

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | APRIL 2017

# TOASTMASTER®

**Meet Google's  
Chief Evangelist:**

**Gopi Kallayil, ACS**

**When Bad Things  
Happen to Good Clubs**

**5 Myths About  
Professional Speaking**

# Are You Upholding Your Club's Values?



In a world where our rights, wants and needs seem to dominate modern society, the pursuit of “What’s in it for me?” has almost become the dominating factor. The danger in only considering ourselves is that it inevitably results in a lack of respect and courtesy for others. This is hardly conducive to fostering an atmosphere of better listening, thinking and speaking.

Our Toastmasters clubs should be a safe haven for everyone to develop their skills. Engaging in an open exchange of ideas, sharing knowledge and mentoring others are the cornerstones of our organization, culminating in effective evaluations—the keystone of the Toastmasters program. With this in mind, the seventh commitment to the Toastmaster’s Promise is more important than ever: *“To treat my fellow members and our guests with respect and courtesy.”*

What does that mean in practical terms? Does your club have a welcoming atmosphere in which all members and guests are encouraged to fully participate? Are diverse opinions respectfully considered? Does the club leader regularly report to members on club progress in meeting members’ goals? If you were visiting a club for the first time, what would be your first impression? Would you join? Are small cliques a part of the club? Do one or two dominating personalities overshadow open discussion and debate?

## Harmony, mutual respect and courtesy are essential elements of any successful club.

Obviously, as an individual, it is often difficult to objectively answer these questions, but try this tried-and-tested method of gauging a collective response. “Moments of Truth” is a resource available on the Toastmasters website as a free download, and I urge every club to conduct the self-assessment it offers. Harmony, mutual respect and courtesy are essential elements of any successful club, and every member is responsible for ensuring that these values are upheld.

In my recent visits to districts around the globe, I have been impressed by the goodwill, respect and courtesy displayed by so many members of diverse cultures. Every member has a duty to help ensure that these values continue to be at the forefront of their club’s mantra. It is only too easy to take such values for granted. However, it only takes one discordant voice to undo what in many cases has taken years of dedication to achieve.

As we stride toward the conclusion of this Toastmasters program year, let us all take time to treat our fellow members and guests with respect and courtesy by always endeavoring to *“Remember the Member.”*

**MIKE STORKEY, DTM**  
International President

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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Connecting with other members is an important part of the club experience. These clubs found ways to have fun in different settings.



Members of Coimbatore Toastmasters club and their families spend an afternoon with laughter, food and activities in Pollachi, a town in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu state, India.



Berkhamsted Speakers club members enjoy a sunny day while promoting Toastmasters at the Berkhamsted Summer Fete in England.



ALE HK Toastmasters club members participate in a team-building hike to the hexagonal rock columns near the High Island Reservoir in Sai Kung, Hong Kong.



**Send your fun club photos to [photos@toastmasters.org](mailto:photos@toastmasters.org).** Include a description and your club name, number and location. Photos must be in jpeg format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) or 1 MB (megabyte). Out-of-focus images cannot be accepted. It is not necessary to include the Toastmaster magazine or other branded materials in your photos, but if Toastmasters materials are displayed, they must reflect the current brand.

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**COVER:** Photo of Gopi Kallayil by Carson Wagonlit.

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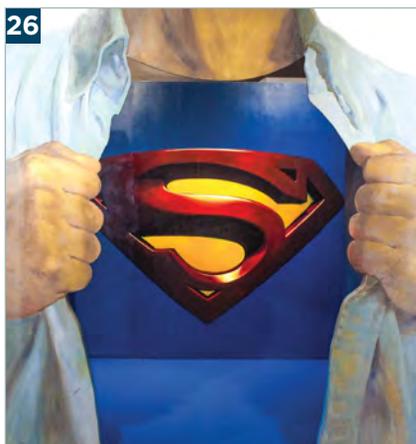


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## ▶ MEMBER MOMENT



Michelle Held

## From Behind the Screen to the Stage

BY SHANNON DEWEY

After discovering a local Toastmasters club in 2014, digital marketing guru Michelle Held spent months exploring the club's website and Facebook page before she decided to join.

Held, CC, CL, admittedly had trouble maintaining eye contact with people. Speaking onstage was a distant hope for her, but after joining Professionally Speaking Toastmasters in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, that hope turned into reality.

Already an established author and online marketing consultant, Held can now add speaker to her resume. In addition to running her own digital marketing company, she also conducts seminars and training sessions on social media and web technology topics and is a contributor for Entrepreneur.com.

### You weren't always in digital marketing—how did you get your start?

I graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and worked as a project engineer until I started to learn about databases for project management in the '90s. As their access went online, so did I. I learned to program in a few languages that could marry databases to the internet.

I then founded a website programming company that specialized in organizing data online. When startups Yahoo and Google began to grow, my company evolved into search engine optimization specialists for websites with database backends.

Currently I own MetroNY, LLC, a digital marketing agency that consults with companies to improve online marketing strategy.

### How has Toastmasters helped you?

Toastmasters helped me improve my personal branding, and as a result, my company attracts larger clients. My eye contact during conversation has improved enormously. This makes a better first impression and helps form a solid personal connection.

I also run meetings more effectively, and I am observant and appreciative of those who run meetings well. One nonprofit I'm involved with has requested that I run their meeting when the president is absent because the members like the Toastmasters timing and style that I apply to keep things moving.

Moderators are the unsung heroes of any multi-speaker conference. Their job is incredibly important, yet they get little recognition. At a few conferences, I am both a moderator for others as well as a speaker. It can be a challenge to keep a session on track, and Toastmasters has prepared me for that job.

### Where do you speak and who is your audience?

Before joining Toastmasters, I never even received responses from speaking engagement applications. Now I speak at business conferences and seminars, and I conduct live webinars on topics of online marketing—especially social media strategy.

I talk at tech conferences, which is always a challenge because you are never sure what level the audience is at until you meet them. The feedback I receive from the wonderful members of the Professionally Speaking club helps me get the messaging right, and they've taught me quite a bit about altering the presentation for different audiences.

### Tell us about your blogs and vlogs.

I am both a blogger on my company website and a vlogger for Entrepreneur Network's video channel. The word "blog" is a truncation of the word "weblog." The word "vlog" is a combination of "video" and "blog."

I started vlogging for Entrepreneur Network last year. Although I was given a list of ideal topics, I am free to create content on anything I choose, similar to the way a Toastmaster chooses the topic they wish to talk about while still following a manual.

I'm also a contributing author for Entrepreneur.com, where I give additional lessons that complement the video content.

### Do you have any digital marketing tips for clubs?

Websites are what business cards were 40 years ago; they are an absolute necessity. Facebook is the largest social network in the world with the widest age range using it. The best part is that it is free to use! A club should be using both Facebook and their websites to communicate with stakeholders.

Find out more about Michelle Held at [www.metroyny.com](http://www.metroyny.com).

Shannon Dewey is the digital content editor for Toastmaster magazine.

▶ **SNAPSHOT** 



Members of two Anadarko Petroleum corporate clubs pose at one of the company's oil and gas facilities in Colorado. Anadarko has three clubs: at the corporate headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas; in Denver, Colorado; and in Platteville, Colorado. Matt Wells, of the Wattenberg Toastmasters Producing Excellence club in Platteville, says, "What makes our clubs unique is that ... many of our members are the boots on the ground, making all of our 7,000-plus wells run. Although we are more blue collar than most club members, we still put a huge emphasis on development and we have found Toastmasters to be an excellent way to do so."

▶ **NEWS FROM TI** 

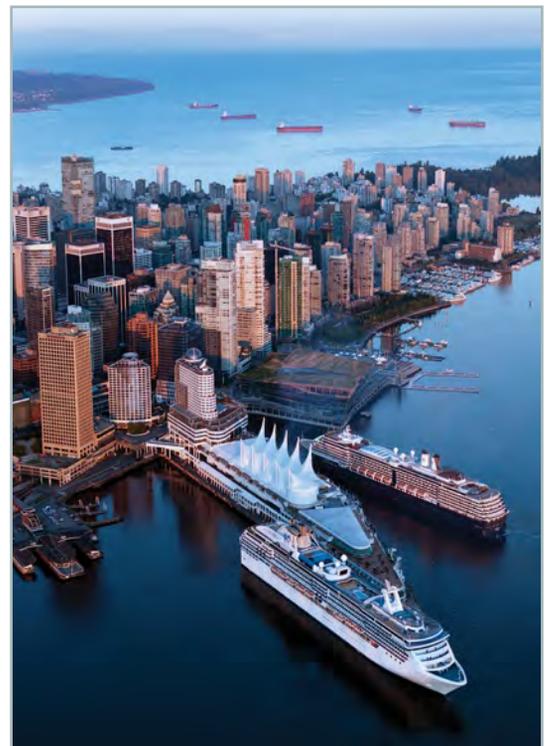
## Register for the 2017 International Convention

Registration is now open for the 2017 International Convention. Save the date and register early. The annual event, now in its 86th year, takes place August 23–26 at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. If you are traveling internationally and require a Letter of Invitation to obtain a visa, contact [conventionregistration@toastmasters.org](mailto:conventionregistration@toastmasters.org).

If you want to keep the fun going after the convention, join fellow Toastmasters August 25–September 3 for a relaxing seven-night post-convention cruise on the Celebrity Cruise Line, traveling from Vancouver to Alaska. Learn more at [www.toastmasters.org/Convention](http://www.toastmasters.org/Convention).

### About Vancouver

Named the top destination in Canada in TripAdvisor's 2016 Travelers' Choice awards, Vancouver is a beautiful coastal city located in the southwest part of Canada. Enjoy world-class shopping, gourmet meals, live entertainment, along with beautiful sights and attractions in one of the most walkable cities in the world. You can travel via Vancouver's SkyTrain, bus or ferry systems, but who wouldn't want to just stroll and take in the city's scenic views, mild climate and friendly people? Learn more at [www.tourismvancouver.com](http://www.tourismvancouver.com).



