

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | JULY 2018

TOASTMASTER®

Creative **Leadership**

How encouraging ideas leads to positive change

10 leadership strategies
to create a
**High-Performance
Culture**

Is Your Club a Learning Laboratory?

Have you ever been to a restaurant or hotel and decided never to return? When asked why, you said, “It just wasn’t worth the price.”

The concept of value for money (i.e., not paying more for goods or services than their quality justifies) is universal. So are you getting your money’s worth from your Toastmasters club?

I’ve visited many clubs in my more than 28-year journey, and the value of those meetings has varied greatly. I often ask members I meet, “What do you like best about your club?” and “How could your club improve?”

Many clubs I’ve visited are all about three speakers, three evaluators and three Table Topics. Sadly, some don’t even offer this. Clubs that offer only the 3–3–3 bare minimum may not maximize their potential. Clubs that add variety and offer high-quality, interactive meetings have better retention.

Yes, prepared speakers and evaluators, as well as Table Topics, are the backbone of our club meetings, but do your members know about and take advantage of the other life-changing opportunities Toastmasters offers?

Toastmasters’ founder, Ralph Smedley, realized this long ago when he wrote in the February 1955 issue of this magazine, “While most of us may have entered Toastmasters to learn to make speeches, that benefit is but the beginning of the good which may come to us, and the good which we may do for mankind.”

“Clubs that add variety and offer high-quality, interactive meetings have better retention.”

Clubs that use their meetings as a learning laboratory enhance their members’ experience. When clubs concentrate on the transformative process of our program, they develop outstanding leaders and communicators. How often does your club have a presentation like “Moments of Truth” from the Successful Club Series or “Building a Team” from the Leadership Excellence Series? These modules offer great insight into evaluating, delegating, goal setting, conflict resolution and more.

Guests and members are eager to attend club meetings that are exciting, offer diverse topics, provide valuable opportunities and have great speakers and dynamic leaders. If your club is still focusing on three speeches, three evaluations and three Table Topics, it’s not too late to change. The first step toward change is awareness; the second is acceptance. Encourage your club to adopt a new and exciting format or theme for a future meeting and enhance members’ learning by creating a more dynamic and rewarding club experience.

Toastmasters all over the world pay the same amount for their dues, but do they all get the same value for their money? Your club can offer a long list of benefits to its members, but the most important must be *real value for the time and money spent*.



Balraj Arunasalam, DTM
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TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, CO, USA 80112

+1 720-439-5050

www.toastmasters.org

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Toastmasters International Mission:

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

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“I am so happy this article was written so I could have this opportunity to share.”

—Jo Anna Shaw
Jefferson State Toastmasters
Phoenix, Oregon

Pause Instead of Ah

I read with curiosity Bill Brown's article “An Empty Tradition?” about the Ah-Counter function [March 2018]. I was wondering if he had found any club that adopted the approach we take at Jefferson State Toastmasters in Southern Oregon.

A few years ago, our club decided to shift the focus of our Ah-Counter role to acknowledging the skill that replaces unnecessary fillers: pausing. We renamed the role the Pause- and Filler-Counter. This encourages the Pause- and Filler-Counter to listen for and note effective pauses so they can be celebrated at the end of the meeting. Our members are now more focused on pausing and breathing than counting their own fillers.

We are experiencing far fewer uses of filler words overall. New members, who happen to be very self-conscious and self-critical, are more relaxed and able to shift from fillers to pauses. Others are enjoying more relaxed and engaging speaking styles.

I am so happy this article was written so I could have this opportunity to share. Best wishes for emphatic and magnetic pausing.

Jo Anna Shaw
Jefferson State Toastmasters
Phoenix, Oregon

Strike a Balance

As always, I very much enjoyed the March *Toastmaster*. Bill Brown's article about the Ah-Counter tradition caught my attention. He gives the option of either continuing with the usual report that points no one out with little effect, to bringing immediate attention to the offender.

I would suggest a practice that I have seen in several clubs. The Ah-Counter congratulates by name those in the meeting who used no filler words, and further names those who used just a few. Others in the meeting know how they did without being embarrassed in some sort of Pavlovian “clicking” exercise. This practice seems to strike a good balance of positive motivation while giving the appropriate message to those who can improve.

Len Bulmer, ACS, ALB
The Court of Blarney club
Aurora, Ontario, Canada

Delivering with Notes

The article “Good Notes: A Public Speaker's Best Ally” [March 2018] is an excellent commentary for speakers who use notes. However, I feel a few points are important for the advanced speaker.

First, whether an excellent speaker scripts material or develops it as an oral journey, they don't “memorize” it; they know it the same as actors. Bill Gove, the first President of the National Speakers Association and Toastmasters' 1991 Golden Gavel recipient, implored others to “know what comes next” so you never have to pause and think about it. When you do so, notes are superfluous.

Also, many speakers fret over not making a mistake from their delivery. Why? If you're performing Shakespeare it's important, but I perform Hill and do not give an audience copies of what I intend to say, except in seminars and workshops. Even then it's a topical handout.

When I work with a speaker I encourage them to refine a personal approach—scripted, outlined, bulleted or otherwise—and always rehearse so well it flows naturally. Joel's article provides a sound basis from which to develop a personal style.

Gordon Hill, ACS
Los Chismosos club
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Magnificent Meera

The March article about Meera Manek, “Coaching, Communication and Comedy,” was enlightening. This is a woman who is or should be taking over the world right now!

Coming from Kenya and establishing herself in the U.S. with a solid sense of self, a steely determination and, judging from her photograph, a smile on her face, this is the sort of character that I would very happily have in our Toastmasters meetings.

Speaking, speechwriting, mentoring and comedy—she's a quadruple threat and an inspiration. Her life is a lesson in believing in one's self, doing what you love and loving what you do. When that is the case, you attract people, and they will come to you for your help, advice and services—something which I believe Toastmasters does so well for its members.

I'm taking on the Presentation Mastery route in Pathways, and Meera is a great example to follow. Let us know when you are coming to Scotland!

Ikenna Oguno, CC
Clyde Communicators Toastmasters
Glasgow, Scotland

Power of Persuasion

I found the communication column by Dean Brenner in the March issue interesting and relevant. I recently completed the third project in the Advanced Communication series: Speeches by Management, “Persuade to Inspire.” The column provides great advice and presented the characteristics of persuasive communication. I quote the five characteristics “Clarity, Brevity, Context, Impact and Value.” Combining this framework and organizing the message in a speech to persuade and inspire will be effective. I will definitely implement this approach in the future. Thank you for sharing.

Cecil Dharmasri, CC, CL
Talking Together Toastmasters
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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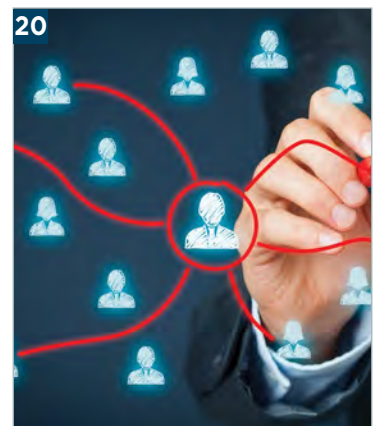
THE ART OF DELEGATION

5 lessons from a first-time club president.

By K.T. Lynn



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Toastmaster Magazine Online

See more photos, videos and links online at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

July Online Extras:

- **Preview the Exciting Speaker Lineup**—Learn more about this year’s convention speakers and the Golden Gavel recipient through hyperlinks. 
- **Why Pronunciation Matters**—Hear more pronunciation tips in an exclusive recording by Bill Brown. 
- **Anatomy of a Joke**—Watch comedian Dean Lewis perform his clean stand-up comedy. 



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Language Instructor Learns Lessons Abroad

A self-described Cameroonian by birth and Canadian citizen by choice, Francisca Epale has taught English and French for more than 20 years in the United States, Canada and China. Coming from a mixed heritage of Cameroonian and Jamaican parents, Epale, ACS, ALB, settled in Ottawa in December 2001 after emigrating from the United States. She joined the Capital Toastmasters club to help familiarize herself with workplace culture, expectations and soft skills in her new country.

Epale has led a multifaceted career as a French interpreter, educator, speaker and award-winning author. She is also a certified coach, teacher, trainer and speaker with the John Maxwell Team. After sojourning in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China, for one year, Epale wrote about her experiences in *The Naked Educator: How to Survive in the Middle Kingdom* and *The Naked Educator: Secrets to Surviving in China as an Expatriate*, Second Edition.

What is your educational background?

As a teenager, I wanted to become a medical doctor; however, I was not good at mathematics, so I decided to become a language instructor since I had a flair for French and German. I hold a bachelor's degree in French and a master's degree in teaching. My credentials include Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

What does your job entail?

As an accredited community French interpreter, I work in the legal, medical, social services and education sectors. I enjoy my job because every client and setting is different. Sometimes I'm asked to go to the police station, and I am audio and videotaped while interpreting from French to English and vice versa for the clients and service providers. In addition to being a French interpreter, I teach French and English as a Second Language four evenings a week privately to students.

I do speaking engagements as well. My target audience includes educators, women in leadership and entrepreneurs, and I speak about teaching abroad, personal development and motivation.

Tell us about your teaching experiences around the world.

