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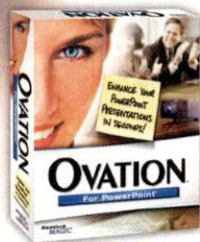
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A 'Perfect' New Year

Some people can find humor even during a long plane flight. Recently, a flight attendant announced an in-flight movie: "The title of our selection is *The Perfect Man*. Now remember, it's just a movie!" The movie was a romantic comedy about a teenage girl's attempt to make her single mother happy by creating an impression that a "perfect" man was interested in her. This subterfuge led to some hilarious situations, but it also revealed some take-home messages for us.

In the movie, every time the mother broke up with a boyfriend, she and her two daughters would move to a new town, which represented a new beginning. Likewise, the dawn of this new year is a new beginning for us. It's the time when people make resolutions. The new year promises a new opportunity to reach our dreams. It is a promise of what could be a "perfect year." It is a time to put behind us the failures and mistakes of the past and press forward toward our preferred future.

At this time every Toastmasters district offers a new round of club-officer training, and several regions have mid-winter training for their top three officers. The Toastmasters year has passed its halfway mark. It is a time to assess our progress toward our individual goals and our goals for our club and district or territorial council. Regardless of the performance of the past six months, what we do now can decide our success or failure for this Toastmasters year. We can create our own future! So, if you are doing well and sailing toward success, congratulations! If you are not where you want to be, you might want to pay attention to Napoleon Hill's comment: "The majority of men meet with failure because of their lack of persistence in creating new plans to take the place of those which fail." However, sometimes it's not the plan that is failing. It is our *will to work* the plan that needs bolstering. Nothing can take the place of action with passion.

My feeling is that "perfection" is overrated. Experience teaches us that none of us are perfect, but what really matters is continuous improvement. In this new year, we can all challenge ourselves to live up to our commitments, define and refine our dreams, make plans, take massive action, and persevere until we win.

This new year, like the *Perfect Man* movie, will certainly have moments of comedy. May it also give you the satisfaction of advancing toward your dreams. As Kahlil Gibran wrote in *The Visit of Wisdom*, "Advance and never halt, for advancing is perfection."

Happy New Year!

Dilip R. Abayasekara
Dilip Abayasekara, DTM
International President

FEATURES



Speaking of Nightmares

Bad speaking situations and lessons learned.

By John Kinde, DTM

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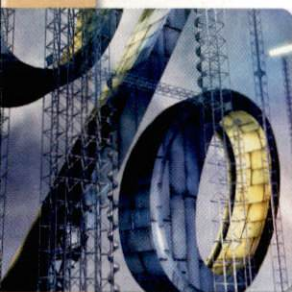


Finding Your Voice

So, what do you have to say?

By Lance Miller, DTM

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Debunking the 55%, 38%, 7% Rule

Words are more important than you may think.

By Judith E. Pearson, DTM

PAGE 24

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.

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Accentuate the Negative

I could not agree more with Phil Slott and his article in the November issue "Never Be Too Positive." I first realized the power of "positive negativism" when I saw the title of Lance Armstrong's book in a shop window some four years ago: *It's Not About the Bike*. The book was captivating, said a lot and was a good read. I have since tried to accentuate the negative in my speeches and suggest likewise to new members. Consider this classic line by Alcoholics Anonymous: "If you stop coming to meetings, you will never hear what happens to those who stop coming to meetings."

Terry Stormon, DTM • Daylight Club 1534/69 • Lismore, NSW, Australia

Fact-Checking Needed

I always read the *Toastmaster* magazine the day it arrives in the mail. Great content, but your editors didn't check "Never Be Too Positive" by Phil Slott closely enough. On page 27, Mr. Slott misrepresents Army recruits with the following statement, "Most recruits are from the inner city ..." This is not true.

Jerry Conrad, Certified Speaking Professional • Muskegon, Michigan

Apropos the November Issue

I think the November *Toastmaster* magazine is outstanding! Cover-to-cover reading is always a must, but I found this edition to be packed from beginning to end with thoroughly interesting articles.

International President Dilip Abayasekara's Viewpoint remarks were right on target! I want to build the essence of his analogy about the Toastmasters banquet table into a speech soon to be offered to my club. We have a unique and wonderful program in Toastmasters, but greater effort needs to be directed to introducing fledgling Toastmasters to the "banquet." All those exciting and challenging activities are an incredible array of possibilities for personal growth!

I found article after article to be of great interest. I especially enjoyed the emphasis on contest participation and Linda Young's "Be the 'I CAN!!!' Toastmaster!"

The *Toastmaster* magazine is superb! Keep it up!

George Shyrock, DTM • Venice Club 5486-47 • Venice, Florida

Speech Topics Are Not Up for Evaluation

My blood pressure racked up a notch while reading "Humor – What's Funny to Some ..." (November). The evaluator who told author Jackie Dishner that he was "offended" by Dishner's topic matter of hair removal needs to be taken to task, not Dishner. Unless speech material is blatantly offensive (slandering a racial or ethnic group, for example), speech content isn't to be judged. Instead, we as Toastmasters are here to critique the mechanics of speaking – voice inflection, body language, enthusiasm or speech structure. The topic someone chooses is up to them.

We had a young man in our district deliver his humorous speech on the topic of "Up or Down," referring to the battle between men and women on the issue of the ajar status of the toilet lid. I loved it but recognize that what's funny to some may not be to others. Dishner does herself a disservice thinking that because one member didn't like her subject matter, it wasn't appropriate. The only inappropriate part was the evaluator bringing personal preferences into an evaluation.

Dena Harris, CTM
Rocking Hammers Club 4327
Madison, North Carolina

The Importance of Speech Contests

The importance of speech contests is ultimately measured

by how it helps our members achieve their public speaking goals.

If it weren't for contests, I wouldn't even be in Toastmasters. For me, contests are a chance to validate the growth I've experienced in my club. Starting from my first contest experience less than six months after I joined, I have always felt that my progress resulting from the focus and concentration in the short weeks of the contest season is equal to many manual speeches over several months.

