

# TOASTMASTER

AUGUST 2005

**Take the Plunge!**  
What's stopping you from trying new experiences?

**Fine-Tuning Some Old Saws**

**Your Memorable Marketing Message**

Turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones.

# Falling Forward

## Thanks for the Memories!

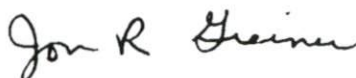
Many years ago, Albert Schweitzer wrote, "We see no power in a drop of water. But let it get into a crack in the rock and be turned to ice, and it splits the rock; turned into steam, it drives the pistons of the most powerful engines. Something has happened to it, which makes active and effective the power that is latent in it."

Over the last year, I've had the opportunity to see, in hundreds of members around the world, the power of Toastmasters to "make active and effective the power that is latent." Belinda and I were privileged to visit 11 districts and three regional conferences where we observed close up the power of the Toastmasters program to change lives. From St. Louis to New York City, from Roanoke to Santa Ana, from Sacramento to Dallas, from San Antonio to Omaha, from Cleveland to Oakland, from Tokyo to Memphis, from Saskatoon to Burbank, we witnessed Toastmasters working together to "split the rock," to "drive the pistons," to bring out that "latent power." This year, individual members experienced the growth inherent in the Toastmasters program and, in the process, reached unprecedented levels of success!

So too has the organization. More and more services are available from World Headquarters to assist our volunteer leaders, helping them to more effectively serve the needs of all Toastmasters and allowing them to achieve both their goals and the organization's goals. The results have been extraordinary: overall membership increased to more than 210,000; we chartered more clubs than ever and recorded a record number of educational awards. Our organization is stronger than ever in its 80-year history. This couldn't have happened without the ongoing participation, focus, dedication and support from each of you. Thank you for your amazing effort!

My year as your president has been filled with memories for a lifetime. Each district visit brought something unique. Each visit brought Belinda and me together with friends, new and old, all dedicated to this organization's success. Each visit brought more testimonials from people telling me something new about our program and its power to change lives. Thanks to everyone who touched us during the year – your kindness and thoughtfulness will be forever cherished.

When I chose this year's theme, "Toastmasters: Changing Lives, One at a Time," I had no idea how much the presidential experience would change my own life. Thank you for the opportunity you have given Belinda and me to serve you and, in the process, change our own lives. We will never forget this year.



Jon R. Greiner, DTM  
International President



# TOASTMASTER

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THE TOASTMASTER Magazine (ISSN 0048263) is published monthly by Toastmasters International, Inc., 23182 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688, U.S.A. Periodicals postage paid at Mission Viejo, CA and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address change to THE TOASTMASTER Magazine, P.O. Box 9052, Mission Viejo, CA 92690, U.S.A.

Published to promote the ideas and goals of Toastmasters International, a non profit educational organization of clubs throughout the world dedicated to teaching skills in public speaking and leadership. Members' subscriptions are included in the \$18 semi annual dues.

The official publication of Toastmasters International carries authorized notices and articles regarding the activities and interests of the organization, but responsibility is not assumed for the opinions of the authors of other articles. THE TOASTMASTER magazine does not endorse or guarantee the products it advertises. Copyright 2005 by Toastmasters International, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Not responsible for unsolicited material.

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*By Thomas Leech*

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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.

Do you have something to say? Write it in 200 words or less, sign it and send it to [letters@toastmasters.org](mailto:letters@toastmasters.org).

### Focus on Strengths vs. Weaknesses

Congratulations to Marcus Buckingham on his Golden Gavel award. While I don't disagree that a focus on strengths is important, I do believe that it is possible to overcome a weakness by focusing on it. When I joined Toastmasters six years ago, public speaking was one of my weaknesses. Now, I consider it to be a strength.

To say that "People don't change much" goes against what Toastmasters is all about. This organization has created much change in millions of people, including me. Toastmasters is not about focusing on strengths, but rather nurturing and developing the potential in all of us.

John Wayne, ATM-G • Earthsave Club 8237 • Vancouver, B.C., Canada

### Being Different is OK

Ralph Smedley must be turning over in his grave as a result of the articles and letters published in this magazine's February, March and April issues where "friendly" Toastmasters are lambasting each other. The point – counterpoint in the letters section of April's issue have Toastmasters in opposite corners ready to knock each other out, as well as the article's author, to decide the winner of proper protocols and parliamentary procedures.

Toastmasters is about communication and leadership. Sharing ideas and processes that work for one club is about communication. Realizing what is agreeable for one troop may not fit for another; respecting their course of action applies to leadership.

Thinking that our way is the best way of conducting a meeting is human nature. Acknowledging differences and presenting other avenues to accomplish similar meeting objectives marks a societal evolution for humankind.

Michael Varma, CL – BergenMeisters Club 7493 – Orange, California

### In Defense of Travel Agents

Call me thin-skinned, but I just couldn't let this one slip by. John Maxwell's article "The Great Separator" in the May issue clearly implies that travel agents are not leaders. To quote from the article:

*"Leaders are either travel agents or tour guides. Travel agents send people to places they've never been themselves, while leaders who are like tour guides take their people to places they know well."*

He continues on to imply that tour operators have more integrity than travel agents.

I understand and appreciate Mr. Maxwell's point and intention. However, as a long-time travel agent, two-term president of the Yes I Can Club of Memphis and former Area D-3 Governor, I am compelled to respond. Surely the author of *Winning With People* can come up with a better analogy!

Combine this little faux pas with the blindingly perceptive insight in bullet point number two: "You are with yourself more than anyone else," and one wonders if Mr. Maxwell can spell the word *credibility*?

Lyn Edwin Cathey, ATM-B • Yes I Can Club 6466 • Memphis, Tennessee

### Clean Humor Appreciated

I am writing to express my appreciation for the "good humor" theme of the June issue. Coincidentally, I recently attended my Region VII conference where a humorous speech "showcase" was held on Friday evening. I expect

other regions have similar traditions. Each of the district humorous speech contest winners from last fall provided the plenary with a wonderful, almost hour-long buffet of home-spun original humor. It was so refreshing to have this experience of heart-felt laughter without any solicitation of my adolescent, sophomoric instincts. This was truly a show I would have been delighted to have a 12-year-old daughter sitting beside me. OK, mine is six, so I'll have to wait a few years for the actual experience.

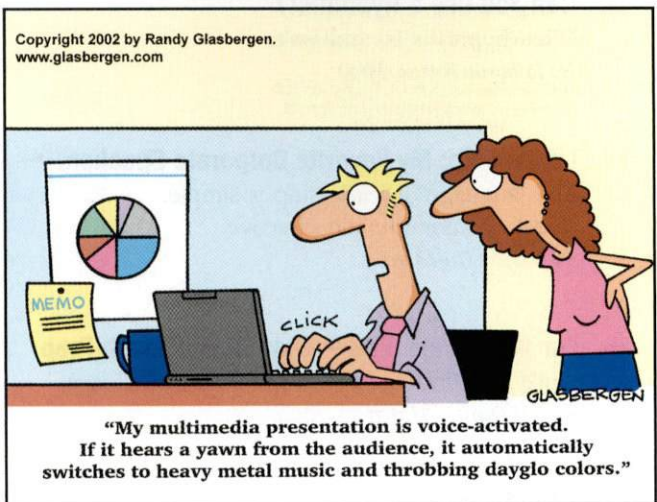
Toastmasters has been one place where I can rely on being entertained with humor that is immensely funny without being crass. Thank you Toastmasters for the wonderful good cheer!

Kevin F. Spalding, CL – ARINC Club 3787 – Annapolis, Maryland

### Humor Counts

My Toastmasters membership began in 1960 as a result of a story on Toastmasters in *Reader's Digest*. The *Toastmaster* magazine is a continual source of education. The June 2005 "special humor issue" is about everything I believe in. Doesn't matter what business you're in – humor counts!

Bill Martinband, ATM-S – Plus Factor Club 1229 – St. Louis, Missouri



Evaluating inmates' speeches brings unexpected rewards.

## Lessons Learned from Listening

In my more than 20 years in Toastmasters, I have evaluated a lot of speeches. Good speeches, bad speeches, funny speeches, inspirational speeches – I've heard them all. But my skills as an evaluator were put to the ultimate test when my wife, Nathalie, asked me to evaluate the fledgling efforts of the group of women she was working with – women confined to prison in Lockhart, Texas.

Nathalie began doing volunteer work with women in prison in 2000. Her plan was to teach these convicts to “tell their stories.” The idea was to get them to concisely tell the story of what got them into prison and what they have learned. The hope was that the women would support each other, learn from each other, build self-esteem, improve their communication skills and, on top of all that, have a valuable message to convey to others.

And if that sounds like a Toastmasters club, it's no accident. While the program Nathalie set up is not a Toastmasters club, it borrows some of Toastmasters' customs. The speeches are five to seven minutes long. The participants are encouraged to create a positive and nurturing environment, which is not always easy in sterile rooms with cinder-block walls and guards yelling in the corridors. Most importantly, the women are officially and publicly evaluated by a member of Toastmasters at least once during the eight-week program.

That's where I came in. Nathalie knew my devotion to Toastmasters well. She has seen me trudge off to a 6:45 a.m. Monday meeting with great regularity since 1981. She has been to numerous Toastmasters events and

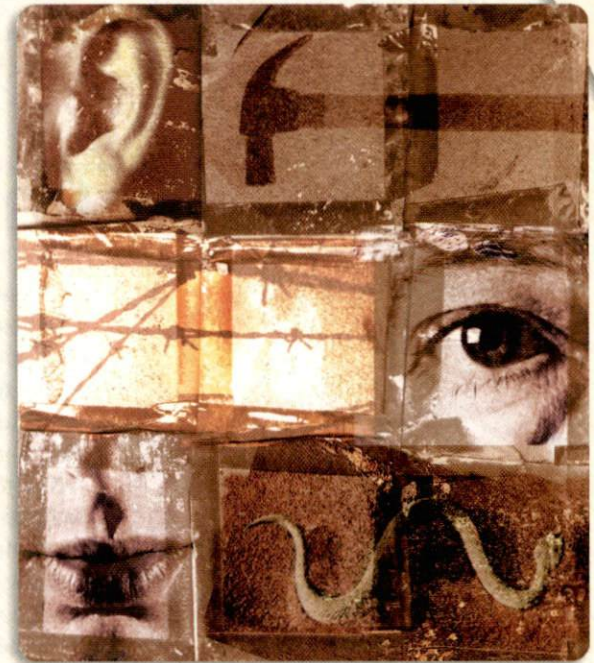
contests with me, and she belonged to a club for a few years as well. She asked me to be the “outside” evaluator for the students in her class. So off I went to the Lockhart Work Program thinking, “This will be just like any other evaluation ... but in a different location.”

Wrong. What made this experience uniquely riveting was the emotional wallop of almost every speech I have heard from Nathalie's students. These women were “telling their stories” much as Toastmasters do in an Ice Breaker. But the stories! Without going into detail, I will just say that I have heard horrifying stories of abuse, both physical, verbal, emotional and sexual. I have heard speeches from young women who have seen more of life's dark side than I ever have – more than I hope I ever will.

