we prepared for yet another group presentation. The women practiced, prepared and successfully spoke about resilience and strength at an International Women's Day event in Barrie.

Finally, we revisited participants' original goals and found the group had succeeded on all fronts. Each woman had learned to focus on key points and capture the attention of an audience when sharing her story. The shy women became less shy and the outgoing ones felt positively on fire. Several experienced greater job success.

Facilitating Speechcraft sessions was one of my best Toastmasters experiences. The skills we teach help others perform well in work and in life. Speechcraft can benefit a variety of community groups, such as those with programs for the disabled, blind and learning-impaired.

Secretly, I have wanted to change the world for the better for a long time. Perhaps Speechcraft is a way of doing it. **T**

**JULIA LAWR, ACB**, is a member of Bay Street Breakfast Toastmasters club in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She works as a compliance officer in the financial industry and volunteers regularly at a women's and children's shelter.





*Phyllis Thesier, standing behind the club banner, presented her program in April to members of the Shanghai No. 1 Toastmasters in Shanghai, China, to help them with their English.*

## Sound Strategies

Tips to make sure your English is understood.

BY PHYLLIS THESIER, ACS, CL

On his way out of the house, my father said, “Oh, by the way, come down to the Toastmasters club tonight and meet two new members. We need some ideas on how to help them.”

Visiting Toastmasters clubs was part of my upbringing. My father had belonged to several clubs through the years, including this club in Indiana. During this particular time, I was home on break from the university where I was studying neurocognitive science and theater.

The two new Toastmasters I met that night were scientists from India and China working in the United States for a global organization. They joined my dad’s club when they recognized the difficulty others had understanding their English. I became increasingly intrigued by the idea of helping non-native English speakers be better understood. After a few more club visits, I changed my college major to speech and communication science, and my journey began.

I now work as a speech and communication specialist, and I’ve been a

Toastmaster for more than 20 years. I consistently refer my clients to Toastmasters clubs, because they offer such a valuable environment for those who speak English as a foreign language—a safe place to practice and improve.

### To Be Understood

While English may share commonalities with some languages—in rhythm, stress patterns, actual sounds and spelling—other languages may have fewer commonalities with English. The goal for an English-as-a-foreign-language speaker is to speak English with enough of the language’s sound code to be readily understood.

Several years ago, as a member of the MIT Easy-Speak club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I designed a program to help non-native-speaking members be more clearly understood in English. I did it with the encouragement of Ruth Levitsky, past president of the MIT club, which draws many non-native English speakers because MIT (the



Massachusetts Institute of Technology) attracts scholars from all over the world.

I've offered the program at a number of district events, including a District 85 training event this past April in Shanghai, where I once was a member. (The workshops are always free—I only ask that participants pay the cost of printed materials.)

My strategies emphasize having such speakers “add” parts of a new accent code—in this case, Standard American—to their speech. Non-native English speakers don't need to change their entire accent—just some key parts. Speakers often “code-switch,” or alternate between two different accents as they learn, but with practice their accent stabilizes for each separate language they speak.

## Non-native English speakers don't need to change their entire accent—just some key parts.

Below are five tips to help non-native speakers with English-accent addition.

**1 Practice.** Speech is a game of turning complex ideas into intricate, highly coordinated muscle movements. It takes a great deal of speaking practice to make such movements automatic, thus creating “muscle-motor memory” (also called “procedural memory”). To strengthen new muscle-motor memory for the English accent code, you must speak English at least eight hours continually throughout each day. One of the best places to practice is your Toastmasters club.

**2 Improve Listening Comprehension.** Zig Ziglar, the famed motivational speaker, once said, “You can't hit a target that you can't see.” The same is true for sounds. We can't say a sound we can't hear. Many sounds and pronunciation patterns in English have similar-sounding substitutions, yet the English-as-a-foreign-language speaker may not hear these differences. Why? Because a particular sound or pattern may not exist in his or her native sound code.

For this reason, it is important to work with native English speakers who can focus on key sound differences. Several resources can help, including training software from **EnglishTalkShop.com** and programs such as “Minimal Pairs—Word Lists” by speech-language pathologist Caroline Bowen, Ph.D., at **speech-language-therapy.com**.

**3 Slow Down.** To be clearly understood, use effective pauses and slow your speaking speed. Audience members need time to absorb what you say. The most critical pronunciation differences in language are rhythm and stress patterns. When

we hear someone speak, our brain listens for timing and melody in spoken words and phrases. The speaking rhythms and syllable-stress emphasis of speakers from South Asia, India, Africa and other countries are very different from those of English speakers. When patterns are different than anticipated, it takes the listener longer to understand.

Try this exercise: Start by reading aloud a paragraph or poem of 100 to 120 words. Time yourself, and then try to say the piece in 60 to 65 seconds. To build your skills, listen to the effective, full-second pauses used by Presiyan Vasilev in the speech he gave to win the 2013 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. (The speech is at [youtu.be/9k92IGhnLig](https://youtu.be/9k92IGhnLig).)

**4 Saying Numbers.** Toastmasters can practice saying numbers like “13” [thir-TEEN] and “30” [THIR-ty], and so on, by taking on the timer role at their club. Reciting a poem during a club meeting—for example, during the “inspirational” segment that some clubs employ—can be another good opportunity to practice stress and rhythm. Use **Merriam-Webster.com** to hear the correct pronunciation of words, and make certain to emphasize the appropriate syllables. For example, the word “idea” is pronounced “I-DE-ah,” not “I-dee.”

**5 Find a Mentor.** Just as when learning a new sport, you need a mentor and an accountability partner, someone on your side who can listen and practice with you. To improve English-accent addition, I recommend that a member have a mentor for a minimum of 10 speeches.

Toastmaster Vijay Agarwal, a brilliant and gregarious engineer, struggled to be understood. His first language is Marwari, a regional Indian dialect that has multiple rhythms, stresses and sounds that are different than English. I worked with him for two months to develop a transitional program that he could use in his club so he could be better understood when he spoke.

Find a mentor in your club who will help you serve in a club role and help you practice your English-accent addition through at least 10 speeches. Arrange a time to practice before meetings. Although there are many more rhythm, syllable stress and sound rules, these are a great start. Utilizing the resources of Toastmasters—with just a bit of extra focus—can make a big difference in being understood. **T**

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**PHYLLIS THESIER, ACS, CL,** is a member of Plymouth Toastmasters club in Plymouth, Wisconsin, as well as the Toastmasters@MIT club in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is a nationally certified speech and communication specialist with a Master of Arts in Teaching degree. Phyllis speaks on communication and culture at various universities and professional organizations.

# Preview of Kuala Lumpur Convention

What to expect at the main Toastmasters event of the year.

BY TOASTMASTER  
MAGAZINE STAFF

It's almost time for the annual Toastmasters International Convention, which this year takes place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The convention is the most exciting Toastmasters event of the year, filled with opportunities to hear great speakers, learn new ideas, meet and celebrate with other members from around the world.

"It is an incredible, eye-opening experience," says Carl Duivenvoorden, DTM, a member of the Civil Speakers club in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, who has attended nine international conventions, including one as an education session presenter.

