

TOASTMASTER®

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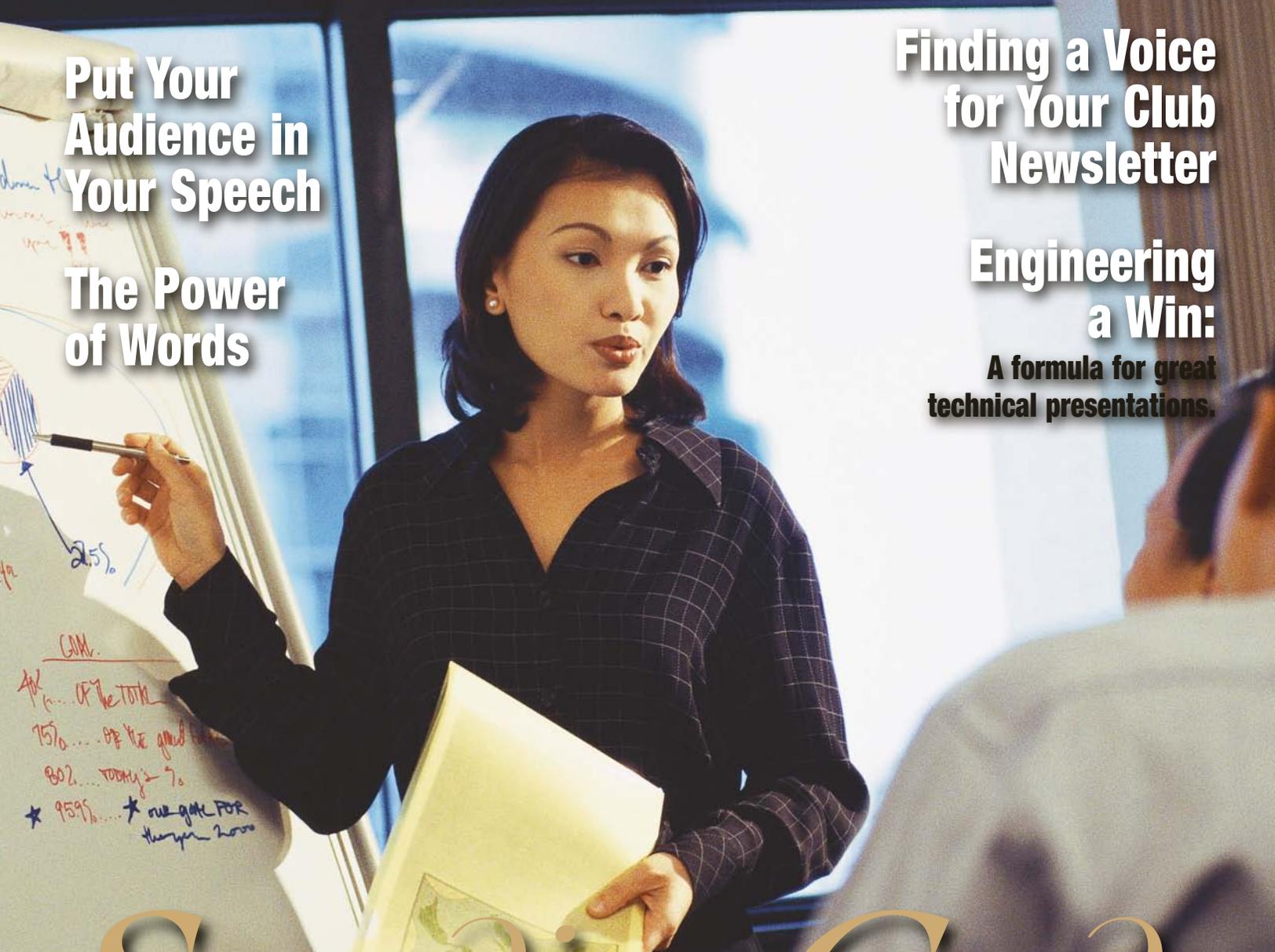
Put Your Audience in Your Speech

The Power of Words

Finding a Voice for Your Club Newsletter

Engineering a Win:

A formula for great technical presentations.



Sounding Good
IN ENGLISH

Tips for non-native English speakers.

Thoughts From 37,000 Feet In the Air

✦ As I write this, I am on a plane flying home from my last trip as International President. Unable to sleep and having already seen the movie being shown, my thoughts begin to wander to the year just passed. And what a year it has been!

My wife, Irene, and I have each flown over 140,000 miles. We lived out of our suitcases for more than 100 days and in that time, we've had to check-in and check-out of hotels and get on at least one – usually two airplanes – every three or four days, and never once had a home-cooked meal. We missed our children, whose school vacation time coincided with one of our long trips.

Was it worth it?

I think of the times I almost collapsed from exhaustion but had to keep smiling because the event I was attending was not over. I think of the many late nights and early mornings. I think of how my teeth chattered as I faced freezing weather in America, and how I sweltered under the heat of the Sahara Desert. Thank God for Irene who was always there for me.

Was it worth it?

I think of the many corporate executives, government officials, school administrators and leaders of various organizations I've met. I see their eager expressions as I talk to them about Toastmasters, and my heart skips as they say, "Yes, we can use Toastmasters in our organization."

I think of the many media interviews I gave. I never thought I could go through even one, much less a dozen. I remember having so much fun at the interviews; we sometimes went overtime just talking about Toastmasters. Never mind if I had to wake up at 4 a.m. for the interview.

I think of our fantastic World Headquarters staff who keeps the machinery of our organization churning efficiently every day. And I think of our volunteer leaders who work tirelessly to make our clubs, areas, divisions and districts Distinguished. Then I think of the many volunteer Toastmasters who spared no effort in making our visits truly memorable.

But best of all, I think of the many Toastmasters I have met over the year. I met too many to remember them all, and yet I can see their smiling and excited faces. I can hear many of their stories – stories of how Toastmasters has changed their lives. I hear them tell me of Simply Amazing things that have happened to them because of Toastmasters. A smile crosses my lips.

Many Toastmasters have come to me after a speech or an educational session to thank me. "No," I say, "It is *I* who should thank *you*." Yes, a big Thank You! to all Toastmasters. You are the lifeblood of our organization. You are the reason I – and many volunteer leaders – do what we do.

Yes, because of you and your efforts, it was all worth it! Irene joins me in saying with all our hearts, "Thank you for a Simply Amazing year!"

Johnny Uy, DTM
International President



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FEATURES

Put Your Audience In Your Speech

Effective speakers use 'people words.' – You can, too!

By Kevin Johnston and Tennille-Lynn Millo

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Engineering a Win

(X + Y) = A great technical talk.

X = This article. Y = You!

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Sounding Good in English

Tips for non-native English speakers.

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The Toastmasters Vision:

Toastmasters International empowers people to achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. Through our member clubs, people throughout the world can improve their communication and leadership skills, and find the courage to change.

The Toastmasters Mission:

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expand its worldwide network of clubs thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

Success Story Suggestion

Does recruitment always trump retention? In my nearly 20 years as a Toastmaster (six clubs to date), I've noticed a heavy emphasis on bringing guests through the front door while seeming to ignore the back one. Very predictably, attrition results.

It is my hope that the *Toastmaster* magazine will spotlight success stories in member retention strategies. Do members leave because of mediocre leadership? An unappetizing meeting site?

Let's roll...with some positive role models.

B. Lee Coyne, ATMS • Mind Openers Toastmasters • Salem, Oregon

Tactical Toasts for the Practical Host

What a relief to see two great wedding articles in your June issue just in time for a new stretch of summer nuptials. A blissful ray of hope is shining for those of us who squirm in discomfort at poorly articulated speeches or toasts that get mired in the quicksand of too personal details and unfocused stories.

I'm hoping to attend a summer wedding or two where the personal, pithy and practical advice of Laura Yeager and Sandra Miller has been taken to heart. Cheers!

Mary F. Heitzman • Realtors Toastmasters Club
Bloomington, Minnesota

No Grammatical Sabbatical

In a June Letter to the Editor, Mr. van Teeffelen says, on the subject of the differences between various languages, "It is just great that the English language allows you to use the word *office* as a verb" and further on, "Using nouns as verbs allows you to do fun things with your language." As a British person who takes pride in the English language, I would like to tell Mr. van Teeffelen that the English language does *not*

allow you to use nouns as verbs. It is becoming a common practice, slipped into the use of English, particularly in the United States. It is ungrammatical and has its basis in a laziness with respect to using English correctly. Rather than enriching the English language, it vulgarizes it and is not a practice to emulate. Grammarians at Toastmasters' meetings should never let this usage go by unchallenged.

Elizabeth Fulford, ATMB • The Europeans • Paris, France

The ABC's of Saving Trees

In regard to Mr. van Teeffelen's Letter to the Editor in the June issue: Because every language in the world has its own highly developed way of expression, it's not possible to state that language A is better than language B. Besides, I think the best way to save trees is to write using a computer, not on paper.

Mandel Lee, CC • Macau Toastmasters Club • Macau SAR, China.

Score One for Toastmasters!

A month ago, I was asked to referee my 8-year-old son's rugby game. Rugby is the national sport of New Zealand and also a national obsession. I took the whistle and did a reasonable job and have since refereed more games. During the games, I could feel my Toastmasters training working for me. A rugby referee must communicate to over 30 players, coaches and spectators. The referee is required to articulate decisions made in an instant.

Thanks, Table Topics!

Marty Vink, ACB • Telecom Talkers • Auckland, New Zealand

Tribute to a Leader

I was pleased and moved to see the tribute to Past International President Ted Wood in the July issue. For me, Ted was a cherished friend and mentor whom I admired and greatly respected. He always embodied the finest in Toastmasters.

