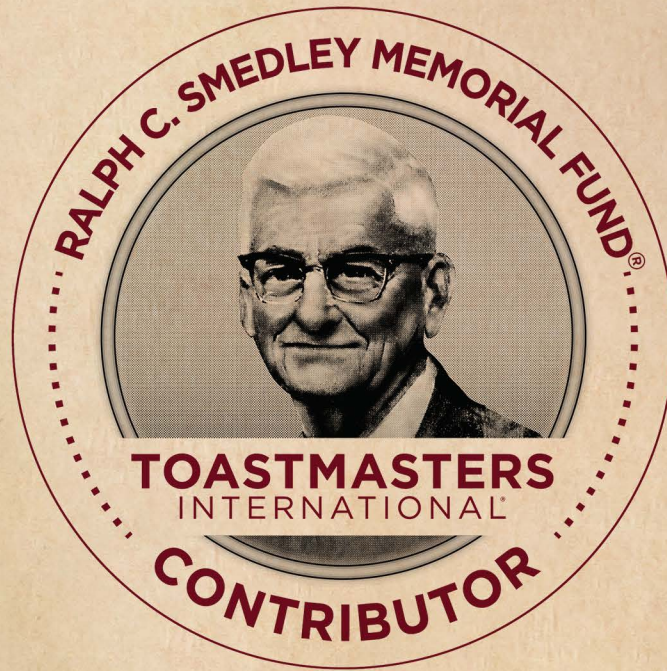


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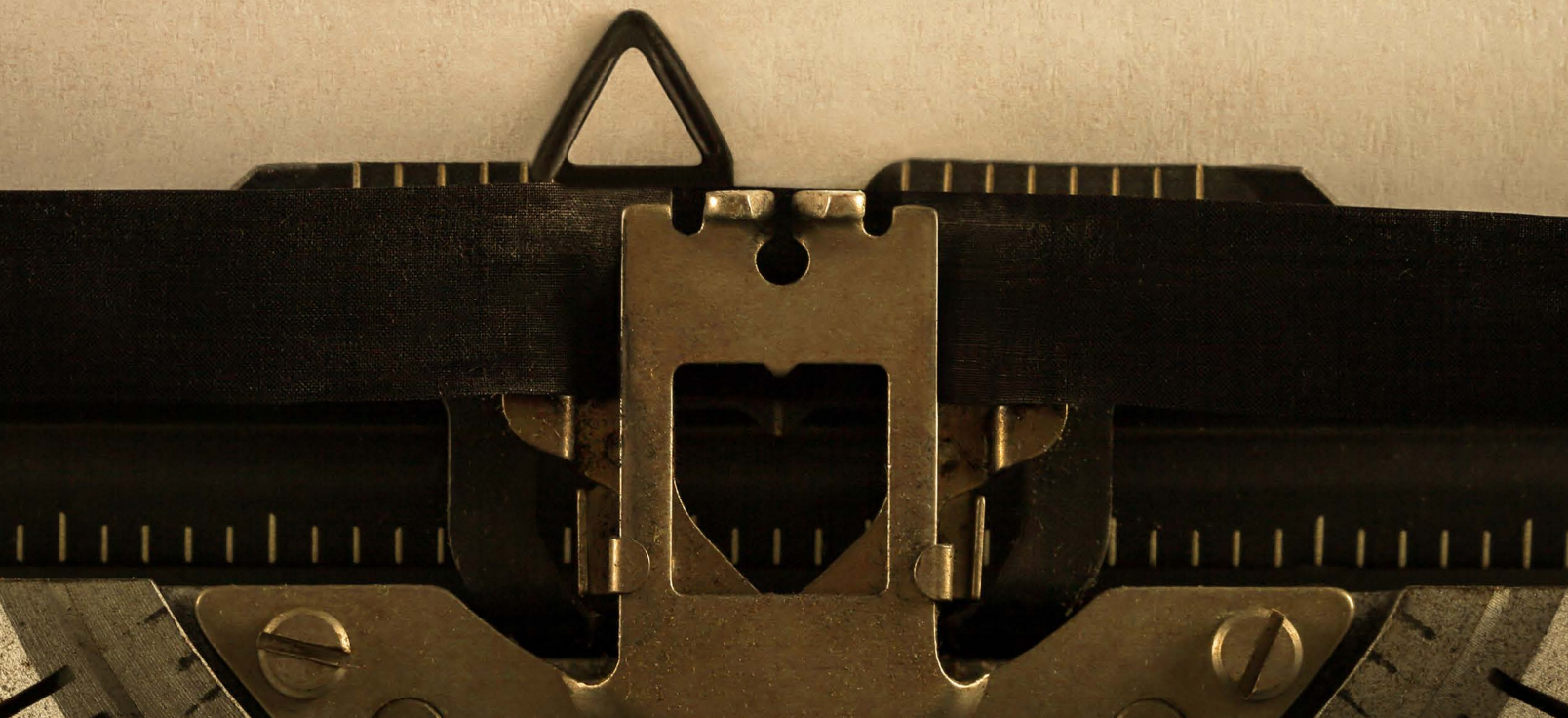
Coloring Contest Winner:
Chhavi, 12, from India



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The *Toastmaster* magazine (ISSN 00408263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 9127 S. Jamaica St. #400, Englewood, Colorado, United States 80112.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. The *Toastmaster* magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises.

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Acting With Integrity

Toastmasters has four core values, and the first is integrity. When I ran for Second Vice President, I had a quote on my website that said, “Integrity is like authority. If you have to tell other people you have it, you probably don’t.” The U.S. investor Warren Buffett, a keen observer of human behavior, says he looks for three things in a person: “Intelligence, energy, and integrity. And if they don’t have the last one, don’t even bother with the first two.”

What is integrity? A well-known definition is “doing the right thing when no one else is watching.” Personally, I find this definition to be at an intermediate level. It has a lot of truth, but I think the meaning goes deeper. In my experience, integrity starts from within. It is when your thoughts and actions are aligned, and your decisions are based on your values instead of personal gain.

On June 24, 2021, the world saw an unforgettable example of what happens when integrity is forgotten. A residential building, one of the Champlain Towers in Surfside, Florida (a suburb of Miami), had collapsed and 98 people lost their lives. Over the next few weeks, there was much speculation as to what had caused the collapse.

Integrity is when your thoughts and actions are aligned,
and your decisions are based on your values.

The investigation found three significant contributing factors to the collapse. The first was a design flaw. The second was water intrusion, specifically a combination of rainwater and saltwater. (As those who live near a saltwater coast have experienced, saltwater corrosion is extremely damaging to both metals and concrete.) The third and most tragic factor was neglect. In this case, the board of directors of the condo association was aware of the issues, knew what it would take to resolve the issues, and failed to do so.

This example is a massive breach of integrity. However, don’t we as humans all have habits that undermine our effectiveness as a leader? How often do we allow our thoughts and other people’s voices to convince us to act out of alignment with our values? When we fall out of integrity, which we all do, do we take the effort to acknowledge what occurred and take the action to restore our integrity?

When your thoughts and actions are aligned with your values, and those of the organization you represent; when you ignore the voices that tempt you to fall out of that alignment; and when you take the necessary steps to address it when you do err—then you are acting with integrity ... and no one will question what you stand for.

Matt Kinsey, DTM
International President

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Two longtime Toastmasters steer the country's government.

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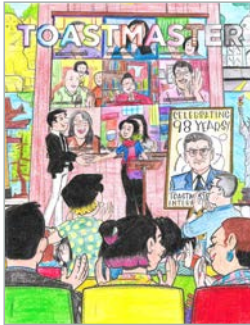
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News



Coloring Contest Results Are In!

Thank you to everyone around the world who submitted their young family members' entries

for the *Toastmaster Magazine* Coloring Contest for Kids! The winning submission, pictured on this month's cover, was colored by Chhavi, age 12. She is the daughter of Bhaskar J. of Maharashtra, India. You can view the additional winners of the coloring contest on page 10 in this issue.

Check Out These Translated Materials

Several Toastmasters leadership and skills development publications are now available in new languages. Check these out:

Malayalam: "Find Your Voice"; "Your Path to Leadership"; "The Benefits of Toastmasters Membership"

Spanish (Mexico): "Develop Your Leaders from Within"; "Corporate Club Soft Skills Flier"

French: "Online Speech Contest Best Practices"

More Options for Hybrid Speech Contests

Districts will have the option to use a hybrid or online-only format for speech contests in the 2022–2023 program year. The Toastmasters Board of Directors approved the move because of ongoing health concerns over COVID-19.

Districts will not be permitted to conduct any contests where members can only participate in person, with no online option. When both options are offered—onsite or online (hybrid)—each contestant must be allowed to select the format in which they will participate. If all members choose to participate in person, that is allowed.

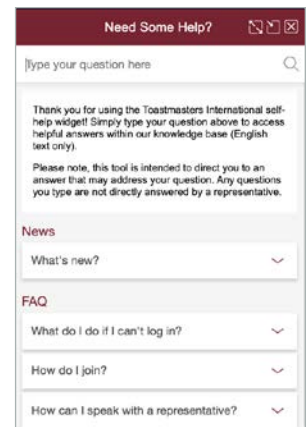
In addition, District leaders select the contest format, whether hybrid or online only, separately for each level (Area, Division, and District). Whichever format is chosen for a level must be used for all speech contests at that level during the program year. For more details, read an expanded version of this article in the online magazine, or check with your District leaders.

Resources

Need Some Help?

Have you tried the self-help widget on the [Toastmasters International website](#)? It will display as a pop-up on the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. Simply type your question in the search bar to access helpful answers within our knowledge base (English text only). This tool is intended to direct you to an answer that may address your question. The questions you type will not be answered by a live representative. For better results, type more than one word, or type a full question. If you do not find a match, try phrasing your question differently.