Other members say they appreciate the camaraderie at the convention, and the chance to experience Toastmasters beyond their club. "Toastmasters is not just a club, it's your area, it's your division,

**"By coming to the convention, you get to see the experience, and feel the experience, of a worldwide organization."**

— Michael Osur, DTM

it's your district," says Michael Osur, DTM, a member of the CHAT club in Riverside, California. "By coming to the convention, you get to see the experience, and feel the experience, of a worldwide organization."

This year's convention, the first ever held outside North America, runs August 20–23 at the elegant Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. One of the expected highlights will be the presence



*International Convention attendees can network with members from around the world, enjoy festive celebrations, and learn from celebrated speakers.*

of so many attendees from Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. As always, the program includes speakers who will deliver inspiring presentations and top-notch education sessions.

The convention kicks off at noon Wednesday, August 20, with a Board of Directors Briefing, where members can learn about the organization's progress and new developments. Attendees can meet the 2014–2015 international officer and director candidates throughout the week, and will vote for candidates of their choice at the Annual Business Meeting, at 12:30 p.m. Saturday. Mohammed Murad, DTM, will accept his new role as Toastmasters' 2014–15 International President during the President's Inauguration on Saturday evening, followed by dinner and dancing.

Yingdan Liu, DTM, a past District 85 governor and Region 13 Advisor, says the President's Inauguration is her favorite event of the convention, because it's a chance to hear the new International President give a speech about his or her Toastmasters journey. That journey

(See the next page for the lineup of accomplished speakers.)

Another way for convention attendees to learn from top-level speaking talent is by watching the semifinals of the International Speech Contest and, two days later, the World Championship of Public Speaking. Those who have never seen the International Speech Contest before are sure to be inspired by the pool of talented competitors!





includes progressing through a series of leadership roles to the highest level.

“That’s why I love this session so much —because I’m very inspired by [the International President],” says Liu, a member of China Advanced Toastmasters in Shanghai. “I want to achieve higher in Toastmasters, and in my life.”

It’s still not too late to sign up for the 2014 convention. The full convention package is available for \$450, which includes access to the Opening Ceremonies, the keynote speech, education sessions, speech contests, the Golden Gavel award event and the President’s Inauguration and Celebration.

The 2014 convention promises to be a once-in-a lifetime experience. Attendees will be enriched by a diverse culture and rich education opportunities; they will build new friendships and strengthen existing ones—all in a beautiful and captivating city. **T**

## Convention Speakers

This year’s lineup of speakers features a wide range of experts and inspirational figures, including authors, coaches, entrepreneurs, Toastmasters leaders and World Champions of Public Speaking.



■ **Golden Gavel recipient Dato’ Rohana Binti Tan Sri Datuk Haji Rozhan**—The Chief Executive Officer of Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, a media entertainment group with operations in TV, radio, publications and digital media. Rozhan has led Astro to be one of Southeast Asia’s leading producers of multilingual content in local, regional and international programming. In 2013, she received CNBC’s Corporate Social Responsibility Award.



■ **Douglas Kruger, ATMS**—Author, speaker and presentation skills coach based in Johannesburg, South Africa. He delivers motivational presentations and training seminars for large organizations including Old Mutual, Caltex and Vodacom.



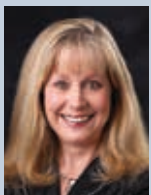
■ **Lance Miller, DTM**—The 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking. A resident of Glendale, California, he is a former executive for Nestlé and Anheuser-Busch. Miller was instrumental in building his home club, Renaissance Speakers, in Hollywood, California, to No. 4 in the world with 95 members.



■ **Keynote speaker Robin Sieger**—A former head of development for BBC Television. Robin is a popular motivational speaker from Scotland who speaks about innovation to Fortune 100 companies around the world. His books include the best-selling *Natural Born Winners*, which has been translated into 18 languages and adapted into a TV series.



■ **Florian Mueck, ACG**—A speaker, coach and author based in Barcelona, Spain, who speaks three languages (English, German and Spanish). In 2010, he gave a talk for TEDxBarcelona titled “Europe: How to Unleash a Common Spirit.”



■ **Jana Barnhill, DTM**—Accredited Speaker and Toastmasters’ 2008–2009 International President from Lubbock, Texas. She is a five-time winner of the District 44 International Speech Contest, and placed second in the 1996 World Championship of Public Speaking.



■ **Rory Vaden**—Entrepreneur, consultant and author from Nashville, Tennessee. At age 23, he placed second in the 2007 World Championship of Public Speaking.



■ **Mark Brown, ATM, CL**—1995 World Champion of Public Speaking. Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, he now lives in the U.S., in Lizella, Georgia. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and delivers more than 200 presentations a year.



■ **John Lau, DTM**—Toastmasters’ 2012–2013 International President from Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. He is chief executive and owner of the Acme Group of Companies, a management consultancy, and is Sarawak State Chairman of the People’s Progressive Party of Malaysia.

**REGISTER TODAY!** [www.toastmasters.org/convention](http://www.toastmasters.org/convention)

# Add Story to Your Slides

What expert Nancy Duarte can teach you about visual presentations.

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

Nancy Duarte wants you to tell stories with your presentations. Not just over-the-backyard-fence type of stories, but stories that follow a framework she's created after years of studying the best presentations to determine what makes the best stand out.

Lest you think these stories need to make you look like a brilliant problem-solver or management genius, rest easy. Stories that expose your humanness and real-life challenges often have the most power to change others, she says, because the audience can relate to them.

"I will follow a leader who has a glorious story of failure before I'll follow one who pretends he's never failed," Duarte says.

Few people have had more impact on the presentations field than Duarte, CEO of Duarte Inc., a renowned design firm in California's Silicon Valley. The firm creates presentations for many of the world's top companies. Duarte first came to prominence for helping former U.S. Vice President Al Gore design the keynote slides that were part of his Academy Award-winning environmental documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. She has gone on to write the best-selling books *slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations* and *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences*.

In 2010, Duarte delivered a popular TED talk at TEDxEast in New York, in which she spoke about how to make a powerful call-to-action in a presentation.

Her latest book, *Slidedocs*, is about creating visual communications that don't require the accompaniment of a presenter, filling the gap between long-form documents and on-screen presentations commonly used in organizations.

## Visual Storytelling

Presenters are often uncomfortable telling stories from their own lives, Duarte says; they see it as inappropriate or a "form of fiction." But incorporating story and emotional appeal can have powerful



*Nancy Duarte describes the process of taking an audience on a visual journey at the 2013 World Domination Summit in Portland, Oregon.*

results. Duarte tells of working on a presentation with an assistant professor from Stanford University who was trying to win a \$2.5 million science grant. The money would help fund his lab for two years, but he only had 15 minutes to make his case before a panel.

“He realized if he wove a thin layer of a human story through his presentation, even though he felt his content may not be as good as that of some others presenting, it might help him inch the competition

out,” Duarte says. “He was right. All of the other scientists presented their work, and it was just the facts. But he felt the storytelling aspect helped him prevail.”