The stories of these female prisoners are depressingly similar. Almost all are the victims of abuse, usually from those they should be able to trust the most – fathers and mothers, husbands and boyfriends. And yet, none of these women blame their

### About the prison program....

Former Toastmaster Nathalie Sorrell is co-founder of “Truth Be Told,” a nonprofit corporation dedicated to working with women prisoners in Texas. Her organization welcomes Toastmasters as volunteer evaluators. For more information, see [www.truth-be-told.org](http://www.truth-be-told.org).



abusers for their current status. They “get it.” They understand that they bear responsibility for the crimes they committed, and that their past is something they need to overcome.

Besides being emotionally wrenching, I have found the experience of evaluating these women's speeches to be especially rewarding. As a Toastmaster, my role in my wife's program is to evaluate. I am expected to offer constructive criticism and specific ways in which the speech can be improved. I do that. I do not overlook problems or weaknesses, but try to offer helpful suggestions.

But when I go to the prison with my wife, I am more than a Toastmaster; I am a human being. In that role, my job is to listen with an open heart. For two hours I sit in a prison classroom full of people who have been cast out by society. It is sometimes uncomfortable. It is often emotionally draining. It is always rewarding. And it reminds me again and again of the gift we give each other when we listen to the stories we have to tell each other. ■

**Jim Walsh** is a writer living in Austin, Texas.

# Leading Through Crisis

Kathleen Vestal Logan, ATM-B

**When Hurricane Ivan disrupted lives last fall, a Toastmasters meeting offered comfort and a sense of community.**

▼ The author's house after Hurricane Ivan left storm debris and broken tree branches. Storm shutters saved the windows.



September 16, 2004. A night of fear and fury. My husband and I spent it awake, huddled together in the tiny room under the stairway. We listened to Hurricane Ivan howl, slashing wind and rain against us, trying to break our spirit and the integrity of our home. The electricity was out, and flashlights were insignificant pinpricks in the all-consuming blackness. We felt the house tremble as something big broke loose and bounced down the roof.

At dawn on Thursday, we climbed out of our lair to look at a landscape brutalized by Ivan. In the bayou, boats had ripped their lines, crashing into other boats or docks, or had simply disappeared. Huge trees were lying on the ground; many – especially pine trees – snapped in half, their tops stuck in the ground like spears. Piles of

bricks lay where there had once been a lovely wall in front of our neighborhood. Debris was everywhere, making it impossible to walk or ride a bicycle; driving a car wasn't an option with roads crisscrossed by trees, shingles, pieces of metal, phone and power lines. Though temperatures neared 90 degrees, the landscape had the disorienting look of winter because trees and shrubs were stripped bare.

The storm surge had come at high tide, pushing a wall of water across barrier islands, emptying houses of their furniture and appliances and depositing them across the bay. Huge spans of concrete were shoved off the pilings of the Interstate 10 bridge, a major east-west highway. Thousands of homes were destroyed completely, or made uninhabitable. People wandered around, grateful to be alive but stunned at the devastation. We had no power, no water. All of the bridges connecting the area were closed, so holding our regular Toastmasters meeting Friday morning was impossible, both physically and emotionally.

A week later, September 24, it still was unthinkable to hold a meeting. No one – including me, the president – was ready. And again, there was no need to contact anyone.

But by Tuesday afternoon, September 28, I began to think that *perhaps* we should meet on Friday, October 1. I didn't want to lose the momentum we had built before the storm, but I also didn't want to meet too soon. And I didn't even know yet if our meeting room was intact. Most regular, line-based phones were working by now, so I called Bob

Hawkins, our treasurer and former vice president of education, to see what he thought. He, too, felt that it was time to get together.

As an educator and counselor, I have done post-traumatic stress sessions for businesses following other hurricanes, so I knew that it was helpful for people to have an outlet for their experiences. My challenge was to adapt that knowledge to our Toastmasters membership.

First, I contacted as many members as I could by phone or computer, jotting down notes about their status. Then, late Tuesday afternoon, I sent out the following e-mail:

*Dear Friends: I tried to call you and talked to many, but couldn't get through to all. I do hope you are doing much better than one week ago. (Then I addressed each member by name, giving a bit of information, if I had any.)*

*Somehow, things felt different, better, yesterday, when people tried to get back to work and some semblance of normal. So I decided we, too, need to re-group and start meeting again. Though damaged, our meeting site will be open at 7 a.m. Friday and we can resume meeting there.*

*We won't have regular speeches or assignments; just getting there will be a sufficient challenge for some of us. So please come and enjoy the camaraderie*

*of folks who care about you, share your experiences, and we'll help each other step back into the real world.*

*Come hungry, as we'll have food, coffee and tea to celebrate life and living. I can't wait to see all of you! Sincerely, Kathleen.*

Remarkably, given difficult transportation conditions, a dozen people – more than half of our membership – showed up. In addition to my breakfast casserole, Tanya Nelson and Debra Pappé brought homemade breads. Food is important because gathering around a meal really is comforting. For the first 10 or 15 minutes, we simply hugged each other, talked and ate. Obviously, our Toastmasters of Cordova Club meant more than speeches; it also meant a special community of friends. We had missed each other.

I acted as Toastmaster that morning, guiding an agenda that was very flexible. Tanya volunteered to lead the pledge. Then I said, "Surely someone has seen or heard something inspirational since Ivan hit." Mike Paris, our vice president of education, came up front. "There's a man from another state who identified four of his best workers, then traveled with them to Pensacola in a truck filled with tools and supplies. The businessman told his employees

*(continued on page 23)*

## Steps a Club President Can Take in Responding to Crisis:

- Acknowledge the crisis and its impact on members.
- Contact members personally.
- Discuss with another board officer when to re-start.
- Ensure meeting place is available.
- Notify members of time, place and purpose.
- Plan simple food and drink; have a box of tissues.
- Keep an open agenda; prepare some written questions in case they're needed to start the process.
- Act as Toastmaster; follow normal meeting flow as appropriate.
- Allow three minutes each for all members who want to tell their stories; respect those who decline.
- Thank everyone for coming.
- Expect members to linger afterward.

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Take  
the

# Plunge!

By Leanne Cusumano Roque, CL



## What's stopping you from trying new experiences?

*"If you play it safe in life, you've decided that you don't want to grow any more."*

- Shirley Hufstедler

First U.S. Secretary of Education, 1979-1981

You have read all the suggestions in *The Toastmaster magazine* and in the *Communication and Leadership manual on taking risks and trying something new in your speeches*. You have seen other speakers use the techniques successfully and been enthralled by their speaking ability. So what is stopping you from doing the same? Chances are, you do not feel comfortable trying new techniques. Here is your passport to success:

### Why Should You Take a Risk?

Why did you join Toastmasters? You probably joined because you wanted to grow as a speaker. To accomplish this goal, you needed to do something different. Scientists have found that if you keep doing the same things, you are literally incapable of growth. The Society for Neuroscience reported in a 1997 briefing titled *Brain Work-Outs* ([apu.sfn.org/content/Publications/BrainBriefings/work.outs.html](http://apu.sfn.org/content/Publications/BrainBriefings/work.outs.html)) that:

*"Environments that offer exposure to complex experiences boost the components that process information in the brain. Brain cell survival increases, the neural appendages that receive communication signals grow and the connections between cells multiply."*

In other words, you get smarter as you experience more. Many people are hesitant to undertake new experiences because they consider them risky. But you joined Toastmasters to learn new skills, right? Then take some risks!

### Why Aren't You Taking More Risks?

We believe an action is risky if we attach some kind of fear to taking that action. This can be fear of failure, fear of rejection or fear of change.

Our perception of risk is highly personal. Ask your friends and colleagues for examples of actions they think are risky. One person will tell you that changing jobs is risky. Another will tell you that staying in his current job is risky. Our fears are unique to each of us.

For example, someone in your club may be quite comfortable using jokes in her speeches, but she never uses props. You, on the other hand, enjoy including props but cannot imagine telling a joke. Both of you are afraid of looking foolish.

The good news about fear is that you can extinguish it and expand your speech techniques in the process.

### Just Do It!

The first step in solving any problem is recognizing that there is a problem. Examine the speeches you have recently delivered. Did you try anything new? Ask your fellow Toastmasters how they perceive you as a speaker. Do they hear good, but very similar, speeches from you? Or do they hear you deliver speeches that reflect a stretch on your part, even if they flop?

If you are not taking risks, determine what would make you more comfortable doing so. For example, how did you gather your courage to join Toastmasters? Did you know someone who was already a member? Did you read everything you could find about the organization? Did you just go with your gut feelings? How you handled this risk, or any other, is a good indication of what you need to do to feel comfortable before taking a risk. Once you know what you need, set a goal that involves risk for you and do what you can to get ready before taking that risk.

Up to this point, you are simply preparing. You will come to a point at which you must, as the Nike commercial says, Just Do It! Taking the first step, no matter how small, reduces your fear of failure and increases your comfort with risk-taking. So:

- Determine what makes you more comfortable with risk-taking.
- Set a goal that is a risk for you.
- Do what you need to do to become comfortable taking that risk.
- Just Do It!

### How To Encourage Others

Once you become comfortable with trying new things, you will want to help others in your club, area or division do the same. Why? Because an organization that helps people take risks without fear of repercussion can be phenomenally successful. Jack Welch, the former CEO at General Electric (GE), understood this when he created "Work-Outs" at GE. Thomas A. Stewart described in an

## A Risk-Taker?

# Who, Me?

By Leanne Cusumano Roque, CL

- Address an ethical issue with a boss, knowing that doing so could destroy the business.
- Leave a very comfortable job to be a supervisor, a position I had never held and for which I had received no formal training.
- Give birth to a child at home, not in a hospital.
- Give a storytelling speech about the highly emotional event of my first child's birth, which included his needing oxygen and being transported to the hospital.
- Deliver another child at home.
- Leave my well-paying, secure, good-advancement-opportunities job to start my own business.
- Change careers from lawyer to coach.

Do the last two while pregnant with my second child.

I took all of these actions. Each was a risk for me, and yet I do not think of myself as a risk-taker. I faced resistance, internal and external. I always felt fear. Still, I wanted a hand in crafting my reality. So I prepared, I investigated options, I learned, I talked to lots of people. And then, I did it.

I would be a very different person today if I had not taken these actions. By addressing the ethical issue with my boss, I held fast to my moral compass. By becoming a supervisor, I learned that growing is more important than stability for me. By having my children at home, I learned how strong I am, mentally and physically. By sharing the story of my child's birth, I learned what a powerful connection with others I can create through storytelling. By starting my own business and changing careers, I felt the great joy of doing work that I love, on my terms. In each case, I took life as it came and asked, What can I do?

We all have tremendous potential. Where does your potential lie? What risks can you take to turn your potential into reality? Take even a small risk. Do it today!



August 12, 1991, *Fortune* magazine article how Welch brought together employees at all levels to brainstorm ideas, remove unnecessary work and resolve problems. He "made it plain that it's 'a career-limiting move' to obstruct the efforts of a Work-Out team," thus making it safe to take risks, the article says.