▶ MEET MY MENTOR



# Anne Machalek, DTM

BY MARY NESFIELD

Sally Rash first met Anne Machalek in 2007, when they worked together on a volunteer committee for a charitable organization. They also belonged to the same fitness center. Anne had been a member of the Siuslaw Tale Spinners club in Florence, Oregon, since 2004, and frequently spoke to Sally about Toastmasters.

Sally says talking to people was never a problem for her. “Boy, can I *talk!* But I wanted to learn to *speak to inspire.*” Sally joined Anne’s club in 2011, and Anne began mentoring her. “In the club I experienced the difference between *talking* and *speaking.*” says Sally, CC, CL. And then, in 2015, she achieved something that she never expected: Her book *Sally’s Silly Small Step System* was published.

### To what do you attribute your success?

My book would not have come to life without Anne. When I delivered my first three speeches, she listened closely, all the time building my confidence with her exceptional, constructive evaluations—it takes a real knack to get a speaker to take in all the advice given.

### Did you always want to write?

No! Over the years, folks laughed when I told them about my small-step approach to doing things. But I gave a speech on that topic—the small-step approach—for Project 10, “Inspire Your Audience,” in the *Competent Communication* manual and then delivered it again at the club’s International Speech Contest.



Sally Rash (left) and Anne Machalek

Then I delivered it at the area and division contests and Anne convinced me to put the words into a book.

### How did her feedback help you?

Anne’s feedback on having an attention-getting opening and closing for speeches also translated into my writing. And I found that listening to my editor as she worked on my book was like paying attention to Toastmasters evaluations. It was an experience of a lifetime for this 75-year-old woman, but my greatest reward is having become friends with Anne.

Mary Nesfield is the associate editor for *Toastmaster magazine*.

### NOMINATE YOUR MARVELOUS MENTOR!

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

▶ PROMOTE THE BRAND



# 2016 Video Brand Contest



The MEF Toastmasters club of Penang, Malaysia, is the December winner of the 2016 Video Brand Contest.

Toastmasters clubs from all over the world participated in the 2016 Video Brand Contest to promote their clubs and

show excitement for the Toastmasters brand. For a chance to win special prizes, clubs shared footage of meetings, member testimonials and more.

Below is a partial list of the monthly winners. To see all winning videos, log in at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine) and view them in the April issue of the online magazine. This year’s contest runs through December 31, 2017. To participate, send your club video to [brand@toastmasters.org](mailto:brand@toastmasters.org).

- 1 **Chamber Toastmasters club**  
Rochester, Minnesota—January
- 2 **Toastmasters Sardinero**  
Cantabria, Spain—February
- 3 **North Metro Toastmasters**  
Kennesaw, Georgia—October
- 4 **Stenden Toastmasters**  
Leeuwarden, Netherlands—November
- 5 **MEF Toastmasters club**  
Penang, Malaysia—December

## ▶ VISITING A CLUB WHILE TRAVELING



# A Cultural Interchange

Vanneca Phelps (center, holding magazine), ACB, CL, from Lompoc, California, poses with members of the Pearl of the Gulf Toastmasters club in Salmya, Kuwait. Phelps is a United States Department of Defense government employee and was in Kuwait on business. Pearl of the Gulf club, made up of professional Kuwaiti businesswomen, was having an open meeting the day Phelps attended. “What a joy these ladies were and what a fun, festive cultural interchange we shared on my visit,” Phelps says. “This meeting was a memorable way to end 2016 and bring in 2017.”



## ▶ NEWS FROM TI

# Explore the Pathways Learning Experience Webpage

Do you want to learn more about Pathways? The Pathways learning experience webpage is a great place to start. It has a wealth of information about the new Toastmasters education program, as well as resources such as videos, project excerpts and answers to a wide range of questions.

The learning experience launched in February with a three-district program pilot. The members of District 57 in Northern California were the first ones to participate. District 27 in the Washington, D.C., area followed in March, and District 51 in Malaysia was scheduled to start in April.

The aim of the pilot is to ensure a seamless experience—for example, that members don't have any problems ordering their educational materials, that all materials (either online or in print) are delivered properly, and that the Pathways assessment helps members determine the best path to embark on. Hear what District 57 members are saying about Pathways at [www.toastmasters.org/PathwaysTestimonials](http://www.toastmasters.org/PathwaysTestimonials).

### [toastmasters.org/PathwaysTestimonials](http://www.toastmasters.org/PathwaysTestimonials).

The learning experience will roll out to Toastmasters regions in phases throughout the year, starting with Region 14 in the May–July time frame.

The updated webpage outlines how the new program works and what it looks like.

how members were involved in the process and why Pathways is valuable to you.

The webpage also highlights the innovative features of Base Camp (the Pathways learning management system), including interactive activities and the chance to earn digital badges. In addition, you can sample the new Ice Breaker—the first project every member does in Pathways.

Elsewhere on the site is a section about educational awards in Pathways and one about volunteer members and the crucial roles they have played in the development and launch of the learning experience. An FAQ section offers answers to a long list of questions, including ones related to Base Camp, the educational structure of paths and projects, the costs associated with Pathways, and how the Distinguished Club Program will work in the program.

Beef up your knowledge about Pathways, and learn why this enhanced education program is so exciting, by visiting [www.toastmasters.org/Pathways](http://www.toastmasters.org/Pathways).



It features a series of short, informative videos that share the story of Pathways: what it is, why it was created, how it was developed,



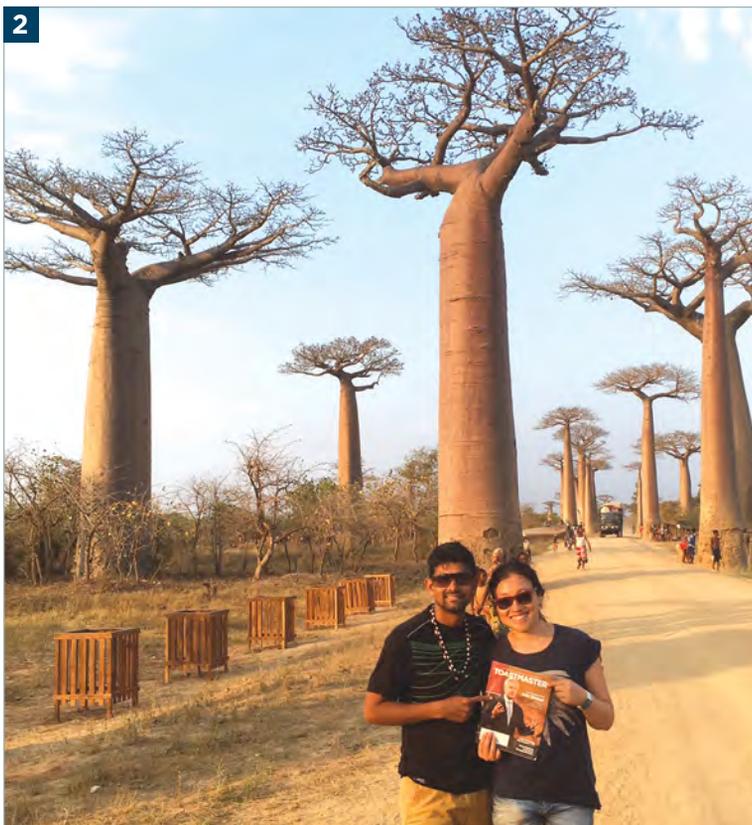
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**1 | MANISHA HITESH SHAH, CC, ALB**, from Chennai, India, sits at the bank of one of the longest rivers in Asia, the Indus.

**2 | YINGQI SHEN, CC,** (right) from China, and **SURAMOWLI BANDREDDI**, from India, visit the Avenue of the Baobabs in Madagascar.

**3 | JOVITO E. MAGONCIA, CC, ALB**, from Taguig City, Metro Manila, Philippines, goes on a zipline adventure with his magazine at Eden Nature Park in Davao City, Philippines.

**4 | JULIE ARNOLD, ACB, ALB**, from Marietta, Georgia, viewed mountain peaks in Iran and Turkey while in the Soran Valley in Kurdistan, Iraq.



2



3



4



**View more photos on** Toastmasters International Official Fan Page on Facebook.



**PICTURE YOURSELF HERE!** Pose with the *Toastmaster* magazine during your travels and submit your photos for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue. Visit [www.toastmasters.org/Submissions](http://www.toastmasters.org/Submissions). Bon voyage!

# The Best Coaching Ever

How 3 members lifted me beyond my own expectations.

BY RONALD CHAPMAN, AS

It was January 1995 and I had just delivered my Ice Breaker at the Mid-day Madness club in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My evaluator, Lance Johnson, had demonstrated excellent ability the few times I'd seen him deliver feedback. Little did I know he was about to give me one of the three best coaching lessons I would ever receive in Toastmasters.

"Listen Ron," he began, "you're already a pretty good speaker, and you probably have a lot of upside potential. But you'll only achieve it if every time you speak you push yourself outside your comfort zone. Once you learn the ropes, you'll no longer have to push yourself. And it will be your loss."

Somehow Lance's guidance struck home. I cast myself into learning in every way I could. I entered speech contests to stretch my confidence. Along the way I learned to use the Toastmasters stage as an incubator and laboratory, ultimately becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster in 2000. In 2004, I received the second of those invaluable coaching lessons. I had failed in my first attempt at becoming an Accredited Speaker, mostly because I had done nothing to distinguish myself. In my second attempt, I struggled with whether to present in accord with my heart, or in a fashion expected by the audience. Merv Jersak, DTM, told me, "Ron, the only answer is to be true to *yourself*."