If you still can't find what you need, you can reach out to a representative by email at membership@toastmasters.org or by calling +1 720-439-5050 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mountain Time, Monday through Friday.



Engage and Educate Your Guests!

The "[Why Toastmasters?](#)" webpage is an easy and interactive way to share information with guests! This digital resource includes the same information found in the traditional Guest Packet, including Toastmasters' structure, how they will grow, and details on how to join a club.

Reminders

Explore Magazine Articles

The *Toastmaster* recently unveiled a new look online, but did you know you can now search for articles too? Take a trip to the [Explore page](#) to find helpful articles by category, author, or month and year. Looking for past PDF issues? You can find and download full issues starting from the current month all the way back to 1930. Start exploring now!

Get Social With Us

Looking for more ways to connect with other members and stay current with the latest magazine articles? Whether you're a fan of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or Instagram, you can find and share recent *Toastmaster* articles, announcements, new videos, and more across all channels. Learn how you can [connect with us](#) today.



TOASTMASTERS HISTORY

Looking Back: 60 Years Ago

On October 27, 1962, hundreds of Toastmasters and their families and friends listened to a 38-piece band play while awaiting the dedication of Toastmasters' first World Headquarters building in Santa Ana, California. In celebration of Toastmasters International's 98th anniversary, take a look back at this historic day and explore the December 1962 issue of the *Toastmaster*—[the dedication issue!](#)



The American flag, a gift from the World Headquarters staff, was raised by Smedley Junior High School students. Students carried the flags of Canada, Britain, Ethiopia, and Cuba—some of the countries where Toastmasters had spread at that point.



The crowd listened as Dr. Ralph C. Smedley spoke at the dedication ceremony.



Visitors lined up to see the new building during an afternoon open house.



Receptionist Joan Seay awaited visitors to the building in the lower lobby. The door on the left led to the Board of Directors room.



The building featured a sunlit atrium.

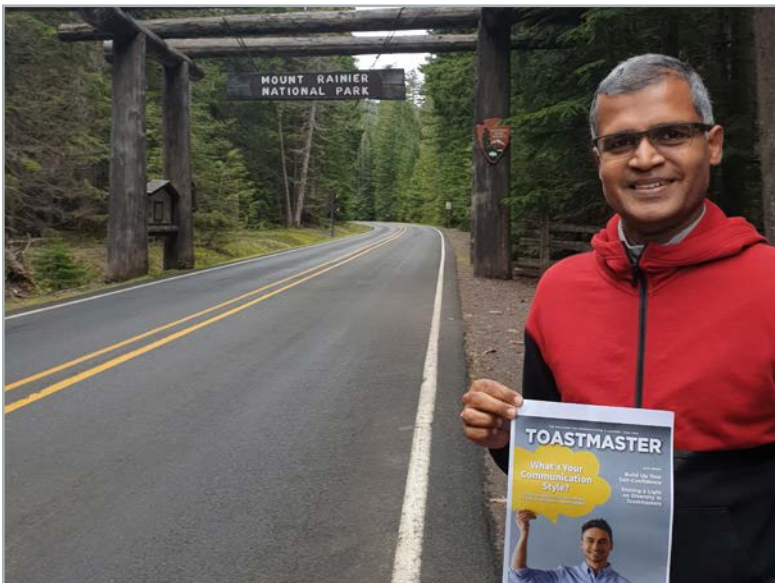
Snapshot



Toastmasters Sevilla of Seville, Spain, celebrate the club's 10th anniversary. Pictured are current and former members of the club gathered on a terrace overlooking Seville Cathedral and Giralada, the bell tower.



Traveling Toastmaster



SIVAPRAKASSH VAITHEESVARAN of Doha, Qatar, takes a vacation to Mount Rainier National Park near Seattle, Washington.



Vanessa Salazar of Marietta, Georgia, visits Mini-Europe, an amusement park in Brussels, Belgium. Behind her is a landmark building called the Atomium.

The Unsung Skill of a Toastmaster

Facing my fears helped me find courage in all areas of my life.

By Alex Kiester

Before my first Toastmasters meeting, I told my mom, who'd introduced me to the organization, that I only wanted to participate in Table Topics®. I just wanted to practice impromptu speaking, get really good at that, and not worry about anything else. I had it all rationalized: As a writer who'd hopefully have the opportunity to publicize my work one day, I'd just need to be good at interviews. I wasn't interested in wasting my time learning to run a meeting or giving a speech. I was going to get in, learn the basics, get out.

What is obvious to me now, five years and many Toastmasters roles later, is that I was scared. When I first signed up in 2017, my fear of public speaking had morphed into a full-blown phobia, my throat closing in anxiety when I did anything that even remotely resembled public speaking. It happened when I met new people. It happened when I told stories to my family. It even happened once when I was ordering takeout food over the phone. While standing in front of a group of people and speaking for 60 seconds may be nothing for some, for me, it was as intimidating as Mount Everest.

I began my Toastmasters journey just as I'd planned. Each time I walked through the door, I'd smile, greet my fellow club members, then sit in silence until I was asked to answer my one Table Topics question. With a pounding heart, I'd walk to the podium and fumble through. I rarely spoke for longer than a minute. I never signed up for a meeting role.

But then, one day a few months into this, my club needed a timer. When asked to fill the role, I surprised myself by nodding a silent yes. My voice trembled as I gave my timer's report that afternoon, but my Table Topics practice kicked in and I got through. So I signed up for another role for the next meeting. And then another and another.



Alex Kiester

I used to believe Toastmasters fostered communication and leadership skills—nothing more. And yet, the skill it has helped me develop, the one I value far more than any other, isn't impromptu speaking or running a

Toastmasters has taught me to be brave. And bravery, as it turns out, is the skill that matters most.

meeting. It's courage. After all, the turning point in my journey—the moment I nodded my acceptance of a new role—didn't require me to even utter a word. All it took, as ludicrously corny as it is to say, was for me to be brave.

Contrary to how courage is often portrayed in books and movies (you've either got it or you don't), my journey through Toastmasters has taught me that bravery is a skill like any other, one you can practice and improve. Each time I stood up in front of my club, heart hammering, my ability and willingness to do things that scare me grew. And it is courage, not fearlessness, that matters: Doing something despite your nerves, rather than in the absence of them, is what challenges you to grow.

While my anxiety in Toastmasters meetings has largely dissipated, my career as a writer has ushered in plenty of new fears to take its place. With the recent publication of my print debut novel, every day I wake up scared. I get anxious for each new public speaking engagement in a higher-stakes arena than my club meeting: at bookstore events and in interviews. I'm nervous about putting my ideas out into the world. I'm terrified of what new readers will think about my book, and as an extension, of me.

As a Toastmaster, I've taken risks and built up my courage, which begets courage, which begets courage. I've long since accepted that fear is a permanent part of my life, but fear means so much less when you've practiced its antidote. I can do interviews, promote my book, and add my voice to the cultural conversation not because I'm not scared to—just the thought of it makes me sweat—but because meeting by meeting, speech by speech, Toastmasters has taught me to be brave. And bravery, as it turns out, is the skill that matters most.

Alex Kiester is a writer and a member of the South Austin Toastmasters Club in Austin, Texas. She just published her first print novel, *The Truth About Ben and June*. To learn more, visit www.AlexKiester.com.

The Treasure Chest Within Base Camp

Explore the gems in the Tutorials and Resources section.

By Bill Brown, DTM

As you work within the Pathways learning experience, have you ever found yourself asking questions like “How do I...?” or “Where do I find...?” In all probability, the answer is in the Tutorials and Resources section of Base Camp.

I must admit, I basically ignored this section for a long time. When I finally clicked on the link, I was amazed at all that is in there.

In this article, we will look at a selection of the resources available. But first, how do you get there?

As you log into Base Camp, you will be taken to the home page. On the upper left-hand side, in the blue banner, you will find three large buttons, one of which says “Tutorials and Resources.” Hover over this button and select the Tutorials and Resources drop down. You might want to go there now to follow along.

If you have questions on how Pathways and Base Camp work, you can find that information by navigating to the Tutorials section using the subjects on the left side of the page. You have a choice of watching a video or accessing a transcript of the video. I prefer the transcript, because I can print it out and follow it as I work my way through that segment on Base Camp.

As Vice President Education (VPE) in my club, one question I am asked a lot is, “Where do I find the Evaluation Resources for the project that I am evaluating?”

There is a special link on the home page for speech Evaluation Resources in English. If you want them in another language, they are found under Evaluation Resources subject on the Tutorials and Resources page. Just select your language of choice. And, yes, the English versions are also available here. Look for your project, click on the title of the evaluation resources, and select launch.

One resource that I really appreciate is the Project Description section.

I recently wanted to add another path to my profile—but which one? I had a list of the

various projects in several paths that looked interesting, but couldn't decide which one was the best for me. At first, I was concerned that I wouldn't have access to those projects until I purchased the path. Then I found out about the Project Description section on the Tutorials and Resources page. This section allows me to access each project in Pathways, even if it is not in my path. That way I can analyze which ones teach me the skills that I want to learn, and which



The Tutorials and Resources section is chock full of information and forms that you may need on a regular basis.

ones are less interesting to me. I could then make an informed decision. Even better, they are available in all Toastmasters supported languages.

In some of the projects, there are forms you can fill out to aid you in the completion of the project, including: Goal Setting, Project Planning, and Write a Proposal. These are worksheets that guide you through the related process. Yes, they are available in the project itself, but what if you want to use them again?