Ted was a tower of strength, a man of unflinching character who was devoted to his wife, Inez, and his family, a tireless advocate for increasing the diversity of our organization around the world, an orator in his own right, and a Toastmaster who believed that our organization has a transformative power to effect positive change in individuals and in our communities. We in Toastmasters were blessed to have such a leader, and I was blessed to have such a friend.

Tim Keck • International President 1999-2000 • Pearl City Club
Honolulu, Hawaii

Thank You on Behalf of Anne Kramer, DTM

My wife, Anne Kramer, Distinguished Toastmaster and 2004-2005 District 21 Governor, passed away July 3, 2007, in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Surrounded by her family, she died peacefully after a heroic battle with cancer. Anne entered the hospital on February 9, and as word of her failing health spread, she received hundreds upon hundreds of well-wishes from Toastmasters around the world. These messages of hope and prayer for her recovery were a great comfort to Anne, providing renewed energy to continue her fight against the deadly disease.

On behalf of our grieving family, I wish to thank all those who provided such solace and inspiration during her time of need. The outpouring of condolences from around the TI world after her passing continues to bring comfort during this most difficult time. Anne's passing leaves an immense hole in our family, just as it leaves a hole in the Toastmasters family. However, her spirit will live forever in those who knew and loved her.

Robert K. Kramer • Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

When to say thank you or apologize to audiences.

A Question of Etiquette

‡ As a Toastmaster, have you been advised not to say “thank you” to your audiences? Or have you been told it’s inappropriate to apologize to them?

Well, I’m here to dispute both these commands from an etiquette point of view.

When I’ve heard Toastmasters say “Never say thank you to your audience” during an evaluation, the reason given is that “audiences should be thanking *you!*”

Well, audience members *do* thank their speakers – if they’ve received worthwhile content. They clap, they smile, they may even cry as a result of your talk. And sometimes they even contact you afterward to find out more about your subject. They don’t *have* to thank you. But when all goes well, they happily say thanks in these ways. Now that’s success!

Remember, you speak to persuade, inform, inspire or entertain others. If those in your audiences don’t clap, smile, or respond in any way, you get the message loud and clear. It’s time to go back to the drawing board!

Look at it this way: Those audience members do give you something of value. They gave you their precious time. What could be more valuable than that? They also give you their full attention. Those two things allow you to do what you came to the lectern to do – present material of importance to them. In return for their time and attention, you give them something of value.

Away from the podium, I always thank people who help make whatever I’m doing go smoothly.

Don’t you? Then why should good manners change from behind the lectern? Saying “thank you” to your audience members is, quite frankly, just plain good manners.

When I heard Bill Clinton, the former American president, give a speech in Vancouver, Canada, I noticed he took time at the end to thank everybody – right down to the lighting technicians. I found it impressive and heart-warming. It demonstrated consideration and impeccable manners.

My only caution is: Avoid using “thank you” as a way to sum up or close your speech. Words of gratitude and acknowledgment come *after* you’ve given audience members a compelling close that leaves them with a message to remember.

What about apologizing? I have attended Toastmasters clubs in which members have emphatically stated “never, ever apologize!” I disagree. The need to apologize changes based on circumstances.

When is it not good form to apologize and when is it recommended? Don’t apologize if you forgot to bring a handout or didn’t get a piece of research done. Never tell audience members what you intended to do and then add on an apologetic explanation. If you did that, you’d be apologizing to benefit *yourself* and not them. Sure, you may feel better by saying something. But don’t expect *them* to feel better as a result.

In addition, I guarantee your presentation will come across more powerfully – and your listeners will be happier – if they don’t hear that

something is missing. I compare it to receiving a puzzle from someone who then says, “Oops, sorry, but some pieces are missing!”

Having said that, is there a time when people benefit from your apologizing? Yes! Beg their pardon when audience members have been inconvenienced physically in some way, but not if they have been challenged mentally, such as giving too much data.

However, I suggest you do apologize for problems outside your control that affect everyone in the room, such as: If it’s too hot or too cold, the lights go out, there aren’t enough chairs for everyone, or if you have to tolerate noise coming from another room.

As you know, a prepared speaker checks into these physical considerations before presentation time. But challenges like these happen in spite of your being well-organized. So when they do, it’s good manners to express regret to people in your audience. Let them know you empathize with their discomfort. It will make everyone feel better – including you – and it’s just the right thing to do.

Good etiquette belongs wherever people gather. It’s especially important to show your best manners when you’re on the podium. **T**

Margaret Page, CL, is a member of Sun Shine Toastmasters in Sechelt, Canada, and is a Vancouver-based etiquette and protocol consultant. She can be reached at www.etiquettepage.com.

Blind woman finds acceptance and achievement in Toastmasters.

Looking for a Profession – Not Pity

April Hutchins, who has been blind since birth, has found acceptance of her disability in Toastmasters.

“From the moment I walked into my first Toastmaster meeting in October 1996, I’ve felt a sense of acceptance that I haven’t felt anywhere else in my life,” says Hutchins, who was born with cataracts on both her eyes.

“To this day, whatever recognition I get in Toastmasters is not because people feel sorry for me or are trying to give me special attention,” she says. “They truly want me to succeed and always recognize me for my accomplishments.”

Since joining Toastmasters, Hutchins has garnered a long list of achievements, including serving as secretary and president of her club, The Nathan Hale Toastmasters in Manchester, Connecticut. She has been area governor and most recently division governor. For three years she also co-hosted and co-produced a cable access television program, “Community Voices,” which focused on including individuals with disabilities in the greater community.

The television show was a testament to how Hutchins lives her life and enabled her to share her message about disabled individuals.

“Everyone wants to be accepted for their abilities and who they are,” says Hutchins, who attended the public schools and has a college degree in media and communications. “I believe that everyone – including those with disabilities – should be given a chance to show what they can do. My mother always said to treat everyone the same until you see that they are different. In the beginning you shouldn’t assume anything.”

Unfortunately for Hutchins and many blind individuals, the average person often makes limiting assumptions.

“People have a hard time understanding how I can function without being able to see – probably because of our extremely visual society,” says Hutchins, who lives on her own and rents a condominium with the help of disability benefits. “What they don’t understand is that I’ve never been able to see; I’ve always had to do without my sight, so I don’t miss what I’ve never had. And I function very well.”

Hutchins gets around with the use of a cane, reads and writes Braille, can type, and relies on an audio computer program that enables her to use e-mail and word processing programs. She has held a few

jobs over the years, including a position as a college testing coordinator for students with special needs, but has found that jobs are difficult to come by. “Many people don’t realize that disabled individuals don’t want to be charity cases,” she says. “There are many people just like me who are skilled and talented but not given the chance to prove ourselves.”

For Hutchins, Toastmasters provided a major turning point in her life. Finally given a chance to shine, she quickly moved up the ranks, taking on leadership roles and winning several speech competitions.

“The Toastmasters leadership positions I’ve filled have provided a wonderful growth experience for me,” she says. “Being a division governor was a once-in-a-lifetime adventure that really opened up the world for me. My Toastmasters membership boosted my self confidence and brought a lot of great friends into my life.”

George Ducharme is co-founder with Pat Beeman of *Communitas*, a non-profit organization based in Manchester, Connecticut, that focuses on erasing negative attitudes about disabled people and provides support and assistance to such



April Hutchins

individuals. He has known Hutchins for many years and saw a major transformation in her when she joined Toastmasters.

"It's easy for individuals with disabilities to get down on themselves, and at one time April was no exception," says Ducharme, whose organization has been in existence for 20 years. "Once she joined Toastmasters, however, April quickly gained confidence from the acceptance and support of the organization's members."

Toastmasters membership has also enabled April to spread the word about how important it is to include individuals with disabilities in everyday life.

"April believes as does Comunitas that if society doesn't give those with disabilities a chance, then we all miss out on their many gifts," says Ducharme. "They don't want pity or to be made heroes. They just want to be given a fair shake and to be listened to, and that's exactly what Toastmasters has done for April."

Carolyn Janssen Wagner has been a member of the Nathan Hale Club since 1995 and has also seen a huge transformation in Hutchins since she joined Toastmasters.

"At first it was awkward for April getting to know people from many different walks of life, and she had a lot of adjusting to do," says Wagner. "Gradually, however, things started to fall into place. As she took on leadership positions and learned that she had something to say and how to say it, I saw a definite maturity in her.

She began to understand others much better and learned to handle herself quite well. I can think of one instance in particular when April managed an especially difficult

member. In a very lady-like manner, she put him in his place."

Toastmaster membership has also enabled Hutchins to develop her sense of humor and spread the word about what it's like to be blind.

"One of April's speeches talked about how members of her church insisted that she bring her Braille Bible to the service. She tried to explain that her version was much different, but they didn't understand until one morning when she showed up pulling a little red wagon full of the various volumes that make up her Bible. During the service when the minister would

say to turn to a particular passage, he'd already be on to the next one by the time she found it. The books also slipped around in transit and were out of order. While it was humorous, it also enlightened fellow church members about the logistics of living as a blind person. They never suggested she bring her Bible again."

As April continues to grow through Toastmasters, she hopes to enlighten more individuals about what it's like to live with a disability and how those with such limitations are as valuable as any other member of society.

"In the future as a Toastmaster, I plan to mentor and compete in contests, as well as work on my educational goals," she says. "I'm always on the look-out for opportunities to use my speaking and communication skills to help and encourage others."

"I've never been able to see; I've always had to do without my sight, so I don't miss what I've never had. And I function very well."

For April, every day in Toastmasters is a new experience that brings personal growth. "Joining the organization has taught me to constantly change and move forward," she says. 

Julie Bawden Davis is a freelance writer based in Southern California. Reach her at Julie@JulieBawdenDavis.com.

