

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNICATORS & LEADERS | NOVEMBER 2020

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We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.



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Grow Your Global Speaking Skills

Have you ever thought to yourself, *I wonder what it would be like to speak in another country? Would my story—my message—be received the same way as I intended?*

All of the hindrances of travel—expenses, the passport and visa requirements, and let's not forget the jet lag—are now a thing of the past. The global landscape has changed, and Toastmasters' meetings have adapted accordingly. Now, the only real barrier to speaking around the world and growing your global speaking skills is overcoming the time zones.

What's the easiest way to "book travel" to clubs around the world? Use the [Find a Club](#) feature on the Toastmasters website and select "online attendance." Once you select a club to visit, contact them and ask if you can speak at a meeting. They may not be able to accommodate your request, but my experience has shown that clubs are more than willing to have guest speakers. Make sure that you ask for an evaluation of your speech—after all, the only way to grow your speaking skills is through feedback.

You will gain tremendous insights speaking globally, and the exposure to other cultures will be eye-opening. How is the audience reading your body language? Consider how gestures are interpreted in other cultures. Is a peace sign conveyed differently? What do your crossed arms say to the audience? Should you point with one finger? Are your words and phrases being interpreted the same way from country to country?

You will gain tremendous insights speaking globally, and the exposure to other cultures will be eye-opening.

During a recent Park City Toastmasters of Stratford (Connecticut) meeting, member Peter Rottenbucher delivered a speech titled "Untranslatable!" In his speech, he illustrated words that only had meaning in a specific country and were untranslatable in any others. Does your speech contain these types of words? There are many websites available, such as [Babel](#), that list words untranslatable in various languages. You will also learn by observing speakers from other countries. I have had the pleasure to visit both an Arabic-speaking and a Portuguese-speaking club, and although I speak neither language, I was able to witness how vocal variety and body language worked in unison to deliver a message, a skill that I focus on when delivering my speeches. Past International President Robert E. Barnhill, DTM, often said, "Sing your song." Now you can sing it globally and gain valuable feedback along the way. I encourage you to reach out to Toastmasters clubs throughout our global community, ask for an opportunity to speak at the club, share your message—your story—and grow your speaking skills! Safe travels.

Richard E. Peck, DTM
International President

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Clubs sustain growth and learning.



Cabra-Vale Toastmasters of Canley Vale, New South Wales, Australia, celebrated its 300th meeting prior to COVID-19 restrictions.



Doylestown Club of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, celebrated its 65th anniversary virtually on March 10, 2020.








Lucknow Toastmasters Club of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, hosted an outdoor meeting in January 2020. Members braved the chilly winds with tea, smiles, and learning throughout the afternoon.



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

www.toastmasters.org/Magazine

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WHAT'S ONLINE THIS MONTH:



PHOTO CREDIT: HUNGRY EYE PHOTO

Aloha, Toastmasters!

Get to know Toastmaster Samantha Neyland, 2020 Miss Hawaii USA. View a photo gallery and read how she became a confident contestant who took the crown.

How to Deliver Bad News

No one looks forward to being the bearer of bad news, but how you communicate during difficult times can define your character and, in some cases, your company's reputation. [Watch this video](#) for tips on how to deliver difficult news with empathy.

WEB RESOURCE

Communicating Across Cultures

In today's accelerated international marketplace, it's important to understand cultural differences. [Watch this free webinar series](#) to increase your cultural awareness, discover nuances in humor and body language, and learn how culture affects the business environment.



Beyond the Trophy

Toastmaster Daniel Midson-Short is a five-time competitor in the International Speech Contest and continues to find the value in

the journey. Learn more about the rewards of competing and [watch Midson-Short](#) on the World Championship stage.



This icon at the top of a page means an online extra is included with the article at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

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▶ MEMBER MOMENT

Miss Hawaii USA Embraces New Opportunities

As the daughter of a military officer, Samantha Neyland moved around the world as a child. Living amid different cultures taught her how vital effective communication is in building strong relationships and understanding the world. That early insight was invaluable when, while searching for a way to express herself as a 16-year-old, Neyland discovered beauty pageants—competitions in which young women demonstrate their confidence, stage presence, philanthropic work, and interviewing skills.

Neyland put in countless hours of hard work and training to hone her confidence onstage. In 2013, she was crowned Miss Hawaii Teen USA. At the suggestion of a pageant judge, she joined Toastmasters to improve her speaking and interviewing skills. Did it help? “100%,” Neyland says.

In fact, when she won the 2020 Miss Hawaii USA pageant, she also won three main award categories: interview, swimsuit, and evening gown. This is a rare feat for contestants, so Neyland was thrilled, but the interview award was the most important to her, because it proved her Toastmasters training paid off.

The lessons that helped her most were learning to control the room, manage her own nerves, and embrace the pause. “Toastmasters does a good job of teaching people to not use those filler words and be comfortable with silence. You don’t have to fill every moment,” Neyland explains.

“My biggest aspiration in life has always been to make a difference.”

—SAMANTHA NEYLAND

Even when she’s not competing, Neyland refuses to slow down. While she waits to compete in the Miss USA 2020 pageant on November 9, she is serving as the 2020-2021 Club President for Ala Moana Toastmasters of Honolulu, Hawaii, and B4 Area Director for District 1 in California, where she first joined Toastmasters, and is still a member of the West Hollywood Toastmasters. “Being active in Toastmasters and taking the time to write a speech or prep for a meeting helps with all the other work I’m doing in pageants and philanthropy,” she says.

Toastmasters also inspired her to start a program called Time to Talk Hawaii, which teaches leadership and success strategies to teens. “I wanted to find a way to bring Toastmasters to a younger group,” Neyland says. “So I purchased the *Interpersonal Communication Youth Communication Module* from Toastmasters International. After reading through it, I decided to combine elements of that program with confidence boosting exercises that I had learned in my previous position as a youth performing arts instructor.”



PHOTO CREDIT: BK PHOTO

Before COVID-19, Neyland was the solo presenter at workshops teaching teens how to communicate effectively with one another, their parents, and the world around them. Now, with virus restrictions in place, she is forging ahead, posting videos with lessons for audiences of all ages on Facebook and Instagram. Topics range from staying positive during quarantine to steps to becoming more assertive.

With conversations about race now prevalent in today’s society, Neyland is also leveraging her platform as the first Black Miss Hawaii USA, and her Toastmasters training, to speak on how to communicate with people who have a diverse variety of life and cultural experiences. “The biggest lesson is just listening. ... If you have two people throwing their opinions at each other, you’re never going to get anywhere,” she explains. When people are willing to listen to one another, they are likely to find more similarities and understanding than differences, she adds.

“My biggest aspiration in life has always been to make a difference,” she says. “I bring it into every aspect of my life.” As Miss Hawaii USA, she is currently rallying community support and lobbying the Hawaii State Legislature to create a law that adds Juneteenth—the holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who were enslaved in the United States—to the state’s calendar. Hawaii is one of only three states in America that doesn’t recognize Juneteenth as an official state holiday. Neyland has already gathered a robust coalition of supporters and has successfully lobbied the Maui County Council to pass the resolution at the county level.

The Miss USA 2020 competition was on hold for most of the year, but Neyland consistently moved forward, advocating for social justice and growing the Time to Talk Hawaii program. And of course, drawing on her polished Toastmasters persona, she will be returning to the footlights of the pageant stage this month.

Laura Mishkind is assistant editor for *Toastmaster magazine*.

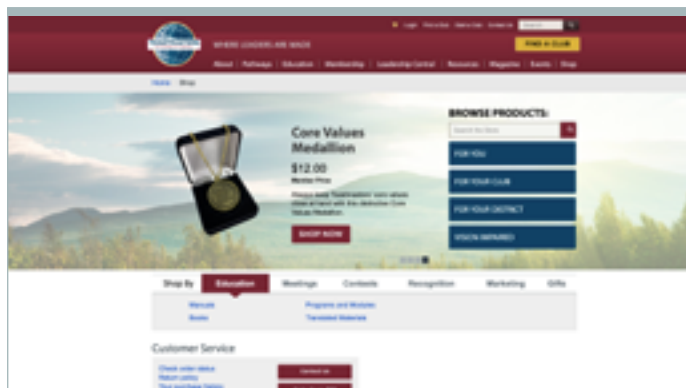
► NEWS FROM TI

Resource Roundup

Set Up New Members for Success – Keep your new members engaged by using the [New Member Orientation PowerPoint](#). This resource will allow a club officer or mentor to introduce Toastmasters International and the Pathways learning experience to new club members and set them up for success.



Convention Replay – Have some extra time on your hands? If you were not able to watch all of the education sessions, speeches, or events, take this opportunity to replay the [exciting convention highlights](#)! We also welcome you to share this experience with other people in your network, which can help them become better listeners, influencers, and storytellers.



Toastmasters Online Store – If you’re looking for ways to show your gratitude to fellow members, friends, or family, take a few minutes to shop around the Toastmasters Online Store. This month, a [special selection of products](#), such as a knitted winter set, travel mug, and canvas tote bag, are 10% off. Click through the store from the comfort of your home and pick out the perfect gift!