At the Toastmasters regional conference in Memphis in 2005, Merv's wisdom was affirmed when, in my signature style, I used a long-format approach that allowed me to engage dramatically with the audience. The speech secured me the Accredited Speaker title.

After relocating to Greenville, South Carolina, and then to Atlanta, Georgia, I struggled to find the next level of mastery. That began to change when I found the best coaching club I'd ever seen in Toastmasters. Speakers Roundtable is an advanced club in Atlanta catering to



Ronald Chapman

professionals and aspiring speakers. Their coaching is just plain magical. The feedback is kind, but members care enough to really push each other.

It was through my relationship with Netania Walker, DTM, that I experienced the third instance of the best coaching to ever come my way. As the program quality director for District 44, she asked me to deliver a keynote at the Toastmasters Leadership Institute.

**Nothing of significance can be borne without major discomfort and disruption.**

In a planning and coaching session, Netania teamed up with Linda Dyson, CC, one of the education chairs. After hearing my keynote plan, they began to work me over ... and I do mean *work me over*. They knew I had talent in professional leadership development, but they weren't seeing it in my content. So they challenged me for three hours. They were relentless. Finally, the keynote's content emerged.

In a matter of days I had codified the heart of the leadership development practice I had been delivering for many years. It even came with a name: The Ascending Path of Becoming the Leader. And in June 2016, I delivered what I believe to be the best keynote of my career. The feedback told me I had hit a mark I'd never before achieved.

Here's the humbling part. Despite my skills and accomplishments, I could not call myself up to the next level. I needed coaching to bring forth my best. That was my third lesson. I could not reach the next level on my own.

Here's the punch line: Nothing of significance can be borne without major discomfort and disruption. If we stay in our comfort zone, greatness cannot come to pass. Of course, we must do it for ourselves, but we need not do it alone. ■

**RONALD CHAPMAN, DTM, AS**, is a 22-year Toastmaster and a member of Speakers Roundtable Advanced Club in Atlanta, Georgia. Find out more at [RonaldChapman.com](http://RonaldChapman.com). Follow his blogging and online content at [SeeingTrue.com](http://SeeingTrue.com).

# Member Achievements

Four Toastmasters share their fears, challenges, dreams and successes.

## Semora Johns Smith, ACB, CL

M Street Verbalizers club • Washington, D.C.



Semora Johns Smith

### Moving Beyond Fear

After turning 40, I realized I'd lived my whole life in fear. I was afraid because I grew up without a father. I was scared to ask important questions about who I was, and I feared I would never be good enough because I'd been called an illegitimate child. I found my strength from people who stepped into my life and showed me love. I got good grades, was a great singer and dancer, won several pageant crowns, became a cheerleader for the National Basketball Association, and was the first person in my family to receive a college degree. It made me feel accomplished, but deep within I was hiding the way I really felt about myself. I saw a lot of pain and dysfunction growing up, and it lingered throughout my life, even during triumphant times. Even though I had the love of a strong mother and grandmother, I longed to know what it meant to be loved by a man. The pain of growing up without a caring male figure was at the core of every decision I made, so I accepted being in abusive relationships. I used to think the best way to end this pattern was to end my life. Then I realized that my silence was feeding the fear, pain and abuse.

I joined Toastmasters during the most difficult time in my life and it gave me a voice to tell my story, without fear or shame. Now I'm using that voice to save lives and be the best example I can be for my daughters, D'Jenne and Demi. I'm wearing the best crown ever as "Queen Mom." Recently, I advanced to the semifinals of the 2016 International Speech Contest, held in Washington D.C. It was a moment I will cherish. I got there by relinquishing my fears and telling *my* story. Thank you Toastmasters!



Thato (left) receives the Golden Raspberry award from Maputo Toastmasters' Vice President Education Rajiv Vassanji, CC.

## Thato Masire, CC

Gaborone Toastmasters • Gaborone, Botswana



### Challenge Completed in Mozambique

Last year, I was challenged by my club's president, Tiro Molebatsi, CC, to participate in Toastmasters when traveling abroad for extended stretches. But during my first two international visits I was unable to make any progress due to logistical and scheduling obstacles. However, recently, while visiting Mozambique, I participated in the Maputo Toastmasters club. And during my first meeting, I jumped into the deep end and boldly took on the role of Toastmaster of the Day. At the second meeting I gave a speech about starting my Advanced Communicators Bronze journey in a country other than my own.

During the Maputo Toastmasters meetings, I experienced the hospitality, warmth and support of Mozambicans. One of the highlights of my experience there was getting the Golden Raspberry award, which is given at the end of each Maputo Toastmasters meeting to the speaker with the most "ums." I found this to be a unique, friendly and jocular way of alerting me to pay special attention to my "ums" and other speech hesitations.

I appreciate Tiro's challenge, as it enabled me to have a Toastmasters experience in a land different than mine. The energy, enthusiasm, support and resourcefulness of members is why I look forward to Toastmasters meetings, no matter where they take place—at home or abroad. I welcome more challenges that will facilitate growth and provide me with an even richer Toastmasters experience.

## Valsakumar Menon, DTM

Dubai Toastmasters club • Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Valsakumar Menon

### I Achieved My Secret Dream

In 2002, I was 35 years old and doing well professionally as a senior manager with a reputed organization in Dubai. But I faced a big challenge: I could not muster the courage to speak to a group of people. When it came to one-on-one conversations or speaking to a group of friends, I had no issue. But put me in front of three people I didn't know and I would become tongue-tied, forgetting everything I had prepared.

But I was in awe of people who could do that. So I nurtured this secret dream to be a speaker and trainer—a dream I thought would never come true.

In those days, a gentleman would occasionally come to our organization and deliver coaching and education sessions. One day I mustered the courage to ask him, "Sir, how can I improve my speaking skills?" In response he simply said, "Join Toastmasters." That's when the magic of Toastmasters began in my life.

I have been a member of the Dubai Toastmasters club for the last 14 years, and my life has completely changed. Going from someone who couldn't utter two words in front of an audience to someone who speaks for a living, I have realized my dream of being a speaker, trainer and entrepreneur.

My journey was not easy at first. But the encouragement, support and motivation I drew from club members helped me come to terms with my fear.

I could never thank Ralph C. Smedley enough for creating Toastmasters. I do my bit to promote Toastmasters within the community so that more people can benefit from its magic. We also bring the program to children through our Gavel clubs and Youth Leadership programs.

Toastmasters has given me so much. I am better-equipped to cope with life's ups and downs. In short, the program has helped to bring out a better version of me and I am eternally grateful.



Subhashini (center) stands with four of her high-ranking students in Oman.

## Subhashini Sumanasekara, ACB, ALB

Sri Lankan School Muscat  
Toastmasters • Muscat, Oman



### For the Betterment of All

I am the head of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) department at Sri Lankan School Muscat, in Oman, and I teach ICT for Edexcel International GCSE exam classes. The Edexcel International GCSEs are academic qualification courses studied in over 55 countries, with 100,000 learners all over the world.

For the first time in our school's history, four of our students became top achievers, by ranking in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth places in the world for Edexcel ICT. One student also achieved the highest marks in Oman in the ICT section of the exams in May 2016.

For this immense success, I used many of the strategies I practice in Toastmasters. After noticing that many students lose marks due to poor communication skills, I brought in a team of Toastmasters to help teach my students. One of our goals was to enhance the students' writing abilities so they could achieve high marks for the exam essay questions. We also conducted Table Topics related to ICT subject matters to help the students develop critical thinking skills. I incorporated round-robin sessions to develop their quick response, creativity and listening skills. My students' achievements indicate that our methods work.

I have also accomplished many personal goals within the Sri Lankan School Muscat Toastmasters club, of which I've been a member for the past two years. I've won many speech contests and, as club president, I've helped my club earn Distinguished status for the first time last year.

Fellow Toastmasters, the lessons and skills we learn in Toastmasters aren't restricted only to club meetings. Instead, let us use these skills in our day-to-day lives and apply them for the betterment of all.

Do you have a Toastmasters success story you'd like to share about yourself or another member? Write it in 300 words or less and send with a high-resolution photo to [submissions@toastmasters.org](mailto:submissions@toastmasters.org).

# When **BAD THINGS** Happen to *Good Clubs*

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM

How to recognize basic membership problems and solve them.

*A*ll clubs experience bumps and bruises over time. They are prone to the effects of economics and egos, logistics and fluctuations in quality. Over time, the membership of most clubs waxes and wanes. Yet some clubs experience particularly tough times. The question arises: What to do when bad things happen to good clubs?

## **Location, Location, Location**

About 10 years ago, AT&T clubs throughout North America were suddenly faced with a loss of onsite meeting space because of a policy change. A combination of communication, leadership and public relations strategies resulted in a recommitment to providing secure meeting space for these clubs.

So how stable is your meeting location? Are you regularly in touch with your landlord or site contact? Nurture that relationship in good times to protect yourself from changes in policy or sentiment toward your club. Demonstrate your club's value to your host organization's human resources department and upper management. Remind them that great things are happening in the club and that the club adds value to their organization, neighborhood and community. You may be able to avert disasters related to logistical challenges with a little planning and communication.

Here are a few difficulties your club might face:

- ▶ You lose your primary location (sometimes on short notice).
- ▶ You're forced out of your regular meeting room and possibly downgraded to a less popular location.
- ▶ Your members might be forced to register, in advance, for each meeting as a result of security concerns.
- ▶ Your company (a primary source of members) relocates, downsizes or closes— stripping your club of talent and mass.
- ▶ Your club becomes too big, outgrowing its location or delaying the growth of some members wishing for more opportunities to participate.