Or what if they aren't part of your chosen path, but you want to do some goal setting? Or perhaps you find yourself in charge of a project and would like some guidance on how to plan it. These forms can help and they are available to all Toastmasters in the Resource Documents section.

Another interesting section is Supplemental Materials. Toastmasters International has selected some key articles that have run in previous issues of the *Toastmaster* magazine, as well as relevant episodes from *The Toastmasters Podcast*. These augment the training that is available within Pathways and constitute valuable resources.

One final resource that I want to highlight is The Navigator. This is an interactive introduction to Toastmasters. It is ideal for a new member and takes them through the various aspects of the Toastmasters program, including the club meeting, evaluations, and Pathways. When you access The Navigator from the Tutorials and Resources page, it will take you to a digital, interactive version. As VPE, I am particularly happy that you can also download it in PDF format. Just use the link in the Additional Resources section of the digital version to access this PDF file. I like sending it to a new member as soon as they join.

Yes, the Tutorials and Resources section is the portion of Base Camp that is easiest to ignore. But it is chock full of information and forms that you may need on a regular basis. So if you are ever asking “How do I...?” or “Where do I find...?” you might want to look here first. Chances are you will find exactly what you are looking for.

Bill Brown, DTM, is a speech delivery coach in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a member of Energy Capital Toastmasters in Gillette, and Evening Stars Club in Denver, Colorado. Learn more at www.billbrownspeechcoach.com.

And the Winners Are ...

See Toastmasters through the eyes of a child in this coloring contest reveal.

By Shannon Dewey

Earlier this year we asked you to share a little bit about Toastmasters with the young family members in your lives. To help celebrate the organization's 98th anniversary this month, we held the [Toastmaster Magazine Coloring Contest for Kids](#), which took place from June 29 to July 31. The contest was open to any young relative, age 17 or under, of an active Toastmasters member—and now the results are in!

The Magazine Team received nearly 70 entries from the children, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews of

members in 23 countries. With so many colorful and creative submissions, it was difficult for the judges to decide.

Congratulations to Chhavi, age 12, whose winning entry is displayed as this month's magazine cover. Chhavi is the daughter of Toastmaster Bhaskar J., from Maharashtra, India. We also want to acknowledge the kids who earned Honorable Mention in their age group, as well as special winning categories.

Shannon Dewey is digital strategy and engagement editor for the Toastmaster magazine.

HONORABLE MENTION Ages 6 and Under



Saaket, 5
Nephew of Sheshang A.
India

HONORABLE MENTION Ages 7-12



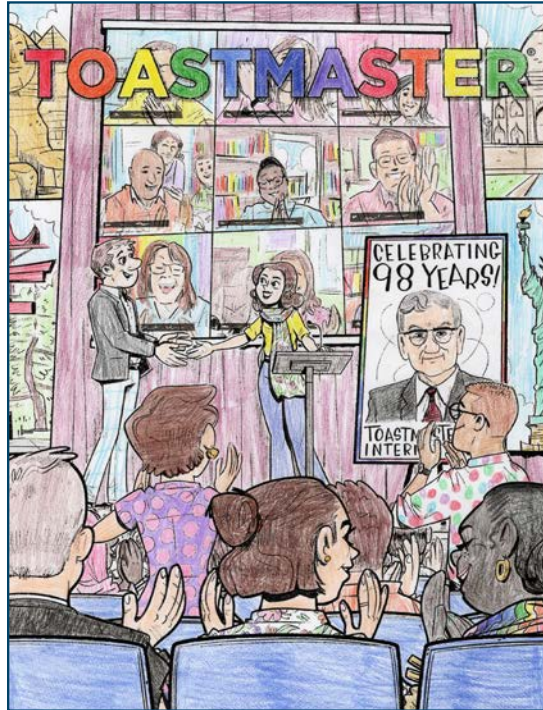
Kareena, 11
Daughter of Krista and Deepak K.
Texas, United States

HONORABLE MENTION
Ages 13-17



Brandon, 14
Grandson of Loly U.
Manila, Philippines

Inside the Lines Award



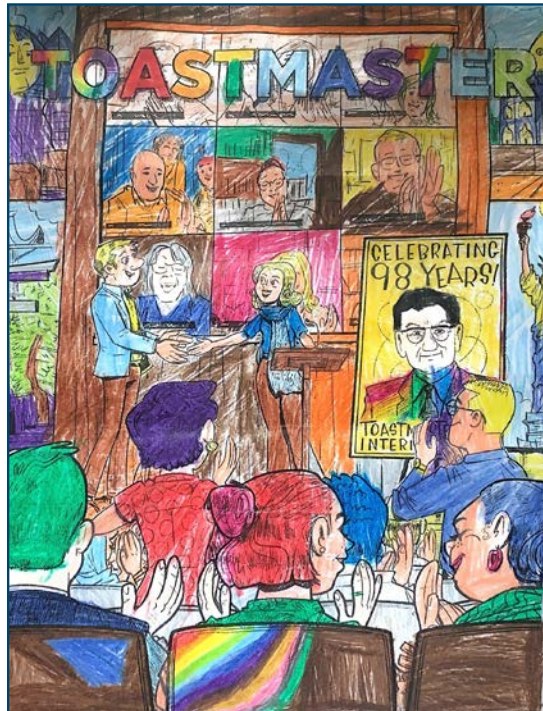
Eliza, 9
Daughter of Mark S.
South Carolina, United States

Outside the Lines Award



Dulcinea, 3
Daughter of Jose B.
New Jersey, United States

Most Creative Use of Color



Ibrahim, 7
Son of Maisarah R.
Selangor, Malaysia

**Coloring
Around
the World**

See where the
contest submis-
sions came from!

- ◆ Australia
- ◆ Bahamas
- ◆ Bahrain
- ◆ Canada
- ◆ China
- ◆ India
- ◆ Indonesia
- ◆ Kenya
- ◆ Malaysia
- ◆ Martinique
- ◆ Mauritius
- ◆ Mexico
- ◆ New Zealand
- ◆ Papua New Guinea
- ◆ Philippines
- ◆ Qatar
- ◆ Sri Lanka
- ◆ Taiwan
- ◆ United Arab Emirates
- ◆ United Kingdom
- ◆ United States
- ◆ Vietnam
- ◆ Zimbabwe

Communication Across Cultures



Culture helps define our communities, but communicating across different cultures is a vital skill in our ever-expanding world. Read what prominent experts and philosophers have had to say about cross-cultural communication.

“The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological. They are cultural.”

—Ruth Benedict, American anthropologist

“Understand the differences; act on the commonalities.”

—Andrew Masondo, South African lieutenant general

“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.”

—Mahatma Gandhi, Indian political leader and social activist

“How do we create a harmonious society out of so many kinds of people? The key is tolerance—the one value that is indispensable in creating community.”

—Barbara Jordan, American politician



“Try seeing, feeling, and tasting the water you swim in the way a land animal might perceive it. You may find the experience fascinating—and mind-expanding.”

—Erin Meyer, American author

“Culture is a way of coping with the world by defining it in detail.”

—Malcolm Bradbury, English author

“The wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed but the liberation of the diverse energies of free nations and free men.”

—John F. Kennedy, American president



“We have the ability to achieve, if we master the necessary goodwill, a common global society blessed with a shared culture of peace that is nourished by the ethnic, national, and local diversities that enrich our lives.”

—Mahnaz Afkhami, Iranian women’s-rights activist

“The love of one’s country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border?”

—Pablo Casals, Spanish cellist and conductor

“Culture is not made up but something that evolves which is human.”

—Edward T. Hall, American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher

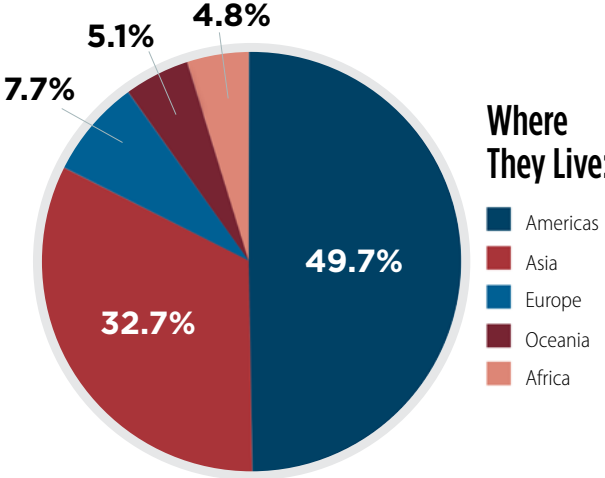
The Numbers Are In!

Toastmasters membership continues to reflect a well-educated, multilingual, and global community. This report is based on the latest Fact Sheet from World Headquarters Research and Analysis Department.