Better Speaker Series Access – Did you know that you can still access the Better Speaker Series as a digital download in the [Resource Library](#)? The 10 modules, designed as 15-minute educational speeches to be given in your club, give practical tips that benefit all members.

Celebrate Pathways Accomplishments – Remember that you can view and print certificates from [Base Camp](#) to celebrate Pathways accomplishments every time you finish a level or complete a path. Please note that since August 30, 2020, your “Certificate of Proficiency” is no longer provided as a hard copy by mail but is available to download on Base Camp.

► CLUB EXPERIENCE

Quick Tips on Corporate Clubs

Corporate Toastmasters clubs provide an in-house opportunity for employees to develop soft skills, such as listening, leadership, communication, and time management skills. As a result of sponsoring a club, companies benefit from better leaders, more effective managers, closer-knit teams, and higher productivity.

Before you start a club at your organization, it’s important to show the leadership how a club will add value and benefit the organization in a meaningful way.

Toastmasters can help employees learn to:

- Enhance listening skills
- Practice time management
- Guide successful teams
- Boost team collaboration
- Conduct effective meetings
- Sharpen presentation skills



To learn how to start a club at your place of employment, visit the [Toastmasters website](#). If your company already sponsors a club but you want to recruit new members, you can [use this flier](#) to generate interest for your fellow employees. In addition, [share this video](#) to show others the key benefits of corporate clubs.

▶ **SNAPSHOT**

Members of Yeouido Toastmasters Club of Seoul, South Korea, celebrate their first in-person meeting since the emergence of COVID-19 with a magazine night. They gave speeches based on articles from the Toastmaster magazine and had a reading session, sharing what they found most interesting in the latest issue.

▶ **PATHWAYS**

Annual Report Tracks Evolution of Education Program

The Pathways learning experience launched in 2018, marking a new era in Toastmasters education. After two years, member patterns and progress in the program are becoming increasingly clear.

The 2020 Pathways Annual Report, which covers the period from July 2019 to June 2020, shows that, overall, members find the program to be highly beneficial. More than 86% of respondents said they were satisfied with Pathways projects and the program's applicability, and over half of them were "very or extremely satisfied."

The report was compiled by the Business Research and Analysis team at Toastmasters World Headquarters and covers the second full year of the program.

Some of the findings:

- ▶ Innovative Planning is the most popular of the program's 11 paths.

- ▶ "Connect with Storytelling," an elective in all the paths, is the most popular project, while "Manage Online Meetings" is the one completed the quickest.
- ▶ Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, more members were selecting a path within 30 days of joining Toastmasters in 2019-2020 than in 2018-2019.
- ▶ Members in Pathways took less than half the time to select a path and complete their first project this program year as compared to last.

Other numbers of note:

- ▶ Nearly 90% of members surveyed say they have achieved their personal goals in Pathways.
- ▶ There are active Pathways enrollees in all 145 countries that have Toastmasters clubs.
- ▶ More than 170,000 Ice Breakers have been delivered since Pathways began.

TRAVELING TOASTMASTER



GET CREATIVE! Traveling *Toastmaster* wants to highlight creativity in quarantine! Take a picture in your home or socially distancing with your magazine or other Toastmasters memorabilia. Send your fun photos to photos@toastmasters.org.

1



1 | **ELAHEH SHARAFIAN** of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, enjoys a Sunday afternoon in quarantine with her online Toastmaster magazine.

2 | **SANDRA E. MEZA** of Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, pauses during a run in La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico, to snap a picture with the digital Toastmaster.

3 | **TEK RAJ GYAWALI** of Manassas Park, Virginia, tunes into the 2020 International Convention from his home.

4 | Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, **JYOTHI and KOTHANDATH MOHANDAS, DTM**, of Palakkad, Kerala, India, visit the Malampuzha Dam—the largest dam and reservoir in Kerala.

2



3



4



View additional photos in this month's Traveling *Toastmaster* photo gallery at www.toastmasters.org/Magazine.

The Power of Active Gratitude

It's a gift to the giver and the receiver.

BY SAMIR GEEPEE

Several years ago, my friend Basheer and I were seated in a restaurant in Guangzhou, China. When we received the menu, the first thing Basheer did was tip the waiter. I was surprised and asked, “Why are you tipping before we have been served or even placed an order?”

I had lived in China for several years by then and was familiar with how excellent the Chinese are at serving their guests. However, that meal was quite remarkable. Our server put in extra effort to make sure we had the best experience ever, and went out of his way to ensure we were delighted.

As we walked out, Basheer asked, “Samir, would you tip someone who would give you excellent service?”

“Of course,” I replied.

“Precisely. Would you tip someone who wouldn't give you excellent service?”

“Of course not. Why would I do that?”

He smiled and asked me a question that was so simple and yet so profound. “Why would you want to leave things to chance? Why not be the one to delight the waiter before he delights you? My tipping him at the beginning gives him the opportunity to repay my deed, rather than me repaying him back for his good service.”

The idea of being rewarded before even committing any action was a breakthrough moment for me. I realized this philosophy can be applied in any scenario. It encourages us to have the abundance mindset.

We are surrounded by transactional behaviors, but an abundant mindset allows us to create a transformational experience when dealing with others. The power of gratitude is immense. It creates a sense of well-being in both the receiver and the giver.

I began thinking about how there are two types of leaders: transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders work toward a goal, then move on to another project. Transformational leaders build upon their goals; they strive to do



Samir Geepee

better, be more innovative, and inspire their team. It is not that one is right and the other wrong; they are simply two different styles. I've found that being transformational, however, is more empowering.

Leadership is about guiding a team to accomplish a goal. There are various methods to do this, such as effective — communication, setting priorities, building trust, etc. There's another method that I feel has great potential, and that is the use of **gratitude**.

The power of gratitude is immense. It creates a sense of well-being in both the receiver and the giver.

Good leaders work to get things done, and to get them done in the best way possible. To do that, they need to motivate their team. And one of the best methods for doing that is to use active gratitude. There are simple messages of gratitude that can be expressed on a regular basis. Many people use passive gratitude, which

comes at the end of an action: *Thank you for taking the time out to read this. Thank you for guiding me with my assignment. Thank you for being my mentor.*

I began observing truly effective leaders, those who inspire and empower their teams, and I tried to decode how they practiced communicating gratitude. While reflecting upon the two styles of leadership—transactional versus transformational—I wondered if the way gratitude is practiced differs between these two styles, and I found a distinct difference.

People who are transformational leaders tend to use active gratitude: They set clear *intentions*—they use gratitude to empower people to do more than just what is expected of them. They are *authentic*—they genuinely care about the people around them, and they enjoy seeing people meet their highest potential. They inspire others to do even more. Finally, they are *expressive*—they have energy in their voice and demeanor. There is true joy when the message is relayed, both by the giver and the receiver.

We all have the opportunity to practice gratitude in various ways. We can choose to practice active gratitude, leaving others feeling empowered, or we can choose passive gratitude, which leaves others feeling appreciated. There are things within our control, and there are those beyond our control. The more we all act with respect to what is in our control, the more likely the chances of achieving the outcomes we desire.

We have awesomeness within each one of us that is at the core of who we are. We can all tap into that. I would be delighted if we had more people who had the mindset of my friend Basheer. **T**

SAMIR GEEPEE is Club President of the recently chartered Podcasters Toastmasters Club, and is also a member of TGIS Toastmasters Club, both in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Find out more at www.samirgeeppee.com



Organization Leads to Clarity

Use three basic structures to outline your speech and guide your listeners.

BY BILL BROWN, DTM

Last month we looked at a speech's purpose. But if you are to achieve your purpose, audience members need to be able to follow what you are saying. The best way to ensure that is to organize your speech in a way that makes sense to the listener.

Speech organization may come easily to you. Then again, it may not, especially for newer Toastmasters with little writing experience. What, then, is a good way to organize your speech?

There is no right way to construct one, which allows for flexibility. But that also means you have to plan what you are going to do. Fortunately, some simple structures have been proven beneficial over the years.

The first technique is what I call the key points structure. This is, perhaps, the most common method. Discuss your key points, one by one. In this method, the exact order is not critical. I recommend that you give your strongest points first. That way you have your audience agreeing with you early in the presentation.

The second technique is what I call the sequential structure, which helps when the time sequence or chronology is important to your speech. If that's the case, by all means discuss your topic in that order. Your audience members will be able to follow the timing as your story unfolds. Let's look at a few possibilities.

A sequential structure helps if you are describing some sort of step-by-step procedure, such as assembly or disassembly. It may also apply when discussing geography. For example, let's say you are giving

a report on sales performance for various territories in your company. You could list them in order of size, alphabetical order, or some sort of geographic order, like west to east or east to west.

Sometimes, when discussing geographic information, another order might present itself. For instance, if you were making a report on criteria for each of the 14 Toastmasters regions, reviewing them in numerical order would make the most sense.

A complicated structure has the potential of confusing your audience.

A third way that you can organize your speech is what I call the problem/solution structure. One strategy is to state an issue or problem, analyze the possible solutions, then finish up with your recommendation. You could also state the issue or problem, make your recommendation, then present an analysis of why that solution is the best.