**Solution:** *Have a backup or emergency plan in case, on short notice, your site is unavailable for one or more meetings.*

## **Ego, Ergo They Go**

Sometimes strong personalities within a club will lead to attrition of members over time. Even healthy clubs lose members when



a particular member's dominant personality or overriding style drowns out other members' voices. And don't think it's only the club president who can have this effect.

I've been in a club where an overaggressive multilevel marketer used the club as a platform for growing her business. This led to sales speeches, unwanted sales phone calls and emails. Thus, the club environment was poisoned for many members. When club leaders were slow to address it, several members quietly left. Only later did the club realize why it was losing members.

One club I visited was highly politicized. It had developed a political agenda based on local and national parties and propositions. Visitors soon realized this club was far from neutral in terms of its political leanings. Guests either fell in line or felt the wrath of members who weren't shy about espousing their prevailing beliefs and attempting to persuade visitors and new members. As a result, this club's membership remained constant; there was little growth. Only its true believers felt comfortable.

**Solution:** *With the exception of some clearly designated specialty clubs, Toastmasters clubs should be open to people of all races, religions and orientations—inclusivity is the key. Whether through speeches or Table Topics, members and guests should not feel the need to adhere to others' belief systems or politics. Nor should they be sales targets. Club leaders should make regular announcements to address this issue and should discuss the importance of evaluating a speech's writing and delivery—not necessarily its content.*

### **A Leader Runs Through It**

Bad things can happen as a result of leadership challenges. On occasion, a club will suffer from an overbearing immediate past president who is reluctant to let go of a club's culture or allow new leaders to modify its structure or operation.

I've seen specialty clubs, whose officers are elected for one year at a time, re-elect their president for a second year. Members

will tolerate a leader they're not enamored with for one term, but two consecutive terms is more than many will endure. Without fanfare they will withdraw or transfer their membership. I've always felt the strength of a club comes from the diversity of its members—their styles, thoughts, opinions and skills, and the rotation of leaders each term. Too much of any one member may inhibit others from expressing their excellence.

Sometimes a power struggle or battle of styles will occur between officers. When it goes public it can divide the club; some people side with one officer while other members support the opposition. Polarizing members with “political” friction leads to fissures and fractures of the club's cohesiveness. This is definitely not a recipe for club excellence!

On occasion a club leader will browbeat members with rules. Occasionally these club leaders can be so dogmatic that their entire focus is on the letter of the law and they miss the spirit behind the law. They espouse rigid rules—often not official Toastmasters rules—at every opportunity, neglecting the focus that Toastmasters really encourages personal growth and learning in a safe environment.

Sometimes over-ambitious club members and leaders, in their zeal to excel in the Distinguished Club Program, focus on empire building and amassing points, to the detriment of human relations. When everything is quantified instead of humanized, a coldness pervades the Toastmasters experience.

**Solution:** *True leaders are uniters, not dividers. Be sure to elect leaders who further the purpose of the club, its members and Toastmasters International. True leaders recognize that the core of every club is its people.*

### The Long Decline

Some clubs suffer from the cumulative effects of many small decisions, each causing a slight decline in quality. Regarded individually, each choice or practice may seem inconsequential. Yet the sum of all these parts leads to an average or below average club experience for members and guests. I call it the curse of mediocrity.

Consider the “Pedestrian” Toastmasters club. This now-defunct group was once Distinguished. At that time it had a nice blend of men and women, and longtime and newly joined members. Their meetings were vibrant and varied. Over time a series of events occurred, each causing a small ripple. For instance:

- ▶ The vice president membership stopped leading membership-building campaigns.
- ▶ The vice president education stopped assigning roles in print weeks in advance.
- ▶ The club leaders began to construct the agenda on a flip chart after that day's meeting had started.
- ▶ A few members left and were not replaced.
- ▶ Guests were ignored when they visited and didn't join or return.
- ▶ Members failed to show up for meetings and neglected to arrange back-ups to cover their roles.
- ▶ Meeting standards declined a little bit each month.
- ▶ Members gave impromptu speeches.
- ▶ The sergeant at arms stopped stocking the appropriate speech evaluation forms for each assignment.
- ▶ Members increasingly arrived late.
- ▶ Speakers rarely provided introductions in advance, but scribbled on lined paper right before they were to speak.

An air of informality pervaded meetings. Soon the membership had dwindled to a handful of die-hards, mostly male. The environment resembled more of a men's club. And thus, a club that was once a model of excellence became a club likely to dissolve within a year without attention and a rededication. That year passed, and the club died.

### When everything is quantified instead of humanized, a coldness pervades the Toastmasters experience.

In communities, quality of life is tied to practices such as repairing potholes in the roads as soon as they appear. The quality of a Toastmasters club is similarly threatened by the incremental diminution of quality in its various practices.

**Solution:** *Infuse your club with more quality and preparation in its practices, communication, materials and interaction. Then watch it grow!*

### It's Not What Happens, It's How You React

Bad things may happen to your club. Yet nothing is irrevocable. There are club specialists, coaches and rescue chairs available to assist you in saving your club. Learn more about club coaches by visiting [www.toastmasters.org/ClubCoach](http://www.toastmasters.org/ClubCoach). Also, veteran members can deliver modules such as *Moments of Truth* to help. Your area director can also assist. You don't have to go it alone in your quest to make your club the best it can be, again. **IT**

*This article was originally published in the August 2011 issue of Toastmaster magazine.*

**Craig Harrison, DTM**, of the Silicon Valley ImprovMasters in San Jose, California, is a past district governor. Craig is a keynote speaker and principal of the training firm [www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com](http://www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com). Visit [www.SpeakAndLeadWithConfidence.com](http://www.SpeakAndLeadWithConfidence.com) for club and member resources.



# How to Resuscitate a Struggling Club

These strategies helped our club find new life and become Distinguished.

BY MICHAEL LUM, DTM

In March 2016, when I was an area director, Bukit Panjang Toastmasters club at Bukit Panjang Community Centre in Singapore was under my charge. Meetings were boring, attendance was poor and morale was low. Members left without renewing. The club had 12 members, the majority of them passive, and they were being asked to relocate the club's meeting place. Two options were available: either close the club or find another location at no cost and within short notice.

I volunteered to coach the club. I was committed to reviving it and having it attain Distinguished status by the end of my two-year term. One club leader, Hussain Fathah, CC, CL, found a new meeting place. We changed the club's name to Senja-Cashew Toastmasters, after the community center, our new host. Within four months, the club achieved five Distinguished Club Program (DCP) goals and

within 12 months, 10 out of 10 DCP goals, making it President's Distinguished for the first time.

Your club can experience this revival, too, by using the following strategies.

## Build rapport

First things first. Take a personal interest in your club members. Be sincere and authentic. Get to know each one well.

## Make newer members feel secure by assigning them a coach or mentor.

Call them by their preferred name. Hearing one's name being spoken is one of the sweetest sounds for anyone. Get acquainted with each member by learning about their profession, family and hobbies. Be careful not to be too intrusive. Any time

you sense uneasiness, stop probing. More importantly, take time to discover their genuine purpose for joining Toastmasters. Learn about their concerns, fears and aspirations. This will enable you to address their challenges and meet their needs.

Mary Kay Ash, American businesswoman and founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, once said, "Everyone wants to be appreciated. If you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret." When members feel appreciated and valued, they feel part of the club and want to contribute to its success. No one wants their club to fail.

## Boost morale

Like a football coach, club, area and district leaders need to inspire members to achieve both their club's and their own goals. Praise is the most effective motivator, and it comes free. Be careful not to sound insincere or make superfluous comments.

To recognize members' efforts, make sure your club has enough ribbons to go around for Best Speaker, Best Evaluator, Best Table Topics, First-Time Speaker, Halfway to Competent Communicator, etc. at every meeting. I also give motivational books to the best speakers. Try buying snacks to share with members during the break. They will appreciate your effort.

### Involve them

There is a saying that goes something like this: *Tell them, and they will forget. Teach them, and they may remember. Involve them, and they will remember for the rest of their lives.* If you involve every member in meetings, they will feel valued and part of the club. Assign newer members the simpler (yet still valuable) meeting roles, such as timer and Ah-Counter, and ask them to take on logistical tasks such as arranging the room or purchasing food. You can also ask them to welcome guests. Performing these duties will give them a sense of achievement; they will feel like important members of a team and make them feel like they belong to a team.

Remember the adage for success in teamwork: "United we stand; divided we fall." Forge a spirit of fellowship in your club and it will bode well for the future.

### Bond through activities

Bonding is the glue that holds members together through both happy and challenging times. Celebrate members' birthdays. Organize picnics, hikes or movie outings. Our club celebrated the winter holiday season with an offsite holiday party—with no projects or speeches, just games and food—to give members and their families the opportunity to get to know one another better.

I have discovered that several members in the Senja-Cashew club enjoy attending self-development seminars. So we attend inexpensive or free talks, including workshops about mindfulness, selling techniques and branding. Besides bonding

over these opportunities, we get to see another world of public speaking.

We also visit other clubs. Not only does this allow members to watch other speakers, and see how other clubs function, it gives them a chance to deliver speeches at other clubs and network with fellow Toastmasters.

After our evening club meetings, we adjourn to a fast-food chain or coffee shop. We give additional feedback to project speakers, debrief about the club meeting and discuss topics of interest. Whenever possible, we arrange tea or meals with members for one-on-one talks.

### Play up speech contests

Organize speech contests and get everyone involved. Although I could find less expensive trophies, I pay extra to purchase elegant trophies in appreciation of the speech contest winners' diligent work. I also coach members who have goals of winning district speech contests.

### Offer support

Make newer members feel secure by assigning them a coach or a mentor. Review educational manuals with them and direct them to relevant pages on the Toastmasters website.