MEMBERS

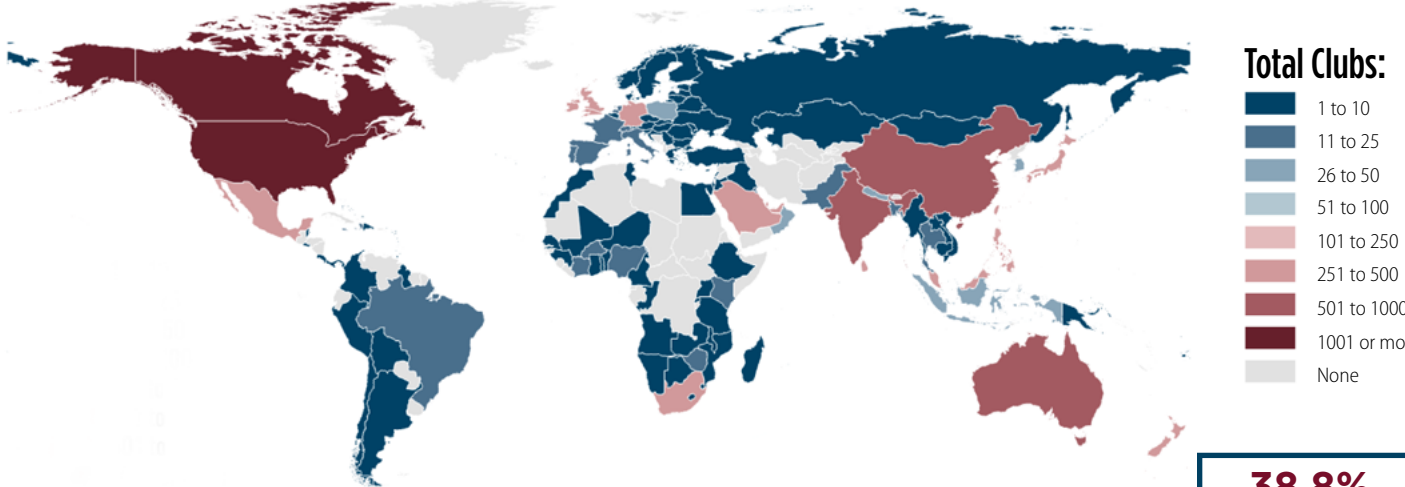
>282,000 MEMBERS¹

>73,000 NEW MEMBERS²



72.3% have become more confident and effective speakers³

Age: 47.4 Average Age	Education: 11.8% Are Students 79.7% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Language: 42.2% Are Multilingual	Gender: Female 55.7% Male 44.3%
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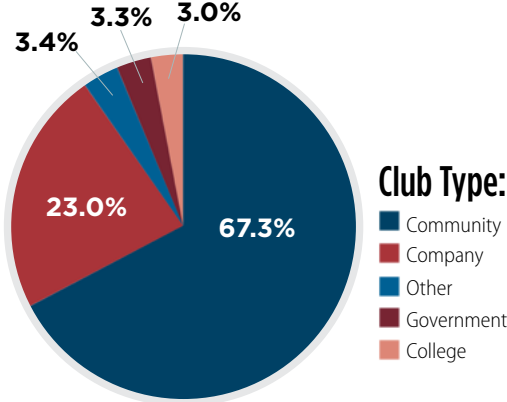


CLUBS

144 COUNTRIES

>14,700 CLUBS

>1,000 NEW CLUBS



38.8% ACHIEVED DISTINGUISHED

Recognition:

President's	>3,700
Select	>990
Distinguished	>970

¹ Total membership for the October 2021 renewal period (includes dual memberships).
² New member totals denote members whose original join date is during the 2021 to 2022 program year.
³ 72.25% of surveyed members met their primary goal of becoming a more effective public speaker or building confidence while speaking.
 Source: World Headquarters Research and Analysis Department



Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis, DTM



Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper, DTM

Leading The Bahamas

Two longtime Toastmasters steer the country's government.

By Paul Sterman

Over the years, Toastmasters members have made an impact in many professional arenas, including politics. Onetime members have included former Hawaii governor Linda Lingle and former Canadian Speaker of the House of Commons Geoff Regan.

But in the Toastmasters world, there has never been a situation quite like this. The current prime minister *and* deputy prime minister of The Bahamas are not only members—they're longtime and accomplished members. Prime Minister Philip Davis, 71, has been a member for a total of over 40 years, one of the early members of the first club ever formed in The Bahamas. Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper, 52, has been a Toastmaster for nearly 35 years. Though both men haven't been as involved in recent years because of their political duties, they were highly

involved for many years; both served in club and District leadership roles and earned a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award.

And both emphasize that their Toastmasters training was vital to their career accomplishments.

"It was a big factor in our success," says Cooper. Possessing the skills to lead groups, listen to others, and persuade people through communication are all key elements in politics, he adds. "The ability to shape your language and your words to suit your audience has really been a gift that I would have only been able to learn as a result of my involvement in Toastmasters."

The prime minister praised the value of the program at a Toastmasters meeting. In June, his club, First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters, in Nassau, honored its long list of Past Club Presidents. That includes Davis, who served as Club President in 1979.

The meeting culminated with Davis delivering a speech, in which he referred to Toastmasters as his "university." It was a place that helped instill self-confidence and the fundamental skills to find professional success, he said. Besides flourishing in politics, Davis also forged a career as one of the country's most prominent criminal defense attorneys.

“To listen, speak, and think is what Toastmasters teaches.”

—BAHAMAS PRIME MINISTER
PHILIP DAVIS, DTM



Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis speaks at a club meeting of the First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters in Nassau. Photo by Anthony Longley, DTM

“To listen, speak, and think is what Toastmasters teaches,” said the prime minister.

Bahamas Pride

Davis and Cooper, who head the country’s Progressive Liberal Party, were elected to their current positions in September 2021. For Toastmasters in The Bahamas, it is a point of great pride to have two of their own leading the government. And that pride extends to the recently announced news that the country’s capital, Nassau, has been chosen as the site of the 2023 International Convention.

“The Bahamas’ top two political leaders are actual Toastmasters members who served not only as club officers but as District officers,” enthuses Verna Bonaby, DTM, a member of several Bahamas clubs and Club Growth Director for District 47 (Southeast Florida and The Bahamas). “I am especially proud that the prime minister, the Honorable Philip Davis, takes every opportunity to speak to the impact that the Toastmasters program had on his personal growth and development as a young, up-and-coming professional, and encourages persons to join the organization.”

Michael Cooper, DTM, a cousin of Chester Cooper’s and a member in The Bahamas for more than 40 years, says, “It certainly makes me feel good to know that the country is being led by Toastmasters.”

When he and Davis took office last year, says Deputy Prime Minister Cooper, “it was a moment of great pride for us, but also for other Toastmasters, who recognized that this truly was the place we got our start in terms of communication, public speaking, and leadership, and I think that is celebrated.”

A Legal Star

Davis became so successful as a defense attorney that he holds the title of “KC” (King’s Counsel), one of the highest honors that a solicitor in the United Kingdom and some Commonwealth countries can attain. (Once a British colony, The Bahamas—an archipelago of nearly 700 islands and cays—is now an independent Commonwealth country.) Davis was also appointed as a magistrate, a position similar to a judge.

He first entered the field of politics in 1992, when he was elected a member of the country’s Parliament, representing Cat Island, Rum Cay, and San Salvador, all small islands in the central Bahamas. He became leader of the Progressive Liberal Party in 2017.

The aforementioned Michael Cooper, who has known Davis for many years, says one of the prime minister’s most impressive skills is how attentive and perceptive he is.

“He’s a very, very good listener—one of the best listeners I’ve ever known,” he says.

Fittingly, Davis conducted a listening exercise for the audience when he spoke at the June Toastmasters meeting.

A Distinguished Start

Deputy Prime Minister Cooper, pointing to the strong connections he made with other members over the years, says, “Toastmasters is family to me.” Quite literally: He joined as a young man at the urging of his brother and his cousin, both members. Toastmasters became his learning lab,

“It was a moment of great pride for us, but also for other Toastmasters, who recognized that this truly was the place we got our start in terms of communication, public speaking, and leadership.”

—DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
CHESTER COOPER, DTM



Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper makes a quip at a meeting of the Bahamas Parliament. Photo by Kemuel Stubbs

helping him overcome what he acknowledges were many communication shortcomings. “This was really a safe place for me.”

He embraced the program so quickly and intently that he achieved his DTM at 23 years old. He went on to become Club President of the Cable Beach West Toastmasters in Nassau and later served as an Area Governor.

Cooper, who also serves as Minister of Tourism and Aviation, was elected to Parliament in 2017, representing The Exumas (where he grew up) and Ragged Island. Before going into politics, he was President and CEO of BAF Financial & Insurance and Chairman and CEO of BAF Global Group. He was also a member of his company’s corporate Toastmasters club—BAF Stars.

Cooper says the skills he developed in Toastmasters helped him thrive in diverse settings, both in business and politics. For example, how to read an audience and respond effectively—like “understanding when I may have said something that needs further explanation,” he notes. “I may have said something that rubbed someone slightly the wrong way. An explanation [by me] usually follows. One of the skills you learn is certainly the ability to accept criticism. Evaluation is what they call it in Toastmasters. But the need to accept the evaluation and respond appropriately is also key in politics.”

The deputy prime minister says public speaking doesn’t even faze him now. “I believe I have two speeches tomorrow and three the next day and two the next day. So it’s quite a frequent occurrence. What was once a big task [for me] or an event filled with fear and trepidation has become all in a day’s work.

“I think many politicians still struggle when they have to give a speech, but I think I’ve done it so much now that it’s become second nature.”

Interestingly, Deputy Prime Minister Cooper and Prime Minister Davis have different public speaking styles. The younger Cooper, who in his government position also communicates often on social media, has a high-energy, dynamic speaking approach. Davis, who possesses a deep, rumbling voice, projects a more subdued, stately quality as an orator.

The two “complement each other perfectly, in my opinion,” says Anthony Longley, DTM, a Toastmasters Past International Director and

another longtime member of the First Bahamas Branch club. “They make a heck of a team!”

Helping Young People

Prime Minister Davis, also his country’s Minister of Finance, joined the First Bahamas Branch club in 1971, two years after it was officially chartered. (See page 17 to learn more about the club’s history.) He played an important role in helping The Bahamas become part of District 47 in 1973, and he served as a Division Governor in 1989.

He and his wife, Ann-Marie, hosted a Christmas party for the First Bahamas Branch club at their home for several years before the pandemic hit in 2020.