Welch reinforced this culture by instructing his operating managers, in a January 14, 1992, memo, to "just be sure we don't punish shortfalls against stretch targets – doing so will guarantee we never reach them." He also made changes to his staff based on this philosophy, explaining in the same memo that "four out of five officer changes [he made] were for value shortfalls, not numbers." GE has established a worldwide reputation as a successful business. A large part of this success is caused by its ability to create group support for taking risks that further organizational values.

Management expert Jerry Harvey explains the power of group dynamics in his tale, *The Abilene Paradox*. At a family gathering, one family member suggests taking a trip to

Abilene. Although privately none of the members wants to go, each agrees in turn to take the long trip. No one enjoys the trip, and upon returning home they come to the realization that the first family member suggested the trip, and they each agreed to go, simply because they thought the other family members wanted to make the trip.

Dr. Harvey's book, *The Abilene Paradox and Other Meditations on Management*, contains a detailed description of the paradox, but the lesson for Toastmasters is clear: No one is getting what they want if everyone is telling each other that they are giving fantastic speeches while secretly wishing their own speeches were better and others' speeches were more of a stretch. As Dr. Harvey points out, this is an easy trap for groups to fall into, since each group member is trying to accommodate other group members.

To avoid the paradox, you can take a number of steps. First, follow the advice in "Evaluate to Motivate," an excellent training module on how to give evaluations. It's part of Toastmasters' *Successful Club Series*. This module emphasizes the need to provide meaningful feedback to

speakers. As part of evaluations, Toastmasters should let fellow speakers know when they could take more risks, and recognize them when they do so.

Of course, you have to set an example. As you take risks, tell others about it and seek feedback. Your openness will make others feel more comfortable, thereby reducing their fear and helping them to be more adventurous.

As a group, you can go even further in creating a positive environment for venturing beyond what's comfortable. Hand out stickers every time someone takes a risk, include their name in your newsletter or create an annual Best Risk-Taker award. Again, be sure to reward any appropriate risk-taking, regardless of success or failure. People often learn the most from their failures – they are opportunities to determine which paths are dead ends. As Thomas Edison so memorably described his attempts to invent the light bulb: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

So what steps can you take to encourage risk-taking?

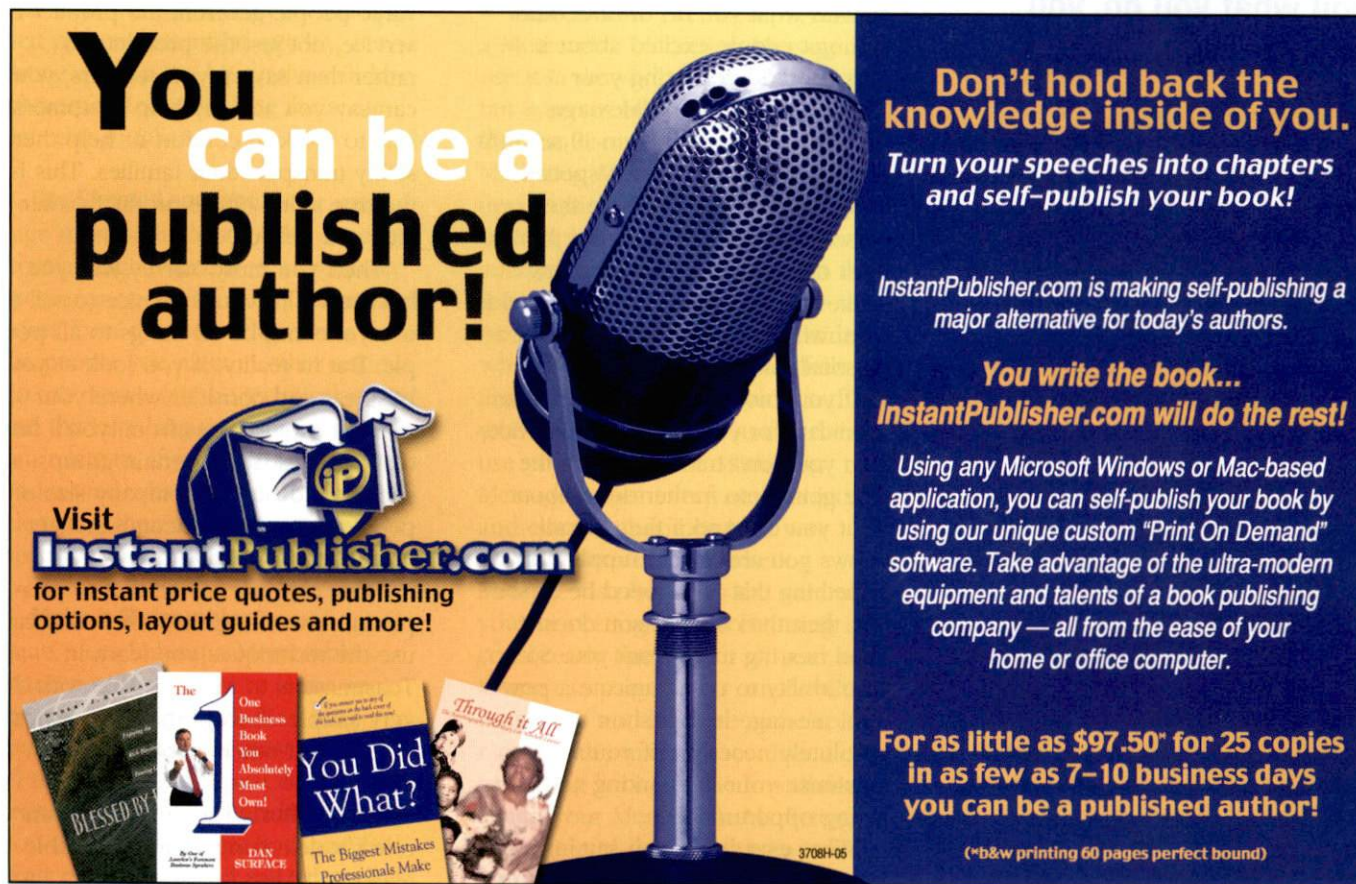
- Help the individuals in your group understand the value of trying something new.
- Discuss your organizational values with your group and

with your officers to accurately identify the arenas in which risk-taking is acceptable.

- Establish the ground rules.
- Create a safe place for members to experiment.
- Reward the risk-taking, regardless of success or failure.
- Encourage other members and officers to use these steps to encourage a culture of "comfort-zone expansion."

If you take more risks and create an atmosphere in your club where it's safe to fail, you will be amazed at how you and your fellow Toastmasters will grow. You will enable yourself to do things you thought were impossible. And once you can do those, you will set your sights on new "impossible" tasks. **T**

**Leanne Cusumano Roque, CL**, is a member of One Dulles Club 738588 in Arlington, Virginia. She became interested in the issue of risk-taking before leaving her government job, changing careers and starting her own business. She continues to research how people can take more risks to achieve what they want. You can reach her at [lcusuman@crcconsultinginc.com](mailto:lcusuman@crcconsultinginc.com).



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Get Attention in 10 Seconds:

## Creating Your Memorable Marketing Message

By Sam Silverstein

**When someone asks you what you do, you must get that person's attention quickly.**

**Here's how.**

Communicating a message is easy when you have 30, 10, or even five minutes, as you are given in your Toastmasters speeches. But what do you do if you only have 10 seconds? In trying to network and generate interest in the services you and your business provide, many times you only have eight to 10 seconds to effectively explain what you do or offer, and then get people excited about it. This is called delivering your Memorable Marketing Message.

In fact, in those eight to 10 seconds you must accomplish two specific things: 1) You must engage the person you're talking to, and 2) You must determine if continuing this conversation on a professional level is worthwhile, or decide if this is just a personal relationship.

If you know someone is a viable candidate for your product or service, then you don't mind spending the time going into further detail about what you do. And if the person knows you are a valid supplier of something that fills a need he or she has, then the other person doesn't mind hearing more from you. So your ability to communicate a powerful message in that short time is absolutely necessary if you want to maximize your networking and marketing opportunities.

What exactly do you say in those 10 seconds? First, you must commu-



nicate **the true value you deliver** through your products and services. This means stressing the benefits, the value people get from the product or service, not just the product. So rather than saying you sell cars, you can say you actually help customers ride to work in comfort or help them safely transport their families. This is the true value of the product or service you deliver.

Then you must convey **who you best serve**. It would be nice to sell to everyone and be all things to all people. But in reality, if you look at your business and consider where your greatest profit comes from, you'll find that you best serve certain groups: a specific industry or company size or people in a certain income bracket or geographic area.

How can you say all that to people in networking situations? You can use the techniques you learn in Toastmasters to leave people with a very simple concept they can remember and tell others about.

■ **Keep it Short.** The most important rule for delivering your Memorable Marketing Message is to do it in less



than 10 seconds. In networking situations, social settings or even at your Toastmasters meetings, when someone asks what you do, you must get that person's attention quickly. If you drone on and on, he or she will lose interest and start looking for someone else to talk to.

- **Use Simple Language.** Your message must be understood by anyone, from an eighth grader to a computer programmer. Your fellow Toastmasters come from diverse backgrounds, and the people you meet in other settings do too. Leave out the technical jargon and the lofty language not everyone can relate to. If you help people understand what you do in very simple terms, then they can express their need for your product or service.

- **Make it Memorable.** One of the main ideas behind a Memorable Marketing Message is to leave an impression on people. You must make your statement easy for people to remember and repeat so they will redeliver it on your behalf. Pay attention to the statement's flow and feel. Your message should roll off your

tongue. If your friends and clients can't remember it, then they won't be able to repeat it to the people they come in contact with, and that's a missed opportunity.

When you make your message memorable, your current contacts can become a primary source for new clients simply through word-of-mouth.

- **Make Them Think.** Another important function of your Memorable Marketing Message is to cause people to ask themselves whether they fit within the group you best serve, and whether they have a need for your product or service.

If they decide yes, then they will ask you the most important question: "How do you do that?" When a person asks this question, you have successfully interested him or her. This gives you the license to go into more detail about what you do, which opens the door for making the sale.

- **Put it to Use.** The main purpose of a Memorable Marketing Message is to use it in networking environments, but it serves other purposes as well. You can use your Memorable Marketing Message to keep your organization on track. So whenever you approach a new business endeavor, you can look back at this statement and ask yourself how this new activity fits within it. Consider whether each new endeavor falls in line with what you really do and who you best serve. You can then use your Memorable Marketing Message to test every new project and client that comes your way.

Your Memorable Marketing Message also becomes the core of all your marketing efforts. By using it consistently throughout all your marketing campaigns, you can develop a reputation and increase name recognition in the marketplace. Essentially, marketing becomes the function of taking your Memorable Marketing Message and delivering it to your target audience in the marketplace.

- **You May Need More than One.** Your organization may benefit from developing more than one Memorable Marketing Message if you serve a more diverse group of clients. For example, a security company won't want to approach their industrial clients with the same Memorable Marketing Message as they would their homeowner clients. They might develop a second statement for corporate clients, such as, "We work with businesses that need to secure their inventories and protect their assets." Then the statement they use will depend on the listener and his or her situation.