Why are compelling stories so persuasive? Because you can have all of the data in the world, but that information itself has little staying power. It’s how those facts impact the audience emotionally that ultimately moves people to action, says Duarte. “Everyone likes to *feel*.”

Stories that convey a sense of change are also powerful. “Humans have an obsession with transformation,” Duarte says, “maybe because we live on an earth that transforms with four seasons and cycles of birth, life and death. People love to observe story and transformation. It humanizes and connects us.”

The VisualStory methodology that Duarte’s firm created transforms core ideas into story-driven presentations. The story framework has three stages and takes the audience



# Making Your Presentation Memorable

The end game for any speech is moving audiences to action, and that's only possible if your take-away messages linger in audiences' memories. Yet memory is more complex than we think it is. For example, if you were asked whether red or green was at the top of the traffic light, could you answer with certainty? Could you recall the design on the back of a penny?

Carmen Simon, co-founder of Rexi Media, a San Francisco-based presentation-skills consulting firm, conducted a study on how many slides people actually remember from a typical PowerPoint presentation. About 1,500 participants were invited to view a short, online PowerPoint presentation of 20 slides, each containing only one core message.

After 48 hours, people were asked to recall anything they could remember about the presentation. The results were sobering, Simon says. Participants remembered on average only four slides out of 20. But on the flip side, significant changes to every fifth slide aided recall, she says.

What lessons can be drawn from the study? Simon says a number of techniques can help boost audience recall of your messages.

**“For the brain to remember, presenters must deviate from a pattern in some significant way.”**

— Carmen Simon, co-founder of Rexi Media

**People remember the unusual.** “For the brain to remember, presenters must deviate from a pattern in some significant way,” Simon says. If everything in your slides is equally intense (graphics, color, large font size) or equally neutral or bland, that sameness acts as an audience sedative, she says. But when a slide's look or content varies from what an audience expects, focus and recall increases—as evidenced by the improvement in memory shown in the study by significantly altering every fifth slide.

**Self-generated content improves memory.** Audiences remember messages longer when asked to participate in or “co-create” your speech in some way. That could be as simple as leaving word blanks on your slides for audiences to verbally fill in, Simon says, or other participatory techniques.

“Because most of us do so much research for our presentations, we think we have to pack every last thing we've discovered into an hour-long presentation, versus leaving some space for audiences to participate,” says Simon. “Participating gives people a stronger sense of ownership in the process, which creates a stronger hook in their memories.”

**Go beyond aesthetics to meaning.** While good PowerPoint slide design is important, speakers get into trouble when they worry too much about the aesthetics of their slides rather than the meaning they impart. When you invite audiences to process information deeply by invoking senses and provoking thought, they recall more.

“You could contact audience members two or three days after your presentation, and they might not remember much of your slide content,” Simon says. “But they're very likely to remember how you made them feel during the presentation.”

— Dave Zielinski

on a journey between “what is” and “what could be.” That ebb-and-flow keeps audiences engaged, Duarte says, and payoffs come when presenters resolve the imbalance.

Every presentation has persuasion as its end game, Duarte says, even those considered informative like internal financial reports or project updates. As she writes in *Resonate*, “Isn't there usually a desired outcome from what's classified as an informative presentation? Yes. You're moving your audience from being uninformed to informed. From being uninterested in your subject to interested. From being stuck in a process to unstuck.”

### Captivate Through Contrast

Contrast also is crucial to creating memorable presentations, Duarte says—contrast in content, delivery and emotion—because it holds the audience's attention. “As human beings, our bodies are wired to process contrast,” Duarte says. “If something moves, we look up and decide if it is friend or foe. If something changes in the presentation environment, we notice it.”

She believes the presenter's job is to create and resolve tension through contrast. Contrast in content means communicating an idea along with its polar opposite, then moving back and forth between those poles. Contrast in emotion means shifting between analytical and emotional appeals. Contrast in delivery means moving between traditional and non-traditional methods, the latter including things like using co-presenters, alternate media or audience interaction, she says.

While creating easily understood, aesthetically pleasing slides also is important and was the focus of Duarte's first book, *slide:ology*, she says it pales in comparison to developing meaningful content. And that starts with crawling inside the audience's skin.

“What happens to presenters is we hole ourselves away to create something we can *pronounce upon* audiences, instead of spending enough time thinking about who is in the audience and how they process information, both emotionally and intellectually,” Duarte says.

Presenters who think deeply about what might resonate with their audiences, but also about messages they might resist—“what

they are likely to throw back in your face,” Duarte says—often have the most success.

For example, Duarte wrote in a recent blog post that one of her biggest presentation failures came when delivering a 2007 talk to her own staff, which she calls “my toughest audience.” The presentation was about a need to shift strategy to cope with the looming economic downturn. But Duarte says that in crafting the presentation, she failed to adequately consider her staff’s perspective; many were much younger and hadn’t experienced or successfully navigated past economic downturns as Duarte had.

“I’ll never forget the reaction when I was done,” she wrote. “The room was dead silent. It was as if a bomb had gone off and the staff was shell-shocked.”

Fast-forward to this year, when Duarte was preparing another presentation to her staff on company strategy and vision. She says most of her 60 hours of prep time was spent talking to key leaders in the organization about how their staffs might resist the message and collecting information to reach consensus.

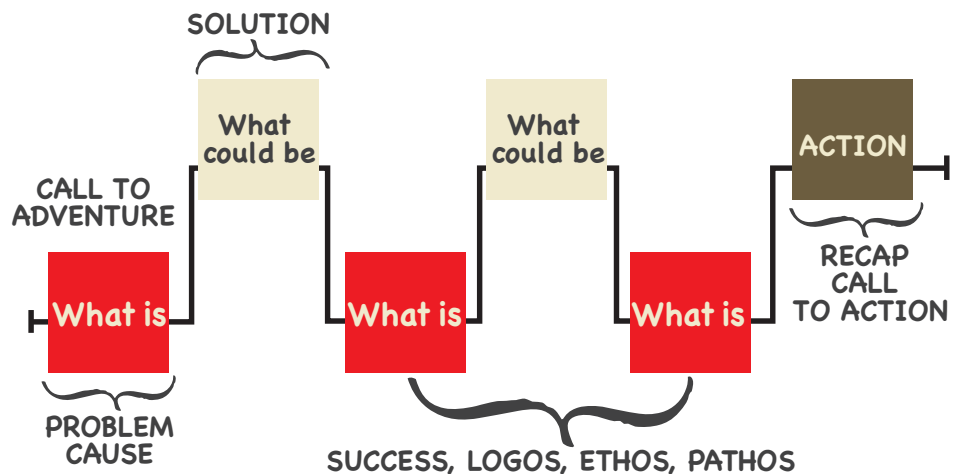
“I included those factors in my presentation and spoke about them from a place of empathy, so people felt like their perspectives had been considered,” Duarte says.

### When Presentations Aren’t the Right Answer

Duarte’s latest book, *Slidedocs*, is a departure from earlier works in that it’s focused on using presentation software like PowerPoint not for creating on-screen slideshows but for printed documents. A slidedoc is a document that “combines visuals and words to illustrate one clear point per page,” Duarte says. It features more text and visual explanations than a “cinematic” or on-screen presentation, and uses a template system with grids, columned text boxes and full sentences.