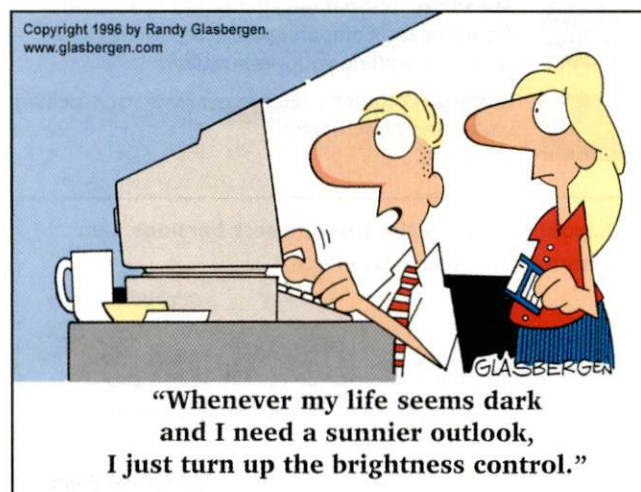
If you really want to know how you stand as a speaker, enter a speech contest. Contests should be a cornerstone of the Toastmasters program.

Norman L. Cook, DTM, PDG • Clubs 407-F • Buena Park, California

A Grammar Faux Pas

Your October issue had several very good articles referencing the importance of grammar and spelling. However, it appears one minor glitch got through your proofreading. Herbert Lee's excellent article, "Communicating Across Cultures" contains this very apt quote on page 21: "The main criteria for understanding other cultures is simply to know your own." This uses the word "criteria" as if it were singular, when of course it is plural.

Roger Wells, ATM • Tower Club 4072 • Seacot, Washington



From novice speaker to national radio host.

Thank You, Toastmasters!

I wish I had kept the tape of my original Ice Breaker speech back in 1981. I was 26 years old, a total public speaking novice, and like many new Toastmasters I used a tape recorder to practice. It was one of the first times I heard the sound of my own voice, and I was horrified. As many of you have done, I blundered through my first speech, knees knocking and voice quivering. I then proceeded to become a CTM, an ATM, club president, and finally area governor. And now I host a live weekly radio talk show heard by millions of people throughout the United States. Who ever would have thought?

When I moved to Southern California to start working in real estate in 1981, I knew very few people, so I decided to join a few local clubs or groups to meet some. I looked at civic organizations, but they didn't turn me on. But Toastmasters was a different story. I knew public speaking was scary stuff and I knew it would be beneficial if not for contacts, certainly for self improvement. I soon became reasonably proficient at being on stage, and I took every chance to get my voice heard. Soon I developed a reputation as a ham, as the "go to" guy when there was a need for a speaker. After more than 10 years of running weekly meetings, I was known by most of my real estate peers.

Later it was time to stretch myself once more and I ventured into other areas. I put real estate aside and pursued new business opportunities, always gearing my efforts toward marketing myself. One of the businesses I got involved in included

giving public seminars, and even though I was used to speaking before my work associates, it was different doing it for the public. Another opportunity consisted of taking a company with three offices and expanding it to 12, and structuring continuing education classes for the California Association of Realtors.

My speaking talents were put aside for a while until I opened my own mortgage company in 2002 and was offered the chance to market myself on a nationally broadcast financial radio talk show. When given the chance to do a one-minute spot each week heard by millions of people, I did not hesitate at all. It was expensive, but I knew it was my calling and something that would cause me to grow once again. For two years that spot brought me most of my mortgage business, but that relationship later ended and another adventure took its place – my own one-hour radio show.

After 25 years working in the field of financial services, I knew I could offer listeners some straight-forward honest advice and also support my mortgage company. I teamed up with a friend of 25 years, Mike Roberts, a fellow real estate agent and financial planner, who was also an accomplished speaker and teacher, and between the two of us, I felt that we could handle it I had enough confidence and talent to just about get us both in over our heads, but I knew we could survive the learning curve.

Our first show on the air, in January 2004, was scary, exciting and humbling. The time flew by; we got a few calls and quickly learned to



▲ The author, Norm Bour with KRLA cohost Mike Roberts talk about real estate on their weekly show.

"think on our feet." Table Topics finally paid off! All those awkward moments, when I was put on the spot and asked to think quickly, had a purpose. Each week it became easier and easier. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? We now do live workshops before hundreds of people and don't think twice about it. We're on the air live in Las Vegas, Phoenix, Orlando and Hawaii along with Southern California, and each week millions of people hear me think on my feet. We even offer a course on how to host your own radio talk show.

Do I have any "ahs" and "ums"? Of course. It's one thing speaking for 30-60 seconds and behaving yourself; it's a little different when it lasts for an hour, but that's OK. I'm sure there are many "ah" bells ringing in many homes and cars, but when I hear other media people being interviewed or hear other radio personalities, they have no idea how bad they sound. I at least have the insight and knowledge to do it right; it's just a matter of focus and effort. Toastmasters, 25 years later I salute and thank you! 📺

Norm Bour hosts "The Real Estate and Financial Show" on Sunday afternoons at KRLA 870AM in Southern California. Reach him at www.normandmike.com.

It's a Wonderful Life

By Nina Insinna, ATM-B

A tribute to three Toastmasters who touched my life.

Most American movie-goers know the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life* with Donna Reed and Jimmy Stewart. It's a heart-warming story that shows how we all touch each other's lives, but more importantly how different our lives would be had our paths not crossed with others. Let me share a story of three incredible Toastmasters who touched my life:

The first is **June Bowers, DTM**. Recently she was featured in an article in our local newspaper with the heading "I shall not disappear into the shadows until summoned". Ironically, the story began like this: "In October 1964, I decided to commit suicide ..."

I first met June in the spring of 1990 at Sarasota Vocational School, where she taught a course in public speaking I was taking; this is where I first heard of Toastmasters. Every week I was thrilled at each assignment. One lesson that remains with me to this day was titled, "Are You a Time Bandit?" Never before had I thought about how my not being clear and succinct stole from the time of my listening audience.