When I lived in the United States, I taught French at all levels of the academic ladder, from junior and senior high school to



Francisca Epale

college and university. Some of my former students have gone on to obtain very lucrative jobs with the American government.

In Canada, I have taught both French and English as a Second Language (ESL) in language schools and colleges. Canada is a nation of immigrants, so I have had the opportunity to teach students from many parts of the world, thereby expanding my global cultural awareness.

While in China I taught English for an international company and taught French privately. During "lounge chats," Chinese students were allowed to ask expatriate instructors any questions. By so doing, there was an exchange of information—the students learned about Western culture, while foreign instructors learned about Chinese culture. My experience with Table Topics also enabled me to answer these cultural questions succinctly with poise, ease and confidence.

Can you share a positive experience you had with a student?

Since I had free time in the mornings while teaching in China, I decided to enroll in the John Maxwell Certification Program to become a coach, speaker, teacher and trainer. One day, one of my students asked me to help her make a decision when she received two job offers. I coached her using the principles I learned from John Maxwell, such as asking her open-ended questions to help her arrive at a decision. I was very happy when she made the choice by herself, based on how I coached her.

How has Toastmasters enhanced your career?

I included on my resume that I am a member of Toastmasters, and when I interviewed at a French-speaking college to teach English, I was asked to start a Toastmasters club. I ran the club for two consecutive years. It has indeed helped my leadership skills and ability to think on my feet when I have to interpret for my clients.

Becoming a member in Toastmasters will pay dividends throughout your life.

SHANNON DEWEY is the digital content editor for the Toastmaster magazine.

▶ SNAPSHOT



Smiling members of the Ningbo Better Man club of Ningbo, Zhejiang, China, flash the peace sign before having an outdoor meeting in a nearby park.

▶ NEWS FROM TI

Cheer for Your Speakers

The speech contests at the 87th Annual International Convention take place in August, giving you plenty of opportunities to support the participants.

At this year's convention, in Chicago, Illinois, United States, 106 speakers—one qualifier from each district around the world—will compete in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest semifinals. That's the largest number of members ever to participate in the semifinals. Come support the representative from your district!

The Top 10 contestants in the semifinals then vie for the title of World

Champion of Public Speaking on Saturday, August 25. The speaking talent in the championship round is always impressive, making it an annual must-see event.

If you are unable to attend the convention, you can still cheer on your district's winner—and others—by watching the contest online. Live-streaming coverage of the semifinals and championship round will be available.



Manoj Vasudevan, left, 2017 World Champion of Public Speaking, and International President-Elect Lark Doley.

The convention will be held August 22–25 at the Marriott Marquis Chicago and McCormick Place convention center. Register at www.toastmasters.org/Convention.

QUICK TAKES

▶ MEET MY MENTOR



Perry Chia

Perry Chia, ACB, ALB, a member of NUS Toastmasters—a club for students, alumni and staff of the National University of Singapore—handles his employer’s enterprise risk management and business continuity management portfolios. He’s been mentoring Lim Tong Lee, CC, since Tong Lee joined the NUS club in 2016.

Tong Lee attends National University and works in IT support in the education industry. He joined Toastmasters for the supportive learning environment and the structured, self-paced learning programs.

How do you describe Perry’s role in your Toastmasters journey?

Perry has been with me every step of the way, from my first speech project to my first area-level speech contest. He is friendly, approachable, helpful and willing to share his public-speaking expertise. Despite my incessant questions and late-night messages, no question is too small for him; he has always responded with deliberation and insight.

What have you learned from Perry?

I remember stumbling during my Ice Breaker and becoming hesitant about making future speeches. Perry encouraged me to learn from my mistakes rather than mope over them. He offered useful tips, like watching out for filler words, and using pauses to gather my thoughts or recall my ideas.

What have you accomplished in Toastmasters?

I have become a better speaker, leader and thinker. Perry’s positive influence motivated me to reach my Competent Communicator award within six months and serve as vice president education of



Lim Tong Lee, left, and Perry Chia

our club. I’ve learned to face my fear of public speaking by taking part in my first speech contest.

How has your life changed because of Toastmasters?

I’m now more confident and vocal. I communicate more clearly and coherently. In project meetings I speak up more often and more actively lead, facilitate and participate in group discussions. This makes me feel excited about my academic and professional work. And Perry has become a close friend and confidant.

Mary Nesfield is the former associate editor of *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.

▶ MEMBER CONNECTIONS



Fun, Games, Toastmasters

IN-Steel Toastmasters of Kadma, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, India, celebrate the beloved communication and leadership manuals at a creative club gathering with games, food and trivia. The shade trees at Jubilee Park provided the perfect setting for an outdoor meeting. During the meeting, members enjoyed a picnic lunch of tandoori chapati, garlic-fried lentils and pulao.



► **ADVICE FROM THE PROS**

5 Must-Read Books on Persuasion

What do you want your audience to do when you finish speaking? Persuasive speakers move people to action, in part by understanding their audience. The study of persuasion dates back thousands of years, to the ancient Greeks, who treasured the art of public speaking. One of the most frequently cited works from this period is Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in which Aristotle famously defines rhetoric as "the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion."

Modern persuasion scholars focus less on the art of the speaker and more on the decision-making processes of the audience. If we understand the audience's decision-making process, we can alter our approach to fit the situation. These five books can help you develop that ability.

1 Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion
By Jay Heinrichs

Classical rhetoricians recognized two modes of persuasion as important to a logical argument: pathos (emotion) and ethos (character). Heinrichs brings these lessons to life for modern readers.

2 Compelling People: The Hidden Qualities That Make Us Influential
By John Neffinger and Matthew Kohut

This book posits that audiences believe speakers who are credible and trustworthy. They also look for signs of good character in the way speakers present themselves and are more likely to agree with those who exhibit strength and warmth.

3 Influence: Science and Practice
By Robert Cialdini

Are attractive people more persuasive? Does the candy bowl on your desk really work? Robert Cialdini describes the mental shortcuts we use in daily decision-making and how they can be exploited to trigger automatic responses.

4 Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness
By Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein

Based on behavioral economics and design theory, this book describes how small changes in the way a choice is presented can have a big effect on an audience's decision. The authors refer to this manipulation of presentation as "choice architecture."



5 Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade
By Robert Cialdini

"Frequently the factor most likely to determine a person's choice ... is one that has been elevated in attention ... at the time of decision." Like *Nudge*, this book focuses on the advantages of reframing our requests to make them more agreeable.

Jesse Scinto, M.S., ACG, ALB, is a member of Greenspeakers Club in New York, New York, and Toastmasters@AUBG in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, where he taught at the American University in Bulgaria as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar. His home institution is Columbia University. Follow him on Twitter: @jessescinto

► **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

Send Us Your Photos

The *Toastmaster* magazine wants to hear from you! In addition to the Traveling *Toastmaster* photos that showcase members holding the magazine in various locations around the world, we enjoy seeing photos of your club in action and encourage you to be creative when submitting images—both posed and candid. You do not need to take a picture with a Toastmasters banner, magazine or branded materials for it to be considered for publication; feel free to take artistic, conceptual photos that reflect the Toastmasters brand of communication and leadership or fun pictures at a social club gathering or celebration.

If someone in your club has an interest in photography, consider designating that member as your club photographer. Use your leadership skills and your lens to show your club's



personality. Please send photo submissions to photos@toastmasters.org with your club's name, location and a brief description of the photo. Look for your club in the print magazine, on social media or in the online Member Connections photo gallery.




1 | YOANN DELWARDE, ACB, ALB, of Shanghai, China, enjoys the breathtaking views of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in Hunan Province.


2 | MARLENE HAUSER of Oxford, England, poses with her horse at Estancia La Golondrina near Mar del Plata, Argentina.

3 | JULIA KASTNING, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, flashes a timeless smile while standing in front of the Pantheon in Rome, Italy.

4 | MARK WALSH, ACB, ALB, and his wife, **TERRY, CC, ALB**, of Lihue, Hawaii, visit one of Japan's tallest waterfalls and the Sanjūdō Pagoda, located in the Wakayama prefecture on the UNESCO Kumano Kodo historical pilgrimage route.



 **View additional photos** in this month's *Traveling Toastmaster* photo gallery at 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. Bon voyage!

The Case of the Moldy Ginger Cake

How Toastmasters made me a better lawyer.

BY V. CHARLES WARD

Remembering what Toastmasters had taught me, I looked the three magistrates in the eye. I then drew breath and delivered my 10-minute prepared speech. And all without looking once at my notes.

I was prosecuting counsel against a leading supermarket chain in England accused of selling a moldy ginger cake. But the retailer was not accepting responsibility. They blamed the manufacturer that produced the ginger cake and engaged

It was a tough case, and I couldn't have won it without Toastmasters. It also made me realize that rules of advocacy are universal. No one wants a lawyer who comes to court unprepared. Or who "ums" and "ahs." Or falls asleep.

I discovered Toastmasters from a business card pinned to a library noticeboard. It spoke about becoming confident in public speaking. In those days, there was no internet. It caught my eye,

I rang that number and soon attended a meeting of Grosvenor Square Toastmasters. With a 50-strong membership, this club was right for me. I quickly made friends and remained a member for the next 20 years.

Three decades after the ginger cake case, I am approaching retirement at the end of a 45-year legal career. I decided to write a book titled *Legal Profession: Is it for You?* in hopes to provide inspiration to



their own experienced counsel to fight the case. But I was prepared. I had already subpoenaed the manufacturer.