For example, let's say you are recommending a contact management software package for your company to purchase and you have evaluated three options: brands X, Y, and Z. You could describe the situation, show your analysis of the three options, and give your recommendation.

On the other hand, especially if you are presenting to top management, an alternative tactic is to say, "Our task was to evaluate and recommend a contact management system for our company. We recommend going with Brand X. Here is

why." And then give your analysis of the pros and cons of each.

Management tends to like the bottom-line up front. Other groups might prefer to see your analysis first. Gauge your audience and organize accordingly.

The problem/solution structure is also common for stories and speech contests. You describe a problem, then reveal an "aha" moment that transformed your thinking. Finish with the results you now enjoy with your new perspective.

Obviously, this can be employed in many ways, and some are more desirable than others. It all depends on the characteristics of your audience.

While you have many ways to organize your speech, I recommend two principles to follow. The first is keep it simple. A complicated structure has the potential of confusing your audience. The second is to use three main points or categories. You can make many points, but I suggest that you lump them together into three main ones. What did I do above? I described the key point structure, the sequential structure, and the problem/solution structure. Hopefully, that made it simple.

Organization is one of the key actions in your presentation planning phase. It is a vital part in making sure that you achieve your speech's purpose. And that, after all, is why you are speaking in the first place. **■**

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach from Las Vegas and a member of Ahead of the Curve Toastmasters. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.

See For Yourself

Discover why training with mirrors and video may be a waste of time.

BY JOEL SCHWARTZBERG

Contrary to some beliefs, practicing a speech in front of a mirror or watching a video of your speech are not the best ways to coach yourself to be a better speaker. Neither of these tactics produce true reflections of your ability, and focusing on your reflection invites as many hazards as benefits. Being aware of these training trip-ups is especially important if you have a limited amount of time to practice and perfect your speech.

Below are some of the biggest challenges of using mirrors and video as practice tools, as well as more effective alternatives.

What Do We See When We Look Into a Mirror?

Every time we pass a mirror or look in a shiny window or take a selfie, we're trained to think about our appearance: Is my hair too ruffled? My shirt wrinkled? But despite this lifelong conditioning, many public speakers rely on mirrors when they practice, as if they can turn off that deep behavioral programming and ask instead, "Am I making my point effectively?"

Similarly, when my clients watch their speeches on video, often their first reaction is not "I should have reinforced my point on that slide," but "my face looks tired" or "my collar is too tight."

This disconnect between instinct and intention can make using mirrors, and in many cases video, a time-wasting training effort, especially for novice Toastmasters who have not yet perfected evaluating someone else's speech, much less their own.

Be Aware of Internal Bias

When you use mirrors or video, you're not looking at yourself as the audience would. A range of internal biases can distort that reflection. If you're naturally a perfectionist, you'll be too hard on yourself. If you lack confidence, your

expectations may be too low. If you don't like the way you look, chances are you won't like the way you present.

You likely already know your voice sounds different to you than it sounds to others. Consider your image biased in the same way. I've given many speeches over the years and won national titles in speech competitions, but when I watch myself on video, I'm typically very unsatisfied. (Conversely, my mother is never disappointed.)

Use Video Judiciously

To be fair, video can be a useful training tool because you can pause and focus on specific visual skills, such as gesturing, eye contact, volume, and motion. Watching yourself on video also builds awareness of errors you might be committing unknowingly, enabling you to fine-tune your training. But realize that when you employ video, your internal biases can still dramatically impede your ability to judge your presentation objectively.

The other problem with video training is that it takes precious time away from *actual* rehearsal. When you capture yourself on video, you'll naturally want to spend time watching it. But public speaking practice is only effective when you're actually speaking, so that time might be better spent working on—not merely watching—your presentation.

Learn How to Self-correct

Ultimately, successful public speakers don't need to be good self-evaluators as much as they need to be good self-correctors. Giving a few Toastmasters speeches will teach you more about identifying and improving your public speaking abilities than reading five books on public speaking. That's because meaningful improvement doesn't come only from

seeing and knowing; it comes even more crucially from doing and correcting.

Seek out Toastmasters colleagues who know your strengths and weaknesses and can help you improve. Practice your speeches for them and nail down what skills you need to work on to make your presentation stronger. Accept their feedback and work it into your practice.

Your Toastmasters colleagues are your best public speaking resources because one, they represent your audience, and two, they know what to look for. By contrast, your reflection is not your audience, and has no more of a clue than you do.

Practice Out Loud

Practicing your speech in your head may help you memorize it, but it won't improve your ability to deliver it because that involves your mouth too. You need to practice using both your mind and your mouth to convey your points effectively, which means practicing aloud.

Practice to a colleague, a friend, a child, a pet, or the wall—just not to a mirror. And, again, don't feel like you absolutely must record and watch it on video. The most important practice is practice itself.

With enough meaningful practice, learning, and improvement, you'll know your presentations are succeeding not because you see it with your own eyes, but because you're confident in your ability to speak in public and in the presentational choices you make.

It will also be reflected in the eyes of your rapt audience, which should be all the reflection you'll need. **T**

Joel Schwartzberg is the senior director of strategic and executive communications for a major national nonprofit in New York City, a presentations coach, and the author of *Get to the Point! Sharpen Your Message and Make Your Words Matter*.

Reap the Rewards of the Toastmasters/Rotary Alliance

How members can benefit from the two international organizations teaming up.

BY PAUL STERMAN

About a year ago, Angelie Bharwaney and several members of her Rotary club decided to start a new community project. The group teamed up to tackle trash. Taking over the maintenance and improvement of a large pathway in Cansons Park, in London, England, they spent the first Wednesday morning of every month snaring pieces of “rubbish” there.

When passersby asked, Bharwaney explained what the group was doing, and they expressed appreciation. “It just took a few hours of my time and it made me feel better,” she says of the beautification effort.

Bharwaney is a member of Toastmasters as well, where helping others is also a central tenet, with members helping each other gain confidence and improve communication and leadership skills. She says her fellow Toastmasters would find it gratifying to collaborate on Rotary service efforts, which range from local projects to humanitarian service around the world.

The alliance between Toastmasters International and Rotary International makes it easier to do that. Though members can’t participate in Rotary service projects as an official Toastmasters activity, they can join in as individuals.

“I think for Toastmasters to join in our service projects would be amazing,” says Bharwaney, Club President of the Harrovia Toastmasters Speakers in London and Immediate Past President of the Rotary Club of Edgware and Stanmore, also in London.

The potential of that shared energy to help others is why Toastmasters and Rotary forged the alliance. Officially announced at the beginning of 2020, it is aimed at capitalizing on the strengths of each organization, helping to further personal and professional growth for members of both groups.

“Rotary being such a great service organization, they can help us take what we’ve learned here and do something better out there.”

—SCOTT BROWN, DTM

Scott Brown, DTM, a Toastmaster in Roanoke, Indiana, says teaming up can help Toastmasters use their skills to positively impact people around the world. To advocate for their service projects, leaders must communicate why such efforts are vital and inspire volunteers to work together.

“Rotary being such a great service organization, they can help us take what we’ve learned here and do something better out there,” says Brown, who does leadership consulting for companies in the retail, service, and hospitality industries.

A Variety of Benefits

What other ways can Toastmasters benefit from teaming up with Rotarians? You can

gain experience speaking outside of Toastmasters, strengthen your mentoring and evaluation skills, expand your professional and personal network, and broaden your perspective on the world.

Rotary International has nearly 1.2 million members and more than 36,000 clubs in almost every country in the world. In addition, nearly 200,000 young adults are members of Rotaract.

Toastmasters clubs can link with their counterparts at the local level—just reach out to a nearby Rotary club. (If you don’t have a nearby Rotary club, you can attend one that meets virtually.) Consider holding a joint Toastmasters/Rotary club meeting, allowing both groups to learn more about the other. Try to visit or speak at a Rotary club meeting or other Rotary events. In doing so, you can connect with Rotarians and speak about the value of Toastmasters, or speak on another issue that sparks your passion. Rotary also offers the potential for speaking to a larger audience than your Toastmasters club.

Such experiences can help members stretch their skills, says Deborah Richards, DTM, a Canadian who belongs to both organizations. Rotary clubs also offer guest speakers time for presentations generally in the 10- to 20-minute range. “I think that would be an interesting challenge for a Toastmaster,” says Richards, a 20-year member who belongs to the Surrey Toastmasters Club in British Columbia.

Invite a Rotarian to your Toastmasters club. Ask them to visit as a guest or give



PHOTO CREDIT: ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

As individuals, Toastmasters members can join in Rotary service projects. Here, Rotary members participate in a community service project in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii.

a speech. In true Toastmasters style, offer them feedback and tips to improve their skills—and sharpen your own evaluation skills in the process. You can also volunteer to be an evaluator for speech projects that Rotarians give as part of education courses being developed for the organization by Toastmasters International.

Mentoring is a core Toastmasters principle, and Brown—Program Quality Director for District 11—believes strongly in the value of mentoring those outside of Toastmasters, which he calls “real-world experience.” That’s one reason he embraces the Toastmasters/Rotary link. Last year, the longtime Toastmaster led a large public speaking workshop for Rotary leaders, and since then he and other District 11 members have spoken at local Rotary clubs, and in turn local Rotarians have spoken at their clubs.