Or you might consider combining multiple ideal clients and multiple values into one statement. Using the security company again, they might say, "We work with home owners who are concerned about safety and businesses that need to protect their assets." If you decide to combine them, make sure you can deliver it in less than 10 seconds.

### Try It Today!

Say your Memorable Marketing Message out loud. Are you comfortable with it? If not, why? Once you get it exactly right, memorize it. Repeat it over and over. It should flow from your tongue as if you've been repeating it for the past 20 years. It needs to sound natural, just like your Toastmasters speeches. You must say it with commitment and passion.

Now go out and try it. Test it on your fellow Toastmasters and observe the kinds of responses you get. When you use these tips, your message will be memorable. **T**

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**Sam Silverstein** is a speaker and entrepreneur who has sold one of his businesses to a Fortune 500 company. He is the author of many books, including *The Power of Choice*, *The Success Model* and *Only The Best On Leadership*. For more information visit [www.BuildaBetterBiz.com](http://www.BuildaBetterBiz.com).

A close-up photograph of a hand in a dark suit sleeve holding a thin metal chain attached to a pendulum. The pendulum is swinging in a wide arc, creating a blurred motion against a dark, almost black background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the hand and the metal of the pendulum.

By Roberta Temes, Ph.D.

**Hypnosis can help you get rid of an unwanted habit or thought, and it can encourage you to develop a new attitude or method.**

## Can You Use a Hypnotist?

**W**ant to get up on stage and quack like a duck? Hop like a bunny? Want to get very, very sleepy? Fifty years ago, hypnotists were nightclub entertainers who persuaded you to get on stage and make a fool of

yourself. Today's hypnotist is likely to be a physician working in the emergency room, a sports coach in the figure-skating pavillion at the Olympics, or a psychologist helping you enhance your platform abilities.

Hypnosis is a respected technique. It can help you get rid of an unwanted habit or thought, and it can encourage you to develop a new attitude or method. Want to know what hypnosis is and how it works? So do the myriad of scientists working on hypnosis research. Thus far they know what hypnosis is *not*. It is not relaxation, it is not meditation, it

is not sleep and it is not mind control. And they don't really know how it works. They *do* know that when you are in a trance state, you become suggestible and eager to do whatever is told to you.

How do you get into that trance state? What if you are a control freak? What if you have a very strong mind? What if you are stubborn? Contrary to what you may have been told, hypnosis is not based on an adversarial relationship. It is a cooperative endeavor. The hypnotist wants you to achieve the same goal that you want to achieve. So your

strong mind and stubbornness work to your advantage. Your insistence on achieving your objective combines with the hypnotist's skill, and together you work to get you where you want to go.

Hypnosis is a state of very deep concentration and focus, to the exclusion of everything else around you. Perhaps you've experienced hypnosis and not even realized it. Have you ever been in your car, reached your destination and then wondered how you got there? Have you ever been so absorbed in a book or a movie that when someone

called your name it took you a while to respond? That trance-like state is the hypnotic state. If while you were in that state someone had given you instructions, you probably would have followed those instructions.

Hypnosis sessions consist of an *introduction* where the hypnotist chats with you, answers your questions and gets to know you. During this time you and the hypnotist decide what will be said to you when you are hypnotized. Then there is the *induction*, where the hypnotist uses words and a specific tone of voice to lull you into a suggestible state. You might be asked to concentrate on a particular image during the induction. The image could be something on the wall or, if your eyes are closed, something in your imagination.

Then the hypnotist offers you the *suggestions* that you've agreed upon. You might be asked to visualize yourself carrying out those suggestions. And then you are told that the hypnosis session is completed and you are slowly coaxed back to reality and back to your ordinary state. The entire session lasts less than one hour. The actual hypnosis part takes only 10 minutes or so.

Why would you want to go to a hypnotist? A hypnotist can help you polish your skills and become a better speaker. Start making a list now of all the things you wish you had done differently last time you spoke to an audience. Then put each item on that list into a simple sentence that will give you a specific direction. That list of directions will become your hypnotic suggestions when you visit a hypnotist.

Fred was concerned that he ignored one side of the room when he spoke. Fred's suggestion: "You will maintain proper eye contact, embracing the full audience, all the time that you are on stage.

Helen was very nervous the night before her presentation. Helen's suggestion: "You will get a good night's sleep the night before all presentations. You will feel relaxed and calm."

Louise fidgeted with her hair and her blouse. Louise's suggestion: "You will keep your hands still except when you need to gesture in order to make a point."

David's voice faded toward the end of his speech. David's suggestion: "You will maintain your confident voice level throughout your talk."

Robin realized that she did not focus enough on her content; instead she had a voice in her head asking, "Are they listening?" and "Do I look okay?" Robin's suggestion: "You will concentrate on the message you are delivering. You will not pay attention

**"After hypnosis you tend to feel extremely relaxed and mellow, yet the suggestions usually last for many, many years."**

to your appearance once you have begun."

Are there dangers to hypnosis? No, the process of hypnosis has no dangers, but if the person who is delivering the hypnosis to you is a quack, you'll be wasting your time and money. The American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association have approved hypnotherapy, and so has the British Medical Association and other similar organizations in other countries.

Here's what to look for when considering hiring a hypnotist:

- Go to someone referred by a friend. Most states do not license hypnotists, so certification has no standard meaning.
- Go to someone who is a professional as well as a hypnotist – for example a nurse, a psychologist, a counselor.

- Go to someone who will permit you to bring a tape recorder into the session. If you have a tape, you can play it whenever you need a boost or a reinforcement of your session.
- Go to someone who thinks that one session is probably all you'll need. You are not looking for a psychotherapist who will try to figure out what happened when you were three years old that caused you to enjoy an audience. Nor are you looking for someone who insists that you have a session every week.
- Go to someone who likes the idea that you will come in with your own script of suggestions. Be sure your hypnotist agrees to tell you in advance exactly what will be said to you when you are "under." You don't want any surprises.

Don't worry; you cannot get stuck in a trance. During hypnosis you can speak, you can move, you can hear everything. If you want to stop the session, all you have to do is open your eyes. After hypnosis you tend to feel extremely relaxed and mellow, yet the suggestions usually last for many, many years.

Use hypnosis to reach your potential. You'll enjoy yourself during the session and you'll be impressed with the results afterward. Good luck! ■

**Roberta Temes, Ph.D.**, is clinical assistant professor, at the department of psychiatry of SUNY Downstate Medical School in New York. She has had hypnosis practice for 30 years, and maintains the Web site [www.hypnosisbyphone.com](http://www.hypnosisbyphone.com). She is the author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hypnosis*, and of *Medical Hypnosis*.

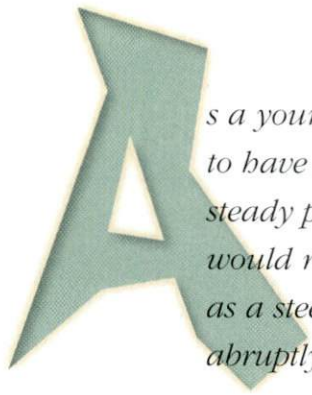


**Turning  
stumbling blocks  
into stepping stones.**

# Falling Forward

By Victor Parachin





*As a young man, Fred Luster considered himself fortunate to have a well-paying job as a steelworker. Because of the steady paycheck and good benefits, Luster assumed he would remain at the plant all his life, eventually retiring as a steelworker. His thinking was shattered when he was abruptly laid off. Rather than become*

bitter about his circumstances, Luster took a quick inventory of his skills and interests. He always had a knack for cutting hair, so he became a barber, opening up his own shop that eventually became a salon.

As he worked in his Chicago salon building up a steady clientele, Luster realized there was a need for hair care products that specifically catered to the health and maintenance of the hair of African Americans. He began developing products that he offered exclusively in his salon. Quickly, the word spread about his products' effectiveness. Demand increased and soon Luster was selling his products to other hairstylists. Luster, whose main education was forged in steel mills rather than university classrooms, built Luster Products, a huge international company.

Luster's experience is one that can easily be reproduced through the life of every person who experiences a falling, a failure, a defeat. With proper thinking, planning and acting, stumbling blocks can be transformed into stepping stones. Here are seven steps for ensuring that when you fall, you will fall forward and, in the process, reinvent yourself:

### **1 Drop the expectation of a perfect batting average in life.**

Many people, when they experience a setback, give up and give in because they have a faulty belief system. Erroneously, they assume that successful people do everything right every time; that they never make mistakes or fail. That is a false assumption. In their book, *The Joy of Working: The 30-Day System To Success, Wealth and Happiness on the Job*, authors Denis Waitley and Reni L. Witt point out the following failure facts about highly successful individuals:

- The greatest quarterbacks complete only six out of 10 passes.
- The best basketball players only make half of their shots.
- Major-league baseball players make first base only 40 percent of the time and that includes walks.
- Top oil companies, even with the consultation of expert geologists, find oil in only one well in 10.
- A successful television actor is turned down 29 out of 30 times after auditioning for roles in commercials.
- Winners in the stock market make money on only two out of five investments.

As you look over those facts, remind yourself that you are human and perfectly capable of making mistakes. "Sometimes you're going to strike out. But if you keep playing, you'll have your days of singles and doubles. Occasionally you'll hit a home run," say Waitley and Witt.

**2 Offset the emotional with the logical.** Whenever we face a major defeat, our emotions can run wild, assuring us that the situation is something that we cannot salvage or cope with effectively. The remedy for overcoming these nonsensical emotions is to detach yourself, step back and look at things logically. Reflect on this wisdom from Diane Dreher, author of *The Tao of Personal Leadership*:

*"Common sense will tell us that we've gone through life developing quite a good record of doing things we've never done before: learning to walk, to talk, to read and write, to drive a car, and many other skills we probably now take for granted. At one time, each of them was a new challenge. The Tao tells us that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The path of human progress has been cleared, one step at a time, by those who dared to reach out to new possibilities, to do what they'd never done before."*

**3 If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.** That popular proverb contains a great and powerful truth. The problem is not in the fall but in the failing to rise up and try again. You may get knocked down but you don't have to stay down. Exercise the will and make the choice to get up and move forward. In 1950, Florence Chadwick set a world record when she swam across the English Channel from France in 13 hours and 20 minutes. The following year, she swam from England to France, making history as the first woman to swim the channel from both shores. However, in 1952, Chadwick learned a powerful lesson from a failure. She accepted the challenge of swimming the 26 miles from Catalina Island to Palos Verdes, California. Although the waters were frigid and sharks trailed her, Chadwick's resolve was shattered by something else. After 15 hours of rough swimming, she couldn't see any sign of the coastline because a heavy fog shrouded the area. With her goal out of sight, Chadwick lost the will to continue and climbed

aboard an escort boat not realizing she was less than half a mile from shore.

When asked why she stopped, Chadwick explained: "It was the fog. If I could have seen land, I could have finished. But when you can't see your goal, you lose all sense of progress and you begin to give up." Her failure was only temporary. A few months later she made another attempt to swim the same waters. Fortunately, as she completed her swim, the sun was shining and her goal was clearly in sight. Chadwick set yet another swimming record.