Editor's Note: Do you have an inspiring story of how the Toastmasters program has helped you? Tell us at letters@toastmasters.org.



Put Your Audience

Effective speakers use ‘people words’ – You can, too!

By Kevin Johnston and Tennille-Lynn Millo

You’ve practiced your speech, promised yourself to make eye contact and organized your notes. You feel like you’re prepared, but there’s still one thing that might sabotage your presentation: a missing connection with your audience.

Have you ever heard the expression, “People like to hear about people?” This couldn’t hold more true than when you speak to an audience. Whether speaking to a group of 10 listeners or 10 thousand, it’s always important to keep their attention by talking about people. Adding an anecdote or two is not enough. Effective speakers know to use “people words.” This can make the difference between an audience that is confused by an onslaught of facts and an audience that jumps out of their seats crying, “I get it!”

Do you want to do that for your audience? Then follow these easy steps:

- **Search for “people words.”** Simply stated, people words are references to human beings. They are what can make a dry subject more appealing to your audience. Start by substituting references to human beings for the abstract words so many speakers put in their speeches.

Take, for example, a common type of phrase from a technically-focused speech, “The results of the survey



e in Your Speech

showed an increase in sales of 25 percent.” The facts are accurate, but you need to add someone that your audience can identify with. If you take the same sentence and, without focusing on the grammatical subject, search for a human-interest subject, you find it in “salespeople.” People increase sales, and that’s who your audience wants to connect with. So you could change the sentence to, “Our salespeople increased sales by 25 percent.”

That’s a good start, but don’t stop there. As you really begin to dig, you will discover more people hidden in that sentence. An easy way to approach this is to begin asking the “who’s” – *Who did the survey? Who did the salespeople sell to?* This is a quick trick that will help you find more people references. Let’s add in some more people: “We found in our survey that our salespeople sold 25 percent more to our customers than they did last year.”

What began as a sentence with zero people words now is loaded with them. “We, our salespeople, our customers” and “they” all refer to human beings. With those simple changes, you have intrigued and involved your audience while giving them an idea of who increased those sales, who kept track of the sales,

and who did the buying. Your human-interest quotient has just skyrocketed, and your audience will more likely pay attention.

No matter what your topic may be, remember that the subject is always people. Whether you’re talking about politics, sales, economics, or the price of widgets in China – it is the people behind these topics that make

“Using these steps will help you bridge the distance between the podium and the back row.”

them interesting. Get in the habit of scrutinizing your text for opportunities to focus on human beings instead of dry facts.

■ **Give Those Statistics A Pulse.** “Sure,” you may say, “adding ‘people words’ is simple enough. But I have to use a lot of statistics. That part didn’t change in your example. How am I supposed to make statistics sound human?”

How many people references should you use?

A random sampling of passages from *USA Today*, a publication that is considered reader-friendly, revealed that the newspaper uses between 20 to 25 people words per 100 words. The more difficult *New York Times* uses eight to 10 people words per 100. A technical book on investing used five per 100. So here's a rough guide:

- Very empathetic: 20-25 words per 100
- Slightly formal: 8-10 words per 100
- Slightly abstract: 1-8 words per 100
- What the heck were you talking about? 0 words per 100

This is a common problem. On one hand you need to convey the numerical data that you spent so much time researching, and on the other you know that a speech filled with numbers can cause your audience's eyes to glaze over. Don't fret. If you give your statistics some thought you can find where your human-interest words are buried.

For example, let's take the sentence, "Half of all Americans have had a brush with crime." "Americans" is the only reference to people in that sentence.

You can warm this up by saying, "If you turn to your side, chances are, the person you're looking at – or you – have been the victim of a crime." Not only have you used more people words ("you, your, someone, victim"), you've changed an abstract reference to "crime" to an example that uses people your audience can actually see – their neighbors.

Finding ways to turn your cold statistics into something audience-friendly can make for entertaining speech entries. To demonstrate, look at those sales figures from the original example again. Those sales didn't just increase by 25 percent, "Every customer that bought four widgets last year seemed to want five this year."

Or maybe there were just more customers. "For every 100 customers who stayed with us, there were 25 new buyers who also bought our product."

Here are some additional statistics that we've warmed up: "The probability of contracting a cold is 50 percent," can be changed to, "If I'm not sneezing, you will be." Or we could take "The number of oil rigs needing repair is 200 per 1000," and change it to, "Our repair crews can drive past four oil rigs, but they have to stop at every

fifth one and repair it." And here's one more: "Sales rose 33.3 percent this year," becomes, "For every three widgets our hardworking sales team sold last year, they were able to sell four, this year."

Just remember that statistics tend to bore people, so make an effort to show how your numbers effect real lives, real people, and if possible, your audience.

■ **Use Body References.** Another way to sneak people words into your speech is to use body references. Think about everyday actions and movements people make, and apply those words to your non-human subjects. For example, you could sink your teeth into a juicy steak, so why can't your customer sink his teeth into a report? You could describe how a company is limping along, how your sales team is working hand-in-hand with the marketing department, or suggest that previous techniques have been frowned upon until you were able to see eye-to-eye with your clients and they loosened their grip on old ways of doing things. Find some original ways to say this and the speech will climb to new heights.

Also, don't "turn up your nose" at the idea of using gut-wrenching expressions to shake up your audience. "Holding your tongue" because you're afraid they will flinch might squash your chances of touching their lives.

As you can see, finding body references can be fun. People instinctively understand how their bodies work, and when you describe the workings of inanimate objects or organizations in terms of the human body, your audience is going to relate to what you are saying. So feel the heartbeat of every sentence, and you'll make your speech easier to swallow. In literary terms, this is called a "pathetic fallacy" and suggests that nonhumans (i.e. things) act from human emotions. Used with care, this can really liven up your descriptions.

■ **What's Up With Those Conversational Phrases?** Once you have scrutinized your speech for opportunities to humanize your sentences, you can begin to add conversational phrases that will make your thoughts easier to relate to. For some reason, many of us want to sound formal when speaking, but many audiences want to hear familiar phrases from their everyday lives.

Look at what happens when you change, "We found him compatible" to, "We decided he was someone we would like to hang out with." Or how about making, "We did not approve of their actions" into, "They rubbed us the wrong way?" Use familiar phrases and conversational language to make a large room feel intimate.

■ **Play the Name Game.** It's amazing what's in a name. Your audience doesn't even have to know the person you are referring to, but anytime you replace labels such as, The Human Resources Manager with Jenny Wilson, you suddenly catch your listeners' ears. You've made your reference about someone more familiar simply by saying her name. Continue to refer to "Jenny" throughout your speech, and you've just made her sound like someone they already know.

Even made-up names can work. Instead of, "Our departments were not communicating," try, "Jim didn't know what Bob was doing, and Sally didn't know what Jim was doing, and Tom, Dick and Harry were out in the field oblivious to the whole problem." Though the names are obviously fictional, they help give your listeners a human angle on the problem.

Another wonderful technique is to use the names of audience members. If you have a chance to arrive early and chat with someone before your speech, make sure to include him or her. It's easy to slip in, "I was talking with Mary Faulkner earlier tonight, and she reminded me of something I meant to speak to you about." Or you can refer to someone all audience members know, such as the president of their organization, Bill Smith, or even the person who introduces you. "Thank you, Ms. Williams," says you are a people person and makes you sound like you are familiar with someone the audience knows.

Using these steps will help you bridge the distance between the podium and the back row. You'll find people leaning forward and nodding their heads. Your fellow speakers may remark that the speech was intriguing. Many of your listeners won't realize how you did

it, but you'll know you have mastered the art of adding human interest without losing a single point in your speech.

So before you stand up to speak, grab your pen and start hunting for those human references that will make your speech sparkle. Use the checklist below:

- **Search for opportunities to use "people words,"** – words that refer to human beings. They can be as simple as pronouns, or as complex as job descriptions.
- **Warm up your statistics.** Find ways to present your figures through examples that help your audience visualize the people affected by your numbers.
- **Replace abstract actions with body references.** Applying human body movements to non-human subjects makes them more understandable and makes your audience more empathetic.
- **Talk like people talk.** Use conversational phrases, and you will seem less distant.
- **Name names.** Add a few names, and your audience will remember yours. 



Kevin Johnston and **Tennille-Lynn Millo** are professional writers living in New York City.

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Ten things I've learned from 10 years in Toastmasters.

Tips from a Toastmaster

Looking back to my first few speeches, I am happy I stuck with Toastmasters. My first few speeches were full of “ahs” and “ums,” distracting mannerisms and rustling papers. I also talked so softly that few people could hear me. After 10 years in Toastmasters, I've grown a lot. These are the most important things I have learned:

1 Eliminate audible pauses. One of the best ways to improve your speaking is to eliminate unnecessary noises, such as “ums” and “ahs.” People often say them when they are thinking of what to say next. The first step to reducing these is to become aware of them.

My club focuses on eliminating audible pauses. The Ah Counter at our meetings gently hits a key on a child's toy piano to alert speakers of any pauses that can be heard by the audience. This practice helps us become aware of what we are saying the moment we are saying it. When I was a new member, I was astonished every time the piano was struck. I was not aware that I was saying “um.” Even after 10 years, I still say it occasionally, usually when I have not been attending Toastmasters meetings regularly.

Audible pauses are distracting, annoying and make you sound unsure of yourself. The more prepared you are and the better you know your speech, the fewer audible pauses you will have.

2 Get rid of distracting mannerisms. If a speaker repetitively

moves his hands back and forth, I start watching the hands and have a hard time listening to what he is saying. A great way to find out if you're making distracting motions is to video record yourself while you give a speech. It is even more helpful to watch the tape recording on fast forward to see if you do the same things over and over.