If members feel lost or down, listen to them and empathize with them. Offer encouragement so they can continue in their journey and embark upon their next project. Set attainable objectives for them. Celebrate any mini-achievements at appropriate milestones. When members complete projects, share in their sense of accomplishment. This gives them a sense of belonging and a commitment to learning. Monitor their progress and send them gentle reminders of their projects.

### Share video and article resources

Communicate with each other via a messaging service such as Twitter or WhatsApp, or form a chat group or a closed Facebook group. And if you come

across any motivational videos or content members can use for their project speeches, post them. Be mindful not to inundate groups with too many videos. Share any inspirational or useful articles via email. Many members look for topics and content, so direct them to the appropriate resources and websites.

### Recruit, recruit, recruit

Members are the lifeblood of the club. It is crucial to recruit new members regularly. Our club added at least eight members through the following channels. In the process, the club won the Smedley Award for its membership drive.

**Social Media** – Our club's Facebook page plays an effective role in attracting members. Post your meeting updates, photographs and social events on social media.

**Workshops** – To recruit members, I conducted three public half-day workshops—on persuasion skills, vocal charisma and hypnotic speaking. We promoted Toastmasters and invited audience members to our club meetings.

**Guests** – Our club encouraged members to bring friends and colleagues to club meetings. When guests arrive, our senior members welcome them, offer them recent copies of the *Toastmaster* magazine and explain how Toastmasters works. A few days before the next meeting, we have someone call and invite our visitors back.

Make every guest, and every member, feel welcome and important, and you'll be on track to rejuvenate your club. 📺

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**Michael Lum, DTM**, is a member of the Senja-Cashew Toastmasters club in Singapore. He is a trainer, coach and author of four books as well as a university adjunct lecturer. He speaks on *Emotional Intelligence*, *negotiation*, *conflict resolution* and *creative thinking*. Visit [www.HardKnocksCollege.com](http://www.HardKnocksCollege.com).

# Speaking in Your Not-So-Native Tongue

5 steps to giving a presentation in a foreign language.

BY LARS SUDMANN, DTM

If you've ever been asked to give a speech or business presentation in a foreign language, you know the level of insecurity this request can bring. I often hear: "I am OK when I present in my native language, but in English/French/Chinese/(add your second language here) ... that's another story." I will share my process for giving presentations in my non-native languages.

First, I will make two assumptions: one, that you have a presentation more or less ready and now need to deliver it in another language, and two, that you have some experience in the other language and can speak on a moderate/intermediate level but have not yet reached a fully fluent presentation level. (Giving a speech in a language that is totally new to you is another matter.) Follow these five steps and take advantage of my favorite tools.

## STEP 1: iPhone it!

Record your speech in your native language on your smartphone or other device that can give a recognizable file format as output. You ideally want to use a lapel microphone so that your hands are free while you are talking.

## STEP 2: Dragon it!

Now you need to transcribe the speech. You can do this yourself (it takes a bit of time) or send it to a transcription service (there's some money involved here). A good alternative, yet one that still involves spending a little money, is to Dragon it, i.e., purchase some speech recognition software, such as Nuance's Dragon NaturallySpeaking, that turns your speech into a text file.

## STEP 3: Google it!

Google Translate will give you a first draft of your speech in the language of your choice. The first draft part is actually really important. Although software is available worldwide, you cannot yet fully trust any translation. If you don't pay attention you will end up with very funny sentences that will likely amuse your audience for the wrong reasons. That's why you need step four.

## STEP 4: Upwork it!

Go to a freelancer platform, such as Upwork (formerly known as Elance-oDesk) or freelancer.com, and search for a copywriter that copyedits and corrects text. You want to carve out the rough edges that Google

Translate left in your speech. Now you should have a decent text in the language of your choice.

## STEP 5: mYngle it!

Now it's time to practice your speech. Here, platforms like mYngle can help. You can work with language teachers over Skype in virtually any language. First, contact a teacher, schedule a first lesson and then ask if they are OK with you giving presentations through Skype. Practice a couple of times, first reading out loud, then reading a bit less until you're more or less fluent. Voila.

While there is no little pill that can magically transform you into a fluent speaker of another language, this exercise can broaden your professional and personal horizons. **L**

LARS SUDMANN, DTM, is a keynote speaker, workshop facilitator and expert on high-performance leadership in global corporations. He works in English, German and Dutch and this year in French. This article appeared on his blog [www.lars-sudmann.com](http://www.lars-sudmann.com).

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# 5 Myths About the Life of a Professional Speaker

A closer look at free to fee.

BY SILVANA CLARK

It's happened to most of us. You just finish giving a great speech at a club meeting or even a district contest, and someone says, "You were great! Why don't you consider becoming a professional speaker!" You start mulling over the idea. Wouldn't it be great to be paid thousands of dollars to give a speech at a luxury conference center in Hawaii with accommodations in a hotel suite included? That's what happens to professional speakers, isn't it?

Well ... not quite. Granted, there are a few high-profile speakers who make a living speaking at major conferences and getting paid major fees. After being self-employed as a professional speaker for the last 25 years, let me dispel some of the myths about life as a professional speaker.

## 1 It's easy to get hired as a professional speaker.

Unless you just landed an Airbus A320 on the Hudson River like American pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger did, or you discovered a cure for acne, you'll have to market yourself to get paid to speak. This means hours of researching conferences and organizations that need speakers on your specific topic.

One of the most common ways I get booked is by submitting proposals to various conferences. Do I like filling out pages of forms asking for my goals and objectives for every speech I plan to give? No. Do I like having to negotiate my fee and who will pay my airfare? No. But do I enjoy giving the speeches? Yes! Which is why I submit all the tedious paperwork time and time again. I have one association that has booked me 10 years in a row and they still ask me to fill out a redundant proposal every year.

You may be an amazing speaker at Toastmasters, but meeting planners across the country don't know that. It's up to you to write articles for trade associations, do radio (or TV!) interviews and have an up-to-date website. You'll often hear, "Give some free speeches at Rotary clubs or civic groups and those members will hire you." Giving free speeches provides you with the opportunity to hone your speaking skills, which is invaluable. However, unless someone in the audience is directly involved in hiring speakers, you probably won't get many paid bookings from those groups. Professional speakers will tell you they spend more time on marketing themselves than they do giving an actual 45-minute speech.

## 2 You'll be an overnight sensation!

In Toastmasters, you may get a call on Monday asking you to give a speech on Tuesday to fill in for a sick club member. As a professional speaker, I may submit a proposal in April and have to wait until August to find out if I was selected to speak at a conference in November ... followed by waiting 30 days to get paid! It easily can take years to get enough paid speeches to live on. Yes, you'll hear about the superstar who gave one speech at a Rotary club and suddenly can't keep up with the requests for more speeches around the world. In reality, the speeches will probably trickle in until you build momentum. Don't quit your day job yet!

## 3 Set a fee for your speeches and you'll get paid.

Think how easy it is to come to a club meeting and give your five- to seven-minute speech. Someone may have called to confirm the date, but you certainly didn't have to negotiate a fee. Here's what often happens as a professional speaker. You receive a call or email from a meeting planner saying they'd heard about you and want to know if you can speak at their conference. They'd like you to give a 45-minute keynote and two additional 90-minute workshops. (I can hear some of you saying, "I'd never have that much content!") Then the meeting planner says they can pay you XXX amount. However, your normal fee is XXXX amount for *just a keynote*. This is a national conference with an association you want to connect with.

If you are like me, your stomach starts churning as you tactfully explain why you charge what you do, knowing the possibility of losing the deal is strong. The meeting planner is persuasive, saying how the "exposure" you will receive at their conference will give you so much business.

While professional speakers have different policies, most try to keep with a set fee. And meeting planners, especially those in the same industry, talk to each other. I've had a few (awkward) instances when a meeting planner calls and says, "You charged us XXXX for your speech and I just heard you spoke at another conference for only XXX. That's not fair!" I've solved that situation by keeping a specific fee, yet letting people know I do one reduced-fee speech per month, which they can "apply" for.



At a training session in Enterprise, Alabama, Silvana Clark speaks to staff who volunteer at camps for foster kids.

### Anyone can give an hour-long keynote.

How long does it take you to prepare for an eight- to 10-minute Toastmasters speech? Now think about the preparation needed to present a 45- to 60-minute keynote *plus* an additional hour-long workshop. Many meeting planners like speakers to present several times, saving the organization the cost of paying airfare and hotel fees for additional speakers.

### It's up to you to write articles for trade associations, do radio (or TV!) interviews and have an up-to-date website.

I frequently speak on workplace issues arising when baby boomers work with millennials. Recently, I was hired to give a 90-minute keynote along with a 60-minute workshop. That's a long period of time to keep the audience's attention while speaking on one topic! Those two sessions involved some lecturing, several role-playing situations, two small-group activities, a fun test for the audience on millennial characteristics and a humorous skit. (All without the use of PowerPoint!) Before you start marketing yourself as a professional speaker, make sure you have enough solid information and knowledge to give lengthy speeches.

### Audiences will love you, just like club members do.

Toastmasters are kind and tactful. Give a rambling, disorganized and unprepared speech and they will still evaluate you with, "I think if you spent a little more time preparing your speech you

could have developed three clear points. But your facial expressions were great!" Audiences at conferences and meetings are not so gentle! I saw one professional speaker cry after getting a scathing evaluation on her presentation. I've had people tell me to get a wardrobe consultant, that I sounded like a frustrated housewife and that my high energy gave them a headache. My favorite "critique" was from a man who came up to me after a keynote and said, "Look, you were great. I learned a lot. However, you're going to get a negative evaluation from my co-worker. He said you remind him of his ex-wife!"