**4 Adopt the coping strategies of POWs.** Near the top of a life's severest stresses would be incarceration as a prisoner of war. Yet, many who endured that hardship emerged from the experiences emotionally balanced and ready to resume the joy of living. Research conducted on Vietnam prisoners of war and on survivors of Nazi concentration camps by Margaret Singer of the University of California, and Joel Dimsdale, of Stanford University School of Medicine, demonstrate that those who handled their hardships best exhibited these common coping strategies:

- They did not surrender or give up their spirit.
- They maintained a sense of control. No matter how bad things got, they could still control their own thoughts.
- They attributed some important meaning to their suffering and pain.
- They focused on good or positive things throughout each day: "I got some food today" or "I didn't get beaten today."
- They maintained a strong sense of purpose and they resolved to make it through the ordeal.

**5 Find the silver lining in every cloud.** Something good can be created out of every situation, no matter how disastrous. Place your focus on learning the lesson buried in the circumstance. Keep your mind open to new possibilities that are emerging. In 1983, Warren Kimble was extremely disappointed when he lost his job teaching art at a Vermont college. His lifelong passion to be a painter seemed to evaporate with that job loss. In order to support his wife, Lorraine, and three teenage children, Kimble began to make and sell wooden toys, marionettes and doll houses. He also experimented with painting Vermont-inspired images – Holstein cows, farmhouses, pigs and rabbits – on the antique furniture that he and

Lorraine collected. That furniture was sold at regional antique shows.

In 1991, Kimble's art caught the attention of a vacationing couple who licensed his work. Since then, his images have appeared on more than two million prints: T-shirts, plates, doormats, calendars, home furnishings, computer mouse pads. Kimble's disappointing layoff as an art instructor was simply the prelude to a more successful and satisfying career. "It's great to have success," he says, "but the best thing is that it never felt like work. I do what I love."

**6 Don't dramatize your mistakes.** In thinking about your shortcoming and failure, don't blow the incident out of proportion. Remind yourself that making mistakes is part of the life journey. In fact, when you fail, you are actually in very good company.

Thomas Edison was thrown out of school in the early grades because teachers concluded he couldn't do the work. Harry S. Truman failed as owner of a men's clothing store. W. Clement Stone, the spectacularly successful insurance company executive and founder of *Success* magazine, was a high school dropout. When Bob Dylan performed at a high school talent show, his classmates failed to realize he was bound for great things and booed him off the stage.

Don't dramatize your mistakes and become fixated on your shortcomings. Such failures and setbacks are a routine part of being human.

Don't dramatize your mistakes and become fixated on your shortcomings. Such failures and setbacks are a routine part of being human.

**7 Speak gently to yourself.** Rather than berate and belittle yourself for any shortcoming, try repeating these types of affirmations to yourself: I am a creative individual. I am capable of seeing my way through this. I am blessed greatly. I am open to new opportunities. Something good is going to happen to me because of this. Affirmations such as these will fortify your spirit, strengthen your ego, restore balance to your life and help you move forward.

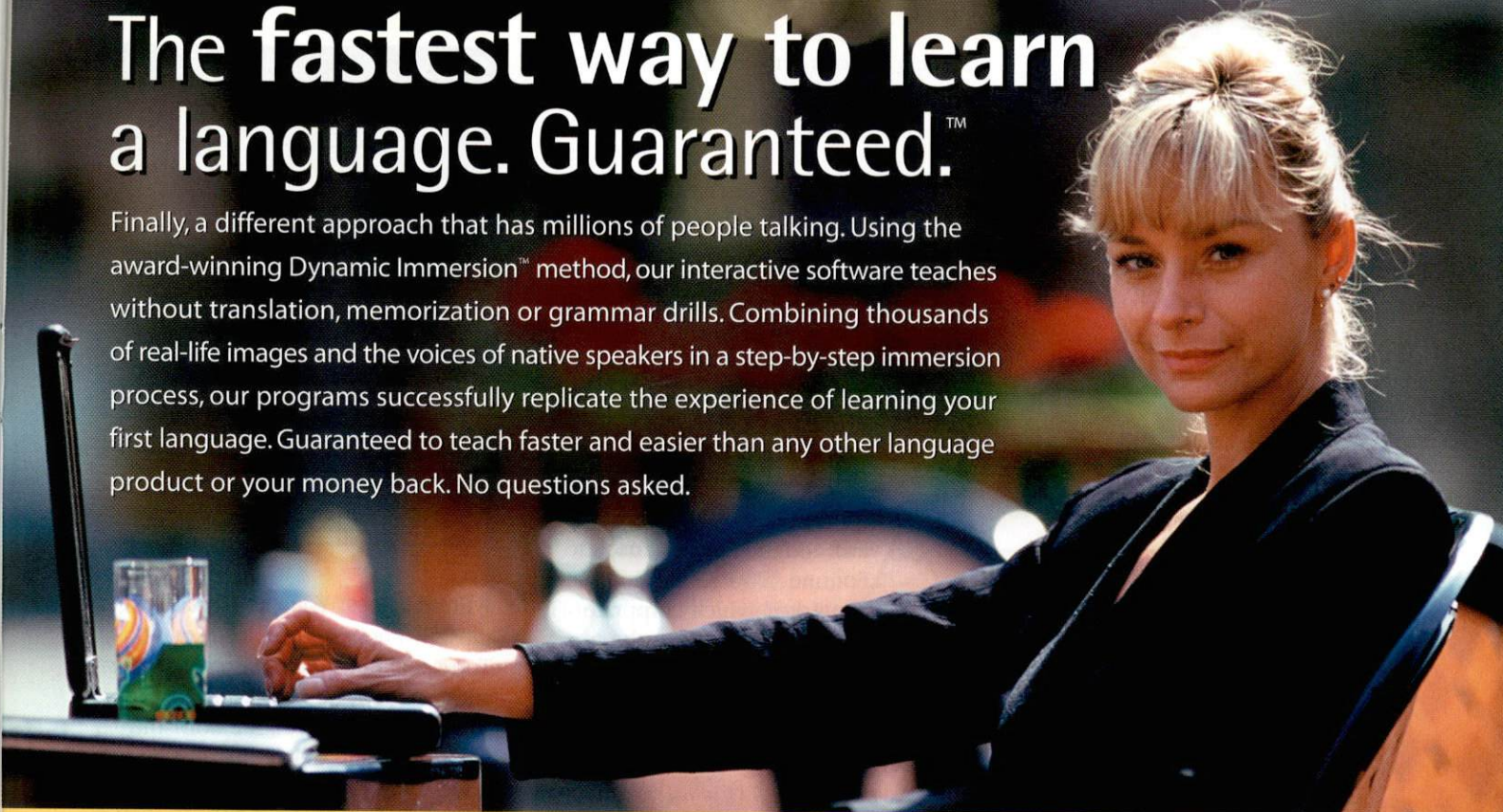
"Even in the face of failure, use encouraging, affirmative language when you talk to yourself or to others about yourself," advise Waitley and Witt. "The setback is only temporary, but your recorded subconscious can be permanent." So, be gentle with yourself. Remember that you don't just go through life, but you *grow* through life. ■

**Victor Parachin** is a freelance writer and ordained minister living in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**"The problem is not in the fall but in the failing to rise up and try again. You may get knocked down but you don't have to stay down."**

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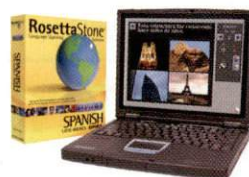
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# My Favorite Corporate Speakers

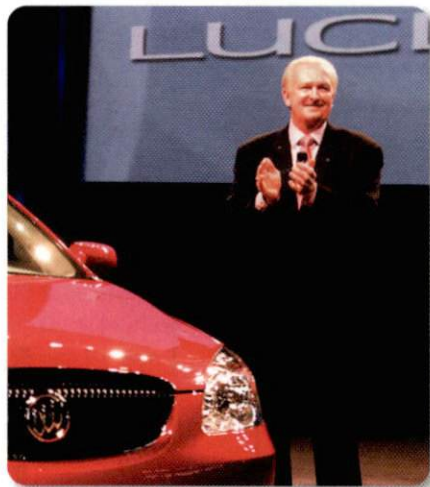
By Jessica Hatchigan

**The language of leadership is simple, direct, memorable and effective.**

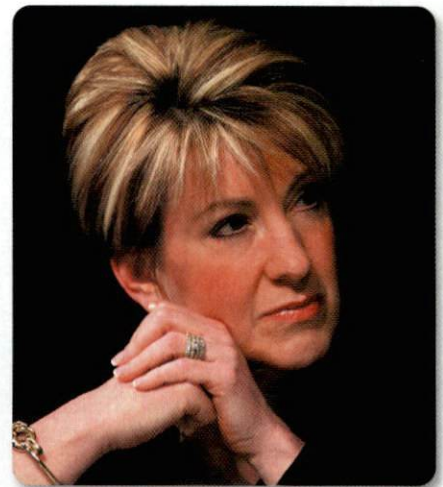
As a professional speechwriter and communication coach to Fortune 500 executives, I have often been asked which corporate speakers I consider to be at the top of their game – and why.

The truth is, you'll find that almost all men and women who rise to top leadership positions in the corporate world excel at public speaking. Expert communication skills are pretty much a prerequisite for senior leaders. But that being said, I've also had the opportunity to hear a few speakers who are widely considered among the "best of the best." In other words, these speakers can be counted on to deliver the goods on the podium – and to do so in a way that raises the bar for all speakers.

As I tried to analyze just what it is about these speakers that made them so outstanding, here's what came to mind:



Gary Cowger



Carly Fiorina

- **Great voices:** You can't make sweet music without a good instrument. Top speakers' voices are clear, pleasant and loud, not shrill. In addition, great speakers have an ear for the words they are delivering, just as good musicians have an ear for music. They make considered word choices, vary the pace of their speeches, and create dramatic effects by the practiced use of vocal variety – by emphasizing certain words and varying their vocal volume.
- **Likability:** Each of these great speakers effortlessly establishes rapport with their listeners. They are well-groomed and at ease with themselves and respectful of their audiences.
- **Leadership persona:** These executives create an aura of trustworthiness and self-confidence that's free of arrogance.
- **Insight-sharing/calls to action:** After hearing these speakers speak, audiences feel they have learned something and gained greater insight into issues. If the speech was intended to change minds, or to rouse people to action, it accomplished that goal because the speaker's careful words triggered emotional chords in the audience.

For example, in a speech supporting small business and entrepreneurship, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard



Jeff Immelt

(HP) Carly Fiorina spoke of the importance of giving “not a handout, but a hand up,” and of her company’s belief that “our purpose on this earth is not just to make a dollar, but to make a difference.”