I remember the first time I watched myself in a recording and saw that I was nervously flexing one of my hands as it dangled by my side. I had no idea I was doing that! When I watched the recording, all I could see was my hand.

Another nervous mannerism I have is to brush my hair out of my eyes. Other people play with their glasses or jewelry. Asking others to comment on how well you are doing in this area and paying attention yourself can help you get rid of annoying movements.

3 Don't call attention to notes. If you have papers in front of you during a speech, the less the audience sees them, the better. Do not staple notes together. When you are finished with one page, slide it over

to the other side of the lectern; do not flip the page over. If you do this noiselessly, the audience may not realize that you are using notes. My nervousness at first caused me to rustle my notes. The longer I was in Toastmasters, the less I needed to rely on notes and now I rarely use them. When I do need to use notes, I try not to draw attention to them.

4 Speak at an appropriate volume for the room. Of all of these tips, this is the hardest one for me. I have a naturally soft voice and people often can't hear me. The only way I have figured out how loudly I am speaking is to have someone tell me. Since my Toastmasters group usually meets in rooms about the same size, I have learned to speak at a volume that others can hear in those rooms. The challenge comes when I am in a larger room or speaking with a microphone.

It helps if I arrive early at the speaking location and have a trusted person in the back of the room telling me if he or she can hear me. I then try to speak at the right volume during my speech. That same person can sit in the back of the room and let me know if I am speaking loudly enough by using prearranged cues.

I once asked my husband to sit in the back of a large room with instructions to stick his thumb up

in the air if I needed to speak louder. The system would have worked if I would have remembered to look at him to see if his thumb was up or not! He said he kept his thumb up in the air during my entire speech and that I never looked at him.

5 Practice giving your speech within a specified time limit. When you practice at home, have a clock or watch in front of you. In some clubs, the audience may interrupt a speech because the speaker has gone on too long. This is horrible for the speaker and the audience. It's even worse, however, when the speaker loses a contest for not finishing within the allotted time frame.

During humorous speeches, be aware that the larger the audience, the more often people will probably laugh and the more time their laughter will take. I lost two humorous speech contests because I went over-time. When I practiced the speeches at home, they lasted four minutes. Incredibly, at division and district level contests, those same speeches were more than seven minutes and 30 seconds. Not all of the extra time was used up because I was so funny, but because I spent too much time standing silently, milking laughs and playing up to the audience.

It can be very hard to judge how much the audience will laugh, so it is imperative to watch for the warning lights and adjust your speech accordingly. One speaker I saw took off his own watch and knew where he was supposed to be even earlier than the warning lights. It worked for him and he did not go over time.



and that the room will meet your needs. Once I ran late for a club meeting. I drove fast, ran into the meeting and arrived perspiring and full of adrenaline. I did not have time to calm down and nervously gave a poor speech.

If you will be using a microphone, try it out ahead of time, so that you will be comfortable with it and know that it works. Ask if you must stay in a certain area to prevent problems with the microphone. It wouldn't hurt to walk around the area, talking into the microphone to check for any feedback or a lost connection.

9 Read your speech out loud several times beforehand.

“The worst that can happen is that you will make mistakes you can learn from.”

6 Never apologize. When a speaker starts off a speech by apologizing for his newness or lack of preparation, the speech starts off on a sour note. In an ideal world, the speaker should always be well prepared, and if not, should not set up the members of the audience to expect a poor speech. A member of my club says, “Toastmasters means never having to say you're sorry.”

7 Enter contests. Entering contests is probably the quickest way to improve your skills. I have learned more from competing in contests than in any other aspect of Toastmasters, because I can watch the other contestants. When someone wins, I always observe something worth imitating. And when someone loses, I see what to avoid.

8 Arrive early when you are speaking. It helps you to relax if you know you will be on time

If you are not sure how to pronounce a word, look it up in a dictionary. Make sure you will be able to read smoothly. Practice reading the first part of each sentence and then looking up at the end of it to make eye contact.

10 Enjoy yourself. Remember that Toastmasters is a safe place to learn. So try to calm your nerves before giving a speech by taking deep breaths and then relaxing and doing the best you can. Your Toastmasters club members want you to be successful.

The worst that can happen is that you will make mistakes that you can learn from. Remember: The best way to help your audience enjoy your speech is to enjoy giving it. If you're having fun, they will too! **T**

Dianne Lawson, ATMS, is a member of Heartland Club in Topeka, Kansas.

Preparing a Speech in 5 Minutes

How to stretch your skills in short time.

‡ As I walked into my Toastmasters club meeting, the Toastmaster said, “You are speaker number one.” “But I’m not even on the schedule,” I stammered. “And there are only five minutes to prepare.” “That’s OK,” she said. “I know you can do it.”

I always arrive five minutes before the club meeting starts. That day I was given a challenge I wasn’t sure I was up to.

When you are called on to make a speech in five minutes, there are two things you can do: You can tell the person you can’t do it. Or you can take the job and do your best. After all, we are taught in Toastmasters to think on our feet. Thanks to Table Topics, we develop our ability to judge a situation and respond to it.

I took the assignment.

Some of us have a hip pocket speech. If you do, there’s no problem – just give that speech. But if no one has a speech ready to give, then you are left creating one on short notice.

To produce a five-minute speech, you must choose a subject that is interesting to you and you are familiar with. Talk about things you are passionate about. I like airplanes. I’m a pilot and I have flown a lot, so aviation is interesting to me and I’m knowledgeable about flying. I can “hangar fly” for hours if I find someone who shares my interest and wants to talk. (Hangar flying is talking about flying experiences – It can be done anywhere!)

At that Toastmasters meeting, I searched my brain for a speech topic, and I remembered a particular flight that was full of weird happenings. I made a list of these

events so I would keep them in sequence as I talked. I knew enough about that trip to relate it without notes, having told this story to several buddies.

My stomach was churning when the meeting started. I mentally rehearsed the speech several times during the Table Topics portion of the meeting. I didn’t hear any responses; I was so involved with my speech.

Then, the Toastmaster introduced me. “I’m on”, I thought. “Come on moths, stop fluttering around in my stomach.”

Off I went into the opening of the speech and the audience seemed interested. As I went through the story I began to feel more at ease. Things were going well, and I won the ribbon for the best speech.

My experience is not unique. All you have to do to give a successful speech is believe in yourself and concentrate on the job at hand. If you are familiar with your subject and are a Toastmaster, you’ll do just fine.

If you find yourself in my position and you are asked to give a speech on short notice, pick a subject that is interesting to you. For example, relate “the thrill of my last vacation.” There generally is a plethora of things to talk about. Did you talk to

anyone special or did something unusual happen to you on the way to your destination? Did all go smoothly, or did you encounter bumps on the way? Either way, the details make the speech interesting.

Continue by telling how you went to important places and saw odd and wonderful sights. Even if it was a boring vacation, your slant on that could be interesting or funny and would make a fine speech.

Just because you have only five minutes of preparation doesn’t mean you can’t make your message appealing and have an impact on your audience.

Finish with a flurry of ideas on how you will spend your next vacation. Make them sharp and pointed (either

positive or negative) to either make the audience want to go there, or convince them not to.

You probably have many subjects that pique your interest. Put them into context in an interesting manner, with a great opening, a wonderful body and a super close – and the ribbon is yours.

Of course it’s nicer and more comfortable to have abundant time to plan a speech. But sometimes things happen and you have to swing with the wind...so to speak. ■



Sid Gilman, DTM, is a member of Mid-Cities Noon-Time Toastmasters Club in Arlington, Texas.

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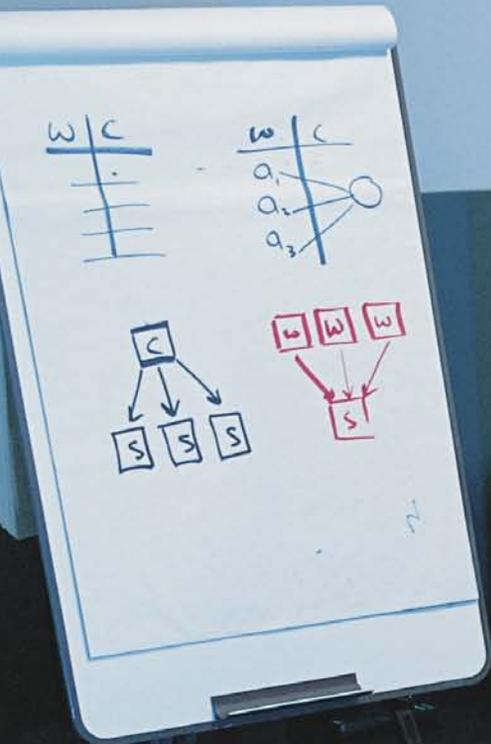
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ENGINE

$(x + Y)$ = A great technical talk
X = This article
Y = You!

By Dr. April K. Andreas, ACS, CL

Do you fall asleep during your own presentations? As an engineering graduate student, I've attended my fair share of technical conferences. I've also survived more than my fair share of absolutely terrible conference presentations. I joined Toastmasters when I started my doctoral program, recognizing that I would have to grow comfortable speaking in public if I was ever going to survive the oral defense for my dissertation.

Quickly, I realized that victory over my own nerves was only half the battle. In addition to mastering skills such as maintaining eye contact and not crawling under the lectern, I had to figure out how to explain my ideas without deriving everything from $1 + 1 = 2$.

For those of us in technical areas, putting together a presentation that is both interesting and informative feels nearly impossible right from the start. When I started giving technical presentations, I kept thinking, "I barely understand this myself! How am I supposed to explain it to anyone else?" In other cases, I would think, "Clearly the function is neither convex nor concave. Do I have to explain everything?!" With a few

subroutine: Cover_the_Basics

Pretend your grandmother/little brother/landlord is in the audience. Recognize that not everyone is an expert in manufacturing, complex analysis or duality theory, but if they are attending your presentation, then they must have some interest in learning about it. Take advantage of that and give everyone a chance to understand what you are doing at some level.