Some professional speakers simply don't read their evaluations. In one case, a meeting planner told me I ranked the highest on evaluations from 200 speakers at her conference. Yet one person at that conference told me I was ignorant, didn't know my facts and should never be asked back again. We know you can't please everyone, but you do need to be levelheaded when getting feedback from groups not as polite as Toastmasters!

So should you give up your dream of being a professional speaker? Of course not. Just keep in mind the process requires patience, hard work and creativity. The reward can be a job that lets you do what you love best ... sharing your message with audiences around the country. **■**

**Silvana Clark**, a former Toastmaster, has spoken around the world to groups ranging from the Canadian Llama Association to the American Electrical Contractors. Her latest book, *Millennials Versus Boomers*, gives practical tips on how both generations can be productive at work. Learn more at [www.silvanaclark.com](http://www.silvanaclark.com).

# FROM THE **Inte**

Meet Gopi Kallayil, ACS, Google's Chief Evangelist for Brand Marketing.

BY SUZANNE FREY

**A**s Chief Evangelist for Brand Marketing at Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California, Gopi Kallayil works with Google's largest customers to help them build their brands through digital solutions. In that role he uses his Toastmasters skills to present to customers' leadership teams and facilitate conversations through many channels.



# Internet TO THE Inner-Net

The title “evangelist” is used in tech companies for someone who builds support for a given technology. Before being tapped for his current job, Kallayil was Chief Evangelist for Google+ and led marketing teams for the company’s advertising products Adwords and Adsense. With its intuitive search engine, self-driving cars, Glass wearable computers and history of innovation, Google is a global brand icon that represents a dream job for many. Kallayil has worked for the company for 10 years and says, “Innovation is at the core of what we do. Googlers are passionate about innovation because they have a deep sense of mission—that the work we do matters and is a force for greater good for humanity.”

“Good communication is a key driver for success at Google.”

— GOPI KALLAYIL

best investments I have made in my professional growth. It has led to a great career, personal brand, book deal, etc.” In their book, *How Google Works*, Google Executive Chairman

and ex-CEO Eric Schmidt and former Senior Vice President of Products Jonathan Rosenberg acknowledge Kallayil’s presentation skills: “Gopi Kallayil is not only the best presenter we’ve ever known but a constant critic with insightful improvements.” Having competed in several Toastmasters speech contests, representing District 4 at the 2007 and 2009 Region 2 International Speech Contests, and spoken at TEDx conferences, the Indian native is a master storyteller, often sharing examples of innovative people who make a difference for others.

“Stories are how human beings communicate best,” he says. “When people are listening to a story, they feel happier, safer and a greater sense of empathy. Stories engage more of our brains than a recitation of facts. As [Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking] Craig Valentine taught me, Make a point, tell a story.

“This is why across the ages and across cultures, from the parables of Jesus to the sagas of Iceland to the great tales in the *Mahabharata* in India, humans have used stories to get a point across. We don’t teach our kids using bulleted lists and PowerPoint slides. ... We tell them stories.”

## Taking Off After TED Talk

One of Kallayil’s favorite speaking engagements was a 2011 TEDx Talk at the University of California, Berkeley, where he spoke on



A Toastmaster for more than 20 years, Kallayil belongs to two clubs: the Lee Emerson Bassett club, which meets at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, and the Google corporate club, called I’m Feeling Chatty, that meets at the Googleplex (as the headquarters are known) in Mountain View. He joined to become “a more confident, articulate and persuasive communicator” and says, “It has fundamentally pivoted my life and is one of the



## GOOGLE CLUBS

**Google sponsors at least nine Toastmasters clubs:** six in the United States, one in Ireland, one in Australia, and one in the United Kingdom. How does Google benefit by having employees involved?

“Many Google employees have to communicate to large groups internally or externally as part of their role,” Kallayil says. “Every employee of Google has to be a good communicator because they have to work with multiple teams and often in multiple geographies across the world. Good communication is a key driver for success at Google.”

“The Internet to the Inner-net.” It launched his career as a professional speaker and led to a publishing deal. His resulting book, *The Internet to the Inner-net: Five Ways to Reset Your Connection and Live a Conscious Life*, has been translated into many languages and opened doors to speaking engagements all over the world.

The book explores how the internet has become “humanity’s invisible central nervous system” that connects people around the globe, yet overwhelms with its instant access to information. In it Kallayil offers tips on how to marry the world of Doing (Actions, Results, Deadlines) with the world of Being (Presence, Spaciousness, Connection). He argues for the integration of technology with self-exploration through meditation. “The most important technology is within us—our brain, body and consciousness.”

Kallayil balances his fast-paced career with daily yoga and meditation rituals that connect him with the world of spirituality and Eastern philosophy. How does he find the time? “Sometimes I find a quiet moment, seek out a conference room, and practice yoga or meditate. When traveling, I often grab a bath towel and practice yoga in my hotel room. Or meditate on the plane just after takeoff.”

His role as “evangelist” takes him to the corporate boardrooms of well-known brands as well as to institutions such as Stanford University and the Wharton School of Business, and events like the World Peace Festival and the Wisdom 2.0 conference. He hosts a TV program on cable and YouTube called *Change Makers* and even has produced two music albums in a series titled Kirtan Lounge.

### The Meaning of Mindfulness

The term “mindfulness” comes up often around Kallayil: He founded a yoga program for fellow Googlers, called Yoglers, and encourages mindfulness training in the workplace. The term shows up in business school curricula. How does he define it and what business value does it carry?

“In India, where I am from, we practice meditation to go beyond the mind, beyond the illusion of the physical world to our divine essence—to be present to that essence in this world,” he

says. “Mindfulness, the fashionable buzzword of the day, is one form of that practice. To be mindful means having your body and mind in the same place and fully present to the activity or experience you are engaged in.”

Karen May, the vice president of people development at Google, says in a *Fast Company* article, “We want to prepare people for how to deal with the challenges ahead and engage them with solving problems that don’t seem to have solutions.” She says employees not only want to learn how to focus on a task, but also “learn how to clear their minds so they can be more innovative and creative thinkers.”

To that end, Kallayil says one of the most popular training programs at Google, with “a huge waiting list,” is called Search Inside Yourself. Founded by one of the original Google employees, Chade-Meng Tan, it teaches mindfulness-based emotional intelligence. “How we direct our attention determines the mental habits we form, the emotions we develop and the results we experience,” Kallayil says.

As for the business value, he recalls an experience of a speech gone awry. Pay attention to the ending, which may be the reason companies like General Mills, Target and Nike teach and encourage mindfulness practices to their employees:

“[Toastmasters] has fundamentally pivoted my life and is one of the best investments I have made in my professional growth.”

— GOPI KALLAYIL

After getting on stage in front of 400 people to deliver his keynote “Technology for the Greater Good” at a Wisdom 2.0 conference, Kallayil pressed the clicker for his first slide. Nothing happened. “I knew my subject backward and forward, and with my Toastmasters training, I was perfectly at ease,” he recalls. “I rebooted my computer and heard that familiar, reassuring sound that a computer makes when starting. *Cha ... chaang*. Then it gasped and died. Three times I tried it. Three times it started, sputtered and died. Each time a bit of me died with it.”

By this time, he had been on the stage for nine minutes and hadn’t started his talk. “Nine minutes is a very long time when you are standing in front of 400 people,” he points out. He felt the collective audience snicker: *Even the Google guy can’t make his technology work for him.*

He calls it an “American bison moment.” That’s because in that critical moment, he remembered the story told by a colleague from Montana, about how when a storm approaches, the American bison “is the only animal that will turn toward the storm, lean into it, and walk to meet it. It knows instinctively that if it does this, it will be out of the storm sooner. This is why Native Americans call it ‘Faces the Storm.’”



“Standing on stage, I decided to do the same. *‘Ladies and gentlemen,’* I said, *‘I came here to talk about the amazing technologies we build at Google. But the most important technology we use in our lives is right here—our body, our breath, our brain. Let me show you how we can use this technology most effectively when challenged by life’s problems. Let me teach you a small breathing and mindfulness technique I am using right now to manage this situation up here on the stage.’*”

From that beginning he gave an impromptu keynote about “how to manage our inner technology when our outer technology fails and creates a problem we don’t expect and can’t solve.” It was a live lesson in stress management. He says he felt “a tremendous sense of support and empathy from the audience.” When he finished speaking, he received a standing ovation.

### Information Access

From his elevated role at Google, it’s hard to imagine that access to information was once not within his easy reach. Growing up with three siblings in a small town in Kerala, southern India, Kallayil says in a 2016 article on Quartz.com titled “A Google evangelist’s guide to finding the purpose in your career,” that he was always “hungry to learn” and “soaked up knowledge through new friends, new books and reading local newspapers.”

Kallayil writes about how he as a college student took a seven-hour train ride to the city of Chennai because it was “the only city in all of southern India where I could access a copy of *U.S. News and World Report’s* guide to the best graduate schools.”

All told, it took him 24 hours to track down that list in a library, including spending the night in a youth hostel and a seven-hour return train ride. It was worth it, he says, because of “the possibilities of the information I now held in my hands.”

Armed with a bachelor’s degree in electronics engineering from the National Institute of Technology in India, he received Master in Business Administration degrees from the Indian Institute of Management and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. From there he was hired at international management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, which eventually led to his joining Google.

Kallayil says one of the best things about his job is “that I’m able to help people get their hands on information that broadens their view of the world.”

When visiting his relatives in a village in the Palakkad district of Kerala, including the school where his mother studied, he is struck by the impact of the internet. “Students now have access to the internet—whether in their homes, their friends’ or relatives’ homes, or through their parents’ smartphones. Those kids can access the same information as any student at Stanford or Harvard.”

His one piece of advice to fellow Toastmasters on how to be more connected to their “Inner-Net”?

“Meditate. Every day.” 🧘

**Editor’s Note:** Watch a video of Gopi Kallayil in the online edition at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine).