Mentoring young people has always been one of Davis’s top priorities. In its early years, the First Bahamas Branch started several Gavel Clubs in high schools.

“That was quite an effective way of [mentoring], helping young people engage in debate, public speaking, and what I call the qualities of leadership,” Davis says in a documentary about the club called *Echoes of History*.

Earlier this year, he gave the commencement speech at Middle Tennessee State University (whose president is from The Bahamas). The prime minister spoke to the college graduates about goals and aspirations, talking about his own background growing up around Cat Island, with a population of a few hundred.

“My grandparents were subsistence farmers, who were never taught to read or write,” said Davis. “My father was a fireman, my mother a domestic worker. When I was a young boy, people of my race, people like me, had no right[s] or ability to vote for their government, and certainly no right[s] to have a say in how the country was run. That I might grow up to become prime minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas was beyond their imagination. And probably beyond my imagination, too.

“But nothing should hold back the size and shape of your dreams.”

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

One Club's Legacy

It is Thursday night, meeting night for the First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters. The country will commemorate its Independence Day a few days later. Longtime member Anthony Longley, DTM—a Past International Director—answers a question posed by Table Topicsmaster Wenrick Clarke: What does the country's Independence Day mean to him?

Longley recalls witnessing, as a child, the explosive celebrations on July 10, 1973, marking the day the country became free and independent of British rule. He talks about the pride he feels and says he tries to teach his daughters the importance of independence to the human spirit. "I am a better person because of our independence," says Longley, a Past Club President.

It is a fitting response, given the club's own proud place in the country's history.

The first-ever Toastmasters club in The Bahamas officially chartered in 1969—two years after the country gained majority rule. It was a time of dramatic change, and the fledgling Toastmasters hoped their club would produce capable, confident leaders for their evolving nation.

Fifty-three years later, that sense of promise has been fulfilled. The First Bahamas Branch, in Nassau, has been a training ground for many successful leaders, including the man who currently leads the country: Prime Minister Philip Davis, DTM.

The club was big news in The Bahamas right from the start. The keynote speaker for its charter ceremony—a black-tie event—was Lynden O. Pindling, the country's preeminent political leader, later known as the "Father of the Nation." The longtime Bahamas prime minister was named an Honorary Toastmaster that night.

Not only is the club the country's oldest, its leaders also helped start many of The Bahamas' other early Toastmasters clubs. Today there are more than 40 clubs spread throughout the country of approximately 400,000 people.

Toastmasters on the Big Screen

The First Bahamas Branch (more commonly referred to by members as Club 1600) often gains local media attention, such as when it premiered *Echoes of History*, a one-hour documentary about its history. Directed by Past Club President Shacoy Mullings, DTM, the film hosted the premiere at a 200-seat Nassau movie theater in 2021.

"You would have thought it was a new James Bond movie," quips Longley.



Past Club Presidents of the First Bahamas Branch of Toastmasters Photo by Anthony Longley, DTM

That event was also a black-tie affair, which brings up another point about the club: It is big on stylish attire. Members and club officers are required to wear suits to all meetings. During summer months, members (not officers) are allowed to drop the necktie. The 50-plus-member club is composed of all men, though that is not any kind of official policy, Longley stresses. In the club's first few years, women were not yet officially allowed as members of the Toastmasters organization, and Club 1600 members made mentoring young men a central part of their mission. Women in The Bahamas liked the club's positive influence on young men, says Longley, and when they've joined Toastmasters, they've been happy to leave Club 1600's membership as it is. Women regularly attend the group's meetings and are members of many other Bahamas clubs.

Club 1600 is still vibrant, as evidenced by the club meeting before Independence Day, a hybrid affair. Its spirited members often rib each other good-naturedly, as well as provide rousing encouragement. At one point, members shout in unison: "Club 16!"—two beats—"Hundred!"

The group is filled with talented, powerful speakers, young members as well as veterans. On this night, the three prepared speakers—Ancin Munnings, DTM; Dion Godet; and Michael Cooper, DTM—deliver ambitious, thought-provoking presentations. Toastmaster of the Day Roderick Colebrook, DTM, runs the meeting with keen enthusiasm.

Club 1600's legacy continues, as the other varied clubs on the islands make their own mark.

"We are a diverse people, and therefore have clubs to meet people's diverse needs—from corporate, to community, to church clubs, and even a club for members with special needs," says Verna Bonaby, DTM, District 47's Club Growth Director. "As members of District 47, the two Divisions in The Bahamas do our part to fulfill the District's mission to 'build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.'"

—Paul Sterman

Project 10: A Global Speaking Initiative

Members in Malaysia and Singapore collaborate with clubs across six continents to deliver 100 speeches.

By Albert Khor Yee Shin, DTM

Project 10 Participants

- ◆ Albert Khor Yee Shin, DTM
- ◆ Sasi Kumar Munusamy, DTM
- ◆ Patricia Yap, DTM
- ◆ Chong Min Poh, DTM
- ◆ Foong Sook Hwa, DTM
- ◆ Low Chooi Ping
- ◆ Jeff Ng Jun Bin
- ◆ Viknaeswari Sachithanandam
- ◆ Liew Tiam Foo
- ◆ Louisa Chan

If you were presented the opportunity to speak in 10 different countries, would you say yes? My club did. In October 2021, Advanced #ArdentSpeakers, an advanced club based in Malaysia, launched Project 10, an ambitious global speech challenge for some of its most experienced Toastmasters.

How Did It Work?

Project 10 called for 10 club members to deliver 10 Pathways speeches in 10 countries, for a total of 100 speeches. The project was inspired by two members' personal initiatives to deliver speeches in different clubs. I took the role of Team Leader, finding speaking slots for each member, who then reported their personal progress by using a collaborative online spreadsheet. The aim was to complete this project within 10 months (or one speech per month, per member). By the end of the project, we believed our participants would gain invaluable skills and experiences in speaking to an international audience.

Our first speech was delivered in Nepal. We managed to secure around 25 speaking slots from about 17 countries, thanks to personal connections and initial publicity on the Official Toastmasters Members Facebook Group. However, by January 2022, we were facing challenges to obtain speaking opportunities from new clubs, as we were running out of contacts. What happened next was a reflection of true hospitality and support from the international Toastmasters clubs.

As a last-ditch attempt, we reached out to clubs individually using contact details from the Toastmasters website "Find a Club" function. Although we introduced ourselves, we were aware that the club might not be able to verify our identity. (We could be Zoom bombers!) However, club after club responded warmly and some were even excited to be part of this journey. We secured slots in the Middle East, South America, Scandinavia, Oceania, and the Caribbean. This "cold-calling" method sustained us till the end of the project.

Participants included past and current Division Directors, Area Directors, and speech contest winners from Malaysia and Singapore, and all are multilingual. This worked to our advantage as one speech was delivered

in China, in the Chinese language, while the rest were delivered in English. As experienced as our speakers are, there were still some challenging moments that caught them off-guard. For example, one member was delivering the "Engage Your Audience With Humor" project in Togo, West Africa, and most cameras were turned off! She took it in stride and had to amend her approach on the spot to still deliver the humor.

The Challenge of Time

The major challenge for most speakers was the time differences in the countries where they spoke. Some had to stay awake past midnight or wake up early in the morning for the meetings.

European and African time zones were the most challenging. Their evening meetings would typically commence at 1 to 2 a.m. Malaysian time! For our first speech in Europe, Toastmaster Chong Min Poh, DTM, was scheduled to deliver a speech at a Ukrainian club at 1 a.m. Malaysian time. A few of us sacrificed sleep to support her and we were all there at 12:55 a.m., waiting for the meeting room to open. When the meeting didn't start on time, we realized something was wrong. It turned out that we were mistaken on the time difference, as European daylight-saving hours ended a week earlier so we were technically an hour early! Min Poh waited and went on to deliver her speech to the Changemakers Club at 2:40 in the morning. And she was at work a mere six hours later. Despite the unearthly hours, six out of 10 members delivered speeches across six continents!

Confidence and Cultural Awareness

We liked how some clubs took special effort to turn this project into a cultural exchange opportunity. Sagikor Group Jamaica Toastmasters Club organized a special session during the meeting where the Malaysian delegation introduced their local food, nasi lemak, and the Jamaican club introduced reggae, as it was Reggae Month. Other clubs used the experience to organize open house meetings and promote them to local guests. I was invited to deliver a speech in Japan's Shimonoseki Toastmasters Club; I



Participants of Project 10 gather for a group photo. Team Leader Albert Khor Yee Shin, DTM, is pictured second from right.

spoke about my career and how Toastmasters has impacted it positively.

The project ended with speech No. 100 being delivered on June 29 at the First Canadian

both my eyes. If it wasn't for this, I would have never pushed myself to not only finish 10 speeches in four months but also do research about the countries. Now I'm 10 countries

“One of our newest members was pleased to see that, despite different cultures, the Toastmasters program remains the same.”

—DONNA KNIGHT, DTM

Toastmasters Club in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. It was the first active club outside the United States when it chartered in 1935.

During this project, all our speakers experienced a transformation. Low Chooi Ping said that she was “gently led out of my comfort zone and gained more confidence in speaking to unfamiliar audiences even though it was virtual.” As some members are club leaders, they have learned a lot from meeting practices in other countries. Sasi Kumar Munusamy, DTM, gained new insights from a “Who Said What?” session in Brunei, and a “Round Robin” session in Kenya, which can now be applied to Advanced #ArdentSpeakers.

Members such as Liew Tiam Foo gained cultural awareness. “Project 10 has opened

richer in my mind, and have 10 more countries I would love to visit,” he says.