Everyone in the room should be able to follow the first one-third of your presentation. As a general rule, if you ever hear yourself using the words, "clearly," or "obviously," back up and try again, since chances are there is nothing clear or obvious about what you are saying.

ERING A WIN

carefully controlled experiments, however, I discovered that delivering a great technical presentation is not an accident, but the result of a well-executed formula. The critical subroutines are detailed below – it is up to you to develop the program that provides your optimal solution.

subroutine: Why_Are_You_Here?

Determine your purpose in presenting. This advice applies to any kind of speech, but it applies to technical presentations in a specific way. Are you there to teach your methods or explain your results? You will rarely have time to do both in detail. Do you want to share your ideas in hopes of finding a colleague in the audience with whom you might collaborate? Are you moving into the job market and want to use your presentation as a means to spark conversations and job leads?

Whatever your purpose, develop your presentation with a goal in mind. If you are recycling slides from a previous presentation, make sure the old slides still communicate the message you are trying to get across, and that they match your new slides insofar as colors, themes, background and dates.

subroutine: Use_Simple_Examples

A great way to get people to connect to your work is to relate it to a real-world example, no matter how contrived. Chaos theory is often introduced using the example of the butterfly effect: "If a butterfly flaps its wings in Tokyo, we get a hurricane instead of sunshine in Miami." Find a simple analogy to explain your research or project, and try to reference back to that example where there are parallels to your topic.

This can help make theoretical discussions or mathematical models easier for your audience to understand. If you are already solving a real-world problem and it is too complex to explain in 90 seconds, describe a simpler version. Then you can say something to effect of, "...and then the fun begins," and hit the road running.

subroutine: Include_Lots_of_Images

Use animations and pictures instead of equations wherever you can. Rather than displaying equations on your slide that explain how something moves, for example, use your presentation program's built-in animations to make a graphic move that particular way. If an algorithm

separates information based on certain characteristics, animate an example that shows how it works.

You might display the equations or pseudocode (a notation resembling a programming language) at the bottom of the slide to satisfy the curious, but in general do not include complex equations unless they are absolutely necessary. Your audience will remember pictures long after they have forgotten what x and y stood for.

subroutine: **Do Not Read Your Equations**

Sometimes it is necessary to show a few equations in a presentation. (You might be thinking, “Of course! That’s the fun part, right?”) It is hard to believe, but not everybody loves equations as much as some of us do. And even when your audience is filled with theoretical physicists, chemists and mathematicians, it is a tough sell to convince them to pay attention as you are saying, “We sum on n from 0 to infinity the quantity x to the n th power divided by n factorial.” Instead say, “And here is the Taylor series for e to the x ,” motion in the general area of the equation, and move on. If someone does not know what the Taylor series is, they are probably not going to get it by having it read to them, and if they do know what it is, pointing it out will simply serve as a reminder.

subroutine: **Explain Your Data**

If you have a large chart, map or graph, include a box at the bottom of your slide with a key takeaway concept. Did production times drop by 50 percent? Did solutions get more accurate? A takeaway note lets your audience know what they should look for in the information you are displaying.

If you use a chart, make sure it does not include more information than your audience can digest in a short amount of time. If you have a map, make sure the legend is clear. If you have a graph, make sure your axes are labeled, and state out loud what those axes are when you present the graph.

subroutine: **Give The Bottom Line**

At the conclusion of your presentation, include a few sentences on why your research or project is unique. Did you try a new manufacturing technique? Did you discover a more efficient algorithm? No matter your purpose, make sure your audience understands why the material you presented is special among all the other presentations in the session or conference. Answer the question: What problem did you solve and why is it important to others?

subroutine: **Practice Timing**

Practice your presentation out loud and time yourself. Nothing is worse than hearing a presentation that begins very well, only to be ruined when the speaker realizes he or she has two minutes to go and 15 slides left.

Then, it’s a race to the end, and all the details and contributions that made the work interesting fly by so fast that the audience has no idea what the research or project was about.

If you cannot get your presentation under the time limit, you absolutely have to cut material. Just as in your local Toastmasters club, you must respect the schedule of the organizers and keep your presentation within the set time limit.

subroutine: **Prepare for Questions**

Practice answering questions that might come up. If you have given a similar presentation before, think about what questions you have fielded in the past and try to clarify those points early in your presentation. Many times, the questions or comments you get will have nothing to do with your research or project, but will simply be based on wrong assumptions. Remember, you know your research better than anyone, and it is okay to politely correct an audience member and clarify the point.

If a question is rude or off-base, the best strategy is to respond with, “That’s an interesting idea,” or “That’s outside the scope of this research,” perhaps followed by, “We can discuss that more one-on-one after the session.” This allows you to move on from the question without getting into an embarrassing argument or saying something you might regret later.

subroutine: **Get Excited**

Most importantly, do not be afraid to show how much you love your work. If you are speaking on behalf of a research group or a project team, you are likely delivering the presentation because you were an important contributor in that group. Allow your enthusiasm and confidence to come across in your presentation.

If you are describing your individual contributions, let the audience come away with the sense of pride and excitement that drew you into the field in the first place. The best thing you can do for yourself and for your discipline is to let your spirit shine through. You may have missed a negative sign, or you may have mispronounced “Cauchy-Riemann,” but your audience will always remember the exciting ride that you gave them through, for example, the magical world of Laplace transforms.

Whether you can execute this program perfectly the first time through, or you still need a little debugging, you will eventually find yourself enjoying the opportunity to share your discoveries with others. As in any experiment, your results are only going to be as good as your input. Recognize that an outstanding presentation is a function of effort and passion. Everything else is just practice! **T**

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Do You Have Charisma?

By Eva Kihlstrom

Captivate your audience with star quality!

*A*mazing new research shows that people as diverse as the freedom campaigner Martin Luther King, South Africa's first black president Nelson Mandela, former US-president John F. Kennedy, the actress Marilyn Monroe, Argentina's first lady Eva Peron and Britain's Princess Diana all had something in common. They had the ability to induce their own emotions in others.

If you study these people's voices and facial expressions in detail, you'll find that they communicate a considerable number of emotions. In this way they form a vibrant, attractive image of themselves.

Charisma, the magical x-factor, is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "the capacity to inspire devotion or enthusiasm." A study of charismatic communi-

cation skills by American scientist Annette Towler proved these skills superior to other presentation techniques. The good news is, these methods can be learned and we can all use them in our presentations.

Fifty percent of charisma is innate and 50 percent is trained, says British researcher Richard Wiseman of the University of

Metaphor Workshop

Create metaphors and similes with this exercise!

Describe _____ as _____.

Use the suggestions below to create your own metaphors and similes. For example, you might compare something to eat with a musical instrument by saying, “The extra-rich ice cream floated across his tongue like the haunting melody of a fine violin.”

Something about war	Something to eat or drink	Something from television	Something about computers	Something from the office
A sport	A musical instrument	A type/make of car	A traffic term	A film/song title
A kitchen implement	A technical appliance	A weather phenomenon	A wild animal	A herb/spice
A part of the body	A piece of furniture	A country/ a place	A house pet	A tool
			A novel	a building
			A piece of clothing	

In only five minutes, members of the Stockholm International Toastmasters group produced images depicting a Toastmasters meeting:

- “A Toastmasters meeting is like a cookbook that gives you recipes for baking a speech. The more often you do it, the better it gets.”
- “Going to a meeting is like having a shot of strong vitamins.”
- “Attending a meeting is like going for a workout – reluctant in the beginning, sweaty in the middle and happy in the end!”
- “A Toastmasters meeting is like standing naked in front of a large group of people. Luckily it is a nudist colony.”

Hertfordshire. Here are some ways to train yourself in the fine art of charisma:

Harness the Power of Technique

The first way of gaining more personal appeal is to express feelings through your face and the tone of your voice. All Toastmasters know the value of good gestures and vocal variety. But do you recognize their full charismatic power?

Besides using these techniques to strengthen your own presentations, knowing them can help you resist their influence when used by the wrong people. Vocal passion and silent body language work for any who employ them. Mass murderer Adolph Hitler and serial killer Charles Manson were considered

charismatic. It is interesting to note just how much influence a charismatic speaker can exert over an unwary audience.

Master the Details

In sports, a few hundredths of a second can make a big difference, and the same holds true for body language. Your audience will read far more than you’re aware of in your body language, both consciously and unconsciously. How you walk, talk, move and act – your tone of voice together with the words you choose – all convey messages. Taken together, they create personal magnetism.

A detail such as the position of your eyebrows can affect how others regard you. Yet, most people

aren’t aware of their facial expressions and how they might be perceived. Many walk around with a critical wrinkle between the eyes, looking like they are angry or irritated. They’re surprised when others respond to them as though they’re upset. There’s an easy fix, however.

“A smile is the shortest distance between two people” said entertainer Viktor Borge. A smile goes beyond any intercultural communication difficulties. But it has to come from the heart. When it is warm and genuine, it includes the eye muscle orbicularis oculi. Like blushing, this is not controlled by our willpower. Only when someone feels real joy and happiness will it be activated by the brain.

People who laugh and smile a lot shape their wrinkles in a certain manner. A true smile creates what the old Greeks called *pistis* or faith, building trust and confidence, a foundation for persuasive presentations. Maybe the plastic surgeon of tomorrow will work on arranging our wrinkles in the right direction!

When you speak, do you use the full potential of your voice? Though carrying around a full orchestra, many of us use only one instrument. And do you also work on creating alluring soundbites? Winston Churchill was a great speaker who used soundbites to great effect. Here’s a famous example: “Never before was so much owed by so many to so few” (referring to the Royal Air Force defending Britain against the Germans). His voice, choice of words and appearance allowed people to believe.