I was hooked, and when the course ended I joined a local Toastmasters club. I have since remained a member in good standing of Sarasota Evening Toastmasters.

Encouraged by my mentors, I entered competitions for the first

time in my life, going all the way to the division contest my first year. What a thrill! In addition to manual speeches and weekly Toastmasters roles, I also learned:

- How to serve as an officer in each capacity (except treasurer)
- Protocol
- Responsibility
- How to fulfill obligations and commitments
- How to make mistakes
- How to do things better
- How to stretch

But most importantly, I made friends and heard stories that could only come from a Toastmasters club! Some of these people are still members and some are not, but all have tremendously impacted my growth as a person and as a Toastmaster.

The second most influential woman in my Toastmasters life walked into our meeting in 1992 with her husband, Hugh, and her guide dog, Duchess. She was **E.J. Burgay, DTM**, and as she and her husband entered the room I was struck by a simple dignity and presence. They were both prominent Toastmasters who had recently moved to Sarasota, Florida, looking to join a club. We were delighted when they chose ours. Many longtime Toastmasters around the globe remember the Burgays, and those who don't should

know their legacy. They were dedicated to club improvement – and if you wanted a mentor, there was none better than the wisdom of those two.

E.J. was one of the first women to join Toastmasters International when membership opened for women in the '70s. She was also the first woman to win the International Speech Contest (in 1978), she served on Toastmasters' Board of Directors in 1991-1993 and she had a successful career as an attorney in Washington D.C. She was blind, yet she had better eye contact when she spoke than many sighted speakers! She had an advantage, she said, because no one knew when she was using notes – they were in Braille!

Her confidence and exuberance were such that the only reminder of her "handicap" was her dog.

Whenever I asked advice on a speech, she provided insight, and as a true mentor, left me to figure it out. There was one speech where I was sure to be a "time bandit" and E.J. asked if I could leave something out and still convey the message. I reluctantly mentioned one section, stating quickly, "But it's so good!"

She agreed and said something that I've always remembered: "Sure it is. Save it and use it for another speech!" I felt validated.

The third, of course, was E.J.'s husband, Past International Director **Hugh Burgay, DTM**. During meetings he referred to his wife as "E.J. Honey" (especially if he was evaluating her speech). A world traveler, voracious reader and hopeless romantic, he could quote Shakespeare's sonnets, Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven" and anything in between at the drop of a hat. He played the Spanish guitar and spoke at least three languages fluently.

Whenever he took control of the lectern, he had our full attention. He was neither loud nor grandiose, but when he opened his mouth to speak, you knew you were going to listen.

One of the best things he did was tell jokes – a weak spot for many of us. He used to say that he couldn't take advantage of E.J.'s blindness by

sneaking into the kitchen for a snack because "she always sprinkled a trail of corn flakes down the hall."

By putting the joke in the first person, he always drew in the audience, then hit us with the punch line. If a member didn't show for a role, he could fill it – from inspirational moment to a manual speech.

In 1992, I started college, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications in 1997. The confidence I discovered in Toastmasters was part of the catalyst. The other part was my two children. As a single mom, I wanted to show them that any goal you set could be accomplished. Goal setting and encouragement were things I learned in Toastmasters; I will be sure to pass those traits on to my children.

June Bowers overcame her depression and is now an octogenarian who believes the end of life is not an option for her just yet. She is writing her fourth book, titled *Speaking for Fraidy Cat*, a self-help guide for public speakers who want to come out of the closet. Had she given in to that dark moment in 1964, would I have found Toastmasters and E.J. and all the other people who have since touched my life?

E.J. battled cancer in the late '90s and was absent from meetings for a few months. Hugh would attend meetings periodically and update us on her condition, always saying she was in good spirit and good humor. One night he walked into the meeting, arm in arm with a striking blonde woman (E.J. was wearing a wig). Hugh introduced her as "the other woman" he had fallen in love with – all over again.

A few years ago, Hugh developed Parkinson's disease, which affected his gestures, yet he man-



▲ Hugh and E.J. Burgay carried the American flag at the Parade of Flags at the 2000 International Convention in Miami, Florida.

aged to control them with great skill. His voice, though much softer, still commanded attention. We had so much to learn from this great man. In 2000, he left us and within a year, E.J.'s cancer returned, spreading rampantly. Our friendship deepened those few years before she finally left to join Hugh.

The lessons, love and inspiration of E.J. and Hugh have been among the real treasures of my life. I, for one, am grateful to June Bowers for changing her mind in 1964. **T**

Nina Insinna, ATM-B is a humorist, speaker and freelance writer from Sarasota, Florida. Her works have been published nationally and she is working on her soon-to-be-published book *Survivor or Thriver?* Contact her at Ninaspeaking@comcast.net

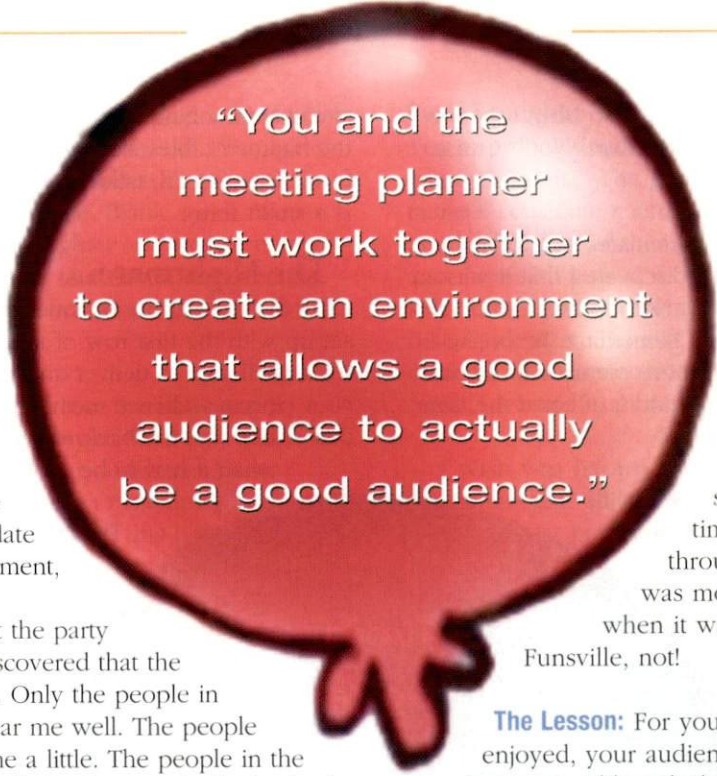


NIGHTMARES SPEAKING OF

Bad speaking situations and lessons learned.