**Suzanne Frey** is manager of publications and public relations at *Toastmasters International*.

## GOOGLE’S 9 PRINCIPLES OF INNOVATION

**As a Google spokesman,** Gopi Kallayil often gives a presentation at conferences and customer events that is titled “The 9 Principles of Innovation at Google.” He says “everyone in the company is responsible to drive innovation no matter what their role is.” The principles of innovation that are core to Google’s culture are not unique to Google and can benefit most companies. Here are the nine principles:

1. Innovation comes from anywhere.
2. Focus on the user, not profits.
3. Think 10 times improvement, not 10 percent.
4. Bet on technical insights.
5. Ship and iterate. (Ship products out to market early rather than wait until they are perfect.

Product users will help you iterate by providing feedback to make it better.)

6. 20 percent time. Google employees are encouraged to spend 20 percent of their work time pursuing projects they are passionate about, even if they have nothing to do with their area of responsibility.
7. Default to open. Make your work open to the world—ask for input and ideas from all users. Kallayil says, “There are seven billion people... the smartest people will always be outside of Google.”
8. Fail well. If you don’t fail often enough, you are not trying hard enough.
9. Have a mission that matters.



## Great Story, Wrong Hero

Audiences are getting tired of “My Struggle and Your Lesson” talks.

BY JACK VINCENT, DTM

**S**o you’re preparing for an important presentation or pitch, and you’ve crafted a great story. But do you have the wrong hero? Here’s why it’s more compelling—and *valuable*—to position yourself not as the *hero* in the story, but as the *mentor*.

Several years ago, I was coaching the CEO of a startup who was preparing a pitch to a prospective client. He also planned to use much of the material for that in his upcoming talk at an important industry conference. He had several anecdotes and stories, all of them powerful in their own right.

When he began his third story my discomfort became noticeable.

“What’s wrong?” he asked.

“You’re not going to like this,” I replied. “All your stories are about you.”

“Hey! You’re the guy who says that emotions sell,” he said. “This stuff comes from deep within. What better way to tell an emotional story than to tell *my* story?”

“You want to give the most compelling presentation you can, right? Ultimately, you want to sell.”

“Yes, of course.”

“Stay with stories,” I said, “but tell someone *else’s* story! When it comes to conference speeches, audiences today are getting tired of the ‘My Struggle and Your Lesson’ talks. This will sound brutal, and I’m not singling you out but, rather, an entire army of presenters and vendors out there today. It’s all becoming a bit narcissistic.”

“But I want to show the audience that I’m battle-tested. What better way to show my expertise than to show them I’ve been through this too?”

“Do you want your prospects to see you as likable and emotionally vulnerable ... or professional and commercially valuable?”

“Hmmm.”

“A knee surgeon may have never had knee surgery. Does that make the guy with the bad knee the expert? Which one of the two would you wish to give you advice on your knee, or even *operate* on it?”

### **You are not the hero. Your customer is.**

The best salespeople know this. So do the best writers throughout history. They know what makes a great hero ... and what makes a compelling and valuable mentor.

In storytelling, heroes are not who many of us, exposed to pop culture, think they are. They are not the ones who have all the answers and solutions. They are not the ones who rescue cats from trees. Over the centuries, in great literature and in great storytelling, timelessly and universally, heroes struggle! They don't have all the answers, and they crave love and guidance. No struggle, no story. And the more compelling the struggle, the more compelling the story.

*Harry Potter* is a classic example. One of the great lines in this enormously popular book and movie series comes when Professor Dumbledore tells Harry, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

Harry is the hero. And Harry was, at this point in the story, struggling with a decision, a choice. Your prospective clients have a choice too: to go with the competition, make no decision at all or choose you.

### **So now you have a choice.**

When you prepare your next pitch or conference presentation or club speech around a story, do you want to be the hero or the expert? Before you answer that, also consider this: Do you want to captivate your audience *and* be seen as valuable?

If you stand up in front of a few hundred people, and essentially say, "I'm going to tell you about my struggle and what you can learn from this," isn't it possible that a third of the audience will switch off and another third will think, *Here we go again. Another touchy-feely, vulnerable narcissist.*

## Crafting a speech around your "glorious struggle" really puts you in danger of positioning yourself as self-absorbed.

If that happens, then a mere *third* of the audience will still be with you, but it might not even be the top third of your target audience. Cynical? Perhaps I am. But I've sat in audiences—*surrounded by other audience members*—and this is the reality. Sure, some will smile endearingly. But don't limit your observation to the supporters.

Some will quietly look at their mobile device. Some will quietly leave the room. Some will look around hoping others will join them in the *Here we go again* roll of the eyes.

### **So, yeah! Give me a struggle. Just make sure it's somebody else's.**

Crafting a speech, and certainly *opening* a speech, around your "glorious struggle" really puts you in danger of positioning yourself as self-absorbed. If, however, you build your pitch around someone *else's* struggle, it will position you as someone who has, at the

very least, done some good research or, even better, as a professional who has helped heroes through their struggles to succeed.

Whether you're making a presentation at a conference or a pitch to a prospective client, sometimes you'll have an audience with whom you haven't yet worked, so your story relates to the listeners in general—but it's specifically about a past customer you helped. You're using their story as a case study, an example. The story is about the audience or prospective client in the sense that they are in this same situation, yet it happened to someone else. The bigger point, of course, is that it's not about you, the presenter.

### **The mentor is also a great salesperson.**

The mentor doesn't tell the hero too much too soon. The mentor, or one of his tribe, entices the hero to cross the threshold, then persuades the hero to walk through the fire. The mentor can't accomplish the mission alone, usually because they don't have the power or the ability. Clients *do* have the power and ability, but they lack the knowledge and wisdom.

The mentor often helps the hero—the client—discover three things:

1. That no one else can accomplish the mission, only the hero is capable.
2. If the hero decides not to do it, the world will go to hell in a handbasket and evil will rule.
3. The hero doesn't have to go it alone—they can rely on a trusted advisor.

This is very persuasive.

### **So be the mentor and make a customer your hero.**

There are two benefits to playing the role of the mentor—when done tactfully, of course.

1. You won't run the risk of two-thirds of the audience emotionally checking out of your talk early on. A story of someone else's struggle, on the other hand, doesn't make the presenter seem self-important, and it is insightful.
2. You will be seen as valuable. As always, be careful not to sell from the stage. Don't talk about your value but, indeed, show it. Weave your value statement into your story. That's the craft of great business storytelling.

Albert Einstein said, "Try not to become a man of success, but rather to become a man of value."

When people see you as the mentor, they see your value. And they more often buy from you. ■

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**Jack Vincent, DTM**, is a member of Toastmasters Zug in Switzerland. He is a sales consultant and the author of *A Sale Is A Love Affair—Seduce, Engage & Win Customers' Hearts*. Read his blog at [JackVincent.com](http://JackVincent.com).

# You Just Became a Toastmaster?

How to make the most of your learning experience.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

**C**ongratulations! You are now a Toastmaster. Welcome to the family. You have embarked on a journey—a journey to improve your speaking and leadership skills. Your club and manuals will give you a great start.

The *Competent Communication* (CC) and *Competent Leader* (CL) manuals are designed to be worked side-by-side. Next month we will take an in-depth look at the CL manual. But this month, I'll give you a few tips to help you get the most out of your CC manual.

## Tip #1: **Getting to CC is not a race.**

If you are goal oriented like me, it is easy to want to get your Competent Communicator designation as quickly as possible. I frequently hear people say something like, "I made it to CC in three months." I used to be impressed. Now I'm not.

The problem with that statement is you don't become a competent speaker by completing a manual. You become competent by mastering the skills taught in the manual.

You have no doubt noticed that the CC manual consists of 10 projects. These are not simply speeches, they are *learning projects*. And projects and learning take time and effort.

Each project teaches a new component of speaking. After the Ice Breaker (Project 1), we learn:

PROJECT 2:	Speech organization
PROJECT 3:	How to stay focused on the purpose of the speech
PROJECT 4:	The use of rhetorical devices; good grammar; short, concise, descriptive words
PROJECT 5:	Body language
PROJECT 6:	Vocal variety
PROJECT 7:	Presenting a topic that you have researched
PROJECT 8:	The effective use of visual aids
PROJECT 9:	How to be persuasive
PROJECT 10:	How to be inspirational

What frequently happens, though, is that a Toastmaster writes a speech for Project 2. They then write another Project 2-level speech for Project 3—ignoring the "purpose." And they continue that for projects 4, 5 and 6. In fact, many times I have heard the speaker use less vocal variety in the vocal variety speech than they did in their previous five speeches. Why is that? Because they don't put in the time to learn the new skill and are in a hurry to get the speech over with as quickly as possible to get that CC.



When you take on one of the CC projects, don't start with writing the speech. Start with learning the information in the manual. Then work to incorporate the lessons you learn into your speech. And don't be afraid to push the envelope. For example, when working on the rhetorical device speech, make it rich with triads, alliteration and metaphors. When focusing on the body language and vocal variety speeches, be very expressive. Stretch yourself. You will be amazed at how much you will learn that way.

## Tip #2: **Map out your speech topics early.**

I have seen many Toastmasters become paralyzed because they don't know what to speak about next. I recommend that you sit down today and start a list of potential speech topics. Carry that list

around with you and add new topics as they come to mind. It is always easier to come up with topics when you aren't under the pressure of a deadline.

When you have a good topics list, review it and ask yourself, "Which one would enable me to use a high level of body language? Which one would best lend itself to vocal variety? Which one is a research topic?" ... and so forth. I had mapped out my speech topics through Project 8 before I began Project 2. And that took a big load off of my mind.

## Tip #3: **Use your mentors.**

Your club has, no doubt, assigned you a mentor. This person will assist as you write your first speeches and guide you in the various meeting roles.