Energy is infectious. A person with strong convictions and powerful feelings often appears attractive and charismatic. What makes you enthusiastic, powerful and motivated? Think about it and use those feelings in your speech. Athletes use mental training and visualization

exercises to improve their results, and speakers can use the same method. If you imagine something or someone you like very much, the thought affects your body. Muscle-tension softens, the breathing is affected, as is the complexion and expression around your eyes and mouth.

Be Poetic

Speaking in pictures is another way of increasing your charisma. Why are metaphors, similes and anecdotes so effective? They go directly to our subconscious and, therefore, aim straight for the goal. Some popular American presidents regarded by the public as charismatic used more than double the amount of metaphors compared to other presidents.

So, build bridges by using imagery and reach the listener so that he or she more easily can remember what you say. Each individual can interpret your images in his or her own way. Poetic wording also forms alluring soundbites.

Churchill created the famous metaphor "iron curtain" for the invisible border between Eastern

“A person with strong convictions and powerful feelings often appears attractive and charismatic.”

and Western Europe after World War II. Nelson Mandela named the new South Africa "the rainbow nation," describing how different cultures could live together. And Marilyn Monroe told us what fame is by this simile, "It's like caviar, you know. It's good to have caviar but not when you have it every meal every day."

Share your Vision

Visions attract! Do you know how to express your dreams meaningfully? Start by cultivating your own passions. Then address the audience's feelings and help them see and feel why this topic inspires you. If you can imbue others with hope, energy and enthusiasm – making them believe your ideas are possible – you will certainly gain their interest.

Charismatic communication isn't something to be used every day and everywhere. No one would put up with a colleague or boss who starts every morning by shouting, with passion, "I have a dream..." However, when a speaker is hoping to convince an audience to believe something or to take some action, he or she can use personal magnetism as a tool to help craft a powerful presentation. There is no doubt that charisma training is a great investment for successful speeches. **T**

Eva Kihlstrom is a Swedish lecturer and author of the book *Charisma Code - Seven Ways To Increase Your Personal Appeal*. She is a member of the Stockholm International Toastmasters group. Reach her at eva.kihlstrom@bredband.net.



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Award-winning editor shares tips for success.

Finding a Voice for Your Club Newsletter

Last August, I was fortunate to accept the Top Five District Newsletter Award on stage in Washington, D.C. during the 75th International Convention. As editor, I was elated to see that Toastmasters International recognized the hard work of my editorial team, and I was very grateful to have benefited by a supportive district team in the production of the newsletter. Further, it felt great to help the district fulfill its mission and vision through the newsletter, while connecting with a lot of members in each issue.

The thrill was about more than just the award though, it was about the experience I had as a newsletter editor. District Governor Troy Wruck encouraged me to develop a new format and layout for the newsletter. For my High Performance Leadership project, I created a mission and vision for the newsletter, recruited my team, created an action strategy and plan and led the newsletter team. I sold the idea to our district team, who in turn promoted the newsletter to our members. Last year, this vision became reality.

As great as it was to win the award last summer, I realize many clubs experience difficulties with creating a newsletter. There is often a steep learning curve when getting started, and creating one requires patience, direction and time. For novice editors who do

not have the assistance of a mentor and little knowledge of available resources, producing a newsletter can be quite taxing.

I think most members don't question the benefits of a club newsletter and/or Web site. Clubs that regularly produce newsletters usually achieve their Distinguished Club Program (DCP) goals with greater success. Members are also inspired whenever they see their achievement recognized in print, and they can stay in the loop with the newsletter if they miss meetings. The real challenge seems to be getting set up. So, how do you get started?



The Voice for Your Club

Producing a newsletter is one of the primary club duties for a vice president public relations, and serving as editor counts as credit for the 10th project of the *Competent Leadership* manual. As a review, Toastmasters International states that a club newsletter serves three key purposes:

- Document and publicize current events.
- Inform with educational material.
- Provide visitors with take-home information.

When these goals are satisfied, a newsletter provides a lot of information to readers. However, I feel that newsletters serve many other purposes, including:

- Connecting new members with the club.
- Encouraging communication among members.
- Recognizing members' accomplishments through published stories.
- Inspiring all members to participate further in the Toastmasters program.

Finally, the overarching purpose of a club newsletter is:

- To help the club to achieve its mission and vision.

With all of this attention to detail, is there any strategy to planning and

producing a newsletter? This sounds like a lot of work for one person. Is there a way to get the help from team members?

Getting Started

- **Contact the new club president and offer to produce a newsletter.**

Ask about the president's vision for the year, and discuss how the newsletter can support the club's vision. Winning the president's support is key to earning cooperation from club members.

- When the new club executive discusses its Club Success Plan, **discuss how the club newsletter can help in the completion of club goals.** Invite input from the club's leaders on the vision and mission for the newsletter and help make the goals concrete.

- **Create a newsletter committee.** Your committee may include a proofreader and photographer if you wish to include pictures. You may wish to share training on all aspects of newsletter production with every team member. That way, everyone maximizes their learning from this project and others can step in to help.

- **What type of content do you want and how many newsletters should be produced?** By outlining details in accordance with the Club Success Plan and events in the Toastmasters calendar, you get an idea of what each issue will look like. Please note that for each newsletter, the quality of the *content* is more important than the *volume* of information.

- **Contact each club member individually and sell your vision for the newsletter.** By inviting individual input and establishing rapport early, members will be keen to participate in the newsletter. Please do this when there is no pressure to pro-

duce a newsletter. For example, talk to members before the summer holidays if you plan to produce a September newsletter. Members will be glad to supply information and articles when the time comes.

- **For the layout, research other newsletters for ideas.** Also, look at designing a masthead and layout very carefully, and keep this consistent for every issue. As you build the newsletter, think of the purpose behind the details. The layout may take about two weeks to plan and design. If you are not savvy with the computer, consider asking a fellow member with appropriate publishing experience and software to help you.

- **Start your newsletter one month before publishing** and ask members to submit articles at least two weeks prior to publishing. This will allow editors to proofread and correct articles.

- **Look at other resources (district and Toastmasters International Web sites) for information** on external Toastmasters events, as well as Toastmasters contacts you can report to your club.

Don't forget: celebrate the completion of each newsletter, and send electronic or paper copies to each member.

Share Your Success

These strategies will help you get started but there are a lot of things you can still learn and contribute as an editor. When your term is complete, consider mentoring the next newsletter editor! 

Rhys Davies, ATMS, ALS, is a member of Fun Speakers Toastmasters in Edmonton, Canada, and former editor of District 42's *Prairie Horizons Newsletter*.

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Sounding C

Tips for non-native English speakers.

By Katherine Meeks

If English is not your native tongue, congratulations! Your ability to communicate in more than one language and operate in more than one culture is admirable. Linguists believe that bilingualism offers other benefits, as well: an ability to see from a larger perspective, greater resourcefulness and creativity, and a better understanding of language in general. Still, as a Toastmaster, you may feel that your non-native speaker status puts you at a disadvantage among native speakers.



I have attended many Toastmasters meetings both in the United States and abroad, and even in the U.S. there are chapters (for example at Baruch College in New York City) where the non-native speakers outnumber the native speakers. These clubs excel and so do their members! If you're not a native English speaker, this fact by itself will not hold you back.

When English is your native language, your reading, writing and speaking skills can always be improved. But when you acquire English after your first language, there is extra room for improvement, not only with these skills but also with vocabulary, idioms, usage and cultural awareness. What are some things you can do to boost your skills in a second language? Try:

- **Immersion.** The more you can participate in an English-language environment, the more interchanges you have with English-speaking friends or counterparts, the more your command of English will develop.

- **Guidance and Support.** If you are new to an English-language environment, try to get a teacher or a class as soon as you can who will guide you and correct your mistakes before you become too fluent. If you become fluent without this, the natural mistakes you make while learning a second language will tend to become ingrained, or "fossilized," to use the linguistic term. After this has happened, it is virtually impossible to get rid of them, even with the help of a teacher. My experience is that you have a window of perhaps a year before full fluency – the ability to speak quickly and easily – occurs.

In addition to working with a teacher, you can also prevail upon friends or colleagues to correct both your pronunciation and your grammar. I recommend both instruction and the help of friends to teach you to speak English more accurately. Your efforts will reflect well on you as an educated and professional person. While you can increase your vocabulary at any time, good pronunciation and grammar require the aid of a teacher (or dedicated native-speaker friends) at a stage before you reach full fluency.

- **Role Model.** Choose a role model whose native language is English – someone you would like to emulate. My clients have chosen role models such as Condoleezza Rice and Richard Gere. The object here is to be able to

GOOD IN ENGLISH

- **Reading.** If frequent interaction with native speakers is impossible, another good technique for improving your English is reading. Extended reading in English, especially on topics that interest you, will automatically help you develop a sophisticated vocabulary and skill with the more complex structures of the language. If your reading is extensive, this vocabulary goes into passive memory and often remains for years, to be activated later through conversational exchanges. Choose material that is 90 percent understandable. You'll be able to determine a lot of the rest from context. Over time, you'll master English effortlessly.

"Life is a foreign language; all men mispronounce it." – CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

take on a kind of English-speaking persona that is associated with a very positive image. This helps overcome psychological barriers to the articulation of sounds that seem unnatural.