What We Learned

At the end of this global project, the 10 members delivered 103 speeches to 97 clubs, covering 14 Toastmasters regions and 45 Districts, in 63 countries, across six continents! Numbers aside, the whole journey inspired us in three ways: willpower, welcome, and world peace.

The members showed that sheer willpower can help overcome various challenges—from sudden power outages to time zone differences.

Next, the incredibly warm welcome from the clubs reflects the DNA of Toastmasters—a safe and supportive environment.

Lastly, by speaking in all these different countries, we hoped to contribute toward restoration of world peace through two important ingredients: communication and understanding. As Donna Knight, DTM, from Sagicor Group Jamaica Toastmasters Club, put it, “One of our newest members was pleased to see that, despite different cultures, the Toastmasters program remains the same. In accepting an international speaker, the members explored how to honor our guests while online. We considered what may be welcoming or offensive to our guests of a different culture.”

Is Project 10 trademarked? Absolutely not! In fact, I encourage all clubs (especially advanced clubs) to try a similar project to challenge and retain their members. All Project 10 participants are still members of our club today, and this project has brought Advanced #ArdentSpeakers to the fore. It has even helped the club to gain two new international members from Myanmar and Taiwan.

Give it a try today and enjoy the global Toastmasters experience!

Albert Khor Yee Shin, DTM, is a member of Advanced #ArdentSpeakers, based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He took on the role of Team Leader for his club's Project 10 global initiative.



5 Tips for Becoming a Culturally Intelligent Speaker

Whether you're presenting virtually or in person, your diverse audience matters most.

By David Livermore, Ph.D.

When COVID-19 hit, many professional speakers saw their work dry up overnight. Conferences were canceled, budgets were cut, and travel came to a halt. But within a matter of weeks, live events were replaced with virtual ones, often filled with people from all over the world.

At first, I loathed speaking at virtual events. I felt like my wings had been clipped. I draw energy from speaking to a live audience where I can read the room, interact with other speakers, and react to what's happening in the moment. With time, however, I began to think about how the very body of work I've devoted myself to for the last 20 years—cultural intelligence—is ideally suited to speaking in today's digital and diverse context.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is the ability to work and relate effectively with people from different backgrounds. It enables you to take a clear,



Culturally intelligent presenters spend as much time considering how to get audience participation as they do developing the content.



dynamic presentation and adapt it for a diversity of audiences, some of whom may be in person, others who may be joining remotely. And it prepares you to navigate potentially polarizing topics that may pop up when you least expect it.

Here are a few ways to think about a culturally intelligent approach to giving a presentation in today's new normal—even when it's from the comfort of your own home:

Presenters:	Culturally Intelligent Presenters:
Prepare content	... but also revise the “why” and the “logical” order of the presentation
Demonstrate passion	... but also adjust the level of charisma and enthusiasm
Invite questions and comments	... but also offer multiple ways for audience participation
Inject humor	... but also vet it with a trusted “cultural advisor” ahead of time
Are authentic	... but also don't overdo it

1 Prepare content ... but revise the “why” and the “logical” order of the presentation.

When preparing a presentation, I spend the most time thinking about the “so what?” for the audience. Most audiences decide whether a presentation is relevant within the first five minutes. So I obsess over my introductions. I practice the intro out loud on my morning runs and I keep revising it until I've mastered the “why should I care?” question. The more diverse the audience, the more time I spend thinking about how to answer that question.

The other key difference in preparing culturally intelligent content is to think about how to structure the presentation. Many public speaking courses present formulaic outlines for how all good presentations should be organized, (e.g., “why, what, how”). But reasoning and logic are significantly shaped by culture, so you need to adjust how you present an argument based on the reasoning approach preferred by the audience.


When I'm presenting to most North American groups, I get to practical solutions as quickly as possible. A long explanation about the theoretical process of how we conceptualized and researched CQ, for example, is sure to be met with impatience. *Just get to the bottom line!*

However, if I'm making a presentation about cultural intelligence to a European audience, I'll methodically walk through the process of how we conceptualized cultural intelligence, the design behind the CQ assessment, and eventually the conclusions reached. If I move too quickly to practical solutions, I'll be met with skepticism. *How did you arrive at this conclusion? What were the questions you started with?* It's not adequate to say, “We used sound research methodology.”

These differences exist in other groups as well. Many academics prefer a more “principles-first” approach and many North American corporate groups prefer an “applications-first” one. Keep in mind that many virtual events have audience members with opposite preferences so you may have to address multiple forms of reasoning in a presentation.



Humor in a presentation is never just about the literal words spoken.



There are many other considerations for how to prepare a presentation for a diverse audience—including selecting relevant examples, anticipating how much content to share, and the powerful use of stories. But the fundamentals to preparing your content begin with figuring out the right “why” and logical order based on what makes sense to *them*, not you.

2 Demonstrate passion ... but adjust the level of charisma and enthusiasm.

Repeated studies have found that the top two factors in the most highly rated professors are interesting content and passion. Students want to know professors believe in what they’re talking about, and the same is true for any audience.

Diverse audiences, however, have different preferences for how they want presenters to demonstrate passion. One time I was asked to observe a group of high-potential leaders in the Czech Republic. I was concerned by the limited enthusiasm and charisma most of them demonstrated when they were making presentations. But my Central European counterpart told me that speakers with a lot of visible enthusiasm actually create a barrier for themselves when speaking in places like Prague or Bucharest. This is because many of their followers believe that a lot of emotion and excitement from a leader may make them seem too much like leaders from an era gone by, when leaders manipulated people with emotional presentations.

If I’m presenting something I’m passionate about, my default is to be gregarious and visibly expressive. Over the years, I’ve learned that I’m a better communicator when I regulate my level of enthusiasm based on the audience and context. When I speak to audiences in places like Japan or to a group of engineers, I turn it down a bit, speak a little more slowly, and consider how to moderate my expressiveness based on what will translate best for the audience involved. When presenting over Zoom, I find that a more conversational style with a little less charisma works

better so that it feels more intimate and less like I’m pretending I’m on a stage when it’s clear I’m sitting at home.

3 Invite questions and comments ... but offer multiple ways for audience participation.

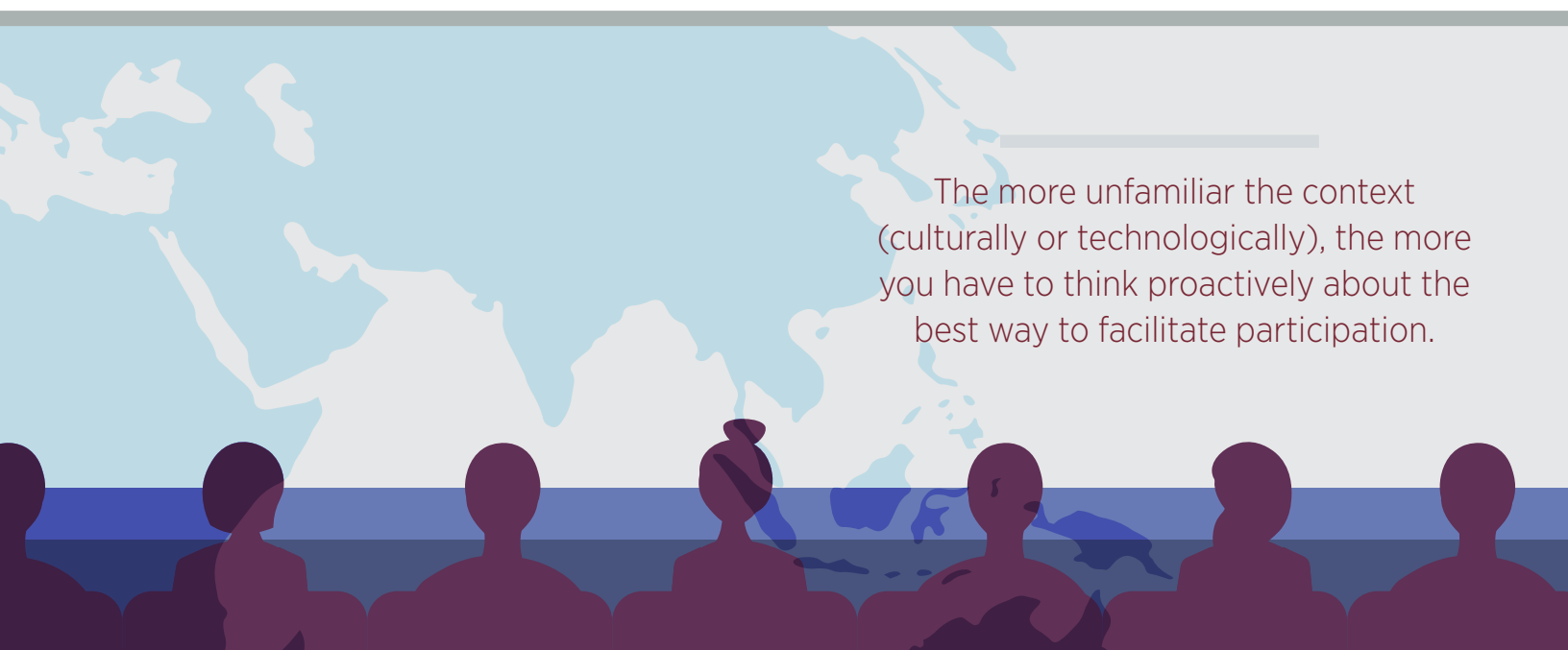
I loathe tacking on a Q&A at the end of a presentation as an afterthought. The same people speak up, often thinking more about how their question makes them look to the rest of the group. I prefer finding ways to get feedback and interaction throughout the presentation.