After giving my opening speech, the rest of the trial was like Table Topics. It was about thinking on my feet and my verbal jousting with the defendant's witnesses. But it had to be done in a way that created empathy, not antagonism. I also had to respond to technical points raised by the opposing counsel and sum up my case within five minutes. Any longer and the magistrates would lose patience. After the last word had been spoken, there was the evaluation. It was delivered by the chairman of the bench in five words: "We find the defendant guilty."

because I had recently attended evening classes to learn effective speaking. The course was disappointing. For too much of it, I sat behind a desk, listening to instruction on public speaking instead of actually doing it.

So, one Thursday in September 1976, I attended my first Toastmasters meeting at the Southend-on-Sea Chambers of Commerce in Essex. When I moved 100 miles away to Hampshire, I wanted to rejoin Toastmasters but couldn't find a club to join. It was not for want of trying.

In 1984 I moved to London and was delighted to find an entry for Toastmasters International in the telephone directory.

students considering going into law and those contemplating a career change.

And yes, I left a special place in the book for Toastmasters. Like advocacy, the personal qualities that lend themselves to a successful legal career are universal. They are the same whether you practice in New York or Shanghai. It is about integrity, taking an interest in people and being passionate about what you do. Just like Toastmasters. **T**

V. CHARLES WARD, ATM, is a member of West London Speakers and a freelance legal writer. Find him at www.amazon.co.uk.



Preview the Exciting Speaker Lineup

What you'll learn from the presenters at the 87th Annual International Convention.

Register for the Toastmasters International Convention, taking place August 22–25 in Chicago, Illinois, United States. Choose from a variety of registration, add-on and special event options. Registration for access to the events Wednesday through Saturday, including the World Championship of Public Speaking, is \$600. Alternatively, you can enjoy the VIP experience for \$675. Toastmasters can also purchase a ticket to attend only the World Championship of Public Speaking for \$75.

The annual International Convention is popular with Toastmasters from around the world, with thousands attending each year. Among many highlights, attendees will watch 10 finalists compete for the title of World Champion of Public Speaking on Saturday, August 25.

Featured Speakers

Keynote Speaker
Steve Gilliland, CSP, CPAE
 “Follow Me”

Author, businessman and celebrated speaker Steve Gilliland is a member of

the U.S. National Speakers Association’s Speaker Hall of Fame. With a style that combines motivational speaking and stand-up comedy, he will share insights on how to make hard decisions, find creative solutions and motivate others.

Pat Johnson, Past International President
 “Building and Sustaining Vibrant Corporate Clubs”

Pat Johnson, a seasoned executive and leader from Victoria, British Columbia, served as Toastmasters International President from 2010 to 2011 and now coaches people on becoming the most effective, authentic leaders possible. She will discuss the importance of thinking

like a stakeholder when working with corporate clubs.

Sarah Khan, CC
 “#BeginWithin”

Sarah Khan is a professional speaker and advocate who frequently presents on topics like “The Science of Communication Through Connection” and “The Art of Mindful Living.” During this presentation, she will share her story about how she learned to cultivate her inner courage through “practices of the heart.”

Lars Sudmann, DTM
 “The Innovative Toastmaster”

Lars Sudmann is a public speaker and former CFO of Procter & Gamble Belgium who now advises businesses on leadership, strategy, innovation and communication. He will share practical strategies on improving leadership and communication skills. To learn more and read Sudmann’s article on “Creating a High-Performance Culture,” see page 22 of this issue of the *Toastmaster* magazine.

Visit www.toastmasters.org/Convention for registration packages, the complete schedule of events, education session information, speaker profiles, hotel and travel descriptions and member testimonials.

KEITH FERRAZZI: 2018 GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD RECIPIENT



Toastmasters International will honor Keith Ferrazzi with its most prestigious award, the Golden Gavel, for his leadership in the field of networking and relationship-building. The award recognizes Ferrazzi's extensive influence in encouraging individuals and organizations to build trusting, mutually beneficial relationships. Ferrazzi will accept the award in August at the 87th Annual Toastmasters International Convention in Chicago.

As chairman and founder of Ferrazzi Greenlight, a research institute focusing on behavioral science and its effects on business, Ferrazzi works to determine how companies can eliminate behaviors that hinder progress and instead adopt those that foster growth. His research on relationships, along with decades of experience as an entrepreneur and chief marketing officer for multinational corporations, helped him develop his influential leadership techniques for "leading without authority." Ferrazzi says connection is the driving force behind all success—personal or professional. Meaningful relationships with others are what inspire people to change, to dedicate themselves and to care. "Once you have a human connection to another person," he says, "you'll do anything to stay connected to that individual, and you don't want to let them down."

Ferrazzi now shares these insights with companies and organizations as a consultant and speaker. Most recently, Ferrazzi helped tech companies Zappos and Groupon build onboarding tools that facilitate improved communication between managers and new employees, increasing job satisfaction and productivity. Open communication is a pillar of his philosophy. "Great relationships are borne from generosity and authenticity," he says. "It's not what you can get out of somebody, but what you can give."

Ferrazzi frequently contributes on the topic of cultivating relationships to publications such as *Forbes*, *Fortune* and *Harvard Business Review*. His two books, *Never Eat Alone* and *Who's Got Your Back*, were both *New York Times* best-sellers.

"Inside all of us is greatness," he says, "and we need other people to pull it out."

About the Golden Gavel

Toastmasters' Golden Gavel award is given annually to an individual who is distinguished in the fields of communication and leadership. Last year's honoree was Erin Gruwell, founder of the Freedom Writers Foundation and best-selling author of *The Freedom Writers Diary*. Other recipients include notable speakers and authors such as Walter Cronkite (1969), Dr. Joyce Brothers (1982), Dr. Deepak Chopra (1997) and Susan Cain (2013).

Johnny Campbell, DTM, AS "Embracing the Winds of Change— Adjust Your Sails"

Author and Accredited Speaker Johnny Campbell's expertise lies in dealing with and embracing change. He will provide pragmatic tips on how to build confidence and resiliency in the face of uncertainty.

Michelle Tillis Lederman "How to Get What You Want: Influencing Others Into Action"


Michelle Lederman, recognized as one of the Top 25 Networking Experts by *Forbes* magazine, is an author and expert on

workplace connections and relationships. She will teach you how to ask for what you want and share the three reasons people take action.

Eldonna Lewis Fernandez, ACS, ALB, AS "Think Like a Negotiator—Ways to Create Win-Win Results"

Eldonna Lewis Fernandez is an expert negotiator, Toastmasters Accredited Speaker and United States Air Force veteran who worked for years as a contracts negotiator in the aerospace industry. She will discuss seven key strategies for negotiating with confidence to achieve results.

Mohammed Murad, Past International President "Is Leadership for Me?"

Mohammed Murad is an entrepreneur and managing director of three companies who served as Toastmasters International President from 2014 to 2015. His interactive presentation will uncover the true meaning of leadership through the "5 Hs: Head, Heart, Health, Humility and Happiness." 



ONLINE EXTRAS: Learn more about this year's convention speakers and the Golden Gavel recipient through hyperlinks.



What to Do When Your Friend is Speaking

How audience members make a difference.

BY JOEL SCHWARTZBERG

In the vast sea of resources available on becoming a stronger public speaker, one powerful influence rarely discussed is the support of a friend, colleague or fellow Toastmaster. Taking a cue from your parents and simply showing up with a smile and a “go you!” face is a good start, but there are more specific ways—before, during and after the speech—to elevate your support. Here are three supporting tactics that make a difference.

Before the Speech: What’s the Point?

When your friend or colleague practices in front of you, you could say “Great job,” but what does that really mean, and how does it help? The answer to both questions: very little.

Confidence doesn’t come from platitudes as much as the internal knowledge that you’re succeeding in your mission. You can help your friend or colleague build that confidence by acknowledging the point he was trying to make:

SPEAKER: “*What do you think my point was?*”

LISTENER: “*That podcasting is a growing and influential platform for sharing ideas?*”

SPEAKER: “*Exactly!*”

Compare this to the impact of:

SPEAKER: “*How was I?*”

LISTENER: “*Great!*”

SPEAKER: “*Thanks!*”

During the Speech: Nod ‘Yes’

Merely smiling says, “I’m enjoying this.” But the speaker’s intention is not to entertain you; it’s to successfully make a point. So the stronger and more supportive reaction is to nod (note: not *nod off*).

Nodding says, “I’m receiving and understanding your point, and it has meaning for me.” Whether the speaker realizes it or not, she will see your nodding as a confirmation of success, not simply a signal of support.

Nodding is also the best way to support a speaker struggling to maintain confidence or stay on track. It says, “You are succeeding, whether or not you think so. Be strong and carry on.”

I know this from personal experience. Early in my public speaking journey, seeing heads nodding in my audience was a huge factor in helping me maintain my mettle.

Other nonverbal signs that show support:

- ▶ Arrive on time.
- ▶ Be “present,” which means not checking your phone, working on your laptop or otherwise being distracted as the speaker is talking.
- ▶ Sit close to the front. If the speaker can’t see you, your support has no impact.
- ▶ Lean forward, not back. This says, “I’m engaged and ready to receive your point.”
- ▶ Shush anyone talking loudly during the speech. Don’t scold them; just say, “I’m having trouble listening.”
- ▶ Be the first to applaud when the speaker finishes.
- ▶ Pay attention to other speakers in the program. Your friend or colleague wants you to respect the entire event, not just his portion of it, because he is contributing to the overall success of the event.