*L*ike every language, *English* – because of history, mentality, and convention – has its own idiosyncratic style. What are some techniques you can use to put together speeches that will sound good to an English-speaking audience? Try:

■ **One-Syllable Words.** Don't be afraid to use one-syllable words. They carry a special impact in English. In fact, they are more powerful than multi-syllabic words. The English language is largely based in Anglo-Saxon roots, with an overlay of Latin vocabulary that was introduced only after the Norman Conquest in 1099. To really reach the heart of an audience, use those Anglo-Saxon words, the vast majority of which are one syllable. Consider

“Short, pithy sentences carry a lot of impact and resonate with English speakers.”

Woodrow Wilson's view of man's task on earth: “We are not here to sit and think, we are here to do.” (Wilson was one of the most highly-educated American presidents, a former university professor. But he knew how to use simple words powerfully).

Another good example is Churchill's description of the service Britain's Air Force had rendered its citizens: “Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few.” John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech contained the memorable “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” which uses 80 percent one-syllable words.

■ **Short, Pithy Sentences.** In composing your speech in English, remember that short sentences are not to be avoided. Consider the opening line of M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled*: “Life is difficult.” (The book remained on the bestseller list for over a decade). Or General Sherman's memorable observation in a speech to military academy cadets: “War is hell.” Or the opening line of the Dickens classic, *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” You will probably want to weave sentences of varying lengths into your speech for balance, but do remember that short, pithy sentences carry a lot of impact and resonate with English speakers.

Making a speech in a language other than the one you grew up speaking can add to your nervousness. How can you reduce this? No doubt you feel much more relaxed in ordinary conversation. Think of your speech as simply an extended conversation. The more the audience can participate, even silently, the more engaged they will feel, and the more they will relate to you. You will also receive a personal response from the audience, and this conversational dynamic – even if modest – will help you relax.

■ **Acknowledgement of Your Audience.** At the beginning of your presentation, acknowledge your audience in some way, even if it's only “How are you this evening?” “Nice to see so many people,” while making eye contact. Your opening remarks should reflect that you know where you are, and who the audience is – that this is not a generic presentation. (It could also be a comment about the institution, the locale, their profession, or even the local weather, if that can be appropriately related to the occasion or the content of your speech.)

■ **Audience Response.** As close as possible to the beginning of your speech, ask a question or do something that requires an audience response. For example, you might ask, “How many of you are concerned about gas prices?” (if your speech is about the oil economy) or “Does anybody know what this logo represents? (if your talk is about an organization with that logo) or “What Korean companies have you heard of?” (if your talk is about the Korean economy).

Remembering a speech in your own language is difficult; remembering exactly what you want to get across in a foreign language adds to the burden. Try these tips to help you remember what to say:

■ **Stories and Anecdotes.** Tell stories and anecdotes to illustrate your point. A client of mine told the audience this story: “Two soldiers were in a race. There was a skinny soldier carrying a fat soldier on his back, and a fat soldier carrying a skinny soldier on his back. The skinny soldier fell down shortly after he began the race. The fat soldier who carried the skinny soldier carried on and won the race.” He used this story to illustrate the effect of too large a welfare state on the fluctuations of the national economy. Not only was the story easier to commit to memory than information in another format, but it served him as an anchor for the points he wanted to make. Stories are memorable. Your audience will also remember them better, sometimes long after they've forgotten the rest of your speech.

■ **Topics and Places.** Associate topics with familiar places. In order to remember a series of points you wish to touch on in your speech, try associating each point with a familiar place that you see every day. For example, associate the first point with the front door of your home, the second point with the foyer, the third point with your living room, etc. In fact, you can even practice your speech, moving from place to place as you move from point to point. This is what the ancient Greeks did. In fact, the Greek word “topos” – the root of the word “topic” – means “place.” This technique works well in any language.

And what are some things you can do to boost your confidence in a foreign language? Try:

■ **Being Yourself.** If possible, tell a personal story, preferably one that is relevant to your message, or give the speech a personal note to let the audience know who you are. If it fits into the topic of your speech, mention something about one of your children, or your dog, or ordinary event in your household. Or mention your country of origin and an experience or memory from there to illustrate a point. These personal touches make your speech unique, and also perk up the audience's interest. Moreover, if your audience can relate to you as a person, your message will be received much more openly despite presentation flaws.

■ **Engagement and Sincerity** are what the audience responds to most. These two qualities will trump technical flawlessness every time.

From my own experience, the best tip of all for non-native speakers who want to improve their speechmaking capacity is to attend and participate in a Toastmasters club regularly. There you will get responses from fellow Toastmasters tailored to you individually. And other Toastmasters will benefit from your unique background and life experiences. **T**

Katherine Meeks is a speech consultant and language coach based in New York City. She welcomes your comments at katherine.meeks@verizon.net.



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*“Don’t let it end like this.
Tell them I said something.”*

– PANCHO VILLA’S LAST WORDS

The Power of Words

By Elizabeth Martin, ACS

Celebrating our most wonderful invention.

I love words. I always have. Any word – long, short, funny, serious, obscure or cliché – words are the fabric around which we humans weave ourselves.

Without words, I wouldn’t have a job, rap artists wouldn’t have any way to curse, and politicians would be demoted to mimes in the park.

Words are perhaps our most wondrous invention – beyond that of fire, even – for without words, what would we have called the blaze?

Humans love words, even at the beginning of our lives. Anyone

who has kids remembers how fascinated they are when they discover words. That first expression of comprehension is priceless – their eyes widen, and you can see the light bulb shining.

After that, it’s a wordfest, as they point to everything moving or nailed down, wanting to know the word for it. I remember when my first daughter discovered the word ‘hippopotamus’ – she was three. We listened to so many variations of that word I was beginning to hate the Discovery Channel.

But soon she found another one – ‘hypochondriac’ – and went off again. She learned new words daily, and is still making up her own at age 22. Now she has a new baby to find new words with.

How about the grade-school kid who learns a new spelling word and comes home and uses it constantly? I can’t count how many definitions my youngest girl tried to get for ‘tributary’ when she learned it – everything was a tributary of something. It was funny, but as I laughed, I realized she was defining the word by what it wasn’t, implanting it in her brain forever.

I take my words very seriously. When I write – whether it be a speech, a book review, magazine article or novel – I choose each word very carefully, looking for just



Wit & Wisdom

“Most of the disputes of the world arise from words.”

– WILLIAM MURRAY, *Morgan v. Jones* (1773)

“Poor Faulkner... thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use.”

– ERNEST HEMINGWAY, *Papa Hemingway* (1966)

“Slang is language that takes off its coat, spits on its hands, and goes to work.”

– CARL SANDBURG,
The Dictionary of American Slang (1934)

“That [man] can compress the most words in the fewest ideas of any man I ever knew.”

– ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
Life on the Circuit with Lincoln (1892)

“Omit needless words. Vigorous writing is concise.”

– WILLIAM STRUNK, JR., *The Elements of Style* (1918)

“There is a weird power in a spoken word.”

– JOSEPH CONRAD, *Lord Jim* (1900)

“A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought.”

– OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *Towne v. Eisner* (1918)

“All words are pegs to hang ideas on.”

– HENRY WARD BEECHER,
Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit (1887)

“[Warren Harding's] speeches leave the impression of an army of pompous phrases moving over the landscape in search of an idea.”

– WILLIAM G. MCADOO,
The Fine Art of Political Wit (1964)

Compiled by **Fred Shapiro**, editor of *Yale Book of Quotations* and an associate librarian and lecturer at Yale Law School. Reach him at fred.shapiro@yale.edu.

the right meaning. I have found that synonyms aren't always interchangeable, and sometimes you really need that \$3 word to get your meaning across.

When I talk about my grandfather, I could say he was a cranky man. And that says it, maybe. But if I say he was a cantankerous old grump, there's a clear picture in your mind of an old man who hated just about everything.

Besides meaning, there are some words that just sound better when you say them out loud. I think that's

People who know words can twist them, combining them with other words to make things sound good, often without really saying anything. Politicians are very good at this. Manipulators use words to trick people into believing whatever they want them to believe, and this lies at the heart of the influence that cults hold over their members.

What we call something defines that something, which is why names and labels can be so harmful. If too many people

“Toastmasters is all about words – using words to convince, amuse, impress and inspire.”

what attracted my daughter to “hipopotamus.” It sounds neat to say.

Then there are those words that look good in print, but try as we might we cannot pronounce them. I still have problems with linoleum, chrysanthemum and aluminum. I mangle them no matter how slowly I say the words.

We all have words that cause the tongue to trip and land in a pratfall. These are such common problems that all kinds of names have been given to them: Spoonerisms (a transposition of sounds – Sea shells she sells on the sea shore) and malaprops (ludicrous misuse of a word – “pineapple of politeness” instead of “pinnacle”) are two examples.

And words have power. If you doubt that, then answer this: Why does name calling among children cause such concern? If “sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me,” is true, then why are we so concerned about political correctness? If names were truly powerless to cause harm, then ethnic jokes would not be taboo.

And the power of words can be used for both good and evil.

define you as worthless, you become that definition, because words have power.

That's why the Word of the Day is so popular – it expands our vocabulary and shares that power with everyone who can learn.

Ask what has been the most far-reaching invention of mankind, and you'll get a number of answers. I will say it's the printing press, because this invention made words – power – available to everyone, not just the elite. Words come out of the desire to understand, which leads to reading, which leads to literacy, which leads to questioning.

Toastmasters is all about words – using words to convince, amuse, impress and inspire. So the next time you craft a speech, pay particular attention to the words – the way they sound, what they mean, the connotations they convey. Use the power of words to improve your speech, to make your message more vital and appealing. **T**

Elizabeth Martin, ACS, is a member of Fairbanks North Star Borough Club and a professional writer. She lives in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The following listings are arranged in numerical order by district and club number.

DTM

✦ Congratulations to these Toastmasters who have received the Distinguished Toastmaster award, Toastmasters International's highest recognition.