Duarte says the best uses of slidedocs are as material to be read in advance of presentations, as follow-up reference material or as an “emissary” to open doors for future presenting. “An emissary example might be when a venture capitalist says, ‘Send me your five slides,’” Duarte says. “They don’t want cinematic slides, they usually want a slidedoc.”

Slidedocs also are built to accommodate dense analytical explanations, which typically



Duarte illustrates how a story that takes the audience on a journey between “what is” and “what could be” keeps audiences engaged.

don’t translate well to on-screen presentations. Engineers, scientists, financial analysts and other professionals deal with dense information on a regular basis, and the book provides compelling options for using high text-to-graphic ratios on pages.

The book also is a nod to the reality that many presentations given in organizations don’t require the accompaniment of a presenter. When everything that needs to be said is included in the bullet points or graphics of PowerPoint slides—and there’s little need for a “human element” to provide context or answer questions—distributing slidedocs can be

a better use of everyone’s time than gathering the troops for a slideshow.

“There is a time and place to present,” Duarte says, “and there is a time and place to just let people read quietly and process.”

**DAVE ZIELINSKI** is the editor of *PresentationXpert* newsletter ([www.presentationxpert.com](http://www.presentationxpert.com)), which shares monthly tips on designing and delivering high-impact presentations. He is a frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster*.

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# What's Your Presentation Proposition?

How to prepare for the unexpected.

BY DANA LAMON, DTM, AS

Shortly after I won the World Championship of Public Speaking in 1992, I was asked to work with a group of students at a local high school to help prepare an assembly on unity and harmony. The program gave nine students the opportunity to deliver two- to three-minute speeches on the topic, and I was tasked with wrapping it up with a 15-minute motivational summation.

When you can state your message in one sentence, you can stretch and condense your speech as necessary to fit within a limited timeframe.

However, at the assembly, things didn't go as planned. The microphone was problematic, and it took time to silence the 800-student audience. While I sat among the student speakers, the program coordinator tiptoed up and whispered in my ear, "You have two minutes to speak."

If it hasn't happened to you, it will. You will be asked to make a presentation in a shorter time frame than anticipated. A key to your success at adapting to such a situation is having a presentation proposition. This is a one-sentence statement of your message. It's the focal point of your speech. When you can state your message in one sentence, you can stretch and condense your speech as necessary to fit within any time frame. You only have to change how much information you include.

Follow these five steps to develop your presentation proposition.

**1 Make it a clear, concise sentence.** The statement should be no longer than 20 words. It should have a simple subject and

predicate so the listener can follow and understand the sentence easily and repeat it. A compound or complex sentence may look good on paper, but the listener does not have the luxury of stopping and re-reading it.

**2 Make it a declarative statement.** Your presentation proposition should be a positive assertion that you state emphatically. It should not be a question; it

should be your answer. It must not include phrases such as "I think," "I believe" or "in my opinion."

**3 Make it supportable.** Your speech will be the argument in support of your proposition. Hence, your statement should be one that lends itself to points of proof, stories to support your message and/or examples to illustrate it. Your time frame will dictate how many points you include, how long a story you tell and what form your examples will take.

**4 Make it yours.** The presentation proposition is the expression of your thoughts and feelings on a matter. It should not be a quotation from someone else. It should not be a recitation of statistics or reports. Quotations and reports are support material, not the message.

**5 Make it purposeful.** You must express or imply in your proposition how the audience should use your message. What's the point of delivering a message if it is not useful to the audience? Are you trying to

persuade, motivate or inform your listeners? For example, the proposition "The orangutans of Sumatra will be saved if we stop cutting down the trees in which they dwell" reflects your purpose to persuade the audience of your message. The proposition "A person with a disability can live a meaningful life too" has an implied purpose to inform if the statement is delivered to an audience of non-disabled persons. It has an implied purpose to motivate if given to an audience of people with disabilities.

If your speech is already written, use these guidelines to condense your message. Make sure to insert your proposition into your speech—in the opening and again in the conclusion if possible. If you have not yet written your speech, start by developing a one-sentence message. Once you are clear on the message, you can create a speech that doesn't ramble.

At the school assembly, I gave a two-minute summation. I stated my proposition and used as support some words the speakers had said. The 800 students walked out of the gym believing they got a full and complete program. ■

**DANA LAMON, DTM,** is an Accredited Speaker and the 1992 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. He is a member of two California clubs: Talents Unlimited in Palmdale and Speakers in the Wind in Sun Village.



Find the *Toastmaster* magazine app on the Apple App store, Google Play store and Amazon Appstore.







# The Sound of Silence

At long last, a mime speaks on stage.

BY MIKE CAVENEY

**T**hirty-five years ago I married a mime. At the time it seemed like a sure path to a nice, quiet life.

Tina Lenert had always been shy, and early in life, after seeing a performance by the famed mime Marcel Marceau, she decided to become a silent communicator. She began as a street performer and then co-founded a mime troupe. Before long the group was appearing regularly in colleges and on Dick Van Dyke's American TV series *Van Dyke and Company*. A visit to Hollywood's Magic Castle inspired her to add magic to her solo mime act. This is where I enter the picture. One of the other magicians performing at the Magic Castle was me.

She developed a mime-and-magic act, a Cinderella-style fairy tale where Tina, playing the role of a cleaning lady, is transformed by her animated mop. This act was like nothing else out there, and soon Tina was traveling the world performing on stages and in television shows. This was her life for 25 years.

A few years ago, I developed a routine for my act that required Tina to carry a microphone into the audience and converse with the spectators. When told of this plan, her answer was immediate and decisive: "No way. I am a mime. I don't speak to audiences." I turned up the pressure and she finally gave in. She was very uncomfortable, but she did it. The lesson I learned was for the sake of our marriage: Don't put a microphone in Tina's hand.

I tell you all of this so you will understand the impact of what happened in November of 2011. Tina was in Chile

performing at a magic festival, and when she returned, before we even got out of the airport, she said, "I'm ready to start doing lectures for magicians." I thought I had picked up the wrong mime.

It turns out magicians at the Chile festival had asked her to speak to the group about her experiences. She politely declined, thinking that no one would be interested in what she had to say, but she reluctantly agreed to be interviewed on stage. At the end of the interview the audience leapt to their feet. This proved to be the inspiration she needed. In addition, a Spanish magician who was present invited her to present a formal lecture at his festival in Granada, Spain. Thus, a lifelong mime decided to shed her cocoon of silence. But how was she going to overcome her fear of public speaking?

A good friend told Tina that she had once found herself in the same situation and had solved the problem by joining Toastmasters. Another thing I never thought I would hear my wife/professional mime say was, "I'm joining Toastmasters," but she did. She found a club within walking distance and began participating in weekly meetings.

Decades of traveling around the world with a magical mop had provided Tina with an endless supply of fascinating stories as well as many theories about performing. Now she needed to learn how to talk about these things in front of a group. She brought home various ribbons for her speeches, but the real prize came last November when she stepped in front of that group in Granada, Spain, and delivered a



*Tina Lenert entertains audiences worldwide with stories about how a mop made her famous.*

one-hour lecture in Spanish. (Tina is bilingual—she was born in Caracas, Venezuela, to American parents.)