■ **Command of the language:** Great speakers are masters of content and word choice, as well as of delivery. That doesn’t mean they use long words or academic phrases. The language of leadership is simple, direct, memorable and effective – even lightly humorous. Here’s Gary Cowger, global group vice president of General Motors (GM), (talking about the rate of change in technology) in a recent speech:

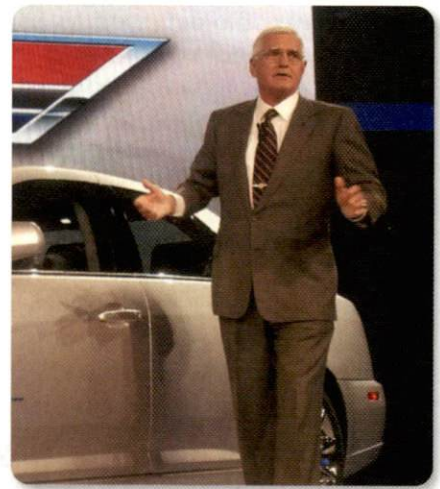
“Basically, we’re talking about a giant technological horse race here. And everyone’s hoping their horse is Seabiscuit.”

■ **Compelling facts:** To make the point to an audience of small-business owners that their businesses embodied great possibilities, Carly Fiorina reminded them that Compaq (a company that merged with Hewlett-Packard in 2002) “began over a discussion in a pie shop – and was helped into existence by an SBA [Small Business Administration] loan.”

In another speech – on how HP was “doing well by doing good” – Fiorina provided specific examples



Kathleen Ligocki



Bob Lutz

of how – by helping entrepreneurial efforts in economically underdeveloped parts of the world – HP created “win-win scenarios.” She related how HP engineers, for example, developed solar-powered products for use in southeast Asian villages (where the electricity supply is unstable) and how these products both created new HP customers and helped local entrepreneurs develop micro-businesses.

■ **Naturalness:** The opposite of wooden, outstanding speakers are natural, enthusiastic, “alive” and animated. They often move easily around the stage or wander into the audience. Their language is natural

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too, almost conversational. Here's how Gary Cowger commented on the importance of quality: "Product is critical. At the end of the day, best car wins. Period." Or General Electric (GE) CEO Jeff Immelt speaking to a University of Miami graduating class: "Twenty-five years ago, I sat in an

**"Great leaders usually evolve and grow into the role. The same is true of great speakers.**

audience just like this, and I remember thinking to myself, 'How long is this guy going to talk?' Well, the answer today is ... not long."

■ **Passion and enthusiasm:** Stellar speakers believe deeply in things – their company's values, or the selling points of the products and services they represent, or the stance their company takes on ethics or community involvement – and they successfully convey their passion for those things. In a November 2002 speech, given when the Enron scandal was still making headlines, GE's Jeff Immelt didn't pussyfoot around what he wanted to say: "I am a CEO ... I love my company. I do not believe the letters stand for Cheat, Evade, Overcompensate." The language of leadership is passionate and direct. In the same speech, Immelt said, "The economic environment is challenging, but it is not hopeless." And, "It is a time for pragmatic and smart management." Short, to the point and effective.

■ **Sense of humor:** Almost every great speaker I've ever heard is able to use humor effectively, to be almost playful at times with the language (when it is appropriate.) Humor is one of the tie-breakers that distinguish good speakers from great speakers. Audiences warm up to an executive who can make his or her points effectively and leave them smiling at the same time.

For example, here's how Gary Cowger addressed an audience at Dell Computers: "And if you have an inferiority complex? That's really not a problem. A lot of leaders do. It's when you start to worry that your inferiority complex maybe isn't as good as someone else's inferiority complex... then you have a problem."

In a commencement address to Univer-

sity of Miami graduates, Jeff Immelt assured them that, "May is when graduates, diplomas in hand, go out to conquer the world. Along about July, the world counter-attacks."

And Kathleen Ligocki, CEO of Tower Automotives, relates how – as the first female supervisor in an automotive plant – she dealt with her fellow supervisors, all male, when they groused about her not having to wear a tie in the plant, as the male supervisors did, in the suffocating heat. "*They marched into the general foreman's office and demanded that I be made to wear a tie too,*" Kathleen said in a speech. "*Total equality, that's what they wanted. Well, my general supervisor called me in and, sheepishly, asked me to put on a tie. He even offered me one of his. I thought for a moment and asked if he really meant 'total equality.'* 'Yes, definitely.' 'Great! Does this mean I don't have to wear a bra?' 'N-n-n-no! Of course you have to wear a bra!' So I said, 'Fine. When the guys put on bras, I'll wear the tie.' And marched out of his office. You know, I have never had a boss give me fashion advice since!"

General Motors vice chairman Bob Lutz (no slouch as a speaker himself), defined the set of skills I'm talking about very well in his best-selling book, *Guts*, in which he calls these skills "command presence:"

*Leaders who have this attribute come in both genders, all sizes, ages and colors, with and without hair. What distinguishes them from their undistinguished brothers and sisters is a certain bearing, a body language that is neither cocky nor aggressive but quietly self-confident, a facial expression, say, that is neither puppy-dog friendly ("I want you to love me") nor overtly challenging. A gaze that is steady and focused, respectful but unflinching.*

All of the qualities I'd listed – from great voice to likability to enthusiasm, are aspects of this "command presence." Take any one of those qualities away and you have a diminished speaker and a diminished leader.

In short, who the speaker is, the persona he or she projects to the audience, determines the results achieved on the podium. The speakers I've mentioned here are but a few examples of great corporate communicators. I mention them because they just happen to be among those who've come into my listening orbit.

Great leaders usually evolve and grow into the role. The same is true of great speakers. I have seen average speakers become great. And here's the kicker – an "average" speaker who improves his or her speaking skills also improves his or her leadership potential.

Few of us will join the ranks of the legends (think Winston Churchill) but each of us can aspire to improve our own personal-best level of ability. With persistence and practice, you will make advances that may just amaze others – and yourself. **T**

**Jessica Hatchigan** is an Ann Arbor-based speechwriter. Her clients include the senior leaders of Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Mazda Motor Corporation.

## Leading Through Crisis

(continued from page 7)

ahead of time to plan to be gone for three months, paying them their normal wages out of his own pocket. They have been going from house to house, doing repairs people need." That touched our souls since we knew there were thousands of people who desperately needed such help.

Next, I said, "Each of you has the opportunity to take two or three minutes to tell your own hurricane experience." I had prepared some basic questions to start the process, but they were never needed. One by one, members told their stories – harrowing, surprising, funny, uplifting, sad. We laughed heartily, nodded in sympathy, or pulled out tissues as needed. There was empathy and healing in the sharing. After the

meeting officially ended at 8:30 a.m., members stayed, eating and talking some more. Clearly, it had been the right decision to meet.

Two weeks later, Mike reflected on the value of that special meeting. He said, "We gave back to people something that felt normal. There was an element of personal recovery, a chance to gain perspective and an appreciation for what had happened to us."

To me, it proved that Toastmasters is more than just a meeting, more than just learning how to give speeches. An effective Toastmasters club also builds relationships and community, so it's important to be conscious of that fact and go beyond normal roles by providing leadership in helping members respond to crisis. As it states in the current Toastmasters Officer manual, *When You Are the President: A Guide to Effective Club Leadership*, "You are the club's

leader. Your club officers and members look to you for inspiration and motivation." A crisis ignored is an opportunity missed for you to provide essential leadership.

Whether it's a natural or man-made disaster, your members experience many losses. Some of those losses may include a sense of control, safety, security, confidence, belongings, mementos, jobs or familiar routines. Toastmasters clubs that ignore those deep, widespread losses risk losing both value and members. Instead, by purposefully framing an opportunity for members to share their stories after a crisis, the president can help them start their personal healing process, and the club is strengthened, as well. ■

**Kathleen Vestal Logan, ATM-B**, is a member of Toastmasters of Cordova Club 1357 in Pensacola, Florida.

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# Fine-Tuning Some

By Thomas Leech

# Old Saws

Revisiting classic advice for public speaking success.

**Y**ou've been hearing them for years:  
the time-honored tips for speakers:

*"Practice makes perfect."*

*"A picture is worth a thousand words."*

*"The apparel oft proclaims the man."*

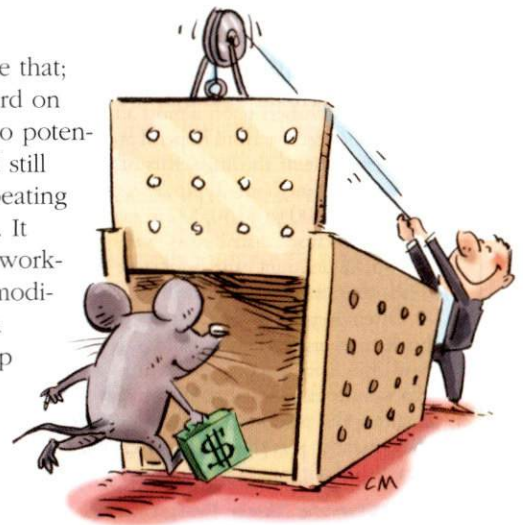
Yes, these old saws seem to contain guidelines that presenters would be wise to heed. However your results might turn out better if you examine them more closely and tweak them a bit to make that classic advice even more practical. Here are a dozen of those old expressions that, with tuning, are definitely worth applying to your next speech:

**Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door.** From Ralph Waldo Emerson, this advice is often cited for those with the hot new idea. Yes, it is important to build the better widget. But many budding entrepre-

neurs have done that; they worked hard on their speeches to potential backers and still found no one beating paths their way. It might be more workable if it were modified to: "Build a better mousetrap and the world will *do nothing until you convince them that it is true, and needed.*" Here's

where communication and presentations come in, as they are valuable tools for giving a winning story to the "world," in this case to those with the money.

**Find a need and fill it.** This has long been a favorite in the sales world (and all public speakers are selling, whether





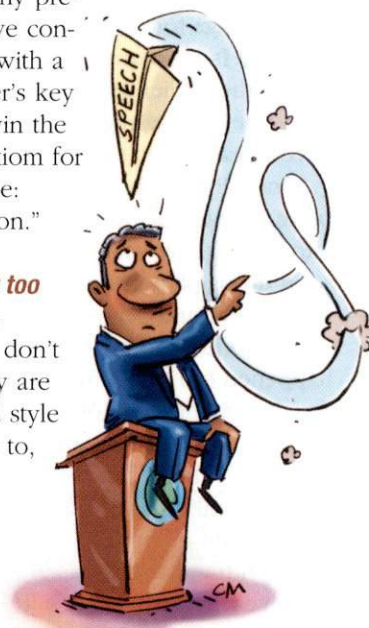


or not they look at it that way). So all you need to do to win over your audience/customer

is to find “a” need. What if it’s a minor need? Yes, you fill it, but that may not be important enough. A better principle for success might be to “Find the *right* need and fill it.” But will that do it? Many presenters going after competitive contracts have indeed come up with a solution to meet the customer’s key need, but they still did not win the business. To complete the axiom for success, add one more phrase: “... better than the competition.”