After the Speech: Double Down on the Accomplishment

After she's finished, the speaker will want to know *if she was successful*. Saying "awesome!" or "nailed it!" alone will not reflect that.

After the CEO I support speaks, he typically emails me immediately for my reaction (even as the event continues). My job is not just to send him the text version of an emoji; it's to indicate whether or not he successfully delivered his point.

This is an example response, again using the topic of podcasting:

"I thought your point about podcasting being a promising media frontier for our company was very clear and well under-

"My job is not just to send him the text version of an emoji; it's to indicate whether or not he successfully delivered his point."

stood. You made a great case for it, and I think the audience will be thinking and talking about it for a while."

One of the most important questions in the creation of a speech is, "If you succeed, what action will your audience take as a result?"

Given that, remarking on the impact of the successfully conveyed point is the most direct way to say, "You succeeded." Short of a trophy, it's the most rewarding gift you can give. **T**

Joel Schwartzberg, CC, CL, is senior director of strategic and executive communications for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and vice president education for ASPCA Toastmasters club in New York City. He is also the author of *Get to the Point! Sharpen Your Message and Make Your Words Matter*.

HOW TO EVALUATE EFFECTIVELY

Giving an evaluation is a key skill learned in Toastmasters. Remember these five basic points when evaluating a speaker:

Before the speech. 1

- ▶ Review and discuss the manual objectives and evaluation guidelines.
- ▶ Ask about any concerns regarding the speech or the speaker's speaking ability.

Show that you are interested. 2

- ▶ Demonstrate that you are truly interested in the speech.
- ▶ Exhibit your interest in the speaker's ability to grow and improve.

Personalize your language. 3

Put yourself in the position of the speaker before giving your evaluation.

Stay away from words like:

- ▶ "You didn't ..."
- ▶ "You should have ..."
- ▶ "You failed to ..."

To stimulate improvement, use words like:

- ▶ "I believe ..."
- ▶ "My reaction was ..."
- ▶ "I suggest that ..."

Keep the evaluator's mantra in mind to maximize your skills:

- ▶ What I saw.
- ▶ What I heard.
- ▶ What I felt.

Evaluate the speech—not the person. 4

- ▶ Always keep your main purpose in mind: to support, help and encourage the speaker.
- ▶ Pay attention to the speaker's goals for self-improvement.
- ▶ Watch for symptoms of fear or insecurity.
- ▶ Evaluate what the speaker does—not what the speaker is.

Promote self-esteem. 5

Encourage and inspire the speaker to participate again by giving:

- ▶ Honest and sincere praise.
- ▶ Positive reinforcement when improvements occur.
- ▶ Helpful direction when necessary.
- ▶ A positive ending to your evaluation.



Source: *Evaluate to Motivate* module, Toastmasters Successful Club Series

Creative Leadership

BY STUART PINK

Why it's an essential skill in today's changing workplace.

Developing a creative environment where people are free to perform and share ideas without fear of judgment or failure is the ethos that underpins every club meeting. If people fear failure or judgment, they will refuse to participate.

Failure is a necessary part of most successful ideas, because success rarely comes at the first attempt. Billionaire Sir James Dyson, the inventor of the Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner, spent 15 years and had 5,126 failed attempts before he got his invention right!

What is Creativity?

To understand why creativity is so important, it is necessary to understand what it is. According to education expert Sir Ken Robinson, "Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value."

Many people mistakenly think that creativity is just for artists, musicians and so-called "creative types." But according to Robinson's definition, everyone is creative. We all have valuable ideas every single day. A person who has original, valuable ideas at work becomes important to their employer. In fact, because creative ideas lead to valuable change, it affects leadership. Leaders don't just have an official leadership title or position; they often contribute the most and have the most influence. Creative ideas are key to businesses, organizations and even countries thriving.

How to Lead a Creative Organization

Leaders should take note from what psychologists found when they studied creativity in children. They noticed that certain behaviors by adults hindered children's creativity:

- ▶ Judging
- ▶ Telling exactly how to do things
- ▶ Exerting too much pressure
- ▶ Constantly watching
- ▶ Creating a win/lose situation







Likewise, be wary of a culture that hinders creativity. Don't tell employees or club members how to behave down to the tiniest detail or create an environment where employees are rewarded for being unquestioning "yes men" to their bosses.

An example of incorporating creativity into the culture is Google's famous "20 percent time"—the idea that employees were free to spend one day a week working on their own projects. Major successes came out of this, including Gmail.

Another solution is to consider ways to capture people's creativity. Employee surveys can be useful—but only if the employees feel truly free to speak their minds. A new employee is likely more observant than an existing one because everything is new to them. Typically, though, they are told how the company works rather than being asked if they have any suggestions for improvement.

“Because creative ideas lead to valuable change, we can even redefine leadership.”

Consider setting up suggestion boxes and incentives for good ideas. Many Toastmasters clubs benefit from asking guests what they thought of the meeting. This feedback allows the club to see what it is doing well and what might be improved. Furthermore, showing that the club values the guests' opinions increases the chances they will join. In the workplace, leaders can give employees a stimulus to enhance their creativity, such as the opportunity to spend time in different locations or departments in order to better understand the organization and be more stimulated to share creative ideas. Toastmasters clubs require this experience, because members have the opportunity to perform the different roles required for any meeting. Many careers involve initial training that requires an employee to experience working in multiple departments. But typically, they then

specialize and subsequently remain in one department, missing out on the diversity of the whole company. A person with a more rounded understanding and experience of a whole organization will understand that organization better and be in a better position to contribute creatively.

Creativity thrives on different perspectives, so diverse teams will have richer experiences to draw from, especially if partnerships and collaborations are encouraged. Two heads are better than one because you can bounce ideas off each other.

Leaders can ensure their organizations thrive in a creative environment by understanding the *creative process* and using it to nurture creative ideas and establish a *creative environment*.

The Creative Process

In my book, *Brainarium: Exercise Your Creativity*, I make the case that we should exercise our creativity in the same way we exercise our bodies. I therefore refer to these two stages as *Creative Strength* and *Creative Stamina*.

Creative Strength

The first stage is for generating as many ideas as possible. At the Creative Strength stage it is important not to judge the ideas, lest you risk stifling the creative flow. That is why so many brainstorming sessions fail.

Creative Strength Exercises

Imagine that you want to develop a new product or service at work. Use the following exercises to generate ideas. (Remember not to judge the ideas; the goal is to create as many ideas as possible.)

Change the assumptions. What assumptions do you have (about your business or a product or service)? How could they be changed? What is the opposite of those assumptions? For example, do you have to make a profit? What if you tried to make a loss? How would you do things differently?

What would “X” do? How would someone else (famous or not) think and act in your position? For example, how would a child run your business?

Break it up. Can you break something up and reassemble it differently? Do you need all the parts, or can you use only some?

Play. Time for recess! Can you play with an idea or object? What do you do with it? What ideas come to mind?

Creative Stamina

The second stage is called Creative Stamina, because it determines which ideas will last. This is the time to evaluate ideas and see whether they are original and have value. Because the Creative Strength and Creative Stamina stages require different thinking, it makes sense to separate them out. The key differences are shown in the next table.

<i>Creative Strength</i>	<i>Creative Stamina</i>
Generating ideas.	Evaluating and judging ideas. Are the ideas original? Do they have value?
Divergent thinking (exploring many possible solutions).	Convergent thinking (narrowing down possibilities).
No correct answers— anything goes!	Looking for the most correct or suitable answer.

There are many ways to evaluate ideas in the Creative Stamina stage. One way is to imagine you have \$100 to allocate among all your ideas. How would you divide up the money? If you are part of a team evaluating, each person has \$100 to allocate. You can quickly see which ideas are the most popular this way.

Creativity in an Increasingly Automated World

The world is changing fast, and the pace of innovation will only continue to accelerate. This presents immediate problems: How can educators teach children when they have no idea what the world will be like when those children graduate? How can businesses and organizations survive when they cannot even see their competition coming? The leaders of tomorrow face some unprecedented challenges.

Various reports in recent years have predicted some terrifying trends. The McKinsey (2017) and Oxford University (2013) studies predict that half of all jobs in the United States are at risk of being taken over by robots or computers in the next 20 to 30 years. Similar trends will affect the rest of the world and may threaten developing countries even more.

It is not only individuals and their jobs that are at risk. Whole businesses and industries are too. One problem leaders have always faced is how to improve. Management guru Gary Hamel said, “Most companies are built for continuous improvement, not discontinuous innovation.” The danger for existing companies is that they look for small, incremental improvements to their business rather than big changes. Consider the demise of Kodak, which used to produce the film needed in cameras. The well-known company actually developed the technology for digital photography but decided not to pursue it. Years later, everyone carries around a digital camera in their phone, while Kodak had to file for bankruptcy protection. Continuous improvement (i.e., a lack of discontinuous innovation) was its downfall.