By John Kinde, DTM

As a speaker and entertainer with more than 30 years experience, I've had my share of nightmarish speaking and performing conditions. The best thing that can come from a bad situation is that we learn something to prevent it from happening again! Let me share some of my worst memories – and what I learned from them.



“You and the meeting planner must work together to create an environment that allows a good audience to actually be a good audience.”

■ **The Nightmare:**

Booked to perform 30 minutes of comedy at a New Year's Eve Party, I was introduced at 11 p.m., one hour before the stroke of midnight. To accommodate my portion of the entertainment, the organizers stopped the dancing. The 300 people at the party were not happy. Then I discovered that the sound system was horrible. Only the people in the first two rows could hear me well. The people in the middle could hear me a little. The people in the back could not hear me at all. So the ones in the back of the room started talking to each other!

The chatter from the back of the room resulted in the people seated in the middle not hearing anything I was saying, so they also started talking. You get the picture: A tsunami of indifference was sweeping toward the front of the room. Soon only the front row could hear small portions of my program. Disaster! When it was over, I didn't hang around to meet the audience. And I almost swore I'd never perform again. Almost.

The Lesson: Sometimes the main factor in an awful situation is bad timing. In this case, interrupting the dancing just before midnight was not good. A performance at 8 p.m. would have been better. For a speaker, a case of bad timing could mean giving a speech while people are eating dinner. It's better to give your talk after the meal is completed. What if you're scheduled to speak at breakfast? Giving a talk at 7 a.m. could be bad timing, especially if you're doing humor. A humorous talk will normally be better received at lunch than it will be at a breakfast meeting.

Another factor to consider is whether you would rather speak to a group before or after they get drunk. I prefer sober audiences. I've learned to explore my options. For example, at an event such as a New Year's Eve Party, is it possible to perform in a separate room where watching the program is optional? I've done this at high school graduation parties and it works like a charm. Those who want to watch the entertainment are able to enjoy it.

■ **The Nightmare:** There was the time I was booked as a middle act in a fund-raiser variety program at a high school auditorium. The stage was perfect, but the spot-

light was fixed. The cord on the microphone was not long enough to reach the illuminated area of the stage. As a result, I couldn't be seen and heard at the same time. I made choices all the way through my program of when it was most important to be heard and when it was most important to be seen.

Funsville, not!

The Lesson: For your speech to be received and enjoyed, your audience must be able to see and hear you. Although this is a no-brainer, you need to remember to coordinate with your host or meeting planner to ensure that you are provided with good sound and lighting. Know what is essential for optimal room configuration and communicate it in advance to the program planner. Sometimes people in charge of meetings have little experience and no understanding of the dos and don'ts of program staging. They have good intentions and want to do it right; they just need your help. You and the meeting planner must work together to create an environment that allows a good audience to actually be a good audience.

Make the commitment to arrive early, at least two hours before your program, to check out the lights, sound system and other elements of the room setup. At more recent programs I have often brought my own sound system, lights, microphone cords, projectors and a screen. Usually, I leave them in the car and take them in only if they're needed.

■ **The Nightmare:** My next performance treat was on a riverboat. My program was staged on the upper deck, on top of the doors that covered the diesel engine. As if the noise wasn't enough, the lighting consisted of yellow "bug lights." I was performing magic, and the color of the props was important to the effect. As a result of the yellow riverboat's lighting, my red props looked like orange. White looked like yellow. Blue looked like green, and I looked like a cast member from *Night of the Living Dead* – and felt even worse.

The Lesson: Avoid outdoor programs. At outdoor events, the audience's energy evaporates right into the sky. Also,

never speak on a moving vehicle. I've also been asked to speak on trains, busses and limos. No thank you! Cruise ships would be the exception.

■ **The Nightmare:** I spoke to inmates at a federal prison. Yes, a captive audience. I discovered that it was an ideal place to experience hecklers. Not just one heckler, but many. If an inmate is thinking something, he or she is more likely than your typical audience member to say it out loud. I was not expecting this, and it affected the flow of my program.

The Lesson: If you're prepared to deal with hecklers, the disruption will be minimized. For the most part, it isn't that hecklers don't like you; they are simply trying to have fun. The best thing is not to confront or challenge them but to go with the flow. Enjoy the moment. If they are extremely annoying, often the audience will help you deal with them. Also, be alert for some funny lines that you may be able to add to your next talk. I picked up a line from the prison talk that I used for many years after.

■ **The Nightmare:** The next surprise was a program for an audience of 400. I had performed for this group in previous years; a good audience. But this time, the decorating committee had unwittingly sabotaged the program. The room's primary decoration consisted of three helium balloons tied to the back of each chair with three-foot ribbons. On arrival, I went to the back of the room to check the view of the stage. Or should I say, lack of view of the stage. The effect of the decorations amounted to the equivalent of 400 people standing in the middle of the room.

When you were seated, unless you were in the front three rows, you absolutely could not see the stage. The larger problem was that since people in the back rows could not see anything, they started talking among themselves. Flashback to the New Year's Eve party. And now, in addition to not seeing the stage, nobody could even hear the program because of the conversational tidal wave. I needed my crying towel!