**Better to just wing it than get too structured.**

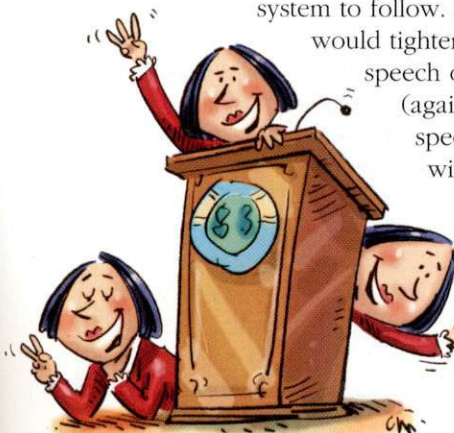
This is a frequent rationale from speakers who don’t prepare enough because they are confident that their story and style are so good, they don’t have to, or they’re too busy or lazy. I’ve heard this “advice” from managers heading into a program review, saying “Just another meeting – no need to prepare,” and then get clobbered by senior executives or customers with certain issues on their minds. I’ve watched others apply the “wing it” approach and end up with a rambling speech, key issues neglected and vaguely stated conclusions. Pleasant talk, poor outcome.



**Can’t go wrong with the three “tell ‘em’s” plan.**

Many are familiar with the organizational concept of “Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em,” then “Tell ‘em,” and to close “Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.” This is actually not a bad system to follow. If applied better, it would tighten up some deficient speech outlines. However (again), if applied to all speeches, it might backfire with some.

A classic speech that successfully did not follow this principle was provided by Shakespeare in his speech by Mark Antony, starting with



probably the best-known opening line in history: “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears....” Antony’s audience had just been aroused by the last speaker, the famed “Et tu Brute?” conspirator, to believe the killing of Caesar was a good thing. Now along came Antony, wanting to convince them of the opposite, that the killers were bad guys who should be strung up post haste. So he deliberately did not “tell ‘em what he was going to tell ‘em.” Instead he maneuvered his way carefully (termed a “motivational sequence order”) to win them over and get them charging after the conspirators with blood in their eyes.

Thus if your audience is opposed to your view, don’t be so blatant about your opinions at the start unless you want those tomatoes to quickly start flying.

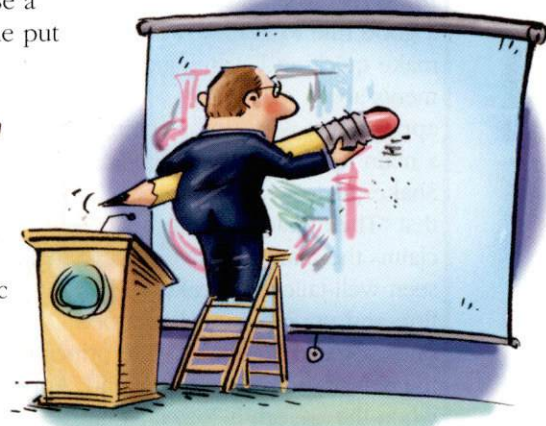
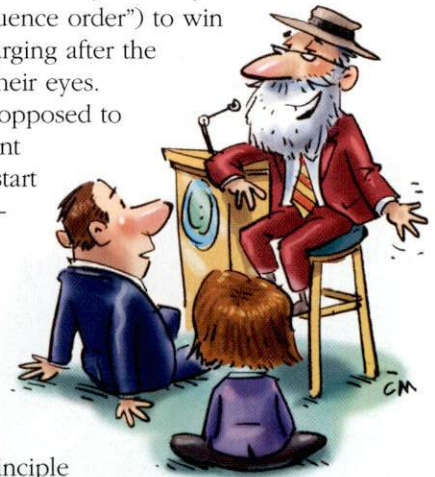
**Everybody loves a story.**

Few things add more interest and relevance to a speech than a good story. Great speakers throughout history have applied this principle for immediate success and lasting value. Also if your audience’s attention drifts due to information overload or irrelevance, you can often regain that attention with a good story. Contemporary great communicators, such as Paul Harvey with his “the rest of the story,” Garrison Keillor with his tales from Lake Wobegon, and John Cleese with his lively training videos drawing on Monty Python-type scenarios, are successful in large part because of their storytelling abilities.

So, do include stories in your speaker’s tool kit. However, apply three serious caveats to keep your story from backfiring: (a) be sure to tie it clearly to the topic under discussion; (b) watch out for ethnic or sexist language; (c) tell it well. Mark Twain demonstrated how *not* to tell a story with a seemingly endless tale that wandered off course a dozen times until he put himself to sleep.

**A picture is worth a thousand words.**

How often have you heard this? Providers of presentation or graphic design hardware or software are especially prone to slipping this



one into their ads, touting the well-proven value that a good illustration can communicate better than words only. Many presenters exemplify this principle fully with extensive use of PowerPoint or other graphics programs.

Or do they? A colleague and I were in a large audience hearing a top executive vigorously address his company's progress and plans using a high-quality PowerPoint presentation. On one slide he rhetorically asked, "Now what's wrong with this picture?" referring to an industry trend. My friend and I instantly whispered to each other, "What's wrong is we can't read it!"

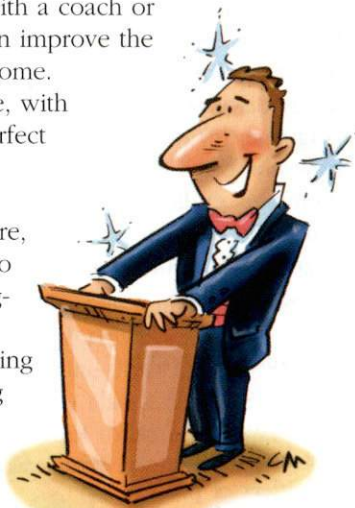
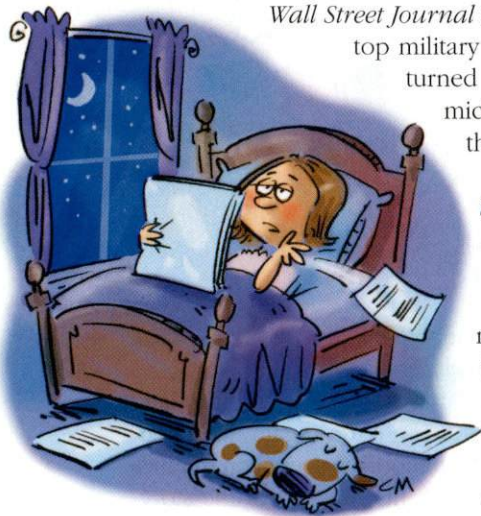
Or what if the picture *is* a thousand words (as many seem to be)? Or if computer-based presentations do use lots of pictures, but they end up with so many "cutesy" treatments they confuse or alienate, rather than inform or convince, their audiences? A well-cited *Wall Street Journal* article reported how top military executives were getting turned off by too much gimmickry in the presentations they received.

**Practice makes perfect.**

In speaking, rehearsals are indeed important for success. But how much will you improve if you're applying poor techniques and don't realize it? If I can practice my golf swing every day, I will see some improvement. But

how much better would I get if a knowledgeable person pointed out that my hands were not gripping the club properly? "Oops, never thought of that." This is why a dry run or three with a coach or experienced Toastmaster can improve the presenter, product and outcome. Change this one to "Practice, with helpful feedback, makes perfect (or certainly better)."

**Dress for success.** Once more, a good rule to follow. We do make quick and lasting judgments about a speaker's appearance, with clothes being a main factor, demonstrating Shakespeare's earlier advice that "The apparel oft proclaims the man." Yet I've seen well-tailored speakers flop and unprofessionally garbed ones succeed admirably. The principle is valid, assuming the rest of the package is sound. Appearance is worth little when the speech is lousy.



**Open with a joke.**

Successful speakers have discovered a variety of ways to open a presentation, the most popular being jokes or amusing anecdotes. The idea is to wake up the audience and get them in a receptive mood. The major caution flags for an opening joke are (a) Can you tell it well? (b) Is it unique to the topic? and (c) Will it possibly offend the audience? Be sure not to tell a joke you've found on the Internet; chances are good your listeners have already seen (or heard) it.

One CEO tried the joke-opening idea with an important business audience of 200 interested people. About halfway into the joke, he started slowing down, then paused, and soon drops of sweat appeared on his forehead. His next line was "Could I have the first slide please?" We all knew what had just happened, something that's probably happened to most of us – he forgot the punch line. Few of us recalled later what his presentation was about, but we sure remembered his blowing the opening joke. And I suspect he never tried that method again.

**Enthusiasm alone will win them over.**

Back to Emerson: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." A counter axiom is often closer to validity: "All fluff and no stuff rarely works." (that is, except for politics, get-rich schemes, sure cures, and send-your-money to save-your-soul appeals). Try one more, from Shakespeare: "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

What do these add up to? In speaking, enthusiasm is definitely an important quality. But if that's the essence of it, you're not likely to win over astute audience members.

**The data speaks for itself.** Toastmasters are not likely to mouth this axiom, but it's often heard from those who believe content is all and delivery is secondary. Representative is the technical or financial speaker with many slides of detailed information, delivered in a monotone





while addressing the screen rather than the audience. Both ample experience and research shows the importance of delivery, especially body language. If in doubt, recall the major attention,

definitely not positive, given

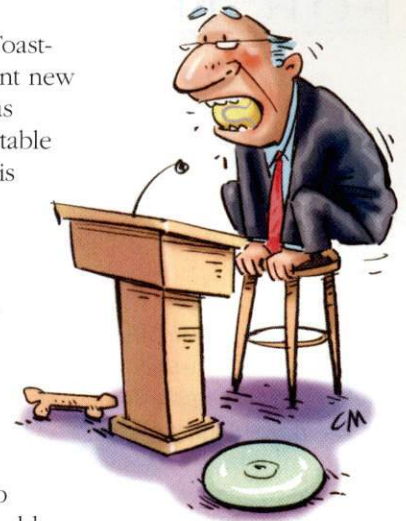
to performances in recent U.S. presidential debates in (a) 2000, Al Gore's rolling eyeballs and sighing; (b) 2004, George W. Bush's peeved facial expressions. Both candidates corrected those negative non-verbal styles for their second debates.

**Can't teach an old dog new tricks.** In coaching and training sessions, participants will sometimes recite this gem as rationale for their resistance to making some clearly needed upgrades to their speaking capabilities. They almost proudly follow Kent's justification for resisting change in Shakespeare's *King Lear*: "Sir, I am too old to learn." If this attitude sticks, they're missing out on advancement. A few

decades back, at my own Toastmasters club, I recall a recent new member, in his 50s who was slowly getting more comfortable with his talks, saying "This is so helpful. Why didn't I do this 25 years ago?" Well, at least he was doing it now, clearly not too old to learn.

Summing up, yes, heed the catchy slogans that have stood the test of time for improving speaking success. And refine them as warranted to make them even more valuable.

Consider one of Steven Covey's basic tips, "Sharpen those old saws." (You may now groan.) **T**



**Thomas Leech** is author of *How To Prepare, Stage & Deliver Winning*, 3rd edition (AMACOM), and *Say It Like Shakespeare: How To Give a Speech Like Hamlet, Persuade Like Henry V, and Other Secrets from the World's Greatest Communicator* (McGraw-Hill). He is a speaker and presentation coach in San Diego, California. Visit his Web site at [www.winning-presentations.com](http://www.winning-presentations.com).



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Once you discover the *what* of your speech, you can spend the bulk of your time on the *how* of your speech.