Another problem leaders face today is a competitor with a completely different business model disrupting their industry and achieving market dominance in no time. Some call this the “Uber syndrome.” Uber revolutionized cab rides around the world through a simple phone app connecting prospective drivers to customers. Within five years of its formation, the value of Uber exceeded that of all the car rental companies combined! The car rental companies never saw Uber coming. Uber had even begun



using self-driving cars and trucks for passenger transport before a fatal crash this March in Arizona put the autonomous vehicle experiment on hold. All of this demonstrates how traditional businesses—as well as jobs that require routine, predictable tasks—are at risk in the face of dramatic innovation.

A silver lining to all this doom and gloom is the obvious benefit of automation, which includes decreased costs and improved production capacity, quality and precision. In light of this, the importance (and inevitability) of creativity and lifelong learning remain. Knowledge is no longer sufficient; people need skills to survive. Toastmasters recognizes this with its focus on improving leadership and communication skills.

In 2016, the World Economic Forum predicted that creativity will be one of the top three skills needed in the workplace by 2020. A 2015 study by Nesta, a U.K. innovation charity, estimated that 86 percent of U.S. workers and 87 percent of U.K. workers in highly creative jobs were at no or low risk of losing their jobs in the future to automation. Instead, computers tend to complement these professions by making creative skills more productive. Toastmasters is a natural place to practice creativity. Table Topics necessitates quick thinking in response to a stimulus. Most of the evaluating and reporting roles also require members to use creative skills in the form of an evaluation or report.

The future may hold unprecedented challenges, but leaders and individuals can use their creativity to help shape the future. After all, every human achievement since the dawn of mankind is a result of our creativity. It’s what makes us different from all other beings on the planet. It’s what we do best. **T**

Stuart Pink, CC, CL, is a keynote speaker and coach on creativity. He earned third place in the 2012 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking. He is the author of *Brainarium: Exercise Your Creativity*. Visit his website at www.brainarium.com.

The Art of Delegation

5 lessons from a first-time club president.

BY K.T. LYNN

In a perfect world, I'd be able to reflect on my first term as club president with glowing satisfaction. Unfortunately, my presidential debut with the Eagles Club of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, was quite lackluster. Like many first-time leaders, I took on too much. Instead of planning and strategizing, I was mindlessly crossing items off a checklist—working harder, not smarter. Despite our best efforts, my executive committee and I accomplished little more than keeping the club afloat.

With careful examination, I've identified the common culprit to most of my hardship: ineffective or nonexistent delegation.

Why Is Delegation Important?

Delegation is crucial because it:

- ▶ **Prevents you from becoming busy with the wrong tasks.** This allows you to spend time on the right ones.
- ▶ **Improves efficiency.** The team carries routine activities to allow you to plan the next move, saving everyone time.
- ▶ **Increases achievement.** When everyone is invested in the outcome and carrying part of a shared workload, more can be accomplished.
- ▶ **Provides leadership development opportunities for club members.** Delegating responsibility to active members creates professional development opportunities and benefits all.
- ▶ **Builds a knowledge-sharing practice.** Effective delegation sometimes requires teaching of a skill or concept, or filling a knowledge gap.
- ▶ **Strengthens coaching and mentoring relationships.** Part of establishing a successful mentoring relationship is collaboratively solving problems.

Delegating responsibility to a mentee with clearly defined goals and responsibilities fosters trust and cooperation.

- ▶ **Establishes and strengthens trust between club and committee members.** Even if you don't have a formal mentor/mentee relationship, effective delegation assigns teamwork in a way that strengthens the team rather than dividing it.
- ▶ **Increases your value as a leader.** Effective delegation can help you gain loyalty, respect and the freedom to accomplish more challenging tasks. Your club's achievements attest to your value as a leader.

Here are five tips on how to effectively delegate as a leader.

1 Let Go

Get over the belief that you need to do everything with your own hands. Micro-managing is not effective leadership. To avoid it, you must delegate responsibility and authority, not just the task.

“Once we delegated responsibility to align with professional and personal goals, productivity soared.”

As club president, I spent about two hours a week organizing catering for the meetings. I should have delegated that task to another person, freeing myself up for higher-value tasks, but I was anxious about the potential embarrassment of not having lunch available.

A good leader functions like a project manager:

- ▶ Defining and communicating objectives that are clear, useful and attainable.
- ▶ Procuring resources (e.g., workforce, required information, various agreements, materials or technology).
- ▶ Managing cost, time, scope and quality.
- ▶ Prioritizing tasks based on organizational goals and objectives.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ What tasks require my skills?
- ▶ Are there any high-effort/low-skill tasks I can delegate?
- ▶ Does anyone else have more appropriate skills to complete this task?

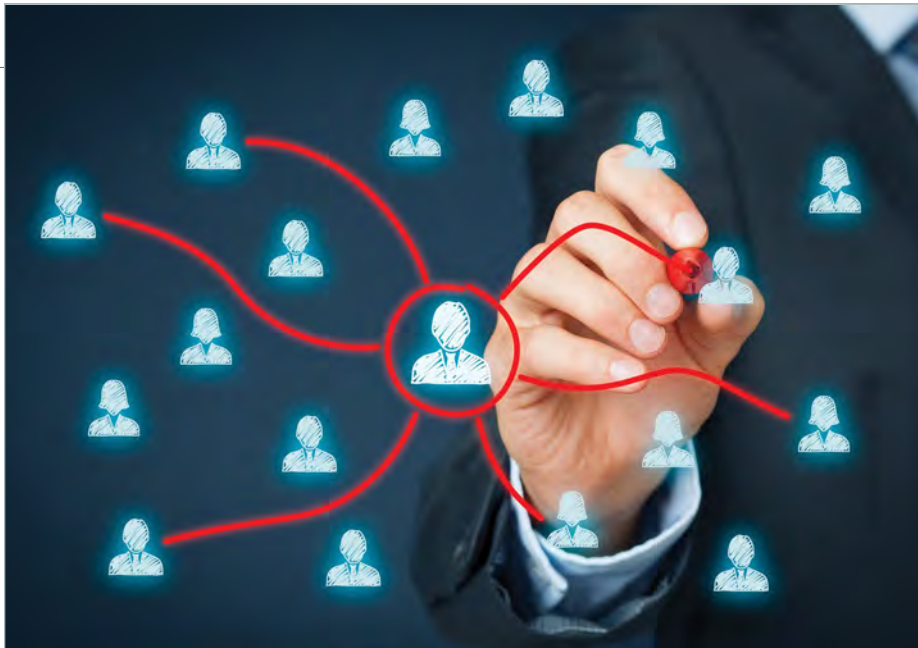
2 Build Connections

Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate and share the workload. Stock up or trade favors with other clubs to establish a symbiotic relationship. Enlist the district and area leadership for support. Establish these connections early; delegation isn't only from the top down.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ What skills are within this club's capacity?
- ▶ How are the resources allocated?
- ▶ Who are the movers/shakers for each major event?
- ▶ Who are the other club presidents in my area/division?
- ▶ Who are the vice presidents education (VPEs)?
- ▶ What is the chain of command?
- ▶ Do I need permission to take action?

For several months, my club struggled to fill roles during meetings. It wasn't until I reached out to another club president



“Get over the belief that you need to do everything with your own hands.”

way they feel good about. Verify progress to ensure their hard work is driving them toward the correct destination.

- ▶ Be realistic with expectations. Use group consensus to agree on deadlines and workloads. Don't push someone to take on more or to adopt a task with which they feel uncomfortable.

5 Cultivate Cultural and Shared Responsibility

A previous group leader placed a book on everyone's desks before work one morning. We opened an email listing this book as required reading material. When ordered to complete book-club-style discussions, most of us resisted. The content or purpose of the book didn't matter; it was the delivery that failed. Her intentions were to foster a healthy team, but her ineffective delegation caused more harm than good and undermined her authority. Remember, without group buy-in you are simply giving orders.

Involve the group:

- ▶ Keep the tasks open and allow team members the room to develop their own tasks.
- ▶ Elicit volunteers for task completion.
- ▶ Enforce shared goals and a common purpose. Use group consensus to make decisions.

Learning the art of delegation is a necessary skill for all leaders—in Toastmasters and beyond. For those of you joining as new leaders this term, jump right in and start delegating! The great thing about Toastmasters is that it's a safe place to make mistakes—as long as we learn from them. ■

K.T. Lynn, CC, CL, is a member in Shanghai, China. She is a copywriter by day and a novelist by night. She aims to promote cross-cultural understanding through her work. Read more about her at www.ktlynn.com.

that I found a temporary solution to our problem. To ease the pressure on both of our clubs, we hosted several dual meetings. Having a larger pool of members to fill roles decreased the workload of the executive committee. The routine tasks were delegated, and this freed up some of our time and energy to plan and strategize a membership drive. Once the membership drive launched, we were able to slowly restore normal meeting routine.

3 Negotiate Win-Wins

Delegate responsibility in a way that benefits all parties. Allow volunteers to “get their feet wet” on tasks that benefit their end game. Make sure to give credit for any assistance or task completion.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ Does someone want to shine in front of their boss?
- ▶ Polish their humorous speaking skills?
- ▶ Run a campaign?
- ▶ Boost a resume?
- ▶ Do your club members/officers have specific goals in mind?