Plus, sometimes you might not find a great fit for a mentoring relationship in your Toastmasters club, says Brown. “Sometimes the perfect person to help is sitting in another organization ... like a Rotary group.”

Helping Rotarians improve their speaking skills, he adds, is rewarding,

because it enables them to more effectively advocate for humanitarian service, including fighting disease, promoting peace, and supporting education and health efforts. Toastmasters “can teach them to be better at what they’re already doing,” he points out.

Building a Network

The Rotary alliance will provide plenty of networking opportunities to build

Learn more about the [Toastmasters/Rotary alliance](#).

Find [additional resources](#).

This [PowerPoint template](#) can help you discuss the benefits of the alliance.

Use this [email template](#) to reach out to a Rotary club to form a local alliance.

Watch these [videos](#) from the Rotary International and Toastmasters International conventions.

personal and professional connections. Networking has always been a valuable part of Rotary meetings, notes Richards, the Canadian Toastmaster and Rotarian. Rotary collects data on members’ professions, and the clubs’ members represent a variety of businesses and industries. Toastmasters could seek new Rotary colleagues in a specific industry, such as engineering, teaching, or marketing. “I could see where a Toastmaster might be interested in that networking, especially if they own a small business, for example,” says Richards, a member of the Rotary Club of Cloverdale, in British Columbia.

Richards is program director in the Health Sciences Division at the Justice Institute of British Columbia, a public post-secondary institution. She has participated in such service projects with her Rotary club as cleaning local streets and creating scholarships for students.

The potential of that shared energy to help others is why Toastmasters and Rotary forged the alliance.

Bharwaney, an airline administration and customer services manager, says being in Toastmasters has boosted her confidence as a speaker. And from Rotary she has reaped the emotional satisfaction of volunteer service. She’s happy about the alliance.

“I think it’s a good thing for both organizations, to be honest,” says Bharwaney, whose husband, Suresh, is also a Toastmaster and Rotarian. “It will help both of them.”

Paul Sterman is senior editor, executive and editorial content, for *Toastmasters International*.

Making the Leap

How to take your talk outside of Toastmasters.

BY LYNNE STRANG, DTM

Toastmasters clubs provide a supportive, safe environment to learn and practice public speaking skills. At some point, you may feel the pull of a bigger challenge: speaking to audiences in your community.

Consider making the leap and drawing on your Toastmasters training to speak outside your club. You can speak on topics in which you are considered a subject matter expert or topics you are passionate about, such as hobbies or special causes. In these situations, you are sharing expertise and insight as an individual, not as a member of Toastmasters. Yet you are using all your Toastmasters skills to inform, entertain, and influence your listeners.

In addition to your active club participation, the more stage time you log speaking outside the club setting, the more of a skillful and engaging speaker you will become. “Every time I deliver a speech, I learn at least one thing,” says Travis Combest, a member of Winners Circle Toastmasters in Ashburn, Virginia, and an exercise physiologist who uses his Toastmasters skills to speak outside the club to groups about diabetes prevention and weight loss.

And by speaking about issues that affect those in your community, you can positively impact people.

“I believe that Toastmasters has a bigger purpose,” says Sajeew Kumar Menon, DTM, a member of Bishan Toastmasters Club in Singapore. “Becoming better communicators and leaders may be a primary benefit, but I think we can do much more.

“We can use our skills to become or create change makers and leaders, to inspire people to take up and stand up for small social causes, and to effect change in the world,” adds Menon,

who has led workshops for schools in Singapore and India. “We can be the voice for those who cannot be heard.”

Crafting Your Talk

Like Toastmasters, many businesses and community groups are meeting virtually these days, due to COVID-19. However, the good news is, they *are* meeting and offer potential opportunities for guest speakers. If your club or workplace has been meeting online for the past 11 months, you know speaking in a virtual setting has some unique requirements, technically and in the presentation itself. Keep [these tips](#) in mind if you’ve accepted a virtual speaking engagement.

Now, here’s the first step to prepare for speaking outside your club. Come up with three to five “signature speeches” that relate to your expertise. As you put together your talks, consider these tips:

Tease with your title. Intrigue meeting planners with a title that has a list (“3 Easy Ways to Improve Your Lifestyle”); a question (“Does Reading Make You Younger?”); or a startling statement (“The World’s Toughest Bicycle Race”). Titles that begin with “How to” and “Why” also grab attention. Aim for a title that is memorable and simple, and hints at the content of your speech.

Tell compelling stories. Include your own if you can tell it in a way that shares useful knowledge, teaches a relevant lesson, or inspires your audience, says Cindy Cannon, DTM, a member of Georgia’s North Gwinnett Advanced Toastmasters and PB & J Toastmasters. “I tell stories with the STAR approach—by discussing the situation, task, action, and result that occurred.”





Make it interactive.

Incorporate group exercises to add some fun. For example, a talk on “6 Easy Ways to Introduce Yourself” could include a brief exercise allowing audience members to pair up in virtual meeting rooms and practice techniques they’ve just learned.

Encourage questions. Use the Q&A session to explain key concepts and obtain audience feedback that can help you refine your talk.

Where to Find Speaking Opportunities

Plenty of organizations need interesting, enthusiastic speakers with a good message. (See Caren Neile’s article on page 18 to learn about Toastmasters speakers bureaus.) In presenting yourself as a qualified speaker on topics you specialize in, check these places for outside speaking engagements:

Service clubs—Many cities have Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, or other community service clubs. These groups have an ongoing need for speakers to address their weekly or monthly meetings. Rotary, in particular, would be a good organization to try, given the alliance between Toastmasters International and Rotary International. (To learn more about the [alliance](#), go to page 14.)

Chambers of commerce—These business networks typically hold monthly luncheons, workshops, and other networking events that feature a speaker.

TIPS FOR TAPPING YOUR BUSINESS KNOW-HOW

Public speaking can be an effective way to gain visibility for your professional service or small business. Not long ago, I cultivated a new client from a breakfast workshop that I co-led at a local university. The key is to provide valuable content without being too promotional. Some guidelines:

Avoid commercials. “Tell stories that highlight your professional role without naming your company,” recommends Cindy Cannon, DTM, an executive recruiter and Georgia Toastmaster. “For example, I might say, ‘As a recruiter, this is what I do’—then share a story that relates to my topic.”

Have a handout. Include your name, title, organization’s name, email address, phone number, and website address so people have a way to reach you later.

Be careful with numbers. Too many statistics can make eyes glaze over. Provide detailed data later if someone asks for it.

Arrive early and stay late. This is when you’ll converse with people who are interested in knowing more about your business services. It’s also when referrals and more speaking invitations are most likely to surface.

Follow up promptly on leads. Whether you save video chats or record reminders on your phone, have a system to ensure you take this simple-yet-critical action.

Conferences—[Conal Conference Alerts](#) maintains an online calendar of academic and professional conferences worldwide.

Universities and colleges—Check nearby campuses to see if any are hosting forums or symposiums related to your expertise.

Public libraries—Visit your local branch’s website to learn about online workshops, lectures, and other programs with guest speakers.

Special interest clubs—A talk for a sports, photography, or other hobby club makes sense if you have a message geared toward these interests.

Trade and professional associations—Conventions and conferences are mainstays for the thousands of trade groups

PRESENTATION SKILLS

around the world. Use directories to research associations that might be a good fit for your topic.

Social media—A profile on LinkedIn that highlights your Toastmasters experience, past presentations, and interest in speaking opportunities may help meeting planners find you.

Finally, don't forget to:

- ▶ **Put your best foot forward.** Arrange for a professional headshot. Generate interest with a concise, well-written biography and short summaries about each signature speech.
- ▶ **Record your presentations.** Find out if the event host will record your speech, or if you should tape it yourself. This is an easy step if you're using Zoom, the video platform used by most groups these days.

- ▶ **Request a written testimonial after your speech.** Share a copy with your Toastmasters speakers bureau (see article below) if you belong to one.
- ▶ **Repurpose your talk.** Why not turn your presentation into an article for a publication? Or post two or three key ideas on your blog?

It takes time to develop a polished, well-crafted talk and land your first outside speaking engagement. Keep at it. Once you become known in your community, you may find yourself with a good problem: more speaking invitations than you can handle. **T**

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BE PART OF A *Speakers Bureau*

Skilled presenters can reach a variety of outside audiences.

BY CAREN NEILE, PH.D., AND PAUL STERMAN

Say you're an accomplished speaker. You have a little time on your hands, and you know a thing or two about a thing or two. Have you ever considered joining a speakers bureau?

Whether you deliver speeches on general topics or to support nonprofits or particular causes, participating in a speakers bureau can be highly rewarding. It's a great way to keep your skills current, expand your opportunities for presenting, and do a little personal and professional networking for good measure—all while giving back to your community. What is a speakers bureau? It's a group that provides skilled presenters for community organizations and businesses to fill a need for specific education or general programming. Typically talks last an hour or less, and subjects vary as widely as the imagination can soar.

Best of all, you can create one through Toastmasters.