Tina still travels around the world with her mop, but now, instead of just performing her well-known mime-and-magic act, she also presents lectures. This has taken her back to Canada, England, Chile, Argentina and Spain, and throughout the United States. I will never forget sitting in a Las Vegas theater with 1,500 other magicians, listening to Tina describe the process behind the creation of her mop act and then finishing her talk with a performance of this act that was already familiar to every member of this knowledgeable audience. Watching those audience members rise to their feet at the conclusion with a sustained standing ovation brought Tina to tears, and filled me with pride. The mime speaks, and speaks well, thanks to Toastmasters. **T**

**MIKE CAVENEY** is an award-winning magician, historian and writer. He is the co-author of *Magic: 1400s to 1950s*.

**TINA LENERT CC, CL**, is a member of Parsons Toastmasters in Pasadena, California. To see Tina's presentation at *Magic Live Las Vegas*, go to [youtu.be/7UWP\\_hUkGFo](http://youtu.be/7UWP_hUkGFo).

# The Social Media

How savvy speakers extend their voices far and wide.

BY DENISE GRAVELINE

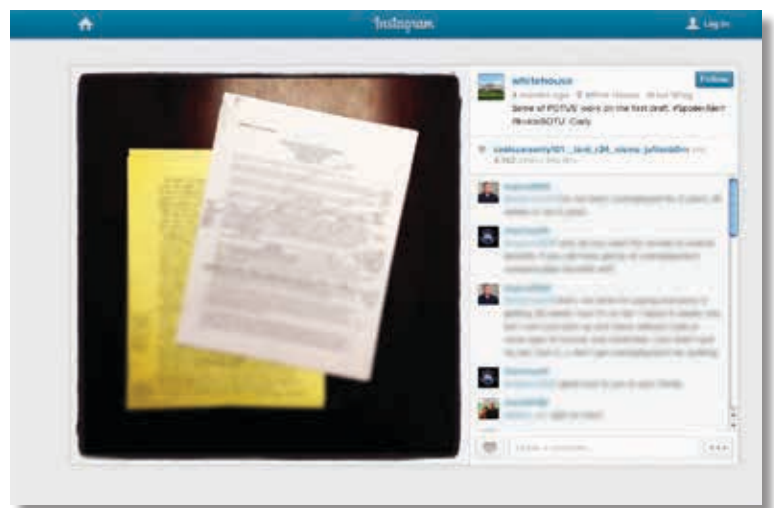
The Instagram photo at the right is blurred to keep the content a secret. It's the draft of a speech, with notes in the margins and paragraphs crossed out.

With that post this past January, White House chief speechwriter Cody Keenan took over the White House's Instagram account in the days leading up to U.S. President Obama's State of the Union speech. In doing so, Keenan joined the ranks of speakers and speechwriters turning to social media to plan, write and promote their speeches and engage their audiences before, during and after a speech. Because the content of President Obama's speech is kept secret before it is delivered, using this photo- and video-sharing network was a clever way to show the speech preparations without having to discuss or write about the content.

As a speaker, you don't have to work in the Oval Office to make use of social media. Social networks offer many options for Toastmasters striving to advance their skills and careers. But since social media can be either a secret weapon or a double-edged sword, you need a smart strategy. The following resources and options can help.

## Prepare with Virtual Discussions

Social media tools can be useful even before you step onto a podium. Before you post your speech for viewing by a wider



audience, consider discussing your strategy—virtually, that is—with other speakers and Toastmasters. Go to the official Toastmasters International members groups on Facebook ([facebook.com/groups/ToastmastersInternationalMembers](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ToastmastersInternationalMembers)) or LinkedIn ([linkd.in/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialMembersGroup](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialMembersGroup)) to ask what other members do and to gather tips.

The Toastmasters International Official Fan Page on Facebook ([facebook.com/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialFanPage](https://www.facebook.com/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialFanPage)) and the LinkedIn Official Toastmasters International Group ([linkd.in/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialGroup](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/ToastmastersInternationalOfficialGroup)) serve as sources for interesting articles. Or head to the YouTube Toastmasters page to watch the official collection of Toastmasters videos that offer speakers practical tips and delivery advice ([youtube.com/toastmasters](https://www.youtube.com/toastmasters)).

You can also post your questions or share your experiences with members on Twitter ([twitter.com/Toastmasters](https://twitter.com/Toastmasters)). To follow other Toastmasters on the site, search for posts with the hashtags [#WhereLeadersAreMade](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WhereLeadersAreMade) and [#Toastmasters](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Toastmasters). Also, search for [#speechwriting](https://twitter.com/hashtag/speechwriting) to find speechwriting pros who often share articles, discuss writing tips and more. And be

# Edge

sure to watch for the Toastmasters International Convention hashtag (#TICnv14) to monitor updates for the event, to be held in August.

When the time comes to prepare your speech, consider using a program like Evernote ([evernote.com](http://evernote.com)). Evernote allows you to keep your research in a designated virtual notebook.

## Publishing your speech on social sites is a great first step in promoting your public speaking.

You can enter your notes into this program by typing them directly, sharing them from your mobile phone or using the Web clipper to save parts of a webpage to your virtual notebook. You can also send information to a special email address that Evernote provides. Evernote is free, but it does offer a premium service with additional features and storage. The program can hold any medium, from written notes and scans to photos, audio and video.

You can even use Evernote's recording function to make an audio file of your text and play it back while you make adjustments. If you collaborate with a team, coach or colleague, Evernote's share function allows you to share your notebook or send notes privately through email. And you have access to your notes through the Web, or via your computer or phone. (Imagine yourself listening to a recording of your speech on your mobile phone while you commute.) You can adjust the settings to work on your speech offline as well. Later, use the share function to publish your speech straight to Facebook or Twitter.







*Speakers can advance their skills and their careers by having a smart social media strategy in place.*

### Bring Your Audience Behind the Scenes

For those who can't be there to hear you speak, share behind-the-scenes photos to help build excitement. Consider taking and posting photos while you wait backstage or immediately before you speak, or snap a picture of the assembled audience waiting to hear you. Then post photos on Instagram ([instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)), Pinterest ([pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)), Flickr ([flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com)), Facebook, Twitter or Google+ ([plus.google.com](https://plus.google.com)).

Want to edit your photo before you post it to the Web? Many free photo-editing apps are available, including Photo Effects Pro, Snapseed, Muzy and PicMonkey. Once you've cropped, enhanced and formatted your photo, share the shot on social media sites or send it via email.

### Make Your Speech Available

It's a good idea to publish the text of your speech once you've delivered it, for reasons that range from contributing to the historical record to sharing your content beyond the hall in which you spoke. If you're building a reputation as an experienced speaker, it helps to publish your speech in a few formats. You are more likely to be considered for future engagements, since conference organizers will have easy access to your content and delivery.