# Power-Start Your Speech Prep

By Jeff Dunn, ATM-B

How to begin?" they lament. In my experience counseling fellow Toastmasters who are working on their CTM speeches, I've encountered many otherwise confident people who have trouble coming up with a topic for their next speech. "I can't think of anything," they'll say. "There's nothing *that* interesting in my life I could talk about." All too often, my colleagues won't come up with a topic until a day or two before the appointed time, then they rush to put the speech together.

At first, looking for a topic may seem daunting. Yet it is crucial to growth as a speaker. The sooner you settle on a topic, the more time you have to work on improving your speaking ability. Once you

discover the *what* of your speech, you can spend the bulk of your time on the *how* of your speech.

Finding a topic doesn't have to be such agony. If you "power-start" future speeches as outlined by the following acronyms, not only will topics always be on hand for you, they will inspire you to perform better than you ever expected.

## ABC - Always Be Collecting

Those who have seen the film version of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glenn Ross* will have this sales-pitch acronym burned into their psyche: "ABC - Always be Closing", the memorable sales pitch magnificently delivered by actor Alec Baldwin.

In choosing a topic, this acronym must be equally indelible. **Always Be Collecting** topics for your next speeches. The more time you spend sifting through possibilities, the more likely you are to find something that interests you and your audiences.

Ideas can be will-of-the-wisps. They can come to you in the shower, on the road, in the most unexpected places. If you always collect topics, ideas will come more frequently. Carry a pad with you and write down all possibilities!

## PEP - Passion Energizes Performance

Which are the best ideas to pursue? The best ideas are the ones with your enthusiasm behind them. Part of the choosing process is to con-



centrate on what moves you to action, what is important in your life. Where do your passions lie?

You will find that **Passion Energizes Performance**. Subjects that are important to you will bring you excitement and motivation, which in turn makes you a better speaker.

Don't be afraid to show audiences your passionate side. Audiences respect a speaker with strong feelings, even if they disagree with the speaker's viewpoint. More likely, they will empathize with you and better connect with the goals of your talk.

### **JIFFY – Jobs, Interests, Family, Friends and You**

The most common areas to search for topics and your passions are **Jobs, Interests, Family, Friends and Yourself**. Most people had an interesting job at some point in their lives, even if they didn't think so at the time: the first job, a volunteer job, even your current job. Do you have a special hobby, sport or other interest? Family and friends are a rich source for speech topics. Most of us can recall a humorous or serious incident involving friends or family that can be worked up into a speech.

Finally, there is yourself. You have given your Ice Breaker speech on this topic. Go back to it and see if there are areas that you can elaborate on in future speeches. Always be collecting; always be considering!

### **CUT – Clarify, Utilizing a Theme**

OK, so now you have ideas, but you don't really have a topic. A good topic is more than just a collection of supporting material.

Now you need to consider your goals for the speech, hone the topic, consider its possibilities, and make it a hardened-steel Topic! The way to do this is to **Clarify, Utilizing a Theme**. The best reason for following through on this step is that it will enable you to *cut* your subject down and give you room to explore the *bow* part of the delivery.

Many speakers short-change this step and present a topic instead of a Topic. The result tends to ramble or be sequential, with little to stick in listeners' memory. Clarifying the topic, cutting it down to size and eliminating extraneous material will give you the extra time needed to make the speech memorable, taking advantage of repetition and rhetorical devices to let the main points sink in.

The first part in clarifying the topic is to be sure you have a goal for the audience. Are they simply to be entertained? Is there a message you want them to take home? Do you want them to take some action?

Once you are sure of your goals, the second phase of topic clarification is to take advantage of a theme. A theme helps you organize the material. Be specific: Read other people's research and comments on the topic, first for your own inspiration and later perhaps for use in the actual presentation. Try to encapsulate the theme in a catch phrase or quote that is repeated two or more times in your talk to bring the Topic home to your listeners. Once you have a theme, cut any material that doesn't relate to it.

So, let's put it all together in an example:

You have *always been collecting* ideas in a notebook since you gave your Ice Breaker speech. In considering what to do for Project 5, "Your Body Speaks," you immediately think of one topic on your list, a family item from the *JIFFY* list, "What I've learned from my mother," because of the way she used to yell and wave her arms around when she found how messy your room was. You know that *passion will energize your performance* because of how angry you felt then, and how exasperated you feel now because your eight-year-old has the same problem as you once did.

Now all that remains to turn your topic into a Topic is to *clarify it and use a theme*. The objective of the

*project* is to use body language, but what is the objective of your *speech*?

You decide that you want the audience to be entertained and go home with the idea that parents can be frustrating, but wait until *you're* a parent.

You now have a Topic and you think up a rhythmic phrase to repeat a few times to emphasize the *theme*: "I hated my mom's nagging, now look what *I* am!" Now that you have a theme, you can cut out any irrelevant material such as where your mom went to high school. You have plenty of time to work on the *bow* of your talk, mimicking her gestures and using body language effectively throughout the presentation.

You're now well on the way to completing your CTM. With a power-start for the preparation of each talk, you'll achieve more than you ever expected. **T**

**Jeff Dunn, ATM-B**, is a writer living in Northern California.

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 Gordon L. Monro 9932-21, Langley, BC, Canada  
 Carma Scheafer 1796-24, Omaha, Nebraska  
 Patricia Martin 9084-30, Hines, Illinois  
 Noe Alvarez Vera 3545-34, Mazatlan, Mexico  
 Lilly Wolfensberger 3889-31, Distrito Federal, Mexico  
 Fannie T. Howell 3092-38, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
 Faye Andrusiak 1245-42, Yorkton, SK, Canada  
 Eleanor R. Grona 3093-42, Medicine Hat, AB, Canada  
 Rowena S. Romero 8647-42, Calgary, AB, Canada  
 Gerald H. Williams 2028-43, Jackson, Mississippi  
 Elaine F. Lester 2217-43, Little Rock, Arkansas  
 William G. Hook 2738-45, Charlottetown, PE, Canada  
 Amelia L. Abad 451-46, New York, New York  
 Reed M. Rogers 4993-50, Richardson, Texas  
 John M. Vescovo 8-52, Glendale, California  
 Linda M. Cota-Kumagai 29-52, Glendale, California

Christina M. Elvidge 1668-54, Bloomington, Illinois  
 Marion K. Humphries 2816-60, Sudbury, ON, Canada  
 Ronald K. Hills 3835-60, Owen Sound, ON, Canada  
 Alain Londes 8517-60, Thornhill, ON, Canada  
 Janice E. Weir 8517-60, Thornhill, ON, Canada  
 Paul F. Prefontaine 7701-61, Montreal, QC, Canada  
 O'Brian Bourne 8658-61, Lachine, QC, Canada  
 Danny Langford 2744-63, Cookeville, Tennessee  
 Ralph M. Bell 2513-64, Winnipeg, MB, Canada  
 Donald R. Wilcox 5265-64, Winnipeg, MB, Canada  
 William A. Weiland 686-66, Norfolk, Virginia  
 Tanya T. Weiland 9841-66, Virginia Beach, Virginia  
 Heather H. Doucet 9803-68, Alexandria, Louisiana  
 Alix M. Fortescue 669-69, Brisbane, QLD, Australia  
 Russell A. Fortescue 2281-69, Lawnton, QLD, Australia  
 Daniel James McNickle 4424-70, East Maitland, NSW, Australia  
 Philip L. Bendeich 6865-70, Croydon Park, NSW, Canada  
 James Robert Ferguson 6327-71, Hatfield, United Kingdom  
 Alan Hamilton 8610-72, Wellington, New Zealand  
 Patricia A. Duggan 3712-72, Brookings, South Dakota

## 40 YEAR

Orange Upon A Time 192-F, Orange, California  
 Excalibur 2914-4, Sunnyvale, California  
 Woodman 681-11, Indianapolis, Indiana  
 Executive-San Joaquin 201-33, Fresno, California  
 TM Club of Barrie Ontario 1603-60, Barrie, ON, Canada  
 Wellington 1046-72, Wellington, New Zealand

## 35 YEAR

Las Juntas 2473-57, Walnut Creek, California

## 30 YEAR

Broadview 3303 3303-30, Broadview, Illinois  
 North Shore 2256-72, Auckland, New Zealand

## 25 YEAR

Mills Early Risers 2312-6, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 WRIP City 1597-7, Portland, Oregon  
 City Hall Connaught 4328-21, Vancouver, BC, Canada  
 Energetics 536-26, Lakewood, Colorado  
 Bolling Air Force Base 3308-27, Washington, D.C  
 Sunrise 4333-33, Merced, California  
 Farmers Market 2192-39, Sacramento, California  
 Elmer A. Sperry 4326-46, New Hyde Park, New York  
 Energetics 2365-65, Syracuse, New York  
 Sildell 4325-68, Slidell, Louisiana

## Anniversaries

### 55 YEAR

Superstition Club 73-3, Mesa, Arizona

### 50 YEAR

Mid-Day 1790-10, Cleveland, Ohio  
 Burlington 1835-37, Burlington, North Carolina  
 Marvin G. Rook 1848-40, South Charleston, West Virginia

### 45 YEAR

Energetic 3173-27, Indian Head, Maryland  
 Sound Advice 1594-32, Tacoma, Washington

### 20 YEAR

Pru Toasters 5948-6, Plymouth, Minnesota  
 Parker SpeakEasies 533-10, Cleveland, Ohio  
 Goldstream 5952-21, Victoria, BC, Canada  
 Firstier 5949-24, Lincoln, Nebraska  
 Laramie Noon 5950-26, Laramie, Wyoming  
 American Management Systems 5958-27, Fairfax, Virginia  
 Renaissance Advanced 5954-31, Marlborough, Massachusetts  
 Y.M.C.A. 5955-51, Georgetown, Malaysia  
 Charleston Classics 5953-58, Charleston, South Carolina

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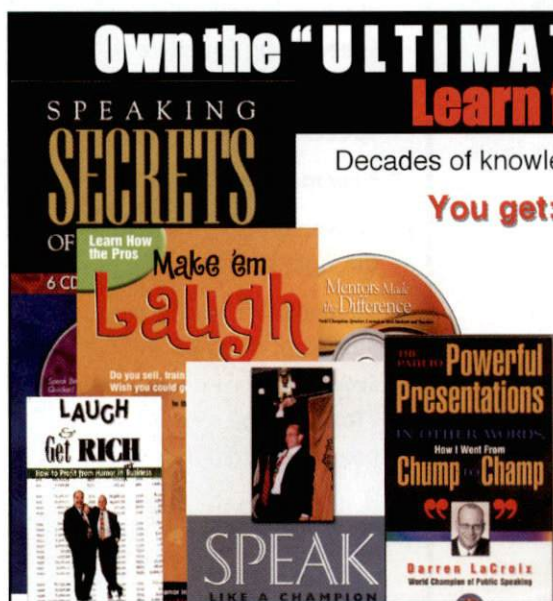
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- The high-profit mix of speeches, seminars and consulting.
- How to create CD and DVD albums that make money while you sleep.
- What markets to target first . . . and exactly how to reach and sell them.
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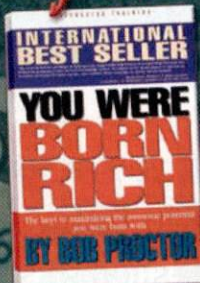
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