Most of my club members ran for office with a sense of duty. Wanting to contribute, they took vacant positions. However, little thought was put into finding the perfect person for the position. In the next half of the term, we reorganized roles. We found a member with a passion for education and with experience delivering leadership workshops for the role of VPE. The publications department provided a writer and ex-public relations professional for the role of vice president

public relations (VPPR). Once we delegated responsibility to align with professional and personal goals, productivity soared.

4 Communicate Clear Goals and Expectations

Have you ever had a boss give you a task with the vague directive to “Take care of it”? I encountered this scenario when, three months into a new position, I was assigned a high-profile annual corporate publication. After working tirelessly on copy, I proudly presented my supervisor with a completed draft two weeks ahead of schedule. When I got it back, I was shocked to find “This is not a report” scrawled across the top. How embarrassing! Due to unclear expectations, I failed to meet goals.

When you delegate ...

- ▶ Provide clear instructions on how to complete the task. This may require some teaching or coaching. Send a follow-up email with instructions to provide a written reference to expectations.
- ▶ Set a task completion date and follow-up system. Agree on the following:
 - How often do you expect updates?
 - How do you expect to receive updates (email, verbal, etc.)?
 - Project completion timeline and schedule.
- ▶ Trust but verify. Keep communication open by checking in and evaluating progress, but be careful not to micro-manage. Give some creative license and allow your team to complete tasks in a

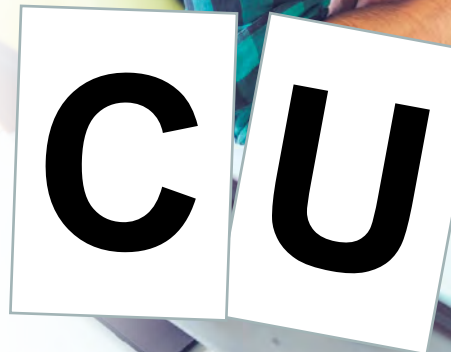


CREATING A

High-Performance

How your organization will benefit from 10 solid leadership strategies.

BY LARS SUDMANN



High-performing organizations and teams. We all admire them. They seem to do great work so effortlessly; it just seems to flow. How can that be? Often, they have installed a culture that just lends itself to high performance. Culture is the behavior of people that can be observed—the actions, rituals and things people do.

As management thinker Peter Drucker famously said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

Culture is a term often misunderstood. Some think it belongs only to the arts, but it is a deeply human and social thing. Fundamentally, it is about the manner in which a group of people interact.

The right culture provides the glue that holds an organization together. It describes the way things “are done around here” without a constant need to explain it. A high-performance culture thus describes a culture that powerfully leads a group of people to great results almost on autopilot, without the need for constant re-explanation.

One example of a strong element in a high-performance culture is Procter & Gamble’s focus on data. When working for this more than 180-year-old company, employees just know to back

up every argument with data. Leaders play a key role in transmitting the culture, and new employees tend to learn the protocol after about two weeks on the job.

While every organization, team, club or association is different, a leader can foster a high-performance culture by taking the following steps.

Define Your Purpose and Standards

Start with a strong purpose (i.e., a “reason for being”). In a company or a club, people have an impact on others; they make a dent in the universe because of their work and effort.

A purpose-driven culture has two key characteristics:

- ▶ **The purpose is clearly formulated and is more than “we do good.”** For instance, in Toastmasters members know the



CULTURE

purpose is to practice delivering speeches to become better at public speaking and to work on their leadership skills.

- ▶ **All members of the organization are fully aware of the purpose and want to live it.** For example, Toastmasters come ready to stretch beyond their current abilities, accept member evaluations and offer constructive feedback.

Often, culture efforts stop here. Purpose printed and put on the wall. Job done; culture defined!

But defining an organization's purpose is often only the first step, and maybe even the easiest. Making it stick and living it as a leader is where the "rubber hits the road." Here is what to do next.



1 **Set high standards and model them.**

A key strategy to bring a culture to life is to focus on selected, observable behaviors. For example, in Toastmasters one way to encourage members to stretch beyond their current abilities is to set the standard of applauding after every performance, and to provide

mentors to new members. These key behaviors need to be lived by every member, and the leaders need to set the standard and also "walk the talk" themselves. As former convention keynote speaker



Patricia Fripp puts it, “It is not what you say you believe that is important, but what you do. Model, encourage, reward and let happen.”

2 Promote self-leadership. A key quality and hallmark of a high-performance culture is when everybody is a leader and takes ownership in their tasks. Individuals then do not need a lot of hand-holding. They

are encouraged, and enabled, to have vision and bring thoughts and projects forward. For instance, when organizing a Toastmasters area conference, every person on the organizing committee should be encouraged to own their task “end-to-end.” People with great self-leadership don’t wait until they are being told what to do. They act, align, communicate and, most importantly, own their task, no matter what. The best way to promote this behavior is to constantly ask when someone on your committee or team comes up with a challenge: What do you propose? How do you think the problem should be solved? Do this instead of just providing the answers yourself.

“Work on 1 percent. If you improve by 1 percent every day, you will be 100 percent better after 72 days.”

3 Promote end-to-end ownership. Make *one* person, not a committee, responsible for a task “end-to-end.” This person will own the project. For example, if a Toastmaster holds a leadership role and cannot attend a meeting, that person is responsible for finding a replacement. The individual will completely own the position, fight for resources and push for completion, regardless of functional barriers or other challenges.

4 Live the “fire principle.” Leaders should extinguish a fire while it’s still small. That means seemingly small matters (e.g., a spreadsheet mistake or that one disrespectful sentence) must be discussed and addressed. Why? Because that shows “how things are done here.” And problems, like fires, are extinguished while they are still

small—while it’s only a small discussion and not a huge year-end fight. As Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker state in the book *School Culture Rewired*, “The culture of any organization is shaped by the worst behavior the leader is willing to tolerate.”

5 Communicate frequently. Members of high-performance organizations communicate frequently with one another (through the use of social media and meeting debriefings, for example). It can be effective to take frequent pulse readings in an organization using technologies like instant polling (e.g., polleverywhere.com). The key is to enable exchange as fast as possible to quickly eliminate misunderstanding and friction. Quick alignments are key to avoiding confusion, especially in organizations where members don’t see one another every day.

6 Train together. High-performance teams such as SWAT teams or sports teams have two things in common: They train together and review their training. This doesn’t happen often in a business or association setting. People are sent for training, and then come back. For high-performance cultures, teams can train together in how to operate and conduct meetings and presentations.



7 Engage team members via feedback. The best way to engage team members and employees is to teach the whole organization how to give energizing feedback that is actionable and can help individuals grow. This type of feedback is specific

and positive. Toastmasters are great at giving feedback for speeches, but not always when it comes to committee work. There, sometimes everything is silent, without any feedback for months. Even worse, if things go wrong, it may cause members to stop communicating with one another. Why not make it a habit to install feedback for club committee work or meeting debriefings, for instance, every three months?



8 Regularly and positively challenge the status quo. Frequently ask, “Why are we doing this?” When I was at McKinsey & Company, it was required to positively “take apart” a colleague’s idea on a frequent basis and play the devil’s advocate for a proposal or plan. It became part of the culture and was never perceived negatively. The same goes for all science debates. Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman argues that by installing formal roles that challenge organizational processes you not only relieve the stigma surrounding speaking up but also enable yourself and your team to avoid common organizational group-think pitfalls.

“The right culture provides the glue that holds an organization together.”

9 Try out new things and innovate. Frequently test out new ideas, new ways of working, new approaches ... and see what works. TED speaker and Google engineer Matt Cutts encourages “30-day challenges”: trying out a small thing for 30 days to see if it works. If it does, continue; if not, drop it. In this way the individual or organization is constantly improving. This is not limited to culture and overseeing a committee or team. Every Toastmaster can be innovative and should push to constantly reinvent themselves as a speaker and leader.

10 Get quantitative and focus on the real world. Any organization that wants to have a high-performance culture should not only measure the output (i.e., results) but also the input, the key things that need to get done. The Distinguished

Club Program (DCP) is a great starting point here, and you can take it one step further. For example, you could measure and track the number of coaching talks per week, the number of strategy updates per month, the amount of feedback requested and so forth.

A high-performance culture pays off. Yet many leaders are marred in the day-to-day grind and don’t foster this type of environment. Those who wish to create such a culture are often fired up and want to implement it quickly, all in one go. However, it is much better to slowly improve a culture one step at a time. As Alan Weiss, author of *Million Dollar Consulting*, likes to put it: Work on 1 percent. If you improve by 1 percent every day, you will be 100 percent better after 72 days.

This approach will allow you to arrive slowly but steadily at your high-performance culture. Invest in that culture. Do it daily. It will help you as a leader, and it will make all the members of your club or organization become more effective. **■**

Lars Sudmann, DTM, *the former chief financial officer of Procter & Gamble Belgium, is now a board advisor, change consultant, author and keynote speaker on change and high-performance organizations. You can reach him and watch his TEDx talks at www.lars-sudmann.com.*



THE INNOVATIVE TOASTMASTER

How can you bring innovation to life as a Toastmaster?

From speaking innovation to meeting innovation and leadership innovation, the Toastmasters experience is the ideal playground to try out new things.

Why not venture into giving a speech in a different language? Does this sound daunting? Technology has made it easier than ever to realize this via voice recording and translation apps, as well as Skype coaching.