Lesson Learned: The room decorations can have a major impact on your program. It's not just balloons on chairs;

streamers hanging from the ceiling or tall centerpieces on the banquet tables also can obscure the view of the platform. Once again, talking to the event planner in advance is a smart thing.

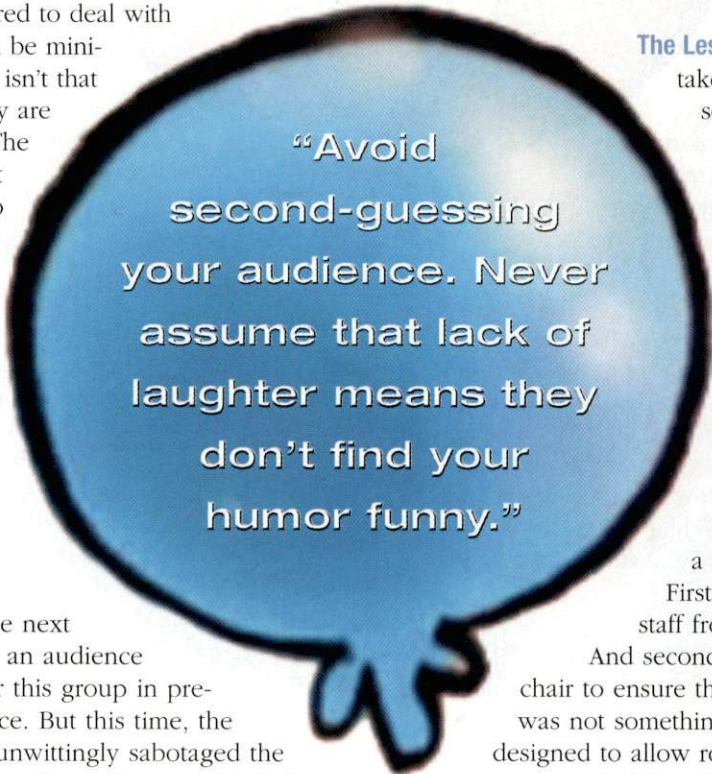
■ **The Nightmare:** At yet another event, I arrived early to find that the banquet tables for 500 people were set up with the first row of tables 70 feet from the stage. It's a challenge to deliver an intimate presentation with your closest audience members 70 feet away. In addition, this means that the back row was 70 feet further away than it had to be. Not good.

The Lessons: Sometimes you need to take charge. In this case, I did something I had never done before. I knew that the fix was simple and quick. It wasn't a matter of moving all 63 banquet tables closer to the stage; it was simply a matter of moving the back two rows of tables (only 10 of them) to the front of the large room. I asked if that could be done and the response was, "Yes, but there isn't enough time to do it." I made a decision, based on two factors. First, I had a relationship with the staff from previous engagements.

And second, I checked with the program chair to ensure that the 70 feet of dead space was not something that was intentionally designed to allow room for something else in the program. And then I said, "OK, I'll move the tables myself." I asked one person to assist me and we started to move the first table.

Within 30 seconds we had 10 staff members helping us. And in less than five minutes the entire table arrangement had been fixed. Because of some slightly assertive behavior, the program was much better than if we had left the room as it was. This tactic needs to be used with caution and good judgment. In some cases (based on my relationship, or lack of relationship, with the venue staff and the meeting planners) I would choose to live with the dead space and make the best of it.

■ **The Nightmare:** Then there was the time we presented an improv show for a senior citizen residential home. The room was set for 100 chairs. Twelve residents turned out for the show. They sat in the back of the room, leaving the front seats empty. We performed our opening,



“Avoid
second-guessing
your audience. Never
assume that lack of
laughter means they
don't find your
humor funny.”

high-energy game that normally was received with loads of audience response, laughter, applause. But this night... nothing. Dead silence. Then we started asking for audience suggestions for the next scene. Blank stares. We ended up providing our own laughter and troupe members shouted out suggestions for the rest of the evening. I was hoping that our audience was finding the room a quiet place to rest.

Lesson Learned: Always assume that the audience is enjoying the program (unless they're throwing things at you). Avoid second-guessing your audience. Never assume that lack of laughter means they don't find your humor funny. Some of the people in this tiny senior-residence audience came up after the show to say how much they enjoyed the program. If only they hadn't kept it a secret during the show! As a speaker, you can always choose to believe that an audience's silence means that they are quietly enjoying your program. If they don't applaud, assume they're sitting on their hands because their fingers are cold. Don't let your negative assumptions and interpretations zap the energy out of your program.

Final Thoughts

You're probably wondering, "Hey John, are all your programs disasters?" The good news is that these performances constitute a small number of hundreds of programs and most of them took place more than 20 years ago. In recent years I've experienced few such unpleasant situations. The improvement in my track record is due to better judgment. The old saying is that good judgment comes from experience, which is the result of bad judgment. I learned from the difficult programs.

I wish you happy performing and happy speaking. But when you do get into a bad situation, deal with it. Do your best program possible even if only one person is enjoying it (even if you are that one person). And when it's over, quickly pack your things. Smile while you are leaving. And know that your future programs will be better because of the experience and the lessons you learn. **T**

John Kinde, DTM, Accredited Speaker, is a humor specialist and keynote speaker from Las Vegas. For more information, visit www.HumorPower.com.

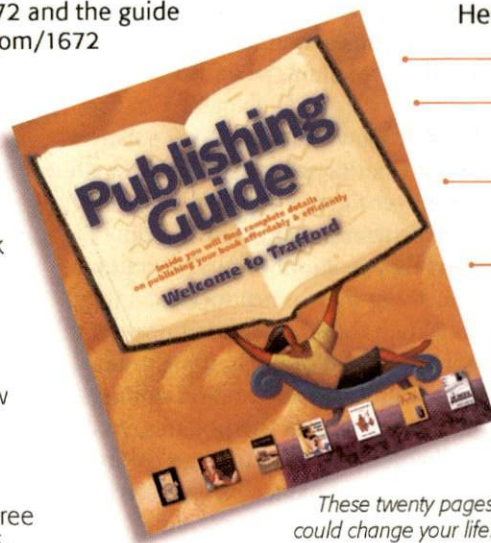
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When things beyond your control go wrong, the only thing you can control is your reaction to them.