Culturally intelligent presenters spend as much time considering how to get audience participation as they do developing the content. If you’re presenting to a smaller group, let them know ahead of time that you want them to respond to a particular question at some point in the presentation. This allows the introverts more time to prepare, and it enables those from more hierarchical or collectivist cultures to understand that you’re explicitly wanting them to be prepared to say something. Alternatively, have audience members pair up with a couple other people for three minutes during the presentation to come up with a question or comment they would like to raise as a group.

Virtual platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams allow ways to engage an audience that are harder to do in live presentations. Polls, chat boxes, and breakout rooms create ideal environments for everyone to engage. The more unfamiliar the context (culturally or technologically), the more you have to think proactively about the best way to facilitate participation.

4 Inject humor ... but vet it with a trusted “cultural advisor” ahead of time.

Most people are aware that humor does not translate very well from one culture to the next, and it runs the risk of being offensive. But humor is such a powerful way to make you seem more human, and there are many studies supporting the psychological benefits of humor.



The more unfamiliar the context (culturally or technologically), the more you have to think proactively about the best way to facilitate participation.

Laughter is proven to release endorphins and it's something experienced across every age and culture. I avoid any humor that makes fun of people other than myself. But I do try to inject “bonding” humor with an audience—something that the group understands that outsiders may not. American comedian Ellen DeGeneres uses bonding humor extremely well. She portrays a friendly, easygoing personality and puts people at ease with her jovial banter, never really making anyone in the room the butt of her jokes. This is particularly useful if your topic veers toward a polarizing topic like politics, immigration, or vaccine mandates. Find a way to bond with the audience so you can challenge their thinking and be seen as an “insider” with them.

Ironically, bonding humor is hardest for outsiders to understand. So it takes careful preparation and cultural intelligence to figure out humor that will bond rather than isolate or simply fall flat. Humor in a presentation is never just about the literal words spoken. What makes it funny is as much about the one who is saying it and the context where it's said. There are funny things a Black leader could say that I should never say. This is, of course, why many experts advocate avoiding humor altogether. A more culturally intelligent approach is to inject humor—but vet it ahead of time very carefully with some individuals who understand the context where you'll be using it.

5 Be authentic ... but don't overdo it.

Ultimately, we want to hear from presenters who are authentic and real. This is consistent among followers across all cultures. People almost everywhere want to hear from speakers who are genuine.

Coming across as authentic often means starting a presentation with a brief, personal story. For me, that's a more interesting way to introduce myself than using a scripted, robotic bio. [Previously, I wrote](#) about a time I spoke in China and my interpreter didn't translate my opening anecdote. She said something like, “Our speaker is doing what a lot of

North American speakers do. He's telling a story he thinks is funny.” I continued, assuming she was sharing a story that had consistently worked so well for me elsewhere. She assured the audience she would translate as soon as the story was done. She even asked the audience to laugh on cue so I wouldn't feel bad. Sure enough, just as I got to the funny part of the story, the crowd erupted with laughter. I read this as, *Wow! This is going great. Even my humor is translating well.* Only later did someone fill me in on what happened.

It turns out that my translator and the organizers who brought me to China felt that starting with a self-effacing story was embarrassing to them and the audience. People came expecting to hear from an expert, but to them, my opening illustration presented me as someone who didn't know what he was talking about. But neither was the answer for me to fully adapt and lose my personal style. A better approach would have been for me to figure out another way to make a personal connection (e.g., sharing a little bit about my family) or waiting until later in the presentation to share the story about my failure. A culturally intelligent presenter needs to ask: *What is the best way to communicate who I really am and what I care about in light of the audience?*

The last couple of years have opened new platforms for Toastmasters around the world. With cultural intelligence, you not only present more effectively to a broader range of audiences, but you also have the skills to adapt to different platforms and navigate difficult questions—even if you're doing it from home in your sweatpants.

Editor's Note: Portions of this article are adapted from David Livermore's new book, [Digital, Diverse & Divided: How to Talk to Racists, Compete with Robots, and Overcome Polarization](#).

David Livermore, Ph.D., is a thought leader in cultural intelligence and global leadership. He is the founder of the Cultural Intelligence Center in East Lansing, Michigan. Learn more at [davidlivermore.com](#).

Be Prepared, Be Professional, Be Punctual

7 tips for a polished public appearance.

By Susanne Abplanalp and Sonja Bonin

A late start, a lame introduction, an inappropriate joke—any blunder can ruin the best of speeches. Seasoned Toastmasters likely know this, but we've had a peculiar few years and might need a refresher. Most of us have gotten more used to talking to a camera from our bedrooms than actually standing in front of an audience in person. Some Toastmasters have never experienced any offline meetings at all. Time to dust off our people skills and brush up on how to behave on an actual stage in front of real human beings. Susanne Abplanalp has been teaching groups and individuals within corporations and adult education institutions in Switzerland for years and is a specialist on manners, form, and etiquette. Here's what this business etiquette expert has to say about the perfect public appearance:

1 Preparation, Preparation, Preparation
When preparing your speech, whether online or in person, ask yourself a few questions. Who's your audience? What occupies their minds at the moment? What level of expertise can you expect? How do you hook their attention right from the start? Tailor your content as closely as you can to your audience and their line of business.

If in doubt: Never assume anything, explain everything, and use intelligible, easy-to-understand language. The more background information you share, the more value your content will have for the audience.

When speaking in person, you want to take some additional steps before you go onstage. Good preparation includes a Plan B: What will you do when faced with a technical glitch or when your speaking time gets cut short? Think through the different scenarios of what could go wrong and consider what you can do ahead of time to prevent them. Prepare a checklist.

You can't plan for *all* emergencies, of course. Should something unexpected happen in spite of all your preparation, you can make up for it with a bit of humor.

2 You're Onstage Even When You're Not
Be true to your authentic self. You want to transmit the same values as a person and a speaker. Behave in a professional and polite manner even when you're just parking your car or entering the elevator. Make sure your audience can feel that you practice what you preach.

Arrive 60 minutes before the event. Allow plenty of time to get to the venue, find the right room, and talk to your host and the person who will introduce you. Set up your technical devices and check the agenda for last-minute changes. If possible, put your notes on the lectern. Double-check that your microphone and projector are working properly.

3 Punctuality Is King
Arriving early and getting accustomed to the room, your host, and your audience allow for plenty of time to calm down, take a deep breath, and even practice some power poses.

Start on time. If members of the audience are late, acknowledge them with a friendly nod of your head without interrupting your presentation.

Always keep to your allocated speaking time. If you go too long, you'll cause problems for your host and test your audience's patience.

4 Greetings and Introductions
Ideally, your host or the master of ceremonies will introduce you. And most often, you'll be the person to either offer them the ideas of what you would like them to say, or you will write something for them yourself. Think carefully about how you would like to be described and what expertise you would like highlighted for this specific occasion. Discuss it with the person who introduces you ahead of time. A handshake or other greeting (a nod of the head, perhaps) onstage is always initiated by the host or emcee. If they don't offer a physical greeting, start your talk without one.



It's showtime! Enter the stage energetically and keep your hands out of your pockets. Tell your audience what to expect, how long your presentation will be, whether there'll be breaks, and whether they'll be provided with a handout. This might feel very different from the online meetings we have all gotten used to. Remember:

People will now be able to see your full body—not just your shoulders and above. Make sure to avoid anything that might distract your audience's attention, such as missing, open, or gaping buttons, creases and wrinkles, sweat stains, trouser legs that are too short or too long, and worn-down shoes. On the other hand, don't overdo

You want to transmit the same values as a person and a speaker.

Being nervous is a normal reaction when you are suddenly faced with a room full of strangers, but keep in mind that your audience is there to see you and is eager to hear what you have to say.

5 Fine Feathers Make Fine Birds

Your clothing, hair, accessories, etc., should match the occasion as well as your personal style. It signals your appreciation to have been invited as a speaker. Keep in mind that this is not a Zoom presentation—you are visible in 3-D. Time to ditch the pajama pants!

Plain colors are usually easier on the eye than stripes or patterns. The human eye reacts to light, so wearing light colors close to your face can help.

it either. Flashy outfits and shiny, sparkling, or dangling jewelry can be just as distracting.

Make sure your hair is neatly in place. It can be difficult to focus on what you are saying if your hair keeps covering part of your face.

6 Authentic Body Language

Make sure your audience feels your enthusiasm, your preparation, and your passion for the subject. Use your gestures and facial expressions accordingly, in a manner that suits the occasion. Speakers who occupy plenty of space and use the stage to their advantage exude confidence. Open gestures and a smile will make you look open-minded and friendly. Employ pauses for extra impact.

You want to avoid scratching, hands in your pockets, touching yourself (e.g., on the face), or playing with your hair, a pen, etc. These kinds of behaviors can distract your audience.

Keep up good eye contact throughout your speech—and don't forget the people in the back seats. This might be the biggest difference to online meetings: no staring straight at a camera anymore! Try concentrating on one person in one section of the room for 4-5 seconds before moving on to another person in another section.

7 End with a Bang!

Don't waste the powerful ending of your speech on a faltering "thank you" to the audience. Ideally you will have acknowledged their attentiveness and their questions throughout your whole presentation. Best to end with something memorable: a succinct summary, for instance, or a fiery call to action.

Just as the transition to online speeches was a change in style, returning to (or beginning) in-person speaking requires some additional considerations. As you return to an actual stage, use the space to your advantage with strong body language and appearance. Before long, you'll feel just as comfortable in 3-D as you are in 2-D.

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An earlier version of this article was first published in its original German in [Shine](#), a womenbiz magazine in Zurich.

Cultivating Inclusive Audience Awareness

Don't let your assumptions of audience members narrow your message.