When it comes to publishing your text on social sites, look for options that permit your audience to spread your speech further. You can post to a blog, a Facebook note, a longform LinkedIn ([linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)) update or a Google+ post. Evernote not only helps you email your speech or create social posts of it, it also creates a Web link for the note containing your speech that is visible to the public.

Using slides? Share your slide decks with a wider audience on SlideShare ([slideshare.net](https://www.slideshare.net)) where you can add an audio narration; on Pinterest; and on your LinkedIn profile page. While you're at it, consider posting audio of your speech as a podcast (it's easier to do if you record it as part of your practice), or upload video to YouTube ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)). Since YouTube is one of the sites most used for searches, your speech stands a better chance of being found and seen there. Viewers can easily share or embed your YouTube video if you opt to permit those functions. Keep in mind: Many conference organizers prefer to book speakers for whom video is available, so these options give you a real advantage in securing speaking engagements.

Once you become comfortable using social networks to share your speeches, get creative. Science journalist Carl Zimmer, an award-winning U.S. author and lecturer, uses Pinterest to share audio and video of his frequent talks and media interviews, since the site accepts links to audio as well as embedded video and slides.

**Social networks are all about two-way conversation. They're an ideal way to connect with your audience.**

### Promote Your Speeches and Club

Publishing your speech on social sites is a great first step to promote your public speaking. But don't stop there: Consider using social sites that make it easy for organizers to find you and read about your experiences and the topics you speak about. Many Toastmasters use social sites to not only promote their speeches and clubs, but to share tips and to talk about their accomplishments.

For example, Lanyrd ([lanyrd.com](https://www.lanyrd.com)) is a social conference directory that lists conferences and speakers and collects video and slides of talks. You can use the site to note your participation as a speaker at previous or upcoming conferences, see talks, network, promote club events or learn who will attend a future conference. Organizers use Lanyrd to find speakers, and for those looking for speaking opportunities it's a good place to build a robust profile. Among its features is its capability to accept past speeches and speaking engagements as well as future appearances.

The Articulate Network on Lanyrd ([articulate-network.lanyrd.com](https://www.articulate-network.lanyrd.com)) lists a group of women speakers available to speak on technology and creative-industry topics. You may find similar networks that promote the topics you speak about.

### Connect with the Audience

Social networks are all about two-way conversation. They're an ideal way to connect with your audience to get feedback on your speech from people in the room where you're presenting, as well as from those far away who "listen" via social networks, tweets and posts.

Many audience members use Twitter to quote speakers or comment on what they say. They share comments like whether or

not they can hear a speaker clearly, as well as reactions to the speaker's points.

In his book *The Backchannel: How Audiences are Using Twitter and Social Media and Changing Presentations Forever*, author and speaker Cliff Atkinson shares the pros and cons of an audience that live-tweets your presentation. He calls social media a "double-edged sword" for speakers and presenters, but notes that speakers can use the backchannel to their advantage. He gives real-life examples of how to handle the new set of situations most speakers face with an audience of social-media users.

Consider using Twitter or other social networks to:

- Ask in advance what the audience wants to know
- Thank organizers for inviting you to speak
- Share your bio and link to your website or other sources of information

- Post a link to your slides or handouts
- Answer questions after the session
- Point your audience to additional resources

After you deliver your speech, review tweets and posts to get useful feedback. Which lines got the most retweets and shares? What kinds of questions did you receive? Did the posts reflect listener enthusiasm (or did the audience notice that you weren't enthusiastic)? This is all material you can use to improve your skills.

Social media allows you connect on a more personal level. You may eventually meet those who you knew previously through social network connections alone. It's a fun idea to take and post photos of yourself with audience members you meet.

Want to keep that certain contact for a future interaction? Take a photo of the person and have it automatically stored

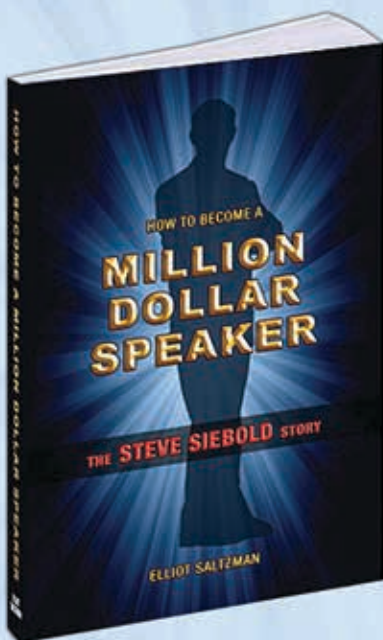
by using the Evernote mobile app on your phone. Later, you can search Evernote for the text on your nametags to find the contact. It's a useful feature that Evernote provides—all you'll need to do to find that photo again is recall the name of the conference where the photo was taken. It's just one more way in which social media can help open up a new world to you. **T**

**DENISE GRAVELINE** is a Washington, D.C.-based public speaking coach and communications consultant who writes the popular blog *The Eloquent Woman* ([eloquentwoman.blogspot.com](http://eloquentwoman.blogspot.com)) and helps clients with social-media strategies.



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*Jimmy Thai (in blue shirt and white sweater vest) served as a club mentor to the Frontline Leaders Toastmasters in Chula Vista, California. The club is sponsored by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.*



Jimmy Thai, DTM:

## From Nightmare to American Dream

BY JULIE BOS

**J**immy Thai's early years may be anything but typical, but his pursuit of a better life in the United States is a passion many can relate to.

His story began in Vietnam, where he spent his childhood and early teenage years during the healing period of a county wounded by decades of civil unrest and war. Desperate for a better future, he escaped to Thailand and ultimately came to America as a refugee in his early 20s.

Since then, his life has been dedicated to hard work and self-improvement. With success came a dedication to helping others, specifically Asian youths. Today, Thai is vice president of technology for Science Applications International Corporation. He works in the company's San Diego offices where he is the lead on a contract for San Diego International Airport's \$1 billion "Green Build" program, the largest construction project in the airport's history.

A member of Wordmaster Toastmasters in San Diego, Thai is also an expert in tsunami warning systems. In addition, as part of a panel of executives, he speaks to students at the Rady School of Management at the University of California, San Diego.

His life experience, education and 14 years in Toastmasters have been important aspects of his journey, and part of what

makes him the successful leader he is today. Thai has master's degrees in business administration and in electrical engineering from California State University. He earned the Distinguished Toastmaster award and advanced to the semifinals of the 2010 International Speech Contest.

### What motivated you to leave Vietnam?

The loss of a country, my parents' home and their business was nothing compared to the loss of freedom and opportunity to learn. That led to my forbidden journey for freedom, which claimed the life of my brother during one of my 15 escape attempts.

### How did that experience shape your character and your drive to succeed?

I was determined to study hard, to work harder and to become "somebody." I used to live with the guilt of a survivor, and nothing I accomplished was good enough for the price of freedom that my brother dearly paid. After three decades in this wonderful country, I still have the same drive—even after I became a vice president for a Fortune 500 company [from *Fortune* magazine's annual list of the top 500 U.S. companies, ranked by revenues].



### How did you decide on your career path?

During my first weekend in America, I went to the mall and was mesmerized by the automatic sliding doors at [what was then] a Pick 'n Save store. After walking back and forth through those doors more than 20 times, I knew I wanted to become an electrical engineer and work with sensors.