"A Toastmasters speakers bureau is a fantastic initiative for any District," says Nigel Oseland, DTM, the 2017–2018 Public Relations Manager (PRM) for District 91 in the United Kingdom.



"District Public Relations Managers are often contacted by organizations seeking speakers," he says, "and a speakers bureau provides a database of experienced speakers with interesting subject matter who are worthy of representing Toastmasters in the wider community."

In return, says Oseland, Toastmasters gain experience speaking in outside venues. Bureau members usually speak to civic organizations (like chambers of commerce), charities, and even community colleges. Such bureaus can be set up at the club, Area, Division, and District levels.

Stalwart Speakers

Members of Toastmasters bureaus must not only be in good standing with the organization, they should display advanced skills in communication and leadership. Oseland, a member of three clubs in the U.K., says he didn't actually intend to start a speakers bureau; it just came about naturally.

As District PRM, he was receiving a lot of presenter requests from outside organizations for lists of speakers and their topics. So he created a page on the [District 91](#) website promoting available speakers.

The 11 members of the District 91 group present on a wide variety of subjects, including leadership, politics, gardening,

HOW TO START A TOASTMASTERS SPEAKERS BUREAU

A Toastmasters speakers bureau comes with a lot of support. To begin with, a [Toastmasters brochure](#) explains how to start a speakers bureau on the club, Area, Division, or District level.

If you're thinking of creating a club speakers bureau, for example, the Vice President Education is your first stop. Or you may want a bureau that involves more than one club. In any case, the brochure provides an application form for members to list not only their contact information, but also the subjects on which they wish to speak as well as their preferred speaking times, dates, and geographical areas.

A few points to remember:

- ▶ Appoint an enthusiastic, organized chair (perhaps a past Club President) who will promote the group not only to the community, but also to members, through presentations at club meetings or in mailings.
- ▶ Establish clear standards for speakers, such as progress toward education awards. You may wish to provide some flexibility on these standards, because not all members are able to receive the same training and experience.
- ▶ Consider creating a professional-looking bureau pamphlet or website. Give participants a PDF or at least two copies of the pamphlet, and mail others to houses of worship, youth groups, community organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions, as well as Parent-Teacher Associations. Follow up on those mailings by phone.
- ▶ Although outside speaking engagements can provide great publicity, members of Toastmasters speakers bureaus can't benefit monetarily. Requesting organizations often will offer an honorarium or donation; if that happens, the funds should be used for Toastmasters educational purposes.
- ▶ Keep it fun, check in with bureau members regularly, and above all, maintain quality!

customer loyalty, beer tasting and brewing, and health and wellness. Some speak on enhancing public speaking skills, while others entertain through the art of storytelling.

Bureau speakers are encouraged to promote Toastmasters and talk about their Toastmasters experience. Speakers should also stress that they are expressing their own views. (Toastmasters International does not endorse any organization or cause.)

Hawaii Group

Rose Kirland, DTM, started a speakers bureau in Hawaii's District 49 about a year ago. The group's members, who include 1997 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking Willie Jones, speak on topics ranging from the value of Toastmasters to lessons in executive leadership to being a grandparent. Terry Chodosh, who worked nearly 30 years in the U.S. Secret Service, speaks about fraud investigation, as well as senior fitness (he has completed the Ironman Triathlon). Kirland's specialties include banking and marketing.

[The Hawaii bureau](#) has drawn many invitations from outside organizations, including healthcare groups, who are eager for advice on topics such as conflict resolution and communicating with patients, says Kirland. When organizers of a local TEDx event were low on speakers, they turned to the District 49 bureau. Consequently, several of the members spoke at TEDx Hickam, held in Oahu earlier this year.

Toastmasters speakers bureaus help members spread the word about issues they're passionate about, says Kirland, and also make the public more aware of the benefits of Toastmasters—"the best-kept secret out there."

"Most people say the best way to promote Toastmasters is through your website or social media," she says. "But I say the number one way to share the value of anything is by talking with others."

Inspiring Other Members


Members of the Hawaii bureau also receive requests to speak at Toastmasters clubs. It's inspiring for members who are not as experienced or polished as bureau members to hear from these expert presenters, says Kirland.

She also recently started the Hawaii Speakers Bureau Club. Having a bureau at the club level opens up opportunities for more members to speak outside of Toastmasters. To learn more, the group regularly has accomplished guest speakers at their online meetings, including Accredited Speakers and former Toastmasters World Champions.

Kirland, an effusive Toastmaster who belongs to several clubs in Maui, wants members around the world to have the chance to speak to outside audiences. You can do this not only by striving to improve your skills but by speaking authentically on subjects you truly care about, she says.

A longtime mortgage banker, she speaks to local churches, food banks, and schools, frequently focusing on the topic of motivation, one that is particularly relevant to teenagers.

"It's so rewarding to speak to students, to young people, because you reflect on your own life at that age."

"My mission," adds Kirland, "is to uplift people." 

Caren S. Neile, Ph.D., is a frequent contributor to this magazine. She has presented at two Toastmasters International conventions. Contact her at cneile@fau.edu.

Paul Sterman is senior editor, executive and editorial content, for *Toastmasters International*.

Delivering a Heartfelt Farewell

Tips for giving a meaningful eulogy.

BY TAMMY MILLER, DTM, AS

Being asked to write and/or deliver a eulogy can be one of the most rewarding yet difficult tasks you will face. Sometimes it's an easy task, a labor of love, and the words flow; other times, it's overwhelming, as emotions and memories flood the page. Often, it's a combination of many thoughts.

A eulogy is an oral or written piece honoring a person's life. As the presenter, you want people to walk away feeling better about the person, or wishing they knew them better. Often, the service may be the last or only time the person is publicly honored.

Writing a eulogy can be a daunting task. It helps to approach it like you would any good presentation, doing some homework and researching ahead of time. Four elements—purpose, structure, tone, and length—can help you put the thoughts together for a smoother flow and a more memorable experience for everyone listening.

Determine the Purpose of the Eulogy

Will you be the only one speaking about the person or will others as well? For example, an officiant may give statistical details (birth, family, background), and you may be asked to illuminate a more personal side of the person. Or you may be the only one giving the formal eulogy and need to include some background information in your presentation.

You'll want to determine what role faith plays in your purpose. Some religions and churches have very strict rules about what the clergy can and cannot say, as well as who can deliver a eulogy if the service is conducted within the church. The family isn't always aware of this aspect, so you might want to check with the clergy personally.

Writing and delivering a eulogy may be the hardest presentation you ever make.

Maybe you don't know the person very well—perhaps you are the officiant, or the family asked you to deliver the eulogy because they know you are a good speaker. In that case, try to meet with a few key family members and friends and draw out their memories and stories. Questions might include: What are your favorite memories of this person? How did they impact your life and the lives of others? What did you admire about the person? You generally don't need a lot of questions—just a few that will get the conversation started.

Find a Structure for Your Story

Like any good speech, a strong eulogy will benefit from a solid structure. Begin by brainstorming all that you could say

about the person, then narrow it down to a few points and apply an appropriate structure, and even a theme if you feel it fits. You might find it easier to structure the speech by providing a timeline of the person's life or by highlighting two to four life stories that have meaning to you and the audience.

Another consideration is what I call a “community to me” structure, one that is both far-reaching and very personal. I chose this structure for my dearest friend's eulogy. As a professional speaker and instructor for over 30 years, I have delivered many presentations on a wide variety of topics, some lightweight and fun, and some very serious in nature. Easily the most difficult presentation I have made to date was the eulogy for my best friend for more than 50 years, Suzanne.

She asked me to present at her funeral, and of course I was honored and humbled, and also hopeful that the time really wouldn't come, that a miracle would be performed, and the need would never arise. But that wasn't the case. On one hand it was extremely difficult, yet on the other it was a true labor of love.

For Suzanne's eulogy, I chose three points with a common theme of “Suzanne was love.” The first point encompassed the love she had for the community of people around her. Not necessarily her family and close friends but her involvement within her community, her church friends, and her coworkers, along with a related story.



The second point was the love she had for her family and friends, including her loving husband, children, and siblings, along with a related story. Finally, the most personal part was our relationship as best friends for over 50 years and why it was so easy to identify Suzanne as love, because that was the very core of her being, and I wanted to relay what her friendship meant to me over all those years.

I chose a couple of brief personal stories that touched on her love of laughter and some funny moments we shared. This type of structure also ensures that everyone in the audience is included while honoring and memorializing the person. You can speak in a conversational, heartfelt manner.

Set the Right Tone

To help settle on a tone, reflect on the following: Have you been asked to speak on behalf of the family? If so, what tone do they prefer? Some people want somber, some want joy and laughter, some want just the facts. Have you been asked to speak from a personal relationship with the

person? If so, what was your relationship like and how does that direct the tone?

Did the person suffer through a long illness where there is now relief? Was it a sudden accident or suicide? Was the person young or old? While these are considerations, the eulogy focuses on how the person *lived*.

There is also the consideration of faith in the life and death of the person. For example, if the person was a Christian and the promise of heaven awaits them upon their death, the tone may be joyous. Other faiths have different beliefs about life after death. Maybe faith isn't a consideration in the tone at all.