Tadd H. Small 62-F, West Covina, California
 Patricia Ann Adelekan 984242-F, Garden Grove, California
 James L. Sultan 822-2, Kirkland, Washington
 Paul L. Yarbrough 822-2, Kirkland, Washington
 Dennis Boyd 2834-2, Des Moines, Washington
 Steven Marlowe 9509-2, Monroe, Washington
 William R. Forristall 706793-2, Seattle, Washington
 Aalt Brouwer 104-3, Prescott, Arizona
 Jeffrey S. Keup 47-5, Oceanside, California
 Marvin Serhan 624-5, San Diego, California
 Allen J. Risberg 205-6, Red Wing, Minnesota
 Anne Groetsch 4807-6, Saint Cloud, Minnesota
 Terry L. Ragan 9026-6, Rochester, Minnesota
 Becky Osland 9648-6, Bloomington, Minnesota
 Mary Ann T. Fabry 364-7, Eugene, Oregon
 Athena Gionis Moline 777508-9, John Day, Oregon
 Mark E. Bassett 1067-12, Upland, California
 Deena R. Benjamin 3152-12, Claremont, California
 Larry A. Edwards 4209-12, Coachella, California
 Pat Cowgill 170-16, Edmond, Oklahoma
 Sheila M. Procter 2645-21, Armstrong, BC, Canada
 Nell A. McInnes 6884-21, Vernon, BC, Canada
 Randy Gene Neill 953433-22, Wichita, Kansas
 Donald B. DuBois 5327-23, Edgewood, New Mexico
 Bonner B. Bowden 706453-24, Omaha, Nebraska
 Otis D. Wilson 3314-27, Washington, District of Columbia
 Stella Lorens 6027-30, Lombard, Illinois
 Patricia A. Wolff 2279-36, Rockville, Maryland
 Kristin E. Nicholson 4036-36, Chevy Chase, Maryland
 Terry Johnstone 9844-42, Saskatoon, SK, Canada
 Rebecca L. McAttee 3962-43, Little Rock, Arkansas
 Candice L. Buell 7682-45, Somersworth, New Hampshire
 Charnette M. Lewis 1012-46, New York, New York
 Bibi A. Haddad 692700-46, New York, New York
 Donald H. Gage 2166-47, Dunedin, Florida
 Wayne W. Warren 4454-47, Tallahassee, Florida
 Scott J. Hoehn 4823-47, Orlando, Florida
 Vernon A. Love 5758-47, Weston, Florida
 Barbara B. Bergstrom 7250-47, Orlando, Florida
 George C. Gonzalez 621469-47, Vero Beach, Florida
 Gilbert Alvarado Ybarra 4108-50, Dallas, Texas
 Cathy Anne Henesey 906696-50, Tyler, Texas
 Andrea Isaacs 3863-53, Loudonville, New York
 Colley Kitson 3736-54, Bloomington, Illinois
 John E. Martin 3189-56, Houston, Texas
 Deborah L. Ford 4570-56, Galveston, Texas
 Mark McLin 6994-56, Houston, Texas
 Theresa P. Dinius 3170-58, North Charleston, South Carolina
 Marcy Lawton 4322-60, Don Mills, ON, Canada
 Karim Premji 709773-60, Markham, ON, Canada
 Brigitte H. Chan 180-61, Ottawa, ON, Canada

Raymond Brisebois 4319-61, St. Therese, QC, Canada
 Silvia Olivares-Guevara 6236-61, Ottawa, ON, Canada
 Bill Bishop 640929-61, Ottawa, ON, Canada
 Jean G. Hogle 2675-66, Salem, Virginia
 Bruce Yang 5978-67, Taichung, Taiwan, Taiwan
 Lillian Ella Edwards 788704-69, Cairns, QLD, Australia
 John Cronin 1896-71, Dublin Co Dublin, Ireland
 Jeannie Wright 4975-72, Hastings, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand
 Glenis Nicholas 5769-73, Fremantle, WA, Australia
 William W. Pearce 2514-74, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
 Armela Creselda D. Cruz 9398-75, Makati City, MM, Philippines
 Subramani Poorna Pushkala 7148-79, Doha, Qatar, Qatar
 Tay Hock Ann 1968-80, Singapore, Singapore
 Poh Kim Siong 7702-80, Singapore, Singapore
 Yong Siang Eng 8975-80, Singapore, Singapore
 Helen Tay 9689-80, Singapore, Singapore
 Deepak Menon 3936-82, New Delhi, Delhi, India
 Leelanath Daluwatte 614737-82, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Anniversaries

MAY 2007

70 Year

Russell H Conwell 82-06, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Walla Walla 81-09, Walla Walla, Washington
 Dawn Talkers 84-32, Olympia, Washington

65 Year

Victory 221-06, Saint Paul, Minnesota
 Toastmasters Club Omaha 229 229-24, Omaha, Nebraska
 Mobile 226-77, Mobile, Alabama

60 Year

Oregon Trail 480-07, Portland, Oregon
 Lamplighters 449-09, Spokane, Washington
 Evergreen 486-09, Spokane, Washington
 Bloomington Good Morning 482-11, Bloomington, Indiana
 Milwaukee 466-35, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Cincinnati 472-40, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Burbank 125 125-52, Burbank, California
 Oakland 88 88-57, Oakland, California
 Rochester 476-65, Rochester, New York

55 Year

Washington 1089-19, Washington, Iowa
 Gateway 1101-24, Grand Island, Nebraska
 Federal 1037-27, Washington, District of Columbia
 Anchor 1110-27, Arlington, Virginia
 Acorn 1068-28, Royal Oak, Michigan
 Arlington Heights/Rolling Meadows 1087-30, Arlington Heights, Illinois
 Garden City 1102-60, St. Catharines, ON, Canada
 Hamilton No 1 1114-60, Hamilton, ON, Canada

50 Year

Pioneer 2308-15, Boise, Idaho
 Esquire 2388-19, Des Moines, Iowa
 Offutt 2393-24, Offutt AFB, Nebraska

Lexington 2391-40, Lexington, Kentucky
 South Dade 2463-47, South Miami, Florida

45 Year

Daly City 1881-04, Daly City, California
 Realtors 2512-06, Edina, Minnesota
 Gift of Gab 3470-33, Bakersfield, California
 Standing Room Only 3456-40, Fairfield, Ohio

40 Year

Springfield 1792-27, Springfield, Virginia
 TNT 2291-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada
 State Farm Talk of the Town 3228-54, Bloomington, Illinois
 Demosthenes 1282-57, Oakland, California

35 Year

Puc(k)sters 3873-04, San Francisco, California
 Servetus East 253-07, Portland, Oregon
 Magic 2597-14, Atlanta, Georgia
 GSA 3448-36, Washington, District of Columbia
 Marshall 868-62, Marshall, Michigan

30 Year

Edison Power Lines 1055-F, Rosemead, California
 Leaders Plus 1853-03, Mesa, Arizona
 Motor Mouths 1718-04, San Francisco, California
 Reston-Herndon 3550-27, Herndon, Virginia
 Brentwood Early Risers 1673-63, Brentwood, Tennessee

25 Year

Tri-City Achievers 4836-F, Anaheim, California
 Seal Beach Speech Bums 4842-F, Seal Beach, California
 High Flyers 4847-01, El Segundo, California
 Harborview 4859-02, Seattle, Washington
 San Pedro Squares 4860-04, San Jose, California
 University of Missouri-Rolla 4850-08, Rolla, Missouri
 Hill Climbers 4846-15, Hill Air Force Base, Utah
 Triskelion 4853-26, Centennial, Colorado
 Arlington Annex 4857-27, Arlington, Virginia
 Sundown 4834-43, Vicksburg, Mississippi
 727 4841-47, Winter Park, Florida
 National Defense Hdqtr 4856-61, Ottawa, ON, Canada
 Dapto 4831-70, Dapto, NSW, Australia

20 Year

Experian 5410-F, Costa Mesa, California
 Target 6542-F, Santa Fe Springs, California
 Rim Country 6532-03, Payson, Arizona
 Cultural Ensenada 4783-05, Ensenada, BC, Mexico
 Word Merchants 6553-06, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Westlake 497-10, Westlake, Ohio
 High Nooners 6557-24, Lincoln, Nebraska
 Pro-Claimers 6545-25, North Richland Hills, Texas
 Saturday Sunrisers 6556-28, Livonia, Michigan
 Ann Arbor Toastmasters and Friends 6563-28, Ann Arbor, Michigan
 Miami Lakes 6568-47, Miami Lakes, Florida
 Chalk River Labs 6536-61, Chalk River, ON, Canada
 Southport Endeavour 6550-69, Southport, QLD, Australia
 Bloemfontein 6554-74, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa
 Continuum 6539-78, Fargo, North Dakota

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- Larry Wilson, founder, Wilson Learning

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From the desk of Darren LaCroix

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- Who will pay you and how to reach them.
- The 16 biggest mistakes that could stop your speaking career before it gets started.
- 5 specific ways to GET PAID TO SPEAK BY NEXT WEEK™ (these tips alone will pay for this program).
- One secret question that can get you a \$1,500 - \$6,000 bonus!
- 29 tools and forms that you need to get started quickly (they took me 12 years to develop).
- Seven different speaking business models and which is best for you.
- How to speak for free and still earn a huge income

...And much, much, much more

What people have said:

"I have received my first speaking paycheck! You helped me avoid many of the pitfalls that others make."

- Theresa Westcott, Houston, TX

"You really helped me focus on my assets and realize that I am sitting on a gold mine!"

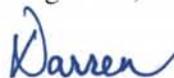
- Andy Dooley, Orlando, FL

"We increased our speaking rates 150% and they didn't hesitate."

- Charlotte Endorf, Norfolk, NE

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Darren LaCroix, 2001 World Champion of Public Speaking

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