### You're also an expert in tsunami warning systems. How does this technology work?

Our company's tsunami warning systems measure the pressure change in the ocean's water column. When certain changes indicate the possible presence of a tsunami, a signal is sent through the water via an acoustic modem to a surface buoy, which then relays the signal via satellite to a processing facility on shore. From there, scientists determine if a tsunami warning or evacuation is in order.

**"I used to live with the guilt of a survivor, and nothing I accomplished was good enough for the price of freedom that my brother dearly paid."**

I was our company's first program manager to build the [tsunami warning system] prototype and deliver these lifesaving devices to international clients in Australia, Thailand, China, India, Chile and Russia. We've certainly made the Indian Ocean region a lot safer today than when it was struck by the 9.2-magnitude earthquake on December 26, 2004.

### How did it feel to reach the semifinals of the International Speech Contest?

When I first came to America, with no ability to speak or understand English, if you had told me that I would someday speak in a 2,000-seat arena, I would have asked for whatever you were drinking (smile). I truly am living the American dream.

### How do you describe the American dream?

To me, it is the ideology of a free society where any hard-working individual can be whatever he or she wants to be. I think people can accomplish everything they want in America with their brain, and help the less-fortunate people in the world with their heart.

The topic of the American dream is near and dear to my heart, and I've proudly spoken about it during my 14 years as a Toastmaster. I'm also collecting stories and writing a book called *Who Killed the American Dream—Stories of the Firm Believers*.

### Tell me about your current work with children and Asian students.

I admire America's former first lady Laura Bush, who said, "Our children are one-quarter of our population and 100 percent of our future." I love to speak on Science Day at elementary schools,

coach Science Olympians at middle schools and be a mentor for Toastmasters Youth Leadership programs in high school.

For Asian students, I've worked with organizations that run orphanages and anti-child-sex-trafficking operations. Last November, I brought eight pounds of candies back to Vietnam for the children of One Body Village [where at-risk children and survivors of human sex trafficking are given assistance], and I spent half an hour explaining what was inside Snickers and Almond Joy candy bars. I want to restore their faith in human decency—to let them know that people care enough to listen, to make them laugh and to educate them; that they are safe now and tomorrow will be okay.

### What do you enjoy most about Toastmasters?

I like helping others overcome a language barrier—either from the accent of a language or the "accent" of life. Right now, I'm helping a young engineer who came to America when she was 19 and put herself through college. For some reason, now—seven years later—she feels inferior to others and is no longer comfortable speaking English. I'm slowly building her confidence with my belief that "it's okay to speak with an accent ... just don't *think* with an accent."

### You speak Vietnamese and English fluently. How does that help you connect with an audience?

Because a growing number of Toastmasters are ESL (English as a Second Language) speakers, my decades of struggling to learn English and reduce my accent allows me to empathize with them. Every point I make, I have stories and lessons to share. These members tell me I inspire them to be more and to do more, because if I did it, they can too. It's gratifying to feel your audience start to believe they can achieve success.

### What cultural differences do you see between the East and the West?

People from both cultures share a universal desire: to be happy. The main difference is that people in the East seek happiness from within while those in the West tend to search for it externally.

### Please share one thing someone said that motivates you.

Dave Hebert, from my home club, Wordmaster Toastmasters, once said, "Life is a circle. Make it a perfect one."

### What advice can you give about overcoming adversity and maintaining a positive attitude?

Think about the less fortunate more, and think about your own happiness less. As a Toastmaster, you can be a voice for the voiceless. If you are unclear about your life's goal or purpose, remember this: Have fun, have faith and make a difference in the future. **T**

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**JULIE BOS** is a freelance writer for the Toastmaster magazine.



Engineer Mit Shah gives a speech at a meeting of the ArtICculators Toastmasters club in Milpitas, California.

# In Silicon Valley, Immigrants Toast Their Way to the Top

A tale of transformation as reported by a prominent U.S. national radio program.

BY HANSI LO WANG

**P**ublic speaking can be nerve-wracking whatever your native tongue. It can be especially difficult for immigrants who speak English as a second language.

In California's Silicon Valley, some immigrant tech workers strengthen their voices by joining groups like Toastmasters. At a recent meeting of the ArtICculators Toastmasters club in Milpitas, California, engineer Nidhi Agarwal confronted her fear of public speaking with laughter.

"Madam Toastmaster, fellow members and guests, have you laughed today?" she asked her audience, seated in rows of burgundy banquet chairs in a mirrored dance studio at the Indian Community Center. "I mean a real lung-squeezing, belly-shaking, eye-bulging kind of laugh!" she continued. "Is there anything better than a contagious giggle that you can't control?"

This was Agarwal's seventh speech since joining Toastmasters two years ago. You could see a slight tremble in her fingers, which was an improvement. Before, she says, you would also hear a tremor in her voice.

"I wasn't that comfortable," explains Agarwal, who was born in India and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2003. "You feel butterflies."

Those butterflies can be felt in Toastmasters clubs around the world. Here at this Silicon Valley club, members work on oratorical skills in a community of mostly immigrants from India and China.

## Learning How To Communicate

Past club president Avani Shah joined the club after marrying her engineer husband and moving from India to San Jose, California. When looking for her first job in the United States, Shah says, she needed more confidence, which she found in part by learning some of the quirks of American English through Toastmasters. "Here, people say, 'I'll tell on you.' People don't say, 'I'll tell about you,'" Shah explains as an example.

Aside from mastering American idioms, speaking well in public is also about finding the right attitude.

Henry Miller, a competitor in Toastmasters speech contests who was invited to a Toastmasters meeting as a guest speaker, says the club provides an ideal environment for overcoming any anxieties. "Here, you can come and you do well, we clap. You don't do very well, we still clap!" he explains with a hearty laugh.

Born and raised in Trinidad, Miller says that kind of encouragement is just what many immigrant tech workers need in the Silicon Valley. "They know exactly what they want to say. They know their products. They know their jobs very well," he says. "But sometimes, just to communicate their ideas, that's where they fall down."

## Tackling The Inner Critic

Club organizers add that practicing at weekly meetings can not only boost confidence levels, but also helps workers land job promotions.

"If you cannot communicate well to your superiors or to the CEO or whoever

is looking at you, they will not figure out whether you are smart enough," says Sunil Tomar, who cofounded the ArtICculators Toastmasters club in 2003. "It's unfortunate, but that's a fact!"

Tomar, an entrepreneur who left India for the U.S. in 1987 and now lives in Fremont, California, remembers shivering on stage when he gave his first speech. He says the key is to tackle your inner critic head-on. "Go out there and say, 'I don't care! I'm going to speak! And that's the way I'm going to get better,'" he says.

And in case members need any extra incentive, meetings end with an award ceremony complete with impromptu drumrolls of stomping feet that dissolve into warm applause as each winning speaker is announced.

After hearing her name, Agarwal rushed forward to collect a navy blue ribbon embossed with "MOST IMPROVED" in silver lettering for her speech on laughter. "I'm improving every time I'm presenting," she says with a chuckle after the ceremony. "That is a good thing!"