If you are part of a club or district committee, why not try out new ways of meeting and even approaching leadership? Why not try, for instance, a walking committee meeting? Toastmasters can be

your “sandbox,” as programmers call the area where they create and test-innovate ideas.

The key is to constantly push yourself to new areas of life.

Don't miss Lars Sudmann's session, "The Innovative Toastmaster: Spice Up Your Leadership and Communication Skills With Practical Innovation Strategies," at the 2018 Toastmasters International Convention taking place August 22-25 in Chicago, Illinois, United States. Visit www.toastmasters.org/Convention for more information.



Meet Microsoft's Sophia Velastegui

As a top engineer in the tech world, she's advancing artificial intelligence while promoting communication.

BY NIA BROWN

Sophia Velastegui, general manager of Microsoft's artificial intelligence (AI) product unit, was named one of the most powerful female engineers of 2017 by *Business Insider*. When asked about this recognition, Velastegui directed attention away from herself and instead focused on all the accomplished women in various industries who don't make headlines. "I need to continue supporting the advancement of diversity," she said.

This goal is particularly challenging, even for a professional who has led some of the most important projects at some of the most powerful tech companies. Velastegui has served as chief product officer at smartphone contender Doppler Labs, as head of special projects at Google Nest and as "Think Tank" program management leader at Apple.

Velastegui first joined Tandem Toastmasters in Cupertino, California, on the recommendation of her mentors Susan Wang, former CFO of Solectron, and Shellye Archambeau, member of the board of directors for Nordstrom and Verizon. Velastegui says she was so shy at the time, she had trouble presenting her teams' projects, even though she knew the technology inside and out. Now a sought-after engineer and tech communicator, this mechanical engineering graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology and University of California, Berkeley, holds several patents and makes headway in her field, organizing panels focused on empowering women in tech and speaking at conferences.

Innovation has been at the heart of your work. What qualities do you think are most important for

a company to nurture creativity and innovation?

Innovation is about different perspectives and thinking beyond the individual. Diversity of thoughts and experience are key to it. Innovation can come from anywhere. Curiosity and play lend themselves to these behaviors. Organizations must reward and recognize innovation to foster the culture.

What challenges have you faced over the years in developing your own leadership style?

Initially, I mimicked styles of others who held positions I aspired to, but they did not reflect me. As I experimented and received honest feedback, I modified my style to own it.

How has Toastmasters helped you?

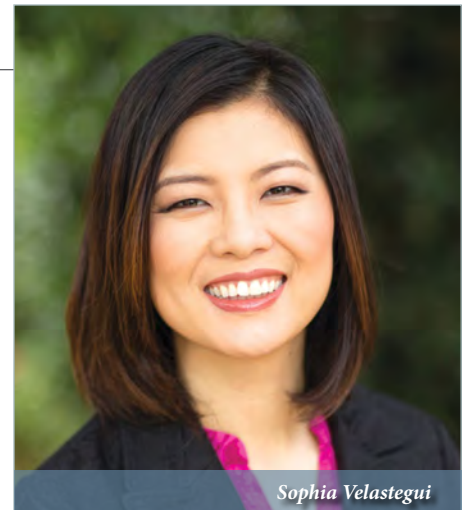
It provided a system that broke down learning how to communicate better into manageable and approachable steps. It's a skill that you need to build up to, especially if you are shy.

You've volunteered for speaking gigs at work to confront your fears head-on. What was that like for you?

I'm a goal-oriented person. So I try to speak every other month. One gets used to speaking to their team or organization, but the challenge for me is speaking in front of strangers. By speaking internally or in groups you have affinities in, you create a safe environment to speak. Microsoft has multiple forums for networking and public speaking.

Why is effective communication important in the business and tech worlds?

Society is full of people interested in tech and how it opens experiences for them,



Sophia Velastegui

but they may not be tech savvy. It's important to effectively communicate the value and benefits that tech can provide. I want my parents to benefit from technology enriching their lives. At one point, my parents thought I was an astronaut in training versus an engineer—mostly because they did not understand what I did. That was on me to resolve and work on being a better communicator.

How do you communicate with, and inspire, your team at Microsoft?

Different styles are dependent on the audience and objective. There's group sync and brainstorming and one-on-one. I inspire my team by listening to them and ensuring my actions reflect the desired behavior.

What excites you most about artificial intelligence?

My team's work on "Satori—Intelligence Over the Data" brought me to Microsoft and working with brilliant people like Yuqing Gao, my counterpart in engineering. Knowledge Graph (technology designed to help computers conceptualize) is foundational to AI. AI is a technology that adapts to people and helps solve problems, including making sense of the data explosion.

How do you feel about public speaking now?

I am confident because deliberate practice has prepared me. If I am able to give people a different perspective and inspire one person to achieve more or challenge themselves, it was worth it. **T**

Nia Brown is a former editorial assistant of the Toastmaster magazine.



Why Pronunciation Matters

Connect with your audience by saying it right.

BY BILL BROWN

One of our objectives in speaking is to connect with our audience members. When we make that connection, they are more apt to listen to what we say and accept our message. You have probably heard many techniques to make that happen. Eye contact is a popular one. There is one method, however, that I rarely hear discussed, and that is pronunciation.

Pronunciation is one of those techniques that works best when the listener isn't aware of it. If they don't notice how you say your words, you are doing something right, which means you are not creating a distraction.

How do you feel when someone sings off-key? Personally, I find it hard to enjoy the music. Mispronunciation is like singing off-key. I learned what was perhaps my most valuable pronunciation lesson back at my university radio station. The station offered a short, informal class for those interested in broadcasting. One topic was the correct pronunciation of words and terms we would use on the air. My most valuable lesson? How to pronounce the *definite* and *indefinite* articles in English.

For those of us without a strong background in English grammar, the definite article is the word “the.” The indefinite articles are the words “a” and “an.” My radio station, WBAA, in Lafayette, Indiana, taught us a pronunciation guide based on normal, everyday usage.

“The” has two pronunciations, a schwa (ə) and a long “e.” For the sake of clarity, I will spell them “thə” (pronounced like the “a” in about) and “thee” (pronounced like the “e” in need). It is quite common for people who are speaking formally, such as speakers and television reporters, to think

that using “thee” is best in most instances. After all, it sounds formal and official—at least to them. But what I learned in class is quite different. They taught us the way people normally talk—the way we, as speakers, *want* to talk. The rules are:

If the word following the definite article is followed by a consonant, then say “thə.” If it is followed by a vowel sound, use “thee.” Hence, it is “thə” table, “thə” wall and “thee” elevator. The indefinite article is similar. If the following word begins with a consonant, pronounce it “uh.” (“We went to a store.”) If the following word begins with a vowel sound, use the word “an.” (“We saw an elephant.”)

“Mispronunciation is like singing off-key.”

You might be thinking, *so now I have to think about the word that is coming up after the word that I am currently saying?* No, not at all. Remember, the rule reflects normal usage. We don't think about consonants and vowels when talking with friends. If we're speaking in our native language, we just think about what we want to say, and then we say it.

Know Their Names

A second way to watch our pronunciation is when saying the names of people and places. We like hearing our name, and our hometown's name, pronounced correctly. Years ago, we didn't have a big problem with people's names. Here in the United States, everyone had names like Bill, Bob, John, Mary and Jane. There wasn't a lot of variety. Today, we have

many people from other cultures, especially in our Toastmasters clubs.

Recently, Venkata joined my club. Our local pronunciation pattern would normally place the emphasis on the second syllable. VenKAta. When he first joined, that is how many members pronounced it. Others just mumbled it. I talked to him before one meeting, and he introduced himself as VENkata. During the meeting, I asked him how we should pronounce it. Now he hears his name said correctly, and the other members aren't confused by it.

Besides emphasis, the sounds themselves are important. I live in Nevada. Many people from out of town pronounce it incorrectly. (The first “a” should be pronounced as in the word “flat.”) While it may not be a big deal, believe me, we notice it when people get it right—and especially when they get it wrong. Residents of Oregon feel the same way about their state's name. (Hint: The last syllable is *not* pronounced “gone.”) If you aren't absolutely sure of a pronunciation, ask. People will appreciate it.

One key way to connect with people individually or as a group is to be attentive to what they expect to hear. When we use proper, everyday pronunciation, listeners are more apt to pay attention to what we are saying and have a favorable impression of us and, hopefully, of our message. **T**

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of two clubs: *Pro Toastmasters* and *Powerhouse Pros*. Learn more at www.billbrownsspeechcoach.com.



ONLINE EXTRAS: Hear more pronunciation tips in an exclusive recording by Bill Brown.

The Anatomy of a Joke

Learn how to structure your comedy to punch up your next speech.

BY DEAN LEWIS

In my entire comedy career I can say one thing is the secret to my success. It's what got me on TV shows like *Last Comic Standing* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and helped me win a U.S. Emmy Award for excellence in the television industry. The secret is understanding comedy structure.

The good news is structure can be taught. It requires a little work, but if you know what steps to take, you'll get solid results! I'll tell you my theory and then show you a great structure for punching up any speech, presentation or blog post.

The Elements of Comedic Surprise

Laughter is created when surprise is present. To be more specific, laughter is created when there is a *comedic element of surprise*. Your electric bill doubling can surprise you, but that doesn't result in a laugh. Or you could be surprised when your teenage son wrecks the car, but again, no laughter.