Dos and Don'ts For When the Mike Won't

By Gene Perret



The sailor is at the mercy of the sea. The captain and crew combine their considerable skills and experience not to master the waters, nor to control them; they struggle simply to co-exist peacefully with the sea. Likewise, the speaker is at the mercy of the elements. The seamen may batten down the hatches in rough weather; what does the speaker do when the microphone won't work? Or when the lights malfunction? Or when the music in the next room is too loud?

Following is a list of dos and don'ts along with a few examples of intrepid speakers who rode out the sometimes stormy seas of the speaker's podium.

DON'T: Blow Your Cool. You never know what or when, and you usually can never figure out why, but occasionally things will either not do what they're supposed to do or do something they're not supposed to do. When things beyond your control go wrong, the only thing you can control is your reaction to them.

When you're at the podium, you're in charge. This is your stage, your arena, your audience. Conversely, when there are problems, they become your problems. Accept them and deal with them. Show your listeners that you are a leader. Prove to them that nothing can rattle you. If you remain calm and in control when these setbacks occur, people

will realize that you're a person they should be listening to.

I watched one speaker who, like Little Miss Muffet, was bothered by a spider. As he spoke, the critter lowered his web right by his side. Without faltering in his lecture, the speaker gestured with his left hand, breaking the spider's web. He followed that with a sweeping gesture with his right hand, flinging the bewildered bug far across the room. Problem solved.

DO: Maintain Your Dignity. All of the complications you encounter onstage are either fixable or ignorable. Remember that you are the featured act in this performance; the problem is a bit player. It will make its entrance and its exit, but you will remain as the star. Never let your audience forget that.

I worked with a seasoned comedian once whose microphone failed in the middle of his performance. He made a few faces and got a few laughs, but there was no way he could continue telling jokes if people couldn't hear them.

Very quickly, though, a backstage technician came out and took the mike from the star. He disconnected it and hooked up a new one. He said, "Testing, 1-2-3" and the audience heard him loud and clear. He handed the microphone back to the comic and calmly walked offstage... to thunderous applause.

The comedian said, "Don't applaud too loudly. He may do an encore."

The performer recaptured his audience.

DON'T: Surrender to the Situation.

Whatever dilemma you face is a temporary one. It will go away. It's only a battle, not the war. A good speaker should be able to project and convince under almost any circumstances. So continue to be a superb speaker even if the podium is falling apart in front of you.

I once coached a speaker who had prepared diligently for a very important presentation. Her voice was lively, her gestures were animated, her delivery was moving. Then the microphone cord broke and the mike around her neck crashed to the floor.

Someone handed her a replacement almost immediately, but from that moment on her voice lost its enthusiasm, her gestures were lifeless, her delivery was unconvincing. All of the enthusiasm was drained from her presentation.

She allowed a 20 second setback to destroy a well-prepared 30 minute speech.

DO: Your Best Under Any

Circumstances. The common show-business expression says, "The show must go on." The curtain rises and you perform with gusto. A comedian I worked for once complained of being tired before a show because he had had several hours of dental work done that afternoon. I said, "Why don't you tell the audience that. They'll understand." He looked at me like I was crazy and said, "I don't want sympathy out there; I want laughs."

If things go wrong, work that much harder to win over your audience. If there's a problem, try to solve it.

One time we were taping a Bob Hope military special in the middle of a war zone. All of our shows were performed on ships at sea. Right before our last performance on the

aircraft carrier, the *USS John F. Kennedy*, we discovered we'd lost all of our costumes. We had them on the last ship; we didn't have them on this one.

How can you do a large musical song and dance segment when the wardrobe is missing? One of the stars remembered that "the show must go on." She borrowed the jacket of a naval officer. Belted tight around her waist it became a very nautical

"Remember that you are the featured act in this performance; the problem is a bit player."

miniskirt. All of the women borrowed naval uniforms and the number looked like it was costumed in Hollywood.

The dance number looked so good with this makeshift wardrobe that it was used in the final broadcast version of the show.

Work your way through minor disasters and often your performance will be better for it.

DON'T: Continually Refer to the

Problem. Most speaker disasters are quickly remedied or circumvented. Once the problem is solved, dismiss it. Calling it up throughout your speech only draws attention to a problem that no longer exists. Referring back to it keeps it alive as a distraction. It's in the past; leave it there.

Some speakers, though, insist on constantly drawing attention to the situation. It may be an attempt to exonerate themselves, to gain sympathy, or to reap revenge on whomever may have been to blame. None of those reasons, though, should take precedence over the message you have to deliver. Now that the problem has been solved, deliver your message.

DO: Keep Your Sense of Humor.

I have worked with very competent humorous performers for many years. I've seen all kind of setbacks on stage. I can say from experience that most polished performers treat each

problem they encounter as a potential "straight line."

Any stage malfunction generates tension. Tension creates an atmosphere that is perfect for comedy. In almost any awkward situation, whatever the performer does or says, will bring laughter. Take advantage of that unexpected gift and get your laugh. It will not only lighten the moment, but it will win you added respect from your audience.

I remember once emceeing a

banquet honoring one of our fellow employees. The dinner was scheduled at a nearby restaurant immediately following the workday. When I approached the microphone, it squealed painfully loud. I immediately backed off and the screeching stopped. When I stepped forward again, the mike whined again. This happened several times until a technician realized the problem and turned down the audio volume. Now when I grabbed the mike, it behaved.

I said, "I apologize for that. When these dinners are held right after work, I don't always get a chance to shower first." It started the program with a huge laugh and appreciative applause from the audience.

