

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | AUGUST 2017

# TOASTMASTER®



## HAVING FUN

The value of team spirit  
and club camaraderie

**Fake News is  
in the News**

How to find reliable information





# A Journey of Development

**A**s I pen my final Viewpoint column it is hard to believe how quickly the past 12 months have gone by. It has been an experience of a lifetime to work with dedicated leaders from the club level to the Board of Directors, a supportive and tireless staff at World Headquarters and you, the members. To all, my sincere and grateful thanks for your support.

In a Toastmasters year of change where we have seen the launch of Pathways, the acquisition of a new World Headquarters building in Denver, Colorado, and the birth of online clubs—to mention just a few changes—it would be easy to become complacent about our organization’s progress. However, we must continue to change and evolve if we are to fulfill the legacy of those who have gone before us. Toastmasters is a continuing journey of development for both our individual members and the organization itself. To stand still is to stagnate.

**I thank you for the opportunity to serve, because true leadership is about serving others.**

I have been fortunate to visit many districts this year from around the globe, and although the cultures, languages, sights and sounds are all different, one thing remains constant: the members. The strength of Toastmasters International is the diversity of our members, who, though of different countries and backgrounds, all have a common goal: to become the speakers and leaders they were meant to be.

With so many different personalities and cultures in our clubs and districts, it is only natural that we encounter differences of opinion. We should not view these as challenges but, rather, as opportunities to live by our core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence. With these values in mind, no challenge is insurmountable.

Our organization has many opportunities to grow: by developing the potential of Gavel clubs and our youth, nurturing the Smedley Fund so it can help Toastmasters grow in developing markets and taking advantage of technology to communicate on a truly global scale. How we meet those challenges is up to you and the support you give to the Board to make them a reality.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve, because true leadership is about serving others. At Toastmasters we are not about making better Toastmasters but about making better people—people who can take the skills they learn in their clubs into the world to benefit their families, their communities and their careers. The one thing my journey has reinforced above all others is that I will always Remember you, the Member.

**MIKE STORKEY, DTM**  
International President

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Clubs milestones give Toastmasters around the world a reason to cheer. Congratulations to these clubs!



▶  
Central Toastmasters club of Worcester, Massachusetts, celebrates its 60th anniversary.



◀  
Members in California celebrate the 84th anniversary of the Long Beach Gavel club number 11—one of 20 clubs that chartered in 1933.



▶  
Members and guests of University of Aruba Toastmasters celebrate the club's 1st anniversary.



**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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## August Online Extras:

- **Your First Few Speech Evaluations**—Learn how to offer constructive feedback in an exclusive Toastmasters video. ▶
- **The Importance of Having Fun**—View additional photos of clubs having fun in our newly enhanced gallery, and don't miss out on a special club video. 📷 ▶
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## Pharmacist-Turned-Leadership Coach Pays It Forward

BY MARIAM JEHANGIR

Glen Savage, ACS, ALB, didn't set out to find a career in public speaking and leadership coaching. As a pharmacist, his focus was on helping others improve their health. But when accepting an opportunity to join the training department for a large pharmaceutical chain in 2000, his responsibilities grew to include giving workshops on management development, communication and leadership to more than 800 pharmacies. He enjoyed his new role and says, "A serial people-developer was born."

Since then, he has founded the Purple Speaking Academy, a presentation skills training firm in London, England, and is a frequent keynote speaker for large events and conferences. A member of the Riverside Communicators Toastmasters club, he shares how he came out from behind the pharmacy counter to lead others to personal and professional growth.

### What attracted you to a coaching career?

I am passionate about communication and influence—how we connect, engage and collaborate to achieve great things. That led me to work with people, particularly leaders, to help them find their voice, construct and convey their message and deliver it powerfully. In particular I love to coach individuals, helping transform both inexperienced and seasoned speakers into exceptional ones. Through Purple Speaking Academy I now combine my two loves—developing people and speaking. I have been so fortunate to have learned the skills and mindset of an impactful speaker through Toastmasters. Recently, I coached Dr. Dimple Devadas, a psychology coach, to the TEDx stage in Ulsoor, Bangalore. What a thrill that was!

### Tell us about your experiences as a mentor.

The buzz of helping others transition from anxiously speaking down at their own shoes to confidently looking out at, engaging and entralling an audience, is incredibly rewarding. I have also had the joy of mentoring a new club, watching and supporting a talented group of people establish themselves as speakers.

### What are some obstacles you've had to overcome?

I was born with a hereditary hand tremor. I came to believe that if I spoke to a group, the audience would be distracted by the tremor and assume I was a shivering bag of nerves and it would



*Glen Savage gives a keynote on customer chemistry at the 2016 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference in Broadbeach, Australia.*

affect trust and credibility. This is what I'd much later come to learn was a limiting belief.

My confidence in speaking was pretty low, and my doctor stepped in with beta-blockers to stop the tremor when needed. That was helpful, except I then had another limiting belief that I couldn't speak unless I took a tablet.

Then I explored all of this with a great Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) coach. I discovered that my beliefs were just beliefs—a way of thinking that was inhibiting me. I developed a newer, healthier belief that I could speak and train without tablets and the tremor didn't matter. My NLP coach helped me focus on the possibility that people would be interested in what I had to say and the benefit I could deliver. I haven't taken a beta-blocker in over 15 years. People do in fact listen to me. And no one has ever commented on my tremor.

### How has Toastmasters helped you?

Toastmasters has given me the skills and confidence to pursue the career I've always wanted. I could always babble—but now I can *speak*, and people even listen! I started my career from behind the safety of a pharmacy counter. Now I get to speak at events and help others develop their speaking and leadership abilities. Wow!

### What advice do you have for aspiring speakers?

Focus on the audience, rather than yourself. If you take on the mindset that you have something others deserve to hear, you'll speak stronger and deliver more benefit. It's all about the message and not about you. If they happen to like you, that's just a bonus.

*Mariam Jehangir is the editorial assistant for the Toastmaster magazine.*



## A MEMORABLE OCCASION

Helen Jang, CC, ALB, center, invited 60 of her closest Toastmasters friends to her wedding in March. Members brought their clubs' banners to make a memorable wedding album photo. "I was so happy to get my Toastmaster friends' sincere applause," Jang says. "I would like to thank everyone again who came to my wedding."

Jang is Area 33 director in District 93, South Korea, and a member of Gyodae Toastmasters, Jamsil Korean Toastmasters and Music & Me Toastmasters, all in Seoul.

## ▶ ADVICE FROM THE PROS

# 7 Ways to Succeed as a Club Officer

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

The seven nominated club officer positions are president, vice president education, vice president membership, vice president public relations, sergeant at arms, treasurer and secretary. The responsibilities for each role are specific, though they may overlap or require cooperation between two or more officers. To make your term successful, consider these suggestions.

**1 Attend club officer training.** This training is developed by Toastmasters International and conducted by your district leaders. Your district probably offers several sessions to choose from, allowing you to find one that fits your schedule. Most seasoned officers agree that attending training is invaluable to start your year.

**2 Do some self-training.** Read the *Club Leadership Handbook* (provided by your club president). Explore the Toast-

masters website for additional resources. Peruse the Resource Library in the Resources section of the website where you'll find lots of informative handbooks, fliers, templates, slideshows and more. Become familiar with Club Central on the site. Read the *Toastmaster* magazine. (Wait! You are!) Connect with other members via social media outlets. Visit different clubs to observe how other officers perform their duties. Search the internet for useful blogs or documents about your position.

**3 Seek mentoring from former officers.** Ideally, meet with your immediate predecessor to make a smooth transition.

**4 Just do it!** In Toastmasters you "learn by doing." Don't fear making a mistake. Most mistakes can be corrected. Take your role seriously enough to commit to it but lightly enough to allow yourself some slack if something goes wrong.

**5 Resist doing another officer's job.** While some roles overlap, clearly define where your responsibilities end and where another officer's begins. Coordinate and delegate.

**6 Attend club officer meetings.** Even if you think your role is quiet or not visible, the other officers should know the status of your efforts.

**7 Enlist an assistant or team when the workload increases or if you will be unavailable to perform your duties.** The benefit? You train a successor in the process!

*Maureen Zappala, DTM, is a professional speaker, author and presentation skills coach, as well as founder of High Altitude Strategies, a coaching and speaking service. She belongs to the Aerospace Toastmasters club in Cleveland, Ohio. Visit her website at [www.MaureenZ.com](http://www.MaureenZ.com).*

## QUICK TAKES

### ▶ MEET MY MENTOR



## Tim Lambert, DTM

BY MARY NESFIELD

In 1989, Tim Lambert, DTM, a scientist for the Canadian government, joined the Fun Speakers Toastmasters club in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. After gaining experience as a district leader, Lambert is giving back through mentoring.

Patricia Rijavec, DTM, is a senior manager with the Ministry of Education in the province of Alberta. She discovered Toastmasters while enrolled in a community college course taught by a Toastmaster. “He recommended that I join the Fun Speakers club,” she says. When Rijavec joined the club in 2005, Lambert offered to mentor her.

### Patricia, please tell us about Tim.

Tim has a wealth of Toastmasters knowledge and is highly respected in our community for his knowledge, experience and ability to deftly maneuver through Robert’s Rules of Orders. He provides sound guidance and expert information, and holds each member accountable to their own objectives and potential. He has the ability to say just the right thing at the right time to nudge each individual forward.