By Tara McMullin

I posted a “pep talk” to my Instagram stories a few years ago. I explained that people often ask me what app or system they should use to get stuff done. Then I made the case that there was no trick to make you do work you're not fully committed to. The secret, I clarified, was a steadfast commitment to your responsibilities.

I aimed to disrupt what viewers thought planning and productivity were all about. Within minutes, I had a direct message from a follower. It was a note of concern: I hadn't considered my followers who struggle with cognitive processes due to ADHD or other developmental conditions and rely on apps and notifications. The follower appreciated my message but thought it might harm neurodivergent people who are still trying to live up to other people's productivity standards.

My heart fell into my stomach. I never want to hurt anyone with my message—even inadvertently. And yet, I'd done just that.

I learned a valuable lesson that day. The message I share has the power to hurt as much as help. Who have I excluded by turning my own experiences into pat advice? Am I carelessly causing others to feel like outsiders?

I'm a podcaster and speaker. I work with other podcasters as a producer. I know the power that stories and information can have—whether delivered from a stage, into a microphone, or in a meeting. And it's a power I want to wield with care and concern for those who listen to me.

That's where inclusive audience awareness comes in. Inclusive audience awareness is a skill for noticing when

one's assumptions and biases make communication less effective or even harmful. The goal isn't to dodge being “canceled.” Inclusive audience awareness isn't about protecting the communicator. It's about caring for the audience.

Respect and concern for others are non-negotiable when it comes to effective communication. If I want the audience to care about what I have to share, then I better care about them enough to go the extra mile to help them feel included.

From my own experience, I can tell you that this feels like a whole new layer of work at first. Even a little unnatural. But the more you practice inclusive audience awareness, the easier it is to see these linguistic and situational biases all around you—and adjust accordingly.

Misunderstandings and unintentional impacts will happen, but we can take care to steer clear when possible. Here are three ways to do that.

Check Your Assumptions

We make a lot of assumptions about our audiences—namely, who they are and what they care about. We often base these assumptions on our experiences and background. Thanks to our social wiring, we're likely to assume that our audience—whether one person or many people—has more in common with us than they do. We're also likely to believe that they have more in common with each other than they do.

These assumptions are part of a psychological process called social categorization. This occurs when we group



people with similar social characteristics (e.g., occupation, gender, race, class, etc.). Once we've placed someone in a social category, that category seems to be a shortcut to all sorts of *other* knowledge about them. And that's where things get dicey.

For example, suppose I'm speaking to a room full of adult women. I might inadvertently assume they're all mothers or married to men. I might rely on that assumption for an example in my talk: "I know we all let out a sigh of relief when the kids are in bed, and our husbands are playing fantasy football." The goal of that example is to connect personally—to empathize—right? For some in the audience, that will work. But I'll alienate any of the women who are not mothers, not married, or not straight (to say nothing of different gender expressions).

Reconsider What's Normal

Diversity, equity, and inclusion coach Erica Courdae often reminds her followers to reconsider their "normal." She coaches people to

impacts are inevitable when we connect with each other. We end up positioned as "insiders" by virtue of our authorship, often making others feel like outsiders (usually unintentionally).

Here are some questions you can use to start cultivating a more inclusive audience awareness for yourself:

- **Socioeconomic class:** Am I assuming that my audience has access (or doesn't have access) to the same financial or community resources that I have?
- **Health:** Am I assuming that my audience shares my health status (including mental health)?
- **Education:** Am I assuming that my audience has the same level of education that I have or access to the same educational resources?
- **Race:** Am I assuming that my audience belongs to the same race I do? Am I assuming that racialized people (categorized according to race) have the same experiences that I have?

of an enthusiast when speaking on philosophy, economics, and media studies.

When I make my relationship with the subject clear to the audience, I leave room for others' experiences or knowledge and their relationships with the topic. I'm entitled to my position. And they're entitled to their positions. I often use phrases such as "in my experience" or "what I've observed with clients" to clarify my positioning.

I'm less likely to overstep and unwittingly exclude someone else's experience or expertise when I'm clear on my position. Or, as writer Angela Garbes put it on *The Feminist Present* podcast, "I don't need to be an expert in someone else's story. I just need to tell [my] story."

"Everyone" Is Not Your Audience

A common concern I hear when I talk about cultivating inclusive audience awareness is that it means you have to try to speak to *everyone*. That's not the case. I know my audience will always be more diverse than I can imagine. And I know there will always be things I can't know about them. When carefully considering the language, examples, and stories I share, I can speak with heartfelt emotion or compelling rhetoric without excluding people I care about.

You don't have to water down your ideas or make your stories bland to create a more inclusive message. You don't need to generalize ideas beyond real meaning or turn your unique story into actionable advice for the masses.

By checking your assumptions, owning your position, and reconsidering what's "normal," you can make room for diverse experiences without jeopardizing your own truth.

You don't have to water down your ideas or make your stories bland to create a more inclusive message.

recognize that what seems normal or unremarkable to them isn't normal to everyone.

What seems normal to me as a white woman from the suburbs of central Pennsylvania is often utterly foreign to my white husband, who grew up between Montana, Utah, and rural Alaska. What might seem normal to you could be very different to someone in your audience who is of a different sexual orientation or another race, or who has different physical or mental abilities or a different health status.

People engage with our stories, advice, and analysis through the lens of their own experience and knowledge. And often, that experience and knowledge are quite different from our own. Misunderstandings and unintentional

- **Gender and sexuality:** Am I assuming that my audience holds the same gender identity I hold? Am I assuming that their sexuality or family structure is the same as mine?
- **Family:** Am I assuming that my audience has a similar relationship to their biological family as the one I have? Am I assuming that my audience has the same goals for their family as I have?

Own Your Position

Every time we communicate, we position ourselves to the subject we're speaking on. In my case, I'm a subject-matter expert when it comes to podcasting or social media. I have firsthand experience of living with autism. And I'm more

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Boredom Revisited

People who say being bored makes you boring ... *bore* me.

By John Cadley

I don't get bored often, but when I do I try to get unbored as quickly as possible, lest I be one of the people American writer Ruth Burke was referring to when she said, "Only boring people get bored." I like to think of myself as a fairly interesting person ... maybe not enough to give a TED Talk on "Do Woodpeckers Get Headaches?" but I can tell you a thing or two you didn't know. Butterflies taste with their feet. Bet you didn't know *that!* And the Mona Lisa has no eyebrows. Pretty interesting, huh? I may be boorish but I'm not boring.

Yet on one particular day back in July, I was bored. Thinking a change of scenery might drain the sludge from my cranium, I drove to a local coffee shop, leafed through a local paper someone had left behind, and came upon a column titled ... "Don't Be Bored." You can't make this stuff up. The writer informed me that, according to www.nationaltoday.com, July was Anti-Boredom Month in America, supposedly because after the Fourth of July the summer gets hotter, the children get bored, and the only excitement is petting goats at the county fair.

Reading on, I contemplated the remedies for boredom offered by my solicitous author: *Exercise! Visit a museum! Read a book! Cook a new dish! Socialize with friends and family! Try something new!* I stopped right there because I knew the next thing would be *Go zip lining!*

Ironically, the article *did* cure my boredom—by arousing my curiosity as to what boredom is really all about. I did some research and came upon a *New Yorker* magazine article by Margaret Talbot, where I learned that conventional thinking equates mental monotony with modernity and the advent of leisure. Once humans no longer had to spend all day foraging for food, they had time to fill, which they did—with entertainments and diversions that were essentially meaningless. And it's true—once the novelty wears off, I think we can all



agree that watching a circus seal clap his flippers for an anchovy isn't all that thrilling.

History, however, tells us that the affliction is mentioned as far back as the first century, when the Roman philosopher Seneca complained of *taedium vitae*, brought on by

There is no attraction, no satisfaction. You mow the lawn. The lawn is mowed. Life is the same. Yawn.

contemplating the endless cyclical of life: "I will be awake, I will sleep, I will be hungry, I will be cold, I will be hot. Do all things go in a circle?" Having offended the Emperor Nero, who ordered a gruesomely creative method for Seneca's execution, could the old Stoic's last thought have been, "Now *this* is interesting?"

So prevalent is boredom to the human condition that even the philosophers got in on it,

Søren Kierkegaard and Arthur Schopenhauer in particular. (There's a certain irony in philosophers writing about boredom in intellectual argot so impenetrable it puts you to sleep, but ... let's not go there.) These august thinkers posited that the 19th century novel emerged in part to relieve the soporific sameness of everyday life. Bored with their own lives, people could read thrilling tales of characters who were bored with *their* lives! Flaubert's *Emma Bovary* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, both bored with their boring husbands, seek illicit liaisons to spice things up and come to tragic ends. The message seems to be: You can die of boredom or you can go out in a blaze of infidelity. Take your pick.

It's important to distinguish between boredom and its more sophisticated relatives. Boredom is not *acedia* (spiritual dryness), nor *melancholy* (sadness), nor *apathy* (indifference), nor *existential ennui* ("been there, done that"). All of these are vaguely romantic, like the handsome prince who, having seen it all, asks wistfully, "Is that all there is?"

Boredom, on the other hand, is just ... boring. It's the "desire for desires," as Tolstoy puts it. You have plenty of things to do, but you just don't want to do them. There is no attraction, no satisfaction. You mow the lawn. The lawn is mowed. Life is the same. Yawn.

And instead of romance there is stigma. To be bored in a world where so much is happening is surely a character flaw. *What do you want—an engraved invitation?* Maybe Ruth Burke was right: Only boring people get bored.

I don't think so. If you've lived through the last three years of plagues, droughts, wars, floods, fires, hurricanes, political upheaval, J-Lo romantically reuniting with Ben Affleck ... and you're still bored, you're not boring. You're my hero.

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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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