As a speaker, you can no more control your surroundings than a sailor can manipulate the waves. The all-inclusive advice is to maintain your dignity and professionalism. In short, you do your part as well as you are able; let the problem you face resolve itself or be resolved by whoever is responsible. **T**

Gene Perret was Bob Hope's head writer and is a three-time Emmy Award winner on the *Carole Burnett Show*. He teaches an e-mail course on using humor in speaking and has written many books on that subject. Contact him at Gper276@sbcglobal.net or visit www.writingcomedy.com.

I attended my first Toastmasters meeting as a guest of a good friend. I was called on to participate in Table Topics, and I remember standing in front of the club and feeling my knee caps nervously bouncing up and down. All I wanted to do was look down and see if my pants were jiggling!

I didn't know what my voice sounded like that day, but it was clear that my body was doing strange things without my permission. They were strange manifestations that only came to life when I stood before a group to speak and then slipped back into hibernation once I was off the stage.

The path from that first Table Topics experience to winning the World Championship of Public Speaking was one of self discovery, or as stated in the Toastmasters Mission Statement, self actualization.

My challenges were not *how* to say something. My speech organization, vocal variety and gestures were in fine shape. My challenge was *what* to say? What was *my* message? What was *my* voice?

I remembered the messages of some great speakers who had overcome great personal tragedies, such as the homeless heroin addict who had put his life back together, or the young man who was shot and paralyzed at the age 15 and went on to win three Olympic gold medals in wheelchair basketball. I remember thinking, "I wish I had been a heroin addict or paralyzed, what a great speech I could give!" Then I realized how horrible that would actually be. That was *their* message; it was not *my* message. I was looking for my voice, my message.

Over the years I've used several elements to sort out what messages to use for my manual speeches and ultimately what message I wanted to give to the world through contests and beyond.

To answer the question of, "What is my voice?" I had to look at who I was, what defined my life, what was I strug-

gling with, what challenges had I overcome that I could share with an audience? I had to be willing to be honest with myself and with the audience. I had to be willing to be open and vulnerable with the audience.

Here is a list of questions that I sought answers to that helped me define myself and my message. While the questions may all be the same, our individual answers will not be.

1 What is your philosophy? A friend once told me that he had challenged his college philosophy professor by stating that he did not agree with any of the philosophies he was asked to summarize for his final exam. The professor's answer was, "OK, then write your own philosophy." To pass the class he had to write his own philosophy. He said it was the most worthwhile exercise he had ever done.

This question stuck with me for years. What was *my* philosophy? I had never sat down and defined the values by which I lived my life. It was so easy to go with the flow and moment and never look at what values I really lived by. This became a major source for speech topics.

In defining my philosophy, I started developing a base by which I could evaluate actions, subjects and even Table Topics questions! It has served as an invaluable guide both in and out of Toastmasters.

2 Defining moments of your life. We all have moments in our lives that stand out, that were special lessons or experiences. These are moments that profoundly affected

Finding You

By Lance Miller, DTM

us and caused us to look at life a little differently. They can be major events but are not always.

I remember learning how to wash the large windows in the front of my father's store. I was 12 years old; my teacher was a 75-year-old lady who was my father's long-time loyal employee. She didn't accept anything less than perfection. I think I washed the first window 15 times before I got it with no streaks! It was not a major event, but it was a defining moment where I learned what it takes to learn something new.

Make a list of the defining moments in your life. Keep adding to it when you think of more. This will result in a large list of topics that are your personal topics and have special meaning that you can share with the audience.

3 What are you *certain* about? Much of my work experience has involved building sales organizations. One point I emphasized when training new salespeople was having them determine what information they were certain about and what they were uncertain about. I knew that a salesperson could only use information he or she felt certain about. I would ask them to keep a list of every issue or question they came across in the course of their job that they were unsure of. Then we would address them and turn the uncertainties into certainties. After a while they were unstoppable as salespeople because they could trust their own judgment.

I started to apply this concept broadly across my life. What is it I am certain of in life? The test of this was: How easily could I be convinced to change my mind? Take an issue such as "the Earth is round." On this point I am certain. I don't know that any amount of convincing could change my mind. But take an issue such as the best way to educate

"My challenges were not *how* to say something. They were *what* to say? What was *my* message? What was *my* voice?"



Mr Voice

So, what do you have to say?

children, or remedies for the common cold, and I wasn't as certain.

Find those subjects and issues that you are certain about. Make a list and find the speech topics you want to share with the world.

4 That One Thing. In the movie *City Slickers*, there is a scene where Curly, the old weathered cowboy, is telling Mitch, the urban executive going through his mid-life crisis, how he figured out life. He said, "There is just one thing you gotta know." Mitch eagerly responds, "What's that?" and Curly says, "That's what you gotta figure out."

That concept puzzled me. If life could be refined down to "that one thing," what would it be? This was a great question to contemplate, to seek answers for, and it provided great fodder for speech topics.

Come up with what you think "that one thing" is and do a speech on it.

5 Fork in the Road. We all come to a fork in the road every day, or actually several times a day. It happens every time we have to make a decision. What criteria do you use to decide which path to take? It could be the decision of what to do when someone cuts you off on the freeway – to lay on the horn or back off and let them in. It could be the decision on taking a new job or buying a new car.

What values or criteria do you use to evaluate your decisions and future actions?


6 Find the extraordinary in the ordinary. To be an inspirational speaker, you have to live an inspired life. It is highly unlikely that you will be able to truly inspire an audience if you live a negative downtrodden life. I believe

if you are going to stand up and inspire an audience, you as the speaker, should do all you can to live and act by your own advice.

The above points refer to reflecting on past actions. This one is a great exercise for finding inspiration in our daily lives: Can you look at the ordinary activities of daily existence and find what is extraordinary about them?

I have given speeches on subjects such as: a can of corn, peanut butter and the history of beer, just to find extraordinary details and facts about each. Life is truly filled with so many wonderful blessings that we overlook every day. Find these and bring them to life for yourself and your audience!