And after more Toastmasters speeches, she says she hopes it will only get better **T**

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# What They Don't Teach You in School

These life lessons will help you shine in business.

BY HARVEY MACKAY



As many college graduates are scrambling to find jobs, one of the most important things for the graduate to understand is that you're in school all your life. In fact, your real education is just beginning.

I'd like to pass on a few lessons, which weren't necessarily covered in school. If you've been out of school for a few years—or many years—this advice is still for you; consider it a refresher course.

■ **Develop relationships and keep networking.** If I had to name the single

## Nothing is more important than a good reputation in building a successful career or business.

characteristic shared by all the truly successful people I've met over a lifetime, I'd say it is the ability to create and nurture a network of contacts. Start strengthening your relationships now, so they'll be in place when you really need them later. In the classroom it was mostly about your individual performance. Success in real life will require relationships. Who you know determines how effectively you can apply what you know. So stay in touch.

■ **Find advisors and mentors.** Advisors will not be assigned to you, as in school. You should actively seek your own mentors. And remember, mentors change over a lifetime. Start connecting with people you respect who can help you get a leg up in each aspect of your life, personal and professional. Make it as easy and convenient as possible for them to talk with you, and always look for ways to contribute to their success, too.

■ **Build your reputation.** Nothing is more important than a good reputation in build-

ing a successful career or business. If you don't have a positive reputation, it will be difficult to be successful. All it takes is one foolish act to destroy a reputation.

■ **Set goals.** Ask any winner what their keys to success are, and you will hear four consistent messages: vision, determination, persistence and setting goals. If you don't set goals to determine where you're going, how will you know when you get there? Goals give you more than a reason to get up in the morning; they are an incentive

to keep you going all day. Most important, goals need to be measurable, identifiable, attainable, specific and in writing.

■ **Get along with people.** Ask recruiters from various companies to name the number one skill necessary for new hires, and many of them will say it's the ability to get along with people. Co-workers share office space, facilities, break rooms, refrigerators and coffee pots. They arrive together, take breaks together, eat lunch together and meet to solve problems together. All this closeness and familiarity can wear thin at times. Everyone shares responsibility for making the company work, run smoothly and stay profitable.

■ **Be happy.** We are all responsible for our own happiness. Don't waste time and energy being unhappy. When people aren't happy doing what they do, they don't do it as well. Life will always be filled with challenges and opportunities. Both are best faced with a positive attitude.

■ **Smile.** A smile should be standard equipment for all people. I learned years ago that one of the most powerful things you can do to have influence over others is to smile at them. Everything seems much easier with a smile.

■ **Sense of humor.** I'm a firm believer in using humor—not necessarily jokes. A good sense of humor helps us overlook the unbecoming, understand the unconventional, tolerate the unpleasant, overcome the unexpected and outlast the unbearable. There are plenty of times to be serious, but I believe that keeping things light and comfortable encourages better teamwork.

■ **Be yourself.** We all have areas that need a little work, but accepting who we are and making the most of our good points will take us much farther than trying to be someone we aren't. Be content with your abilities and comfortable enough in your own skin to trust your gut.

■ **Volunteer.** It might be hard to do a lot of volunteer work at first, but people who help other people on a regular basis have a healthier outlook on life. They are more inclined to be go-getters and consistently report being happier. Volunteering is good for everyone. **T**

**Mackay's Moral:** *The purpose of education is not to teach youth to make a living, but to make a life.*

Reprinted with permission from nationally syndicated columnist **HARVEY MACKAY**, a former Toastmaster and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive* as well as many other books.





# Lifelong Learning

Why watch TV when you can paint bananas?

BY JOHN CADLEY

Now that I'm retired I can do anything I want, and boy, do I have some exciting options, thanks to a catalog that came in today's mail. It's from an organization that wants to help me "discover life after 50." I sure do appreciate that (even though at 68 I already know there's life after 50. If I didn't, I'd be dead—and dead people don't have arthritis, cataracts, liver spots, hearing loss and a hip replacement). But I'm not going to quibble, not when this organization is offering me so many wonderful courses to enrich my golden years.

They all sound so good, I don't know which one to take. Like *Step by Step Painting: Floral and Fruit Still Life*. It's never been my life's ambition to paint begonias and bananas but I'm intrigued by the course description. It says "no drawing skills are necessary." It also says by the end of the class I'll have a "beautiful finished painting." I'd like to see how someone with no drawing skills can create a beautiful finished painting. My sense is that when I'm done, the instructor will pat me on the head and say, "It's so beautiful that you finished."

I can also learn to play the piano. Five different levels for beginners are offered. After the first two levels I would think you'd stop being a beginner, but then I remember this is for older folks. Maybe in level one and two they just teach you how to sit down on the piano bench without hurting yourself.

Or I can study Rumi, the Sufi poet. This involves "exploring his spiritual legacy," which is summed up in a quotation from his work: *Inside your body is a priceless treasure, a gift from the eternally generous One. Look for the gift inside you.* Not sure about this one. I've had so many X-rays and MRIs in the last few years that if a priceless treasure were inside me they would have found it by now.

Then there's a course called *Writers: Welcome the Muse!* I was a professional writer for 33 years and the Muse never showed up once. Maybe it's because I was only writing ad copy and she wanted to inspire serious authors who were writing real literature

like *Fifty Shades of Grey*. So yeah, I'd love to welcome the Muse—with words that can't be printed in a family magazine.

On the other hand, if I sign up for this course I can "expect to experience Aha! moments of clarity in the creative writing process." That would be nice. I only had one of those in my entire writing career. It was when I was up against a deadline and my computer wouldn't work. I put in a frantic phone call to the IT department and the guy came, looked under my desk, and said, "It's not plugged in." Aha!

I could also broaden my historical knowledge by taking *The American Revolution for Beginners*, but that would be admitting my complete ignorance of the American Revolution. Maybe not.

Wait a minute! Here's one: *Jewish Comedy: From Shtetl to Showbiz*. I'll learn about the great Jewish comics like Milton Berle, the Marx Brothers and Woody Allen. Maybe I'll even pick up a few one-liners to use at parties. I already make people laugh hilariously. Now it can be intentional.

They offer lots of yoga classes, too. Yoga is good. It keeps you relaxed, nimble and flexible. That would be nice for a guy who's usually stiff and sore. Or course, a Jacuzzi has the same effect and I can have a beer while I'm sitting there. I don't think there's any beer in yoga.

With all these choices, I know one course I *won't* be taking: *Tales of the Afterlife: Fantasy or Reality?* Whoa, Nelly! I got this catalog to discover life after 50. Who said anything about life after death? At my age, the less said about that particular subject the better—especially when I read the course description: "Sharing one's own experiences will be encouraged." The only people who experience the afterlife are *not alive*, and I have no desire to sit in a classroom full of dead people. They ask too many questions. ■

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



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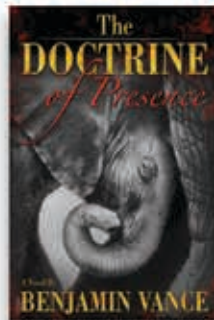
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