You may be thinking, "Of course I would use my mentor." The truth is—many do not. In fact, more times than not, my mentees haven't even returned my phone calls. Big mistake! Don't be like them. Embrace your mentor. He or she is a resource who can greatly enhance your Toastmasters experience.

You will note, however, that I wrote "mentors." You should have an officially assigned mentor, but you aren't limited to talking to just that one person. You will figure out real soon that there are some members in your club who stand out as strong speakers. Ask them for their input. Most will be glad to give you some tips.

Those are just a few points to keep in mind as you begin your Toastmasters journey. It is easy to get caught up in the rush to get speeches done. Instead, get caught up in mastering the art of the speech. What a difference it will make. **■**

**Bill Brown, DTM**, is a *Speech Delivery Coach from Las Vegas and a member of Powerhouse Pros, which specializes in observational humor. Learn more at [www.billbrownspeechcoach.com](http://www.billbrownspeechcoach.com).*

# A Word of the Week to the Wise

How to find a suitable word and make it last.

BY KALLE LUNDAHL, ACB

An essential part of any Toastmasters meeting is the “Word of the Day.” I prefer to call this the “Word of the Week,” since if you use the word for only one day or one meeting, it is likely that you will not incorporate it into everyday conversation. To increase the word’s usage, I recommend that the grammarian spread the word to all members in advance so they can begin to use it immediately and include it, for instance, in their prepared speeches.

The Word of the Week should not be confused with the *theme* of the meeting, although, preferably, they will go hand in hand. Let us presume that the theme is “learning becomes leading.” The Word of the Week should be related to this theme, but it shouldn’t be an easy word, like *leader*, because the point of the word is to improve our vocabulary by having it be a relatively uncommon word. Something more appropriate could be the word *jaunty* because a leader should be cheerful and confident in their manner, exactly what the word *jaunty* means.

Let me share with you a personal experience indicating what you should *not* do: In 2015, soon after joining Toastmasters, I selected the word *tnesis* (pronounced “to me sis”— think about “to me, sister”) which comes from the Greek word *tmēsis* meaning “cutting.” Tmesis is a linguistic phenomenon in which a word or phrase is separated into two parts, with other words inserted in between them, for instance in the phrase “TURN the light OFF?” Why was my choice of this word not a good one? Well, because you cannot use *tnesis* in everyday conversation!

How, then, will you find a suitable word? You can do a Google search for: “Adjectives relating to leadership” or whatever the theme of the meeting is. Another good way



What I find smart is to choose a word that can be both an adjective and a noun, because members will thus learn two meanings of the same word.

is to sign up for the newsletter “Word of the Day” from *Oxford Dictionaries*.

When I want a definition of a word, I Google “Oxford (dictionary)” along with the word, because I find this is the best way to find a more precise definition. Don’t take my word for it: In *The Etymological* (2011, p. 146), author Mark Forsyth says: “The *Oxford English Dictionary* is the greatest work of reference ever written.”

## Adjectives and adverbs are smarter

I agree with the advice given in the October 2015 issue of *Toastmaster* magazine

(p. 3): “The best thing you can do is to concentrate on adjectives and adverbs. A greater vocabulary of adjectives and adverbs will give you a deeper knowledge of varieties and characteristics of words. [...] In short, you’ll be smarter.”

Smarter? Well, we all wish to at least *seem* smarter, so let us therefore use adjectives and adverbs because they will give us more fine-tuned descriptions. One word of caution: Even though one article, titled “11 amazing words we should be using,” recommends the adjective “callipygian,” it may not be an appropriate choice for a Toastmasters meeting: It means “having beautiful buttocks.”

What I find smart is to choose a word that can be both an adjective and a noun, because members will thus learn two meanings of the same word. One example of such a word is *sanguine*, which as a noun means “a blood-red color,” and as an adjective, “optimistic.” Other words can be both nouns and verbs, such as *slog*. A sample sentence is, “Although it will be a slog to move the World Headquarters, Toastmasters members are sanguine about its future location in Denver, Colorado, because they hope to find gold there.”

In conclusion, here is my proposed checklist for selecting the Word of the Week: 1. Relate it to the meeting theme. 2. Concentrate on adjectives that are uncommon but not overly obscure. 3. Distribute the word to members well before the meeting. 4. Subscribe to the *Oxford Dictionaries* newsletter. 5. Use it and help us enrich our language. **T**

KALLE LUNDAHL, ACB, CL, is a member of Creative Communicators in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



## Home Improvements

Impress your neighbors! Amaze your friends! Lock your family out of the house!

BY JOHN CADLEY

**M**y mother was 89 years old when I tried to help her understand email. The more I talked, the more her expression turned from bafflement to skepticism to outright disbelief. (I think her exact words were, “Send mail without a stamp? That’s impossible. Don’t lie to your mother.”) So I showed her. I sat her down at the computer, pulled up a new message screen and told her to write a note to my sister in Boston. “What do I say?” she asked. “The same thing you’d say in a letter,” I replied. My mother thought for a moment and typed: *Hello, dear. This is your mother. I hope you are well. Do you still have a cough?* Then I told her to click Send and wait a few minutes. We sat silently, my mother looking like she’d just released the launch codes for an intercontinental ballistic missile. A few minutes later a message came back from my sister: *Hey, Mom. Glad you’re using email. Welcome to the digital age! My cough is fine. Love you.*

My mother stared at the screen, stunned. It was as if she had seen a vision. Then she shook her head and said, “I’ve lived too long.”

I always thought that was funny—until I read a magazine infographic titled *The Smart Homes We Live In*. Now I’m beginning to think I *have* lived too long. If you’ve ever worried about human beings creating a world that’s too smart for its own good, this piece will remove all doubt. The infographic, published in a 2016 issue of *The Week* magazine, features an illustrated cross-section of a house, with callouts pointing to all the gizmos that can raise your home’s IQ to the point where it

qualifies for Mensa. Starting in the living room, there’s a product by Samsung called **SmartThings** that sets off the sound of barking dogs when it detects an intruder—which could be anybody since it doesn’t say how the device can tell the difference between an intruder and the mailman.

There’s also the **Netatmo Welcome**, which recognizes your family’s faces and lets you know when they’ve arrived home. This works fine as long as nobody grows a beard or gets a face-lift, in which case you could be permanently locked out of your house. Of course, if you have both the **Samsung SmartThings** and the **Netatmo Welcome** you’ll know the family is home by the sound of barking dogs.

**“Send mail without a stamp? That’s impossible. Don’t lie to your mother.”**

Then there’s **Singlecue**, which allows you to change TV channels with the wave of a finger. Just be sure to close the shades so people outside can’t see you. Sane people don’t wave at their televisions. If you have a pet, there’s the **Petzi Treat Cam**, which “lets you spy on Fido and reward his good behavior with treats, even when you’re not home.” Well, I have a dog, and if he was home alone and a treat dropped out of a box on the wall, he’d rip that thing open faster than you could say “maybe this wasn’t such a good idea.”

Moving into the bathroom we have the **Withings Smart Body Analyzer**. This is

a scale that measures your weight, body mass index and heart rate—then gives you the morning weather report. I consider this a risky purchase. The technology is impressive but it could easily ruin your day. Imagine stepping on the old **Withings** in your pajamas only to find that you’ve gained weight and the day will be cold, gray and rainy. This is when you realize what you’ve really bought is the **Withings Depresso-Meter**.

Not to leave the bedroom out, we have the **Sleep Number x12 bed**, which tracks your caffeine intake, exercise and sleeping patterns so you will know how to get a better night’s sleep. Not in my case. I’d be up all night worrying that any bed smart enough to measure my caffeine intake could easily track other things—like my late-night consumption of Rocky Road ice cream.

Finally, we come to clothes—or, as it’s called in a companion piece to the infographic, “wearable technology.” There is **Blacksocks with Plus+**, a device that tells you which socks belong together and how often they’ve been washed. Why we would ever need this I don’t know. I’d prefer it simply tell me how my socks mysteriously disappear. Be that as it may, the day I need a computer chip to tell me which socks go together is the day I really *have* lived too long. ■

**John Cadley**, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at [www.cadleys.com](http://www.cadleys.com).

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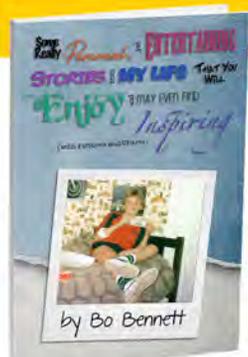
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**CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM**



You might know Bo as the creator of FreeToastHost, the host of the Toastmasters Podcast, or the Founder of eBookIt.com. Or perhaps you never heard of the guy. Either way, you will enjoy his latest book, *Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring*.

What is a "normal childhood?" Does it include almost being murdered by your sister with an ax? Speeding around town in the back of a station wagon because your mom is chasing an "alien spaceship"? Being busted by the police for intent to light a pond on fire? Tackling your mom to the ground and wrestling a knife out of her hand because she was trying to kill your dad? While my stories may be unique, readers will be able to relate to the broader themes are part of a normal childhood such as sibling rivalry, eccentric parents, doing stupid things, and frequently preventing one's parents from literally murdering each other.

Although some of the subject matter is not something one would generally laugh at, you have my permission to laugh. Social rules don't apply here; my rules do. It works for me, and who knows, after reading the stories from my past, you might be inspired to see your own screwed up past in a more humorous light.

*Some Really Personal, Yet Entertaining Stories From My Life That You Will Enjoy and May Even Find Inspiring* by Bo Bennett is available in ebook, paperback, and audio, at 

**We are happy to speak with you about your publishing needs. Call us at 978-440-8364 or visit us at <http://www.eBookIt.com>.**



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— Mike Storkey, DTM, International President

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