7 Speak about what your attention is mostly on. I once had a lady ask me how to handle "speaker's block." She had not been able to come up with a speech topic for over a year. I told her to do a speech on "speaker's block," since that was the most prevalent subject she had her attention on. What are you struggling with right now? If you feel that you cannot do a speech because you do not have enough time, do a speech on not having enough time. I have found this makes for very passionate speeches and helps me address and resolve the issue for myself.

Remember that Toastmasters is a means, it is not an end. It is the place you go to test new things, to see what works and what does not work, to push yourself outside of your comfort zone. It is a safe place where there is no penalty for failure. Don't play it safe. Challenge yourself, try new ideas and discover *your* voice! 

Lance Miller, DTM of Glendale, California, is a member of Renaissance Speakers Club 2374. He won the 2005 World Championship of Public Speaking in Toronto in August 2005.

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Want to motivate club members to get their CTM? Here's how:

Getting Your Audience to Say 'Yes!'

It's a common dilemma for every speaker: You want to persuade your audience effectively, but you don't want to come across as pushy.

My clients bring up this concern all the time. That's why I developed a formula that eases your audience into accepting what you have to say...and, into taking the action(s) you suggest.

Because it's January and many of us are focused on goals for the year, I will show you how to use this five-step formula for a particular kind of speech: to persuade your fellow Toastmasters to set the goal of earning their CTM this year.

Step 1: Early in your presentation, state a few relevant facts your audience already knows to be true.

Don't start by reeling off facts about the specific action you will suggest. Instead, simply set the stage for what's to come. For example, you could talk about Toastmasters in general, the value of belonging, the importance of public speaking, and other "warm-up" topics like those. But don't bring up the CTM right away.

Here's why: You first want to get the audience comfortable with you and the big picture that surrounds the specific action you will later suggest.

Step 2: Start talking about the advantages of your idea.

Now you can tease your audience a little by hinting at the advantages of what you're going to suggest. But you still don't want to tell them exactly what it is! This is to build anticipation.

You could remind them how Toastmasters is highly regarded in the business world. Comment that what-

ever members accomplish in the club will reflect well on them at work. Point out how some members' bosses have received letters informing them of their employee's achievements in Toastmasters.

You could even remark that some companies actually give their employees cash bonuses for earning their CTM award.

By now, your listeners will be sitting on the edge of their seats! So this would be an excellent time to move to the next step.

Step 3: Present your idea.

Since you have already laid the groundwork so carefully, your audience will naturally be more receptive to your idea. However, as you present your idea, don't just blurt it out. Instead, present it in the context of what you have been talking about up to this point.

For example, you could ask, rhetorically, How exactly does someone's boss know about a member's Toastmasters training? Respond that it's by getting a CTM. You could go through a litany of similar questions and answers. Or you could tell of positive personal experiences you and others have had as a result of earning the CTM.

Step 4: Anticipate and undermine "mental escape routes."

It's a curious aspect of human nature: The minute people decide they want something, they start thinking of reasons they don't want it! Sales trainers call this phenomenon "buyer's remorse"; psychologists call it "approach-avoidance."

And here's the rub: The better a job you have done making your listeners want to accept your suggestion, the more mental escape routes they will begin mapping out for themselves. You can create roadblocks to escape routes without alienating your audience. Show them – in a firm yet understanding way – why they want to avoid taking those escape routes.

Emphasize how easy it is to follow the CTM plan by giving the speeches listed in the manual; talk about someone else (maybe even you!) who was nervous, or who thought they didn't have the time, but found they did and were so glad they stayed the course.

Step 5: Suggest a next step that's easier to take than to avoid taking.

For example, you could mention that just as the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, earning your CTM begins by giving your first speech. Point out how easy this is to do and ask for a commitment by a show of hands.

There you have it: The five-step formula for persuasive speaking. Though we've focused this article on persuading club members to earn their CTMs, remember that this is only one good use of the formula. You can use it whenever you have a need to persuade anyone about anything. **T**

David Garfinkel is co-author of *The New Art of Public Speaking*. He consults with businesses on effective persuasion in spoken and written messages. You can contact him at david@newartofpublicspeaking.com.

Boost Your Business with Public Seminars

By Sam Silverstein

If you can help people by providing them with valuable information, they will listen to it.

No matter what your profession, whether you're a doctor or a dry cleaner, you can use your speaking skills to get information into the marketplace that can help your potential clients. How? By organizing and conducting public seminars on some topic of your expertise.

Holding a public seminar conveys to future customers what you can do to meet their needs. Realize that public seminars don't "sell" people on what you offer; rather, they get the word out about what you can do. They're a vehicle for you to communicate options and opportunities, acknowledge the challenges your clients may be experiencing, and show how your products or services offer the solution.

It's a simple principle: If you can help people by providing them with

valuable information, they will come to listen to it. And, if you deliver that information with expertise and authority, then the individuals who attend will realize they have a need and someone to go to who can meet that need, whether it be curing their back pain, making their car run better, installing their hot tub, or helping them with retirement investments.

Again, it's not sales; it's delivering value. If you showcase yourself as confident, articulate and trustworthy, people will come back to you to buy your product or service.

Follow these steps to use your Toastmasters skills to bring in new business through public seminars.

- **Decide on a location.** Depending on the goods or services you offer, you may want to have the presentation in your place of business, or you may want to rent a room at a conference center or hotel. For example, if you have a home improvement business, and you set up a room in the store to do the presentation, your audience can go to a showroom after the talk and look at some of the products you offer.

Apple computer is another example of a company that does in-store seminars. Each month they have software demonstration days that include free software training. Afterward, you may want to invest in some software or hardware, or just continue to invest in the relationship. On the other hand, financial services industry seminars are often at a restaurant or hotel meeting



room, and they offer refreshments. Do what works best for you.

▪ **Choose your topic.** In Toastmasters, you must narrow your topic precisely. For public seminars, you must do the same. You don't want to overwhelm people with too much information. Therefore, look at your industry and pinpoint your target audience's greatest need. Do not assume you know why your customers do business with you. Ask them!

Consider surveying current customers