When appropriate, humor can play a major role in the tone of the entire eulogy. I recently delivered a eulogy for a woman who was 99 years old. She was more than ready to join her husband of 65 years who had preceded her in death. My friend loved to laugh, enjoyed life, and had a wonderful mischievous spirit that was contagious to everyone around her. While we were sad to see her pass, everyone in the room knew she was ready to go.

Her eulogy was filled with funny stories. When her friends were asked to say a few words in memory of her, the theme of mischief and fun continued throughout the entire room. It was truly a celebration of her long life and her uncanny ability to befriend everyone she met.

Consider the Length

The suggested length for a stand-alone eulogy, one that doesn't offer background information, is four to six minutes. However, if part of your role is to offer the factual obituary information, the speech may be slightly longer, but still not over 10 minutes. Remember, people aren't there to hear you speak but to honor the person who died.

Remember, people aren't there to hear you speak but to honor the person who died.

Writing and delivering a eulogy may be the hardest presentation you ever make. Unless you are a professional who delivers eulogies on a regular basis, you may only deliver one, two, or a few in your lifetime. Each eulogy should be as personal and unique as the person you are honoring. Taking into consideration the purpose, structure, tone, and length may help you write a better speech in respect of your loved one. Your heartfelt delivery will make this presentation special as you remember the person you honored. **T**

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MASTERING Controversial Conversations

How to balance opinions and civility in volatile times.

BY GREG GLASGOW

Turn on the news or fire up your favorite social media app, and you're likely to encounter a world divided. To wear a face mask or not to wear a mask? How much social distancing is enough? What about racial and social justice, politics, elections?

"It's an unusual time right now," says Sindy Martin, DTM, a member of two clubs in High Point, North Carolina. People's feelings are involved in conversations around such issues as coronavirus and racial inequity, she says, "and any time feelings are involved, it gets deep and people may get hurt."

As Toastmasters, we are trained to listen, speak, and evaluate topics in a thoughtful, civil manner. We also tend to enjoy lively exchanges and so may feel uniquely qualified to dive into discussions on subjects such as these—but should we? And if so, how? Sensitive topics are always, well, sensitive, but in 2020, it seems they are even more so.

Here are some strategies from conflict resolution experts and fellow Toastmasters to help navigate tricky topics, whether you're at work, a holiday party, a family gathering, or with a group of relative strangers.

Do a Cost-Benefit Analysis

Is it worth it to even engage in a conversation about why you should wear a mask to stop the spread of COVID-19? If it's a stranger at the grocery store, maybe not. You're not likely to change their mind, and the situation will likely just leave you frustrated, or even escalate to a level you didn't anticipate.

However, if it's a topic you feel strongly about, you may feel, as many people do, that you have a personal, moral responsibility to express your opinion. Even so, you don't have to initiate a lengthy debate.

"Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter,'" says John Zimmer, a member of the International Geneva Toastmasters Club in Switzerland. "When it comes to issues such as racism or social inequality or environmental degradation, people should speak up.

"Even if you don't want to engage," Zimmer says, "you can always tell the person that you respectfully disagree but that you prefer not to discuss it now."

Set a Goal

If you do engage, know what kind of interaction you want to have, says Tamra d'Estree, a social psychologist who directs the Conflict Resolution Institute at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado, "It's important to ask ourselves why we are engaging interpersonally with this person who differs from us," she says. "Are we doing it because we want to change their mind? To be honest, that's probably the least likely thing that's going to happen in that interaction."

That's why, when it comes to conversations on hot-button topics, it's important to set a goal. Do you want to feel heard? To

speaking. You still feel a little bit exposed when you reveal that you have a different opinion."

And while facts don't always do a lot of good in the moment, it never hurts to prepare yourself with credible information on a topic that might come up in conversation. That way, Toastmaster Martin says, "if they disagree, it's not with you—it's with the facts."

Listen

One of the most fundamental human desires is the desire to be heard. No matter how heated a topic, recognizing the other person's humanity and really listening to what they have to say goes a long way toward de-escalating any potential conflict.

Martin says that it's important to make listening feel authentic. After the other person speaks, acknowledge that you listened by saying, "What I heard you say is ...," suggests Martin, who is a trainer and coach.

"They're not going to remember the facts you threw at them but if you tell a story it's going to be in their head."

—TAMRA D'ESTREE

share your view? That's easier to do when your goal doesn't involve the other person, notes Jesse Scinto, DTM, a member of Green-speakers Toastmasters in New York City and a communication faculty member at Columbia University in New York City. "The way I approach it now is I let go of responsibility for other people's beliefs," says Scinto, who is also CEO of the strategic communication firm Public Sphere. "I don't have to change their beliefs, but I think it's important for me to be able to state what I believe—and state what I believe with an 'I' statement."

Research suggests that when a person knows you have a different viewpoint, it may lead them to reconsider their own opinion. In other instances, mutual respect among the debating parties may lead people to think harder about differing ideas, or lead to a truce—simply agreeing to disagree on the topic and ending the conversation peacefully.

Be Prepared

If the same topics keep rearing their heads in conversation, it's smart to think ahead and prepare some possible responses. Not only does that keep you on topic, it removes the heated feelings that can arise when a subject takes you by surprise.

And, of course, remember your Toastmasters training. One way to think about a conversation on a tough topic is that it's just practice for the next one.

"The way that Toastmasters helps is just by building confidence to speak," Scinto says. "When you're on a hot-button issue, even if you're one-on-one, face-to-face, it can still be kind of like public

Make It Personal

While Martin advises having some verifiable facts on hand when discussing controversial topics, Scinto believes facts are virtually worthless to people who disagree with you. It's readily apparent, in today's information-saturated world, that facts can be disputed, countered, or ignored altogether. What is more helpful in heated conversations, experts say, is sharing personal experience.

"You can say either, 'I've had this experience' or, 'My roommate told me the story of when he was in this situation and this happened to him,'" d'Estree says. "If you share something that is your own experience, it's a little harder for the other side to deny that. It's harder for them to say, 'No, you didn't experience that.'"

Sharing a personal experience brings things back to a human level, d'Estree adds, and if done well can even evoke empathy on the other side.

"They're not going to remember the facts you threw at them but if you tell a story it's going to be in their head. It's something they might share with somebody else."

So the next time you engage with someone around a controversial topic, remember to set a goal, share personal experiences, call on your preparedness, and really listen to what the other person is saying. You might be surprised at the results. ■

Greg Glasgow is a freelance writer and editor based in Denver, Colorado.

HOW TO Deliver Bad News

Empathy is at the heart of how you communicate in difficult times.

BY KAREN FRIEDMAN

My father used to say that having a problem is like being stuck in a tunnel. The only way out is to go through it. Simple words, but sound advice in both our personal and business lives. Leading during a pandemic or crisis is clearly more challenging than navigating your way out of a smaller problem. However, the lessons learned for responding and communicating as events unfold are the same.

Whether you've been forced to lay off employees, shut down a business, or cancel a conference or special event, no one looks forward to delivering bad news. Yet, at some point many of us will find ourselves in that difficult position. And even when intentions are good, it's easy to make mistakes. How you communicate during difficult times can define your character and, in some cases, your company's reputation.

Let's contrast two examples.

Recently my company received a letter from our local tax collector's office informing us we were being penalized for failing to pay school taxes last year. It threatened that if we didn't send money by a certain date, there would be additional consequences.

I looked at the letterhead and didn't recognize the name of the tax collector, which seemed odd as I've known the local collector for years. The tone was also terse—not at all like Patti, who was kind and understanding. This made no sense to me. So, I called the office.

Imagine my surprise to learn that Patti had unexpectedly died. The letter we received was from a newly appointed temporary tax collector. After my initial sadness over Patti's loss, anger set in.

Instead of sending a threatening letter, why didn't this individual introduce himself and tell us his predecessor had died? Why didn't he say something nice about her and offer to help people who may have missed a payment during this surprising and upsetting transition?

Contrast that with a different approach. My company is working with a client that is going to have to shut down their business of many decades. Heartbroken over the impact this will have on so many, they have spent months developing communications that are heartfelt, thoughtful, and project the right tone. For example, instead of crafting a single correspondence that will be sent to everyone, each communication is tailored to the specific concerns of the person receiving a letter or email. The importance of putting those affected before the company itself is paramount to the organization's CEO, who is one of the most empathetic leaders I have ever met.

Empathy is at the heart of all business and personal crisis communications. Think about times you may have delivered tough news to a friend or family member. It's likely you did so in a way that was caring and understanding. While information is important, it's how that information is delivered that forms long-lasting impressions. If you find yourself having to be the bearer of bad news, consider these important tips:

Take Responsibility

Instead of blaming others or focusing on mistakes made, take responsibility, be accountable, and tell people what you're doing to improve the situation. Let them know they can count on you for information, support, and resources.

Communicate Early and Often

In the absence of information, innuendo and rumor fill the gap. Make sure you have the facts and communicate as quickly as possible. If you don't know something, avoid speculating. Be honest and say you don't know. In a 24/7 news cycle, media will update as often as possible even if there is nothing new to report. Frequently reiterating timely, accurate information helps you control the message.



and empathetic, which will make you relatable and credible.