A comedic surprise is a twist without serious repercussions. It's important to know this because it explains why some people will not laugh at a joke. It can be structured perfectly but still flop. The reason is, the listeners feel the twist has serious repercussions. You may hear, "That's mean!" instead of a laugh.

Comedy is subjective, and your job is to understand why your material is or isn't effective. It is worth considering negative feedback as valid, especially if a joke is causing someone pain. Maybe the punch line can be softened, or made less aggressive toward its target. There's no need to upset your audience!

A joke structure that works means the audience believes one thing to be true; however, it is revealed that something else

is actually true. The involuntary psychological reaction is usually laughter.

The techniques for making a surprise humorous include:

- ▶ Conciseness
- ▶ Misdirection
- ▶ Revealing the punch word or punch phrase at the last possible moment. (This is the part of the joke that will trigger the laugh. Putting it as close to the end as possible makes it more effective. A punch word is the word that will trigger a laugh. A punch phrase is the series of words that are funny.)

In a well-structured joke, it's not only about having a good twist; it's about connecting the setup and punch line in a logical way.

It helps to have a buildup to the twist. Usually, the first line is informative. When misdirection is used, it lulls the audience into having a certain expectation. It can also create tension, which the twist releases. Here's an example of a joke from Steven Wright, an American stand-up comedian:

"I've been getting into astronomy, so I installed a skylight. The people who live above me are furious."

When he talks about installing a skylight, we are imagining his roof. He is luring us into thinking he'll view the stars from his home. This makes the twist even stronger!

Now here's the joke *without* misdirection. "I've been getting into astronomy, so I installed a skylight."

It's not as funny because it's just the setup with the twist. Without misdirection, the twist is too abrupt.

With the misdirection statement, "The people who live above me are furious ..." we are led away from the punch line, which makes it more effective.

OK, enough theory; here's a great way to write a joke!

Writing the 'Assumption Joke'

Here are two jokes I wrote using the process of misdirection:

"I had eggs for breakfast. They were fresh, they were delicious, they were Cadbury."

THE 6 QUESTIONS OF JOKE WRITING

While writing a joke, ask yourself the basic Who, What, Where, When, Why and How questions, and consider the following:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| • Gender | • Quantity | • Weight |
| • Location | • Ownership | • Height |
| • Age | • Intention | • Breed |
| • Time of day | • Usual tools used | • Sound |
| • Day of week | • Origin | • Smell |
| • Weather | • Vehicles | • Procedure |
| • When it happened (era) | • Occupations usually associated | |
| • Clothing | | |

"I had eggs for breakfast. Don't you hate when, every time you're about to take a bite, the light turns green?"

Whenever a listener hears a piece of information, assumptions are made. By identifying probable assumptions, the comedian can explore possible reinterpretations and structure the joke to take advantage of the assumptions to create a comedic surprise.

When writing a joke, *always* begin with the truth. Don't try to be funny as your first step. Being funny too early often creates ideas that are overdone, or unbelievable. Start real. This will more likely pull the audience in and leave them unaware a comedic surprise is coming.

The 4-Step Joke-Writing Process

STEP 1: Start with a factual, truthful piece of information. Here is mine: "I had eggs for breakfast."

STEP 2: List 10 assumptions.

Start with 10 so you'll make more interesting choices. Each assumption can be investigated and questioned until useful alternative meanings can be discovered and formed into jokes. Here are 10 possible assumptions:

1. The eggs were cooked.
2. The eggs were what I wanted or ordered.
3. It was a reasonable amount of eggs.
4. They were chicken eggs.
5. I ate them off a plate.
6. "Breakfast" happened in the morning.
7. This happened today.
8. The eggs were mine to eat.
9. I was at home or in a restaurant.
10. By "had" I mean I ate them.

STEP 3: Investigate the assumptions.

Look at each assumption and ask questions about it until you find a funny twist.

Assumption 4 made me start asking what other eggs exist besides chicken eggs, including ostrich eggs, lizard eggs and Easter eggs. Easter eggs made me think of plastic eggs filled with candy and of chocolate eggs. Chocolate eggs seemed like an unexpected alternative and a solid twist.

Assumption 9 made me investigate where else I could be eating eggs. At a



neighbor's house, in a hotel room, at school or in my car. "In my car" felt like a good twist.

STEP 4: Make the joke concise, provide misdirection and put the punch as close to the end as possible.

Once I chose chocolate eggs, I used a specific brand name (the more recognizable something is, the better chance of getting a laugh). I also decided to use the misdirection of describing the eggs. I chose words that could be used to describe both scrambled eggs and Cadbury eggs. This misdirection will hopefully lead the audience so far from the revelation it will increase the impact of the funny twist. I put "Cadbury" as the last word, delaying the surprise until the last possible moment.


Like my eating eggs in the car joke, asking a question involves the audience and misdirects them into thinking about a common experience. I worded it so it seems I'm bringing up something like spilling eggs on your shirt or maybe the phone rings and interrupts you from eating. The punch here (actually a punch phrase) is revealed close to the end, enhancing the comedic surprise.

This will take some work! At first, the whole process may take at least 30 minutes. However, keep in mind:

- ▶ It will become easier with practice, and you will eventually be able to do it quickly, or just in your head. Once you are experienced in the process, you can create jokes in seconds.
- ▶ This is a much more reliable process than waiting for inspiration, which can be fickle and unreliable. By having a process that produces results, you can create material any time.

Final thought: This joke structure can lose its impact when overused. If it becomes clear to the audience that the technique is to twist an assumption, the element of surprise is no longer surprising. **T**

Dean Lewis is a stand-up comedian who has appeared on CNN and American TV shows Last Comic Standing and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. He also won a Lone Star Emmy for writing on the comedy show DFW 10. Learn more at www.deanlewiscomedy.com.

 **ONLINE EXTRAS:** Watch comedian Dean Lewis perform his clean stand-up comedy.



The List

To do or not to do? When you make a list, there's no question.

BY JOHN CADLEY

Where would the world be without To-Do lists? Well, for one thing, we might not have a world. Even the Creator had to make a list: **Day 1: Light. Day 2: Oceans. Day 3: Land.** And so forth.

Then there was that all-important second list when Adam and Eve, banished from the Garden of Eden and suddenly on their own, had to write down everything humankind might need for the next few billion millennia. After much theological debate it is generally agreed that the first item was: *Buy clothes.*

If you think I'm being facetious, great minds will tell you that I am not. Umberto Eco, for instance, the late distinguished Italian philosopher and novelist, was an inveterate list maker—not so he could remember all the ingredients for meat loaf, but so he could “make infinity comprehensible.” Think of that the next time you're complaining about the price of tomato paste.

It's what we humans have a desperate need to do—make order out of chaos. We have a thousand “to-do's” whirling around in our minds at any given moment, slamming and crashing into each other like a horde of miscreant kindergartners run amok. If we can catch them one by one and pin them down (the things, not the children) we can bring form to chaos, substance to shapelessness, manageability to the otherwise unmanageable. We can feel like Hercules taming the nine-headed Hydra.

Then we can stick the list in a drawer and feel like we've just conquered the universe.

Not really, but you get the point: making a list gives us that all-important feeling of control. Yes, we have many things to do, but if we nail them down to a piece of paper, they seem more doable. I say “seem” because even though putting something on a list makes it 33 percent more likely you will do it, 41 percent of items on a list never get done (yes, people actually research this stuff). In other words, put “fix screen door” on your list, and there's a good chance you'll do it—but there's an even better chance you won't!

“It's what we humans have a desperate need to do—make order out of chaos.”

Why is this? It's because making a list isn't enough; you have to make the right kind of list. If it's too long, with too many items and too much time to do them, your objectives will languish like those wrinkled tomatoes that hung a little too long on the vine. For instance, “Change my life by next Wednesday” is not a good to-do item. You need to “chunk it down” into smaller, more actionable goals. For instance, “Get to work on time once this week” is a good first step. Even if you fail, you can refine it to an even easier objective: *Buy an alarm clock.*

Unfortunately, even if you make the perfect list, you may still be thwarted by the unknown—i.e., unexpected inter-

ruptions. You start out in the morning with your list firmly in hand, determined to start at No.1 and work right to the bottom ... when a neighbor stops by to ask about your pachysandra. Where did you buy it? How much do you water it? Will it do well in the shade? At this point it becomes difficult to attack your list with gusto when all you can think of is doing the same thing to your neighbor. The Scottish poet Robert Burns may help you here. Seeing “fix hole in roof” on his to-do list, it took him four days instead of one to accomplish the task due to a Scottish Blackface ram that kept knocking the ladder over with its horns, stranding Burns on the roof. In the rain. It was then that the poet wrote his classic line: “The best laid plans of mice and men go oft awry.”

Mr. Burns' experience notwithstanding, I strongly recommend you write a to-do list.

First, so that you may avoid the dreaded Zeigarnik effect, which posits the human tendency to remember things we haven't done more clearly than those we have. Better to write the list and stuff it in a drawer than to be haunted daily by what should be on it. And so that you may experience the rapturous, the joyous, the inexpressible elation that only a to-do list can give you—crossing things off it. **T**

John Cadley, a former advertising copywriter, is a freelance writer and musician living in Fayetteville, New York. Learn more at www.cadleys.com.

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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 that 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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