### What did you expect to achieve in Toastmasters?

Because I advocate for children and education, I wanted to become more eloquent and compelling in order to command attention and influence decisions. Toastmasters offers endless possibilities for continued development in both communication and leadership. Tim taught us that we can complement our professional lives with the important leadership experiences we have in the club.



FROM LEFT: *Tim Lambert, DTM, and Patricia Rijavec, DTM*

### How do you apply what you’ve learned?

I use what I’ve learned every day by providing timely feedback to colleagues, offering succinct and well-developed responses or interventions during meetings, delivering professional presentations and facilitating performance conversations as a supervisor.

### What do you like best about Tim?

His inspiring ways and his deep commitment to the organization, starting with what he says is the most important component: the members. He is an incredible role model. His belief in my potential from the first time I visited the club 10 years ago has led me to complete my DTM and mentor other members and clubs.

Mary Nesfield is associate editor for the *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).

### ▶ MEMBER CONNECTIONS



## Officer Training in Papua New Guinea

Toastmasters International President Mike Storkey and his wife, Lesley (seated third and fourth from left), pose with club officers and members of the Bank of South Pacific club after a day of officer training in Papua New Guinea.





## ▶ PATHWAYS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

# Pathways Guides & Ambassadors Will Prepare You

The program pilot for the Pathways learning experience is now complete, with three districts—57, 27 and 51—successfully launching Toastmasters' new education program. Pathways is now rolling out in phases, region by region. Region 14 launched first, at the end of July, with Region 2 scheduled for September.

Before a region launches Pathways, each of its clubs should be visited by a Pathways Guide and a Pathways Ambassador. These two members will give a presentation about the learning experience, helping club members prepare to work in the program. Be sure to attend your club meeting the day of the Pathways visit—it will be a great benefit to you.

Jim Heeren, DTM, a District 27 Pathways Guide, says his club visits went well overall, especially in meetings with high

member turnout. "The members were enthusiastic and had lots of questions," he says. Heeren, a member for 35 years, says the presentations took about an hour and, "once we got into the material, they kind of wished there was *more* time."

JoAnn Ainsworth, ACG, ALB, a member of two clubs in Northern California, says a number of Toastmasters are concerned about working in the new program because they've been working in the traditional one for a long time. That's why the club visits are so important, she notes—they make members feel more comfortable about what's ahead. Club visits by District 57 Pathways Guide Coordinator George Marshall have been very informative and reassuring, Ainsworth says.

John Dinh, ACB, ALB, a member of the Star Search Toastmasters club in Fremont,



California, echoes Ainsworth's comments. He also stresses the important role club officers play in the launch. As club leaders, officers need to set the tone by embracing Pathways and actively working in the learning experience, says Dinh, the club's 2016–2017 president.

"It's very important, because club members need to have someone to help show them the ropes."

*To learn more about Pathways, visit [www.toastmasters.org/Pathways](http://www.toastmasters.org/Pathways). The webpage includes FAQs as well as information about Pathways' history, Base Camp and the role of member volunteers.*

## ▶ NEWS FROM TI



*Blue Ocean Academy Toastmasters club, Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

## Get the Most out of Your Magazines

If you receive duplicate copies of the *Toastmaster* magazine each month, you can use those extra magazines to bring new members into your club. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Donate your magazines to your club to distribute to guests.
- ▶ Drop them off at a library, hospital or doctor's office waiting room. But be sure to ask for permission first.
- ▶ When leaving magazines, cover your mailing address with a label indicating your club's contact and meeting information.
- ▶ Arrange to ship extra magazines to an address of your choice.

To manage your subscriptions, update your address or change other preferences, go to [www.toastmasters.org/My-Toastmasters/Profile/Magazine-Subscriptions](http://www.toastmasters.org/My-Toastmasters/Profile/Magazine-Subscriptions) or email [membership@toastmasters.org](mailto:membership@toastmasters.org).




**1 | JUAN CARLOS DURAN, ACB, ALB,** from Barcelona, Spain, visits the Arashiyama Bamboo Grove in Kyoto, Japan.


**2 | DAVE CULTON, ACG, CL,** from Ventura, California, stands along a fault line between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates in Thingvellir, Iceland.

**3 | SONYA MOUNTS, CC,** from Spokane, Washington, enjoys the Hobbiton™ movie set experience in Matamata, New Zealand.

**4 | Toastmasters International Director DAVID McCALLISTER, DTM,** from Arlington, Texas, visits Sydney, Australia.



 **View additional photos** in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at [www.toastmasters.org/Magazine](http://www.toastmasters.org/Magazine).

 **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!

# Seeing My Students in a New Light

How Toastmasters changed the way I view leaders.

BY MANDY STEWART, CC

One year ago, I joined a very “strange” group that meets in my local library. What makes us strange? Well, for starters we clap—a lot. Basically, anyone who says anything in the exceptionally structured meetings gets a hearty round of applause. We also shake hands euphorically in the midst of the applause and refer to those with particular roles as *Mister* or *Madam*.

But what really makes us different is that we view everyone who enters the room as a leader, a public speaker and a person with much to contribute. In our day-to-day lives, people can grow numb to negativity. We see those who lead, particularly public figures, picked apart and mocked for what they say, how they say it, even for their physical appearance. Perhaps this is what keeps most of us from stepping forward, speaking up, raising our hand or leaning in. Toastmasters, however, is a unique bubble in which people are actually rooting for one another and everyone is considered a leader. Everyone.

I began attending Toastmasters to improve my public speaking skills. As a college professor, I often hide behind my computer, letting my writing communicate what I have to say. I wanted to learn to communicate my ideas better—and I have done that. I have improved my speaking abilities at conferences, in the classes I teach or in front of *any* audience. The encouraging and constructive feedback I regularly receive from fellow members has helped me know what to focus on.

Yet the greatest benefit for me is in how I now view other people—particularly those whose lives I influence. Those are primarily my two children and my university students.

In our society we are conditioned to categorize people. We perceive some as “natural leaders” while believing others just don’t quite fit the bill. We may come to this

**Even the quietest person in the room, the one sitting in the back, has much to contribute.**

—MANDY STEWART

conclusion because of an aspect of their personality, lack of previous experience, educational level, socio-economic status, physical appearance or the way they speak.

I was guilty of this. But this past year, I developed a different lens through which I view my students, whether they are pursuing a Ph.D. or a master’s or bachelor’s degree. I see them *all* as leaders and I provide them the same supportive environment Toastmasters provides me—a place to develop public speaking skills, to speak with confidence, persuade with authority and influence through words.

Even the quietest person in the room, the one sitting in the back who rarely shares an opinion, has much to contribute—unique ideas, diverse perspectives and alternative ways of looking at problems. Unfortunately, many of the people with the most-needed perspectives learn to be silent. They internalize notions reinforced by society that their opinions do not matter that much, there is nothing they can do to fix a problem or leadership is not for them.

Toastmasters offers the opposite message. In my club, people applaud every time I speak. They entrust me with leading

club meetings (even when I really have no idea what I’m doing). They give me the greatest compliments I’ve ever received (Classy? Me?). Thank you, Roanoke Texas Toastmasters club—you are my champions!

Now I view the people entrusted to me as leaders with limitless potential. Though I might never be called upon to deliver a commencement address or inspire a nation through a great political speech, I will live like my students (and both of my children) will. If I live the next few decades viewing people through this lens, imagine what the impact will be!

Someday those people might be junior faculty members at a university, like me. They might just need a little nudge and a hearty round of applause to get to where I know they can be.

That’s the Toastmasters way. 

**MANDY STEWART, CC**, is a member of the Roanoke Texas Toastmasters club in Roanoke, Texas. She is a literacy professor at Texas Woman’s University in Denton, Texas. Find her @drmandystewart and [www.maryamandastewart.com](http://www.maryamandastewart.com).



Our thoughts are moving in one direction when—wham!—we are redirected, ending up in a completely unexpected place.

## Do the Twist!

Use this easy humor technique to produce audience laughter.

BY BRIAN WOOLF, DTM

A few people are naturally funny. The rest of us aren't. Is there any hope for us non-humorists? Actually, yes, and the simplest starting point is the Twist.

My Toastmasters journey began 50 years ago in New Zealand. I was a serious young accountant, definitely a non-humorist, and very apprehensive about public speaking. My club had two members who triggered laughter readily. I wasn't one of them.

I felt condemned to be a "serious" speaker for life. Even dabbling in Toastmasters' humor and entertainment manuals didn't give me the key to escape from my humorless speeches. But surely,

I thought, there must be a logical way to learn how to lighten up.

It was after I was drawn to the challenge of competing in the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® (WCPS) that a faint light started to flicker. Over time, I won at the district level of the International Speech Contest five times (and lost many more times than that), and I advanced to the 2003 World Championship of Public Speaking. After competing in contests, imbibing the wisdom of contest winners and reviewing every WCPS speech on video, I learned the easy entry code to humor for non-humorists: *Do the Twist*—but not the Chubby Checker way!

### The Twist

What do I mean? Picture this. You are listening to an engaging speaker who stops and says: *Gentlemen, you have no idea of the power of a love letter until your wife—intercepts one.* That simple sentence with its twisted ending sent laughter through the large audience at the 2001 World Championship of Public Speaking, helping earn J. A. Gamache third place.

It is the perfect twist: Our thoughts are moving in one direction when—wham!—we are redirected, ending up in a completely unexpected place. Its structure is elegantly simple: **Short statement—Pause—Surprise redirection.** It

is surprise at its best. And surprise is the foundation of humor.

As I viewed WCPS contests, I discovered twists being used by champions and contenders alike. Examples:

*He was six foot—from shoulder to shoulder.*

—Douglas Kruger, third place in 2004 WCPS

*Blood is thicker than water—and no one is thicker than my brother.*

—Jock Elliott, 2011 World Champion

*It's the same sort of mentality [as] those who book their graves in advance—they don't want to miss a good spot!*

—Brett Rutledge, 1998 World Champion

Some contestants even took an extra step, artfully crafting a three-phrase twist.

*When I was 22, I got a job as a hydration specialist—a bartender.*

—Josephine Lee, third place in 2016 WCPS

*I had a job I didn't like. I hadn't had a date in three years—and I had a couple of roommates named Mom and Dad.*

—Lance Miller, 2005 World Champion

### Where to Begin?

The great news is that twists are easy to create and low-risk to deliver. For your next speech, try writing your own version of any of the following:

*My plane left at 5:25—and I didn't.*

*I've had a lot of luck this year—all of it bad.*

*Now, everything I tell you today is true—except the stuff I make up.*

Separately, experiment by taking common expressions and changing the second part. For example, I've seen the saying *A fool and his money are soon parted* rephrased as *A fool and his money—are invited places!* and *A fool and his money—can throw one heck of a party.*

Also, be on the alert for twists when listening to speeches. Isn't it amazing how just a simple short phrase—followed by a pause—and a twist, triggers laughter?

It truly is the non-humorist's easy entry point to humor.

But that's not all. A twist comes with two bonuses. First, it's low-risk. If the audience doesn't get it, you just carry on. You've only lost one or two short sentences of speaking time. That risk is almost zero compared to a joke or funny story that bombs. Second, it acts as a *mental speed bump*. Just like a road speed bump, it jolts wandering minds and puts them back on alert. It helps maintain audience attention.

### Meet the Family

My discovery led to three others in the twist family—**put-downs**, **asides** and **exaggeration**, all with the same DNA of brief, witty humor and low risk of failure. My advice: Where possible, include the whole family in the same speech! Family introductions follow.

**1 Put-downs.** When you put yourself down—playfully, of course—audiences love it. Self-deprecating humor is a hit because speakers who make fun of themselves are more relatable. Here are a couple of self-directed put-downs that have worked for me:

*I was a real nerd. I graduated from Harvard with an MBO—a Master's in Boring Others.*

*I am a gourmet cook—my seven-course specialty is a hot dog and a six-pack on the side.*

**2 Asides.** Asides are short side comments, a sort of insider's remark to the audience about something you just said. Many asides are humorous in nature, and they frequently carry a twist-like surprise. Toastmasters World Champions have used asides to nimble effect.

*At 8, I finally rode my bike. To celebrate, my mother and I took the training wheels off—Don't get excited, we only took them off the front wheel!*

—David Nottage, 1996 World Champion

*I'm 5 foot 4—when I'm really trying.*

—LaShunda Rundles, 2008 World Champion

*Many, many times, I would don the armor of righteousness; mount my trusty gray horse; Yeeeha!—Work with me here!*

—Mark Hunter, 2009 World Champion

**3 Exaggeration.** Exaggeration is a statement so surprisingly absurd that it amuses. Ideal for the non-humorist, it's easy to play with because we are surrounded by material that can be taken to extremes, as these examples demonstrate.

*My boss was 50 shades of crazy.*

—Diana Watson, semifinalist in 2015 Toastmasters International Speech Contest

*He moved like a spastic pinball on amphetamines.*

—Randy Harvey, 2004 World Champion

*Picture your audience naked—that's just one of 4,279 suggestions I received from the folks back home on how to improve this speech.*

—David Sanfacon, finalist in 2003 World Championship

### A Final Twist

Each member of the twist family works well because it is simply structured and easy to understand. Smiles and laughter readily follow. Even getting started is easy: Begin with four files labeled Twists, Put-downs, Asides and Exaggeration, and just keep adding examples you like, along with your own creative ideas. Then keep sprinkling your speeches with your newfound wit. You will soon begin to impress your club members and excite contest judges. ■

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**Brian Woolf, DTM**, is a member of Advanced Communicators club in Greenville, South Carolina. Brian has won five district speech contests and was a finalist in the 2003 World Championship of Public Speaking. He is the author of four books, including *The Speaker's Toolbox: 47 Tools to Build Better Speeches*.

# How to Master the Stage

9 theatrical tips for delivering award-winning stories.

BY KAREN BANFIELD, ACB, CL



**S**ometimes speakers who are accustomed to presenting from a lectern struggle when competing in a Humorous or Tall Tales contest. Perhaps it's because they lack basic information about stage technique. Below are some guidelines to help you deliver effective and masterful presentations to engage your audience.

**1 Block your speech as you write it.** To block means to move to a specific area on the stage at a specific time, for a specific reason. You move to achieve a dramatic effect, to ensure sightlines (or unobstructed views of all areas of the stage at all times), or to take advantage of lighting. For example, if I recite a line about my mother, I might walk toward her dressing table, which onstage can be either real or imaginary. The content of the story motivates movement. This technique also has the advantage of making lines easier to remember because it activates body memory.

**2 Never move without motivation.** Many speakers try to add interest by pacing back and forth. But pacing by definition is the result of impatience, anxiety or annoyance. It does not engage an audience. If you don't have a reason to move, don't move.

**3 Learn character voices.** If your speech has different characters, make an attempt to learn their voices. Go to YouTube, listen to different dialects and practice speaking them. You don't need to have the accent down perfectly, but a few well-spoken lines will snap your audience to attention. However, don't choose voices

or characters that are beyond your range of believability.

**4 Make different characters occupy different physical spaces.** When you become another character during a dialogue, physically step out of the main character's position. Give each person in your story their own real estate. It doesn't need to be a big move, but it does need to happen. One step to the side can often be enough to achieve the desired effect.

No message will be effectively delivered to your audience unless *you* feel it.

**5 Be in the moment.** Interested people are interesting people. If you are reading a newspaper as part of your talk, don't hold it and pretend to read, because the audience will know. Actually read from a newspaper prompt. The audience will feel the difference. If you feel what you are doing, the audience will feel it with you. Make your props real.

**6 Show the detail.** Bringing the arc of a story (the narrative) down to a minute detail will nail the moment. For example, I can speak of how I took piano lessons from an overweight, bored and sweating man who chain-smoked. But if I also introduce the ticking of a clock or the small black hairs on the back of his fingers, then I have brought the audience into a single memorable moment.

**7 Being tender is better than being theatrical.** Aim for the heart. It is theatrical to dump a basket of letters onto a table to demonstrate the abundance of mail you received after your trip to Africa. But the effect is far greater if you show how receiving just one heartfelt letter made a difference in your life.

**8 Kill your little darlings.** This phrase has been offered for decades (at least) as literary advice to aspiring writers who include their own favorite passages in their writing. This advice applies to writing speeches, as well, and so, if anything in your story is not clear or focused, or prevents the story from moving along, then take it out—no matter how much you love it. If the delete button is too traumatic for you, then copy and paste your passage into a different file to use later. Remember, less really can be more.

**9 Deliver from your body, not from your head.** Feel it! No message will be effectively delivered to your audience unless *you* feel it. Delivering from the head is a different kind of speech, one that involves passing along information, such as: *one plus two equals three*. Don't take this approach in storytelling, as this is a time for heart, not information download.

Practice these tips to engage your audience, and you too can master the art of presenting from the podium. **T**

**Karen Banfield, ACB, CL,** is a performance coach, writer and trained therapist living in Ojai, California. Visit her website at [www.karenbanfield.me](http://www.karenbanfield.me).



# Your First Few Speech Evaluations

Learn to report on what you see and hear.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

Sooner or later that day is going to arrive—the day when you’ll give your first speech evaluation. I suspect you’ll have a few concerns as that time approaches. You might ask, “What do I look for? How do I put my thoughts together? What if the speaker is much better than I am?” As you prepare for your first evaluation, try to learn ahead of time which manual the speaker is using. I recommend you read the whole project through, but if you don’t get the chance to do that before the meeting, at least look at the questions on the Evaluation Guide at the end of the project to familiarize yourself with the speech requirements.

As you read those questions, you may be thinking: *This is a long list!* On my first evaluations I found those lists overwhelming, so I picked three criteria from the Evaluation Guide to focus on. That gave me something more manageable, something that didn’t seem like such a daunting task.

I took a sheet of paper and divided it into quadrants. I did this by drawing a vertical line down the center of the page and a horizontal line halfway down. That gave me four boxes.

I gave the first three boxes a heading of one of the three criteria listed in the manual. In the fourth box, I wrote “Anything Else That I See.” As I listened to the speaker deliver his speech, I listed my observations in the appropriate box.

You might want to take the same approach. It will help you organize your thoughts and keep you focused. If you come up with an empty box, it means that you need to look closer at the criteria you had chosen.

Before you know it, the speech will be over. Now is the time to prepare your oral evaluation. Take a look at your observations and find three or four positive comments. Number them in the order that you will deliver them. Next, look for one or two areas for improvement. Number those, as well. Then come up with an encouraging comment as a conclusion. Congratulations, you are now ready to present your first speech evaluation!

Yes, I know. That one big question remains: “What can I tell the best speaker in the club if I don’t see any room for improvement?”

I will answer that question by telling a personal story. I have delivered a lot of speeches over the last 10-plus years, which means I have received a lot of evaluations. However, there is one I think about on a regular basis, and that one occurred about five years ago. It was from a relatively new Toastmaster. What did she say that was so memorable?

“Bill, you are a really good speaker. There isn’t anything that I can tell you—except that you keep playing with the flap on the pocket of your sports jacket.”


Great input! You see, I had a nervous habit—it was an obvious habit that was sure to drive my audience crazy. Why didn’t the more advanced Toastmasters ever mention it? It’s because they had been looking only at speech structure, body language and other traditional criteria. They didn’t see my habit because they had looked right past it.

You, as a new member, are in a unique position to help the advanced speakers in your club because you observe their

speeches through fresh eyes. So if you are evaluating someone who is a much better speaker than you are, ask yourself, *Are they doing anything that seems a little strange?*

Evaluating a speech is relatively simple. It involves reporting on what you see and hear—in a friendly, helpful manner. As you learn more, your evaluations will become richer in content. Yes, eventually you will look at speech structure and body language. And for those of you who haven’t yet started in the Pathways learning experience—Toastmasters’ new education program—you’ll get lots of practice with speech evaluations when Pathways is introduced in your district. But for now, start where *you* are today, and recognize that you are in a unique position to help every member in your club.

## Additional resources are available in the Toastmasters Online Store:

- ▶ *The Art of Effective Evaluation* Power-Point presentation (Item # 251CD) and its coordinating workbook (Item # 251B).
- ▶ The Individual Speech Evaluation Form, set of 25 (Item # 165).
- ▶ *Evaluate to Motivate* (Item # 292). 

**Bill Brown, DTM**, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of *Jackpot Speakers*, which specializes in speech evaluation. Learn more at [www.billbrownspeechcoach.com](http://www.billbrownspeechcoach.com).



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Learn how to offer feedback by watching an exclusive video.

Photo courtesy of Oliver Sambeth



Members of the Rhetorik im Gebrüder Schmid Zentrum club, in Stuttgart, Germany, trek into the Tannheim Mountains in the Austrian state of Tyrol.

## The Importance of

# HAVING

*“If you’re happy and you know it, and you really want to show it, if you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands!”*

—BARNEY THE DINOSAUR

OK, Barney didn’t really originate that phrase, but playing, laughing and happy clapping are not just child’s play. They can also be the hallmark of your Toastmasters meeting, which can be playful and filled with laughter. We certainly love happy clapping. Applause is an essential element of our meetings.

Build team spirit and camaraderie with creative club meetings.

BY MAUREEN ZAPPALA, DTM

Toastmasters meetings are fun. But maybe the fun has waned a bit, and you’ve forgotten how much fun a meeting can be. Is your meeting the same old format, week in and week out? Don’t let it get stale. Far too many members leave their clubs or abandon their goals because meetings are predictable and monotonous. It’s time to inject more fun into your meetings!





*Puerto Rico Toastmasters club, San Juan, Puerto Rico, celebrates at every opportunity.*



*Members of Puchong English Toastmasters, in Selangor, Malaysia, toast to their 100th club meeting.*



*Members celebrate the anniversary of the Chamber Toastmasters club, Kiev, Ukraine.*

# FUN

*“The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.”—e.e. cummings*

## Why Have Fun?

Psychology confirms that when people have fun, the brain releases feel-good chemicals such as oxytocin and dopamine, leading to feelings of bonding with—and safety around—other people. Scott Christopher, author of the book *The Levity Effect: It Pays to Lighten Up*, refers to a 9.1 million-person study by the Great Place to Work Institute that makes the connection between the top places to work and the amount of fun employees have. Studies show that fun in the workplace can increase profits and employee camaraderie, lower absenteeism and reduce workplace conflict. While Toastmasters is not a for-profit workplace, there’s every reason to assume that increasing fun at meetings can have the same effect. Members who connect with others in an environment of fun will be more productive, creative and accepting of others. It is more likely that they’ll stay in Toastmasters and be more committed to reaching

their goals. Think about the times you’ve enjoyed the company of others. Most likely, you felt a warm connection to them, and those emotions helped cultivate a stronger sense of community.

Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, and bestselling author of *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion and Purpose*, writes, “Happiness is really just about four things: perceived control, perceived progress, connectedness (number and depth of your relationships), and vision/meaning (being part of something bigger than yourself).” Toastmasters can deliver in all four of those elements, but cultivating that connectedness is easily achieved by creating fun member experiences.

The ways to have fun at Toastmasters can be divided into three categories: 1) Fun Twists on Traditions, 2) Fun Meeting Themes and 3) Fun Events Outside the Normal Meeting Site.

**RIGHT:** Jonas Grundler, of the Rhetorik im Gebrüder Schmid Zentrum club in Stuttgart, Germany, delivers a speech in Schlossplatz. Photo by Xia Liu

**BELOW:** Moneris Toastmasters dress in the style of the Roaring Twenties at their holiday party in Liberty Grand entertainment complex, Toronto, Canada.



*"We don't quit playing because we grow"*



### Fun Twists on Traditions

Why not jazz up normal club activities with some levity? Here is how some clubs do it.

If anyone with a speaking role at the Independently Speaking club in Seven Hills, Ohio, fails to use the Word of the Day, they "Pay the Pig" a quarter. The pig is a tacky pink plastic piggy-bank toy; the money collected is used to throw a club party. Peggy Carr, DTM, of the Box Elder club in Logan, Utah, says, "In our meetings we vote for and award a spark-plug award to the member who adds the most 'spark' to the meeting (we use a real spark plug!), and a bone award to the person who makes the biggest error in the meeting. The bone award is a fundraiser since we auction the bone and members buy the votes. Sometimes bone winners nominate themselves. We have a great deal of fun while respecting and encouraging one another."

Table Topics provides the most opportunities to inject creativity and laughter. Bill Essen, DTM, of the Speak With Us club in Cincinnati, Ohio, describes a hilarious take on Table Topics: "We do Table Topics 'Spin the Bottle.' Everyone is in a circle. The Table Topicsmaster starts a story, spins the bottle and whoever it points to will continue the story."

### Fun Meeting Themes

Many clubs host holiday themed meetings, end-of-the-year celebrations, or meetings reflecting a national or cultural event such as the Olympics or a national holiday. A quick search of the Toastmasters International Facebook page provides dozens of themed meeting ideas, including "Wisdom of Winnie the Pooh," a reverse meeting (where the meeting starts with evaluations and ends with speeches and greetings), and celebrations around obscure or unusual holidays like National Chocolate Day or International Dog Biscuit Day. If your club meeting falls on May 4 of any year, have a *Star Wars* theme, "May the Fourth be with you." Need more inspiration? Prince George Toastmasters in Prince George, British Columbia, has an incredible list of theme meeting ideas at <http://bit.ly/2sFB30X>. Be creative when planning around the theme. During the meeting, the Toastmaster can insert comments, facts and short stories related to the theme. Members can dress in costume and provide food and decorations for the theme. The Table Topics, and perhaps even the prepared speeches, can revolve around the theme.

Have fun *creating* the fun. Kris Pool, DTM, of Cream City Communicators Toastmasters club in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, says, "We had a surprise birthday party theme, complete with

*older; we grow older because we quit playing.”— Oliver Wendell Holmes*

cake and decorations. Members picked a wrapped gift, and inside was an item to represent the role they'd have that night. Foot lotion for a Table Topics speaker (thinking on your feet), star-shaped stress balls for speakers (they're shooting for the stars in improving their speaking skills), and even sparkling apple cider and a glass for guests (to sit back, relax and enjoy the meeting). It was fun for everyone."

Annette Mayfield's (ACG, ALB) club, Pines Toastmasters club in Brisbane, Australia, held a pirate-themed meeting with pirate-inspired speeches and Table Topics. She says, "The club had such high energy—we converted a guest to a member. It definitely built camaraderie. We now have a social night every second month. It makes the mentor-mentee bond stronger, and people participate more when they are having fun and are part of a group." Indeed this is significant. Forced mentor relationships don't work as well as ones that develop naturally as a result of spending unstructured time together.

The Canberra Gourmet Toastmasters club in Canberra, Australia, takes its December meeting offsite each year. Club member Kaylene Ledger, DTM, says, "In 2016, our meeting was at Cockington Green. We walked the grounds answering Table Topics questions about the miniature villages. In 2015, we visited the National Zoo and Aquarium where members became zookeepers with some prepared and impromptu speeches." Greg Ching, DTM, of Pearl City, Hawaii, says, "We used to rent a karaoke room and our club had a lot of fun singing to each other. We speak all the time at our meetings so singing brought out a lot of laughs."

To welcome a new Toastmasters year, Frankston Toastmasters club in Victoria, Australia, conducts a special meeting in July. Club member David Hughes, DTM, says, "It's an international theme, where our members (or their partners) from Wales, Scotland, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Australia prepare a local food dish for our supper recess. It's such an enjoyable evening."

### **Fun Outside the Normal Meeting Site**

After a meeting, many members may gather at a pub, restaurant or cafe to relax with other Toastmasters. Holiday parties, hikes, summer picnics and community projects are also on the list of enjoyable events, and when imagination is unleashed, the fun escalates. One day, a Toastmaster in Brisbane, Australia, suggested holding a meeting in a pool. That comment gave birth to the April Pools Day meeting on April 1 of 2017. Fifteen members representing 12 clubs from three divisions jumped into the Southbank Lagoon to conduct a most unconventional meeting, complete with a laminated agenda and timing cards. Speakers gave humorous speeches, and the themed Table Topics included props such as an anchor, a rubber duck, a paddle board and a boat propeller.

Some members of The Rhetorik im Gebrüder Schmid Zentrum club in Stuttgart, Germany, enjoy taking hiking trips into the mountains where they even practice speeches and give each other feedback. Club member Patricia Sadoun, DTM, says she

enjoys "the ability to communicate, take responsibility and have fun with one another."

Moneris Toastmasters in Toronto, Canada, has an elegant semi-formal themed holiday party every year. Last year the theme was *Great Gatsby*, and the party was held in Liberty Grand, an exquisite entertainment complex in Toronto decorated in elegant 1920s décor with soaring ceilings, crystal chandeliers and fine period furnishings. Club members dressed in the style of the Roaring Twenties time period made famous by the *Great Gatsby* novel and movie. (The cover photograph of this magazine depicts the club members at their New Year's Eve party.)

Mercedes Garrido, CC, CL, of the Moneris club remarked, "Our members bring a spontaneous and fun vibe each week to the club. The atmosphere, stories and sharing of our Toastmasters journeys all create that bond that extends outside the club." Hernan Sanchez says, "Attending Moneris' holiday party and having fun with fellow Toastmasters gave me a sense of belonging and increased my confidence. I recently participated in a district contest. It was intimidating, but seeing my club members in the audience made me feel comfortable and I delivered one of my best speeches ever."

While planning your events, don't overlook the opportunities to meet your personal Toastmasters goals. Joseph Arnold, DTM, of Aspinwall Toastmasters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is passionate about members using special events to complete manual projects. For example, consider how his club used a simple off-site dinner event. "We went to dinner as a group, inviting spouses. We had an agenda with Table Topics and we presented achievement awards from the previous year. Members who planned the event earned Competent Leader (CL) credit for planning a special event or helping to plan a special event. Those presenting and receiving awards earned credit for projects 4 or 5, in the *Special Occasion Speeches* manual. The Table Topicsmaster and Toastmaster earned CL credit, as did the Table Topics speakers. The vice president public relations gathered great material for print and social media posts to promote the club. It takes planning, but a lot can be done."

The ways to have fun in your meetings are limited only by your imagination. Build team spirit in your club while inspiring people to reach their goals. Then give yourselves a hand. Because when you're happy and you know it, you clap your hands.

**Editor's Note:** *All clubs depicted in this article are on track to being President's Distinguished for the Toastmaster 2016-2017 year.* ■

**Maureen Zappala, DTM**, is a former NASA propulsion engineer. Today she's a professional speaker, author and presentation skills coach, as well as founder of *High Altitude Strategies*, a coaching and speaking service. She belongs to the *Aerospace Toastmasters club in Cleveland, Ohio*. Visit her website at [www.MaureenZ.com](http://www.MaureenZ.com).



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** View more fun club photos and check out a special video.

# Where's Your **Blind Spot**?

Are you ready to look at yourself through the eyes of others?

BY CRAIG HARRISON, DTM

**D**id you know you have blind spots? It's OK, we all do! As a speaker and leader, there are things you cannot see, hear or independently know about yourself. The good news: Once you learn what's in your blind spot and incorporate this information into your own development, the more likely you are to win contests and elections and garner the trust and confidence of colleagues and clubmates.

When you drive a car, despite rear and side view mirrors, there is an area that you, as a driver, physically can't see, a spot where another car, motorcycle or bicycle may be lurking, yet you are not aware of it.

How do you deal with *your* blind spots? Only when others reflect back to you what they see do you gain insight into how you're perceived. And many times it's *not* as you intended to be seen or heard. Therein lies the disparity.

## **Feedback Illuminates Your Blind Spots**

To compensate for natural blind spots, we rely on tools like mirrors when we're getting dressed and 360-degree reviews in our employment appraisals. As speakers and leaders, we don't know what we don't know, but key members in Toastmasters clubs can help illuminate our blind spots.

Key members, for example, can include a speech evaluator, an assigned mentor or a guidance committee for your hand-picked High Performance Leadership project. These colleagues can help you see what you cannot, and help you know how you come across to others. Through their feedback you improve and grow as you harmonize your projections with the perceptions of others, and your intentions with actual results.

Are you ready to look at yourself through the eyes of others? The more you know about how others see you, the more informed your decisions will become.

## **Opening the Doors of Perception**

One speaker sees himself as bold, but audience members perceive him as arrogant. Another speaker sees himself as the ultimate improviser, while others regard him as unprepared. Perceptions are often in the eyes of beholders; they don't often match our own sense of how we are perceived. Worse yet, we don't even realize the disparity.

Why don't people see us the way we see ourselves? Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen address this question in their 2014 book *Thanks for the Feedback*.

## **Universal Blind Spots: Our Leaky Face and Leaky Tone**

"Some blind spots are common to all people," explains co-author Stone, the founder of Triad Consulting and a lecturer at Harvard Law School. "Our face when giving a presentation is a literal blind spot. We tend not to be aware of the unintended signals our facial expressions may be conveying." Our eyes literally can't see ourselves when we are speaking. Our audience not only sees but also interprets our facial expressions which may belie our words. For example, a speaker's furrowed brow or look of disdain will contradict a verbal message intended to convey concern, care or love.

"We also have trouble hearing our voice the way others hear it," writes Stone, explaining the physiological reasons for this. From the time we are infants, we humans develop an ability to hear through

our superior temporal sulcus (STS) located just above our ears. This helps us interpret human sounds and the emotions embedded in them, and helps us decipher tone and meaning. Yet when we speak, our own STS turns off. We literally can't hear our own tone the way others can. We don't realize how we sound. It's often a big surprise when our evaluator, mentor or loved one tells us we sound sarcastic, tired or disinterested, distrustful or dismissive. It's a blind spot we all have. Stone recommends coaching and videotaping in instances where blind spots exist.

## **When Perception Doesn't Match Intention**

"Many of us have trouble understanding the impact we have on others," explains Stone. "It's because we tend to judge our impact based on our intentions, and they are often very different than how others perceive us." Some people are naturally more empathetic, and some less so. How aware are you of how you "come across" to others? Sometimes feedback from listeners derived from this gap between a speaker's intention and the audience member's perception can range from mild surprise to disbelief. Seemingly innocuous feedback from a speech evaluator that illuminates a speaker's blind spot may nevertheless land harshly. While it's no big deal to the evaluator, "to the receiver, feedback that illuminates a blind spot can (sometimes) be devastating. It impacts a speaker's sense of who he or she is, and wants to be, in the world," says Stone.

Stone offers this example: "If I think of myself as generous and kind and learn that others don't think of me that way, that can take a long time to make sense of."



The speaker and evaluator should be aware of the power of feedback. It's all in how it's received. Many factors may be at play, including one's upbringing, past traumas or psychological make-up. If the parties know and trust each other, the degree of feedback and candor can be calibrated to what the speaker is able to handle. Yet the evaluator often doesn't know the speaker well, and therefore well-intentioned suggestions or critiques can hit a vulnerable speaker hard and deep when shared right after a speech is delivered, despite the evaluator's best intentions.

### Factors Affecting Feedback

Receiving permission to evaluate, provide feedback or coach a speaker or leader is the first step. Unsolicited feedback may be unwanted, untimely and thus unwise to bestow. Good timing is also essential. Often speakers are vulnerable right after they finish their speech; they haven't processed their own performance yet and are ripe for bruising. Toastmasters are trained to temper criticism with praise, and lead and end with praise using the sandwich approach in an official speech evaluation.

Stone points out a common flaw in such an evaluation. Many times the praise given is general while the criticism is specific. Stone advises a more even-hand-

ed approach, "Too often we give general positive comments, specific and lengthy negative ones and then finish with more general positive ones. Better to be as specific with the positive as the negative."

**We literally can't hear our own tone the way others can. We don't realize how we sound.**

Professional speaker and speech coach Max Dixon of Seattle, Washington, says one key to coaching speakers around perceived blind spots is to go slowly. In his coaching he emphasizes implementing that "one single, simple, doable thing" that eases a client into change. Too often speakers being coached are given too much to think about, or to try to implement at once. Stone concurs, "A good guideline is that people can take in one thing at a time (if that)."

### Professional Speakers Have Blind Spots Too

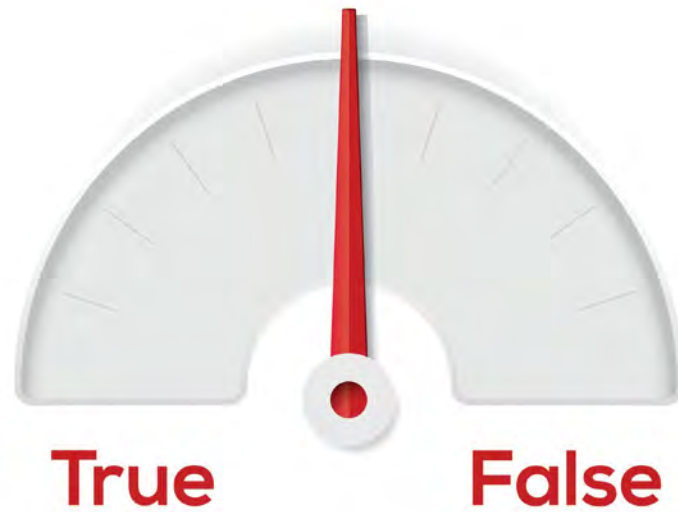
Like Toastmasters, professional speakers strive for continuous improvement. They have a vested interest in discovering blind spots that could offend or alienate clients and mitigate repeat business. The most

astute professional speakers seek feedback from meeting planners, those who hire them, and speaking bureaus who procure them for clients. Professional speakers need to be mindful of such issues as excessive selling from the platform, allowing their religious or political beliefs to filter into their business presentations and being respectful of the diversity in their audiences, to name a few of the many challenges.

### Set Your Sights on Insights

"Our perception could either be our path to nirvana or an invisible cage that bottles us up," states author and technology leader Pawan Mishra. When you seek to discover your blind spots you create opportunities for growth and self-improvement. Are you ready to open your blinds? ■

**DTM Craig Harrison, PDG**, *discovered, with the help of other Toastmasters in his district, his numerous blind spots the year following his term as District 57 governor. Knowing about these helped him improve as a leader when he subsequently served as president of the National Speakers Association—Northern California chapter. Access some of his complimentary learning tools for professional and amateur speakers and leaders through [www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com](http://www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com).*



# FAKE NEWS

is in the News.  
**Keep it Out  
of Your Speeches**

Learn how to find reliable information online.

BY TERESA R. FAUST, CC

In April 2017, a number of news outlets in the United States and the United Kingdom carried a story of a Mississippi couple undergoing infertility treatments who found out during the process that they were biological twins.

Although several of these news outlets are usually considered to be reliable sources, they were passing along a story that originated on a website for a newspaper that does not exist. The story, and the “newspaper” itself, were fakes.

Ironically, the article managed to spread weeks after “fake news” and “alternative facts” had become hot topics in the 2016 American presidential campaign and the election aftermath.

Despite the current attention, fake news is not a new phenomenon. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams spread rumors about each other in the press in the American presidential campaign of 1800, Holocaust deniers have been around since World War II, and propaganda and disinformation have probably played a role in every war.

Today’s internet makes it easier to get fake news into the public eye and spreads it like wildfire. The social media giant Facebook, considered to be a major, if unwitting, distributor of fake news, is stepping up its efforts to silence accounts spreading manipulated or inaccurate information. Google, whose ubiquitous search engine did not discriminate between real and fake news, has tweaked its algorithms to demote material originating from non-authoritative websites and is asking users to help identify and tag suspect content. Jimmy Wales, co-founder of the crowd-sourced online encyclopedia Wikipedia, is launching



## Fake-news writers aim for hot-button issues.

Wikitrubune, an online news site combining the efforts of paid journalists and volunteer contributors, to counteract fake news.

Project 7 in the *Competent Communication* manual emphasizes researching your speech topics. Your speeches will be more effective if you support your points with facts collected from reliable sources. “Facts” can include verifiable information and statistics. The internet certainly makes access to materials from organizations and individuals readily available. How can we know what is real?

### How to evaluate stories and sources

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has a number of suggestions when it comes to evaluating news stories.

- ▶ When reading an article you may want to cite, look at the website or publication to see what organization may be behind it. Check out the author as well. Are the other articles found on the same site or by the same author in a similar vein? If supporting sources are listed, it may be worth checking those. If no supporting sources are listed, that may be an indication that something is amiss.
- ▶ The headline is not usually written by the author and may not really reflect its content. A headline’s aim is to get readers to read the article, and nothing grabs readers like sensationalism. The article may be meant as a joke or satire. The best jokes build on a grain of truth; don’t assume the whole pile is true.
- ▶ Check the date of the story; sometimes it’s really just old news.
- ▶ Examine your own biases. Do certain subjects tend to bring you closer to anger more quickly than others? Fake-news writers aim for hot-button issues.
- ▶ Quantity does not signify quality; the number of times an article is cited or repeated is not necessarily an indication of its trustworthiness.

In the story of the Mississippi twins, no names were given for the author, the couple involved, their doctor or even the clinic. In short, there were no verifiable details in the story. The article appeared on a website for a newspaper that does not exist, and the website

lists no editors or writers. The story was simply a fictional tale on a salacious topic sure to draw attention.

One way to check on a rumor or news story is to consult one of the websites set up to combat fake news. Possibly the oldest is **Snopes.com**, which began in 1994 as a place to check out urban

legends, sensational stories that seem to have a life of their own and pop up every so often. Snopes covers the gamut from today’s political headlines to the Neiman Marcus cookie recipe revenge story that’s been around since at least the late 1990s. The most recent rumors are covered in the Snopes Hot 50 list.

**FactCheck.org** is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. Created in 2003, it concentrates on U.S. politics. It also has a section called SciCheck, which evaluates scientific claims publicized to influence public policy on topics such as global warming, pesticides and drug use.

**PolitiFact.com** is another site focusing on American politics. It was created by the Tampa Bay Times in 2007 and won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for its coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign. PolitiFact has sections dealing with specific states in the U.S. and also rates the truthfulness of specific politicians and political commentators.

The U.K.’s Channel 4 News FactCheck, launched in 2005, is credited as the first regular source of political fact-checking in Europe, followed a few years later by similar sites in France and the Netherlands. Some sites are sponsored by newspapers, such as Le Monde’s *Les Décodeurs*, the Decoders, whose motto is “*venons-en aux faits*,” or let’s get to the facts. Others, such as Italy’s *Pagella Politica*, were created by independent organizations.

Today there are 113 independent fact-checking groups active in more than 50 countries around the world, according to a report released by Oxford’s Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in November 2016. More than 90 percent of these sites were established since 2010.

### Nothing is bias-free

There really is no such thing as a totally bias-free publication or website. As objective as an article may appear, the mere fact that choices had to be made as to what to include and what to leave out introduces an element of bias. Many publications do strive to be as bias-free as they can be. How can we tell which ones these are?



When it comes to websites, domain names can give you an idea of potential bias. Most of us are now aware that **.gov** designates a government-sponsored website, **.edu** is for an educational institution, **.org** is an organization, **.net** is a network and **.com** and **.biz** are commercial enterprises. We tend to trust government and educational sites, but it isn't always that simple. Savvy readers know that a government site may highlight information favored by those who are currently in power, as we are seeing with the elimination of climate change information on U.S. government websites. Websites affiliated with a college or university may not be endorsed by the institution itself; in the past, some individual faculty holding extreme views posted these on their webpages. Although we may feel we are aware of specific biases represented by websites, be aware that look-alike sites with similar web addresses may actually be counterfeit sites attempting to snag readers holding opposite views.

Be aware that look-alike sites with similar web addresses may actually be counterfeit sites attempting to snag readers holding opposite views.



**Finding reliable sources**

Computerized indexes of magazine and journal articles began appearing in academic and public libraries in the 1990s. Today, you would be hard-pressed to find a periodical index in paper form in a library, and most databases have expanded to include the full text of the articles they index. Many public libraries allow their patrons to access these databases from home, using their library card barcode as a login. In some areas, access goes beyond the local public library and is made available to residents of an entire state, province or county, such as Florida in the U.S., and Quebec in Canada. The periodicals included in these databases are likely to be those that are widely considered to be reliable.

Some of the databases are general in nature, covering a variety of subjects appearing in popular or scholarly publications. Many libraries use a “discovery tool” which allows users to search several databases at once. This one-stop search may be all you need to find material for your speeches. Be aware that not all of a library’s databases may be connected to the discovery tool, and that for some topics, selecting a subject-specific database (like for health or business) would be more useful.

EBSCO and Gale are among the most commonly encountered database vendors, but there are many others. Despite specific differences, there are a number of common functionalities across databases. Knowing how they work can help you get more relevant results from your searches.

Try to distill your search down to the most important words. To research the topics in this article, for example, you might focus on the idea of evaluating sources of fake news. You might begin with these search terms: *fake news evaluation*. Many databases search for a string of words together. If the database uses Boolean operators, the search *fake news AND evaluation* may return

better results. All articles returned by that search will have fake news and evaluation somewhere in the article.

We may want to put fake news in quotes to ensure those words are searched together, *“fake news.”* This is also useful when searching the titles of specific books or movies, as in *“run lola run,”* or names of organizations, like *“toastmasters international.”* Truncation is a way to get all forms of a word. The truncation symbol varies from database to database, but frequently an asterisk is used. If we then run the search *“fake news” and evaluat\**, all of the articles will mention fake news and all will have a form of the word evaluate—evaluates, evaluating, evaluated, evaluation, evaluations.

If the search is not pulling up enough articles, consider synonyms or near-synonyms for some of the words. In this article, we have seen *“alternative facts,” “rumors”* and *“urban legends”* used in place of *“fake news.”* Use the Boolean operator OR to link these terms, as in: *“fake news” OR “urban legend\*.”* We might as well put a truncation

symbol after “legend” to catch both singular and plural forms of the word. We can combine all of these in one search, using parentheses to clarify what is being AND-ed and OR-ed, like this: *(“fake news” OR “urban legend\*”) AND evaluat\**. The resulting articles are likely to be relevant to your search and provide good content for your speech.

When trying to locate facts for speeches, consider adding the word *statistics* or *reviews* to your subject search, such as: *breast cancer AND statistics* or *iphone AND reviews*. Your audience will give more credence to your point of view if you include objective facts or the views of respected experts in support of your position.

**Help your club**

Your Toastmasters club may want to explore these topics further. The infographic created by IFLA from a **FactCheck.org** article “How to Spot Fake News,” (see page 25) is available for download in several languages from the IFLA website, **www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174**.

To learn about the free periodical databases you may be able to access in your community, contact your local library. Why not invite a local librarian to your club to introduce your members to the resources available online? If yours is a corporate club, your company may have its own library and a librarian who is familiar with local resources. ■

**Teresa R. Faust, MLS, CC**, is library director at the College of Central Florida and a member of the Ocala Noon Toastmasters club.



**ONLINE EXTRAS:** Watch a video and learn how to spot fake news.

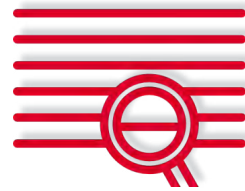


# HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



## CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



## READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



## CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



## SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



## CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



## IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



## CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgment.



## ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.



## Can You Hear Me Now?

How to boost your vocal power to say it like you mean it.

BY LISA B. MARSHALL

**F**or almost an entire year, while hosting *The Public Speaker* (a weekly audio podcast on the topic of communication) I was sick just about every other week until I was finally diagnosed and treated for adult-onset asthma! During that year my voice was consistently nasal, breathy and raspy. With hundreds of thousands of monthly downloads, that trifecta of awfulness motivated several listeners to share negative comments that were, let's just say, less than motivational!

Here's the thing—whether we like it or not, we're judged by our voices. Thoughts, memories and emotions are automatically triggered by the sound of another person's voice. The research is very clear: When a voice is clear, smooth and dynamic, the speaker is viewed as competent, confident and compelling. Unclear, hesitant flat speech creates the opposite impression.

After your next club meeting, ask yourself: Was my voice influential or ineffectu-

al? How did my voice support my words? What traits and patterns of my voice betrayed my messages? If you're like most of us, you're probably not absolutely certain, because we rarely hear our own voice as others do.

To objectively evaluate yourself, I recommend recording your voice. Then download the free *Your Speaking Voice* manual from the Toastmasters Online Store. Use the Speech Profile to evaluate yourself, and ask a fellow Toastmaster to complete the same profile for you. Your goal? To identify your potential problem areas and use exercises to improve your vocal power.

Here are some common vocal problems to listen for:

### Trailing Off

Do your sentences start off strong but the final few words diminish to the point that it is difficult or impossible to hear

you? Are you running out of breath toward the end of each sentence? When you trail off, your listeners miss words and your thoughts feel incomplete. It's important to deliver all your words with similar energy and commitment all the way to the end of each sentence. If not, you'll lose clarity, credibility and authority.

**The Fix:** Use diaphragmatic breathing techniques to breathe through to the end of a phrase and not run out of steam. As you speak, imagine written words falling out of your mouth and floating toward your listener. Loud, clear words float at the level of your mouth, while quiet words fall to the floor. The idea is to keep your words floating slightly above and below your mouth—especially the ones at the end of your sentences!

### Mumbling

Mumbling is a close cousin of trailing off and often leads to the same negative

impressions. If you're a mumblor, you probably already know because you're tired of people asking you, "Can you repeat that?" Unlike trailing off, which is a breathing/confidence issue, mumbling is usually due to poor enunciation. I've noticed that many people hold stress and tension in the jaw, neck and mouth, which makes it more difficult to open the mouth wide enough to speak clearly. To speak clearly, you should have at least one finger width of space between your upper and lower teeth.

**The Fix:** Loosen up your neck, mouth and jaw by yawning and by chewing a big imaginary piece of gum. Then practice speaking your words with your mouth two finger widths apart. Be sure to use a mirror for this exercise, because your mouth will naturally begin to close if you aren't looking.

### Vocal Fry

Do you hear a croaky, raspy frog in your voice? Vocal fry happens when you move your voice down to the lowest register. It involves elongating certain syllables so that they vibrate at the back of your throat, creating a low pitched scratchy, gravelly sound most common in young North American and British women's voices. It's difficult to describe in words, but you've probably heard vocal fry in celebrities like American Kim Kardashian.

People in the older generations (baby boomer or Generation X) tend to perceive vocal fry as irritating, and at least one study showed that voices with fry were perceived as less competent, less attractive and less hireable. However, many in the younger generation don't view it that way, and in fact, intentionally use it in an effort to sound sexier and more authoritative.

**The Fix:** Try a few of the breathing and voice relaxation exercises found in the *Your Speaking Voice* manual. You can also try slightly raising the pitch of your voice so you're consistently speaking toward the middle of your natural vocal range (the manual explains how to find your vocal range if you are unsure).

### Monotone

Is your voice flat, lackluster, lifeless? A monotone voice lacks intonation—a variety of tone, pitch, loudness, rhythm and tempo. Intonation is critical because that's what we use to signal our attitudes and emotions and focus attention on important elements of our message. What I've noticed is that people who speak in a monotone often don't give themselves permission to openly express emotions. On a scale of zero to 10, with zero being dead and 10 being over-the-top emotional, these people often express at level 2 or 3, at best.

**The Fix:** A good way to develop intonation is to exaggerate. Try to express emotion at level 9 or 10 using your entire body. Start with anger. Start with the phrase *I hate this. I can't do this.* Scrunch your face, grit your teeth, clench your fists and repeat the words with as much emotion as you can muster, choosing a different word to emphasize with each repeat. Do the exercise again, except this time express the opposite emotion using upbeat words: *I can do this! I love this!* Change your facial expressions and movements to show extreme joy.

To speak clearly, you should have at least one finger width of space between your upper and lower teeth.

Finally, repeat both sets of phrases at level 5 several times. This time look in the mirror and notice your face. For someone who usually limits facial expression to levels 1 through 3, level 5 will seem overly exaggerated. However, rest assured, this reflects natural expressions of emotions appropriate for both conversations and public speaking (much more natural than limited expression at levels 1 through 3). For more practice, try some exercises in

the "Spice Up Your Speaking" section of the manual.

### Upspeak

Does your voice have a rising intonation at the end of declarative sentences? In other words, does it sound like you're asking a question when you're making a statement? Conversationally, we use this rising intonation to convey the sentiment "Do you understand me/agree with me/approve of me?" However, when it's used excessively or exclusively, particularly in a prepared speech, it becomes problematic. Upspeak makes you sound uncertain.

**The Fix:** Ask and then answer a question just using one word. *Really?* (rising intonation). *Really!* (falling intonation). Practice making the difference between the two as big as you can. Then practice declarative sentences by issuing a series of commands to your imaginary dog. *Give me your paw. Play dead. Roll over.* The idea is to get used to how rising and falling intonation feel different in your throat.

### Will You Commit to Improving Your Vocal Power?

Although I've given some vocal traits to listen for and a few exercises to get you started, when it comes to developing the voice, what you really need are short, daily repetitions over a long period of time. Like going to the gym regularly, daily practice gives you the opportunity to reinforce new skills and create a noticeable difference in your voice.

If you want your voice to communicate strength, competence and confidence, take my mini-course, *21 Days to Improve Your Vocal Power* (<http://bit.ly/2rBlmW9>). It's free to Toastmasters members for a limited time. I believe everyone deserves to be heard! 🗣️

**Lisa B. Marshall** is a communications expert who delivers consulting and workshops, is author of *Smart Talk and Ace Your Interview* and host of the *Public Speaker and Smart Talk* podcasts. Learn more at [www.lisabmarshall.com](http://www.lisabmarshall.com).

# Keep Your Speech Within Time Limits

An easy way to tighten a speech is to use short words with few syllables.

BY PAUL JENKINSON, CC

One thing speakers learn in Toastmasters is the importance of keeping within the allotted time for a speech. When you see the red signal, you should be at the conclusion of your talk. Keeping your speech within time is a courtesy to your audience and to other speakers. If this isn't a compelling enough reason, consider this: If you exceed your time limit you will be disqualified from speech contests.

When you prepare a speech, you probably practice it by reading it out loud against the clock. If your speech takes too long you can edit the text. However, it can be difficult to know how much to cut, especially if you make big changes. Reading each new draft aloud against the clock is

time consuming, and sometimes impractical (as when you are in a library or on the train). Fortunately, there is a quick, easy and silent way to estimate how long it will take to read a new draft.

The duration of a speech depends more on the number of *syllables* in the speech rather than the number of *words*. These numbers are only roughly correlated, since words can range from monosyllables like *I* and *a* to polysyllabic monsters like *pneumoultramicroscopicilicovolcanoconiosis* (to cite an extreme example). Programs like Microsoft Word can tell you how many words your draft speech contains, but not how many syllables.

Fortunately, many syllable counters are available on the internet, including

[www.HowManySyllables.com](http://www.HowManySyllables.com), [www.SyllableCounter.net](http://www.SyllableCounter.net) and [www.WordCalc.com](http://www.WordCalc.com). Here's how to use a syllable counter to help you estimate the duration of your draft speeches:

First, take any piece of text and read it aloud at a comfortable pace and time yourself. When your allotted time is up, note how far you have read, then copy and paste only that portion of text into a syllable counter. The number of syllables in this text is the number of syllables that you can comfortably speak in the allotted time. Make a note of the number.

Now take the revised draft of your speech and paste it into the same syllable counter. Compare the number of syllables in your draft to your comfortable syllable number. If your draft has fewer syllables, you can afford to add longer pauses to your speech or even add a little more to it. However, if your draft has too many syllables you will need to cut it more ruthlessly. This does not necessarily mean that you have to cut the number of words. For example, replacing the word *initiate*, which has four syllables, with the word *begin*, which has two syllables, or even better with the one-syllable word *start*, will let you say the same thing in less time without having to speak any faster.

When you have a draft that has fewer syllables than your comfortable syllable number, it is worth practicing the new version aloud against the clock and fine-tuning it, as necessary.

One last thing to keep in mind: Find a syllable counter you enjoy using, but continue to use the same counter since different counters give slightly different results. ■

**Paul Jenkinson, CC**, is a member of the *Bombardier CH Toastmasters* in Zurich, Switzerland.

## SPEECHWRITING TIPS FROM THE PROS

BY DAVE ZIELINSKI

One of the most effective tactics to use in crafting speeches—especially those including PowerPoint slides—is to heed author Stephen Covey's principle of "starting with the end in mind," says Jim Endicott, head of coaching firm Distinction Communication in Portland, Oregon. To that end, Endicott has his clients create the last slide in their PowerPoint decks first, asking them to use three key points or less, and not exceed one line of text per point.

"The exercise helps create a laser focus on what you want the audience to think or believe differently at the end of your speech," Endicott says.

Nick Morgan, president of the speech coaching firm Public Words

and author of the book *Trust Me: Four Steps to Authenticity and Charisma*, uses a related method. He tells his clients to begin the speechwriting process by creating a one-sentence summary of what their talk is about.

"Everything that relates to that summary goes into the speech script, and things that don't are left out," Morgan says. "I think one trick of great speechwriting is knowing what to leave out. That kind of focus on your key message also is a good way to save time when writing speeches."

**Dave Zielinski** is a freelance journalist in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and a frequent contributor to the *Toastmaster* magazine.

# You Need More Than Goals to Succeed

Let your mind meander to trigger new thoughts and ideas.

BY RAVI RAMAN

*We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.*

— Albert Einstein

**G**oals are a vital tool for maximizing one's potential not just to achieve but to contribute. Goals enable the mind and body to organize resources in a manner that creates a favorable outcome. Goals are the North Star by which we can build the habits and systems that lead to a brighter future. I'd go so far as to say that humans are designed to be goal-seeking animals, with important aspects of our brain and physiology "lighting up" when pursuing a worthy goal.

You might think, by the tone of the past few sentences, that I think goals, and their achievement, are all that matter when it comes to living a full and successful life. If you believe that, you are incorrect. When we want to break free from the predictable and achieve something entirely new, we require more than just a worthy target. We need something beyond a destination that is predetermined. We need fresh ideas and new thoughts that will help us get to where we need to go. The new thought does not spring from predictability, planning or extrapolation from the past. New thinking comes from a different place.

## The Value of Emptiness

*You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment.* — Henry David Thoreau

New thoughts come from blank space, free time and quiet moments. They can be triggered by a good book, new conversations, a fantastic movie, or fresh perspectives shared by a new friend. New

thoughts can, and often do, come from the sudden embrace of a meandering mind.

Albert Einstein, for example, stumbled upon his special theory of relativity while taking a break from intensive mathematical work to allow his mind to wander and daydream.

Nothing I am saying contradicts the fact that goals are immensely useful and, dare I say, vital. What I am saying is that in addition to a habit of setting goals, be open enough to allow new thoughts into your world.

How? Cultivate a greater awareness to what you are doing moment by moment. Increase your curiosity, and strike up conversations with the people around you, even if you don't think they would be of any direct relevance to your current projects or goals. Most crucially, create blank space in your day, both free time and free mental space and quietude, to allow the fresh thought to emerge.

## Anyone Can Do It

Even the busiest among us can create this time and space. Here are three examples:

- ▶ Jeff Weiner, CEO of LinkedIn, is known to block up to two hours of free time per day on his calendar, divided into four

30-minute increments. Why? To allow new thought and fresh ideas to emerge.

- ▶ Bill Gates famously retreated from his busy job as co-founder and leader of Microsoft for a week, twice a year, to think about the future.
- ▶ Yuval Noah Harari, author of the book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (I recently read it, as did Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and CEO of Facebook), takes 30–60 days away from his busy teaching, writing and travel schedule to go on a meditation retreat each year. Harari does this in addition to a twice-a-day hour-long meditation practice.

## My Challenge to You

*Creativity [is] the process of having original ideas that have value.* — Sir Ken Robinson

My challenge to you, particularly to the goal-crazy ones among us (I include myself in this cohort), is to create empty time and space in your day to unleash your originality and creativity. Use this time to be bored, daydream and allow new thoughts to enter your world. Be it 10 minutes or two hours, see what this fallow ground will yield regarding creative ideas and insights. It's my belief that through entering this void, you will ultimately gain more progress than even the best **SMART Goal** could create on its own. ■

*This article was originally published on [raviraman.com](http://raviraman.com).*

**Ravi Raman** is an executive career coach and long-time veteran of Microsoft, where he led product management and marketing teams for several global software products and services. Read more of his articles at [raviraman.com/blog](http://raviraman.com/blog).

## SMART Goals:

SMART is a mnemonic that stands for:

**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**chievable  
**R**esults-focused  
**T**imely



## The Bucket List

Kick that idea right out the door.

BY JOHN CADLEY

**D**o you have a bucket list? If you do, I would suggest you burn it. If you don't, keep it that way. You don't want a bucket list. It can't do you any good and it may do a great deal of harm.

Let me explain. First, for those unfamiliar with the term, it is derived from "kick the bucket," an old English slang phrase that means to die (more on this later). A "bucket list" is an enumeration of those things you would like to do before the arrival of that unhappy event. We are in the age when living life to the fullest seems to be an absolute requirement for happiness. I'm not sure what "living life to the fullest" means, although it appears to involve activities such as climbing Mount Everest and zip-lining through the Amazon jungle—endeavors that make you feel fully alive by offering the prospect that you could end up fully dead. The idea is to face your fears and "leave your comfort zone" so you don't end up on your deathbed saying, "I wish I'd skydived into the Grand Canyon."

To avoid this tragic fate you make a list of all the things you want to do before you shuffle off your mortal coil and then check them off as they are accomplished. This is how you know your life hasn't been wasted—when there's a piece of paper lying by your corpse containing a lot of check marks. The more marks, it seems, the more happily you will have died. I suppose if you have the most check marks of all, you could be considered the happiest dead person who ever lived.

Before the 2007 film *The Bucket List* appeared, I had never heard the term; now

I can't stop hearing it. Everyone has a bucket list. It's absolutely *de rigueur*. If you don't, you're considered a wallflower in the wild, whirling dance of life, afraid to get out there and bust a move.

**This is how you know your life hasn't been wasted—when there's a piece of paper lying by your corpse containing a lot of check marks.**

Well, I don't have a bucket list. (And what's wrong with being a wallflower? While other people are out there stumbling through the foxtrot you get to eat all the chips and dip.) My aversion to the concept begins with the term itself. As I mentioned earlier, the term is derived from the English idiom "kick the bucket." No one is sure where it comes from but there are several theories, all equally unpleasant. Some think it comes from a manner of dying in which a person stands on a bucket with a noose around his or her neck. The bucket is then kicked away and the person is hanged, which means either execution or suicide depending on who does the kicking. I may be missing something but neither of those unfortunate terminations makes me think of a life lived to the fullest.

Another possible explanation comes from the Right Rev. Abbot Horne, a clergyman of the 18th century: "After death, when a body had been laid out, the holy-water bucket was brought from the church and put at the feet of the corpse. When friends came to pray, they would sprinkle the body with holy water. It is easy to see how such a saying as 'kicking the bucket' came about." No, reverend, it is not easy to see. Kicking involves a coordinated effort by the neuromuscular system that propels the leg outward in an aggressive and, dare I say it, lively manner. Show me a dead person who can do that and I will show you a person who is not only *not* dead but who is so furious at being pronounced so that he is ready to render that condition unto whoever said he *was* dead.

Regardless of the phrase's origin, my point is this: Having a bucket list will make you less happy, not more. A bucket list is really a wish list, and we all know the distance between a wish and its fulfillment. Chances are you will never do most of the things you write down (did you really want to bungee jump off the Yachi River Bridge, anyway?). Time will slip by, you will come to your end, and you will have no choice but to guiltily kick your bucket list into the bucket you are kicking.

What a way to go. **T**

**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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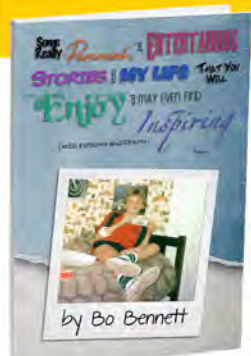
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**CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - BO BENNETT, DTM**



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 

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