Collaborate

This is not a time to be a know-it-all or go at it alone. Demonstrate unity by collaborating on partnerships for expert guidance and advice. It is a time to seek multiple opinions from different vantage points to make the best decisions for all involved.

Communicating effectively during tough times will instill confidence, ease fears, and help others prepare for change even when you don't have all the answers.



Manage the Message

Developing and delivering clear, consistent messages will help alleviate fear, panic, and confusion. It's imperative that your spokespeople not contradict each other. Additionally, if you decide to do something such as eliminate travel, explain why. Set up a hotline, website, or multiple touch points where people can access the latest information.

Consider Tone and Demeanor

When addressing the public during a crisis, show concern and speak in a calm, reassuring voice. Don't sugarcoat the facts or minimize the problems, but come across as sincere, transparent,

My father, who was not a crisis manager, also had another piece of advice. He said when you get out of the tunnel, you need to look forward, not backward, so you can plan for the road ahead. When a crisis subsides, leaders must do the same by assessing what worked, what didn't, and how those lessons can be used as a blueprint for the future. **T**

Karen Friedman is a leadership communication coach, speaker, and chief improvement officer at Karen Friedman Enterprises (www.karenfriedman.com). She is the author of *Shut Up and Say Something* and *Ordinary People: Extraordinary Lessons*.

CRISIS TIPS

Communicate immediately

If you don't communicate, someone else will, and you risk losing control of the message. Even if you don't have all the facts, acknowledge what happened, tell people what you're doing about it, and say you'll share more information as it becomes available.

Never say "no comment"

Saying "no comment" can make you sound like you're guilty or you have something to hide. Instead, share what you do know and why you can't comment. For example: "It is company policy not to discuss personnel issues."

It's not about you

Years ago, BP's then-CEO Tony Hayward was publicly vilified for saying "I'd like my life back" following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that left 11 people dead after

hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico. He came across as someone who cared more about himself than those affected by the spill.

Be honest

Trying to minimize a problem or bury the truth will almost certainly backfire. Reporters will always ask, When did you know about it and what did you do about it? If people think you are hiding something, they will turn against you. So, even if the news is bad, it's better that your audience, employees, or customers hear it from you in your own words.

Stay cool and calm

It's important to keep your emotions in check as a crisis unfolds, and unexpected events come your way. Losing your temper can scare others and damage your credibility.

The True Value of Speech Contests

Winning isn't the reward—the journey is.

BY DANIEL MIDSON-SHORT

If you've ever competed in a speech contest, you've probably felt your heart race as you've heard the words "And the winner is ...". Maybe you were fortunate to hear your name called as a winner. Or perhaps you've felt your heart sink while being left sitting as the winners take the stage.

As a five-time competitor in the International Speech Contest, I can attest to feeling that anxiety at every level. And trust me, the larger the stage, the greater that anxiety grows. Sometimes people ask me: Is competing in speech contests worth the effort? Are the weeks (and sometimes months) of preparation a waste of time when you don't win? Over the years, I have been very fortunate to rack up my share of wins. But I also know the pain that comes from falling short. Some competitors feel they have failed or start to discount the value of their speeches; others feel their efforts were wasted. Some even fall into resentment, thinking the contest judging is biased.

However, competing in speech contests offers rewards far greater than any prize. Many of us compete every year and don't "win." And yet we return time and time again because we get something extremely valuable for the experience.

The Hidden Prize in Not Winning

In August 2019, after five years of attempts, I had the chance to [stand on the final stage](#) of the World Championship of Public Speaking®. I delivered the very

best speech I could; I poured my heart out on the stage. And when the results were announced, my name was not among the winners. But that does not mean I lost. The truth is that simply competing offered me many benefits beyond a trophy. I would encourage everyone to compete at least once; in fact, I would say that *not* winning offers more opportunities for growth than being awarded a first-place trophy. I've rounded up five ways you win by simply participating in a speech contest.

1 You Improve Faster

Contests, by their very nature, have higher stakes than regular club speeches. This usually means more practice. And when you practice the same speech time and time again, your skill as a speaker starts to improve quickly. You begin to focus on tiny components of your speaking; you notice that people respond differently as you change your approach. Each time you take the stage, it gets easier.

And then something amazing happens—your speech becomes better, and you become more composed, more streamlined. The speech becomes a part of who you are, like a musician playing one of their best-known songs.

In regular Toastmasters club meetings, we usually deliver a speech once and move on. But in almost no other discipline does this happen. Musicians play songs thousands of times; dancers rehearse

and perform the same routines each day; writers rewrite and edit constantly. Being a speech contestant gives you the same opportunity to hone your skill and perfect a particular speech by giving it over and over to different audiences.

2 You Learn to Embrace Feedback

When competing in a speech contest, you will inevitably get a *lot* of differing opinions about your speech. Some people will love it, and some won't. They will compare your contest speech to previous speeches. Learning to take on feedback from many people is tough, but it's a necessary part of the process. You have to smile and thank them when sometimes you feel like screaming. You are often at your wit's end and feel like giving up, and still, people keep telling you to work at it.

Feedback can be puzzling and unclear sometimes, and often you're only given clues, such as someone telling you that they're just not "feeling" it. It's up to you to keep reworking the speech until it's better. However, the more feedback you can take on, the better you will get at receiving and incorporating it.

3 You Gain Confidence for Other Roles

One of my co-competitors, David Moore, a member of B. Braun Toastmasters Club in Irvine, California, has been competing in speech contests for over 13 years. And he keeps coming back, challenging himself



year after year, even though he has already won several District contest titles.

“The way I see it, I need to keep challenging myself,” he says. “With a speech contest, there is something on the line. I don’t know how the audience will react, or if I will win. But at least I’m putting myself out there.”

I admire the World Champions of Public Speaking more for their character than their speaking skills.

He adds that competing in speech contests gave him the confidence to expand into other roles in his District, including Area and Division leadership roles. “Speaking in those contests made me see that I could rise to the challenge as a leader.”

4 You Expand Your Horizons

Adelina Eftenoiu of Toastmasters of Laguna Beach, in Laguna Beach, California, is an entrepreneur who joined Toastmasters to hone her speaking skills and learn how to impact people with her message. Despite feeling unsure about what she was getting herself into, she entered her first speech contest this year.

“I won my club contest with almost no planning, and I was incredibly nervous for the next round,” Adelina says. “But when I spoke at the Area contest, I realized that if I can push myself to compete, then I can also push myself in other areas. I walked away from the contest with a second place but a lot more mental strength.” Since then, she has expanded her business and begun speaking at motivational events. “None of this would have happened without that shot of confidence the speech contest gave me. It showed me what I could do.”

5 You Build Character

Character development might be the most unexpected benefit of competing.



Daniel Midson-Short competes on the 2019 World Championship of Public Speaking stage.

Something changes inside you when you don’t hit your goal. You either give up, or you come back. Either way, you are making a choice that affects your character. I have learned through my five years of competing that there are many behind-the-scenes aspects of speech contests. You must practice consistently, be courteous to the other contestants, and be respectful of the judges and their decisions. You must show up on the day and give your very best every time.

All these behaviors start to change who you are. And the longer you continue to compete, the more it becomes a part of your character. I believe the International Speech Contest is the world’s best personal development course. You gain all the tools you need to communicate, and you gain the character to change your own life for the better.

Today I admire the World Champions of Public Speaking more for their character than their speaking skills. A champion has been through the same difficulties as those who don’t win, but they have changed their character along the way. That, I believe, is the greatest benefit of the speech contests in Toastmasters.

The Journey Is the Reward

When you raise your hand to enter a contest, you are putting yourself on the line, facing your fears, and expanding your character. And in reality, the only contest

is inside you. You have to choose which actions you will take and how much you are willing to invest in yourself. When you “lose” a contest, people will say they are sorry you didn’t win. After five years of competing, I want to change that story. Instead, I want to encourage us to remind competitors who don’t win that they have changed and grown as speakers.

My mentor Dananjaya Hettiarachchi, the 2014 World Champion of Public Speaking, gave me this sage advice a few years ago before a speech contest: “Life is a journey, and the journey itself is your home.” I am finally starting to understand what he means by this. I can now see that the true value of the speech contest is that you get to find new ways to become better. And that’s why I will keep competing for as long as I can.

The trophies and titles don’t matter. Who you become is the real prize. 📌

To learn more details about Toastmasters speech contests, download the [2020-2021 Speech Contest Rulebook](#).

Daniel Midson-Short is a member of Coastmasters in Dana Point, California. He has competed in the International Speech Contest since 2014, reaching the semifinal round four times, and the finals in 2019. He is a keynote speaker and writer and runs a digital marketing agency in California.

Ditch the Notecards

Step-by-step methods for helping you internalize your speech.

BY DIANE WINDINGLAND, DTM

Would you like to give a speech without notes, or at least with very few notes? Memorizing your speech word for word is not only difficult, it can result in a stilted style or in completely forgetting what you are going to say. While it is a good idea to memorize your first sentence or two, and your last—to tie down the ends of your speech—memorizing a speech word for word rarely is worth the effort.

As a professional speaker and presentation coach, I tell my clients, “Don’t memorize. Internalize.” I first heard that phrase years ago from the 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking, Darren LaCroix. Internalizing a speech works well for most people as a three-step process. Step 1: Create memorable content. Step 2: Practice the content without being concerned about delivery. Step 3: Incorporate gestures and space out your practice.

Step 1 Create Memorable Content

Structure Your Speech Logically. How you organize and develop your content can enhance your recall. Think of your speech like a tree, with the main message being the trunk. Then brainstorm subpoints (the branches of the tree) and supporting material, such as stories and data (the leaves of the tree). Finally, get out those pruning shears and eliminate the branches and leaves that do not support your main message. This makes your speech more structurally sound, and easier to remember.

Then, create an outline using a logical organizational structure (e.g., topical, compare/contrast, chronological, cause/effect, problem-cause-solution). An alternative is a mind map, a diagram for visually organizing your ideas and information, linking items around your main message.

Movement combined with props can make a speech unforgettable for both you and the audience.

Illustrate With Stories. Stories are concrete and memorable. Relevant stories help audiences remember your points, and help you remember your points too. A story runs like a movie in your mind. When comparing people’s memories for words with their memories for pictures, research has shown significantly superior memory for pictures, primarily due to the greater amount of sensory details associated with the picture. See it. Feel it. Remember it.

Write It Out. If you have a logical structure with supporting material, writing out your speech will help you create flow, with one idea or part transitioning to the next in a manner that is both pleasing to the ear and memory-enhancing.

Such memory-boosting techniques include:

- ▶ **Repeat.** Repeat phrases using parallel sentence construction, especially in groupings of three. For example: When I was a teenager, I worried about three things: bad people, bad food, and bad breath. Here, the repeated word is “bad,” and the structure is the same for each use (adjective/noun).
- ▶ **Transitional phrases.** Transitions bridge the gap between concepts, helping your speech flow smoothly from one part to the next. A transition also can be a simple signpost such as “first . . . second . . . third.” Better signposting echoes previous material in your speech. So, instead of just saying, “Second . . .” it is better to say, “The second reason is . . .”
- ▶ **Acronyms.** Acronyms use a simple formula of a letter to represent each word or phrase that needs to be remembered. If you have three to five supporting points, you can sometimes create an acronym. For example, in a speech on conflict resolution, you could tell people to LEAP into conflict: Listen, Empathize, Agree, and Partner.
- ▶ **Alliteration.** Alliteration is the repetition of an initial stressed consonant sound, as in “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” Alliteration in excess can be distracting, but in small doses it can enhance memory. For instance, in a speech about persuasive presentations, you could say, “Persuasive presentations begin with three P’s: Pep, Promise, and Path.”



Step 2 Practice Content, Not Delivery

Repeat. Read your speech a few times out loud. Listen to a recording of yourself. Revise.

Chunk. Chunk the content and practice parts of it (for example: chunk the introduction, then the first point, second point, third point, conclusion). Include transition statements that occur before and after each chunk.

- ▶ Read each chunk aloud, along with transition statements.
- ▶ Recall/try to say the chunk without peeking at the written speech.
- ▶ Check to see how accurate you are by reading again.
- ▶ Repeat until you feel comfortable with the first chunk, and then move onto another part.

Use Keywords. Reduce your notes to keywords (no more than three to four per sentence). Stories may only need a trigger phrase, such as “Family Christmas Party.” In subsequent practice sessions, reduce your keywords until you have only one (or

fewer) per paragraph. “Family Christmas Party” reduces to “Party.”

Use Picture and Symbol Notes. If your brain remembers better in pictures or symbols, use those instead. While pictures and symbols can take longer to construct, they can quickly connect your brain to your content. As with keywords, you can reduce your pictures to one per point, and then visualize those pictures as you speak.

Discuss With Others. Discussing your content

with others will force you to speak conversationally, be clear, and say things a little differently each time.

Try the Method of “Loci” (also known as a memory journey). Assign parts of your speech to different physical objects on a path and then practice those parts as you walk the path. In your home, you might give your introduction at the front door, make point one at the refrigerator, point two at the stove, point three at the sink, and give the conclusion at the dining room table. This helps you visualize the journey as you give your speech.

Step 3 Use Props and Gestures to Help Internalize Structure

Move with Props. Movement combined with props can make a speech unforgettable for both you and the audience. Your interaction with the prop, even just holding up a picture, makes your presentation more concrete, and can add emotion, drama, and meaning to your words.

Gesture to Connect Content With Memory. Numerous studies have shown a

positive effect of using gestures to encode memories, retrieve memories, and decode information for the listener. Spontaneous, unplanned gestures can enhance your fluency, and specific, defining gestures can enhance memory. (A note of caution: Gestures, even if planned, must flow naturally as you speak. Practice and record yourself.)

For instance, if I am making three points about public speaking, I might have these points and the following gestures:

- ▶ **Focus on your audience.** For example, gesture as if looking through a circle formed by a curved thumb and fingers.
- ▶ **Internalize your material.** Try a gesture such as patting your upper chest.
- ▶ **Tell a story.** Gesture by holding your hands like an open book.

More Ways to Enhance Recall

Spaced Repetition. Trying to cram in your practice right before you give a speech is more time-consuming than spacing out your practice. Spaced repetition (or distributed practice) increases retention better than massed practice (aka “cramming”). How much you space out your repeated practice depends on how much time you have before you give your speech, and if you will be giving the speech again, you may want to practice it weekly, and then monthly.

Just Sleep on It! Long-term memory formation is a major function of sleep. A good night’s sleep can help you cement your speech in your mind. Conversely, if you are sleep-deprived when you are trying to learn (or deliver) your speech, you can’t focus your attention optimally. **T**

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Talking to Myself

Or is myself talking to me?

BY JOHN CADLEY



If you had looked in the window of my house on August 18, 2020, you would have seen me looking out of it. I would have appeared as a man lost in thought. If you wanted to know what I was thinking you would have entered my house and put a stethoscope to my head. This is what you would have heard:

The grass is getting long. Do I want to mow the lawn? The forecast said rain later, but it looks fine now. I could probably get it done. But what if it rains early and I can't finish? Then I'll have a half-mowed lawn and it would drive me crazy. I need closure. Why do I always procrastinate? I'll score points with Cathy (my wife) if I do it now. Maybe she'll bake banana bread. I eat too much of that stuff. Am I gaining weight? The bird feeder's empty. Why did I buy a house with a big lawn? Did I pay the mortgage? I can't remember. Is there something wrong with my memory? I should mow. If I wear a hat, do I need sunscreen? Why do I chew my nails every time I have a job to do?

And so on. The longer you listened, the more you would have heard these aimless thoughts banging around in my head like a pinball machine until finally, driven to distraction, you would have yelled, "JUST MOW THE LAWN!" Unfortunately, I would not have heard you because, as I said, I was lost in thought deciding whether to mow the lawn.

Does this sound at all familiar? As a Toastmaster you work hard at talking to other people. And yet, truth be told, you

probably spend far more time talking to yourself. I don't mean those positive self-affirmations when you look in the mirror and say, "I'm beautiful just the way I am." I tried that and before I could get out a word, my mind said, *You need a haircut.* That's because your mind has a mind of its own. It never shuts up, and it certainly doesn't listen to you. Tell yourself not to think of a white rabbit and what happens? Sit down to listen to music and you think, *Am I using too much hair gel?* Go to sleep and you dream you're being chased with an axe by your third-grade art teacher. It's like a carnival fun house in there, where the show never stops.

As a Toastmaster you work hard at talking to other people. And yet you probably spend far more time talking to yourself.

Where do all these random thoughts come from? Well, you have to understand that when you talk to your "self," only 5% of your brain is listening—approximately the same as when you talk to a politician. This is the conscious mind, and a fine little one it is. It can solve crossword puzzles, plan vacations, and send people to the moon. But it can't tell you why you like the color orange, hate the smell of hot dogs, or dream that your third-grade art teacher is an axe murderer.

Those answers—and thousands more—reside in the vast unconscious, which accounts for 95% of your cognitive activity. It's like an enormous Amazon warehouse stocked with all the memories, feelings, and experiences you've decided to forget—until something from the present "orders" them up (a color, a smell, a dream), at which time they're delivered to the little bungalow of your conscious mind in packages marked **Weird Feeling, Strange Thought, or Am I Losing My Mind?** No, you're not going crazy. You're just not in control. You're trying to captain the ship with 5% of the crew, while the other 95% are below deck messing with the steering.

This raises some provocative existential questions. If most of what I "know" is hidden from my awareness, do I say, "I don't know what I know," or "I'm conscious of how much I'm unconscious of"? When I refer to the "great minds" of civilization, am I talking about people who have simply used the full 5% of their miniscule accessible brain? Do I talk to myself, or does myself talk to me?

This is *Alice in Wonderland* territory, folks, where things get "curiouser and curiouser," where you're Alice and the Cheshire cat is your unconscious giving you a big, fat, smug, know-it-all grin. Well, now you know why. **T**

John Cadley is a former advertising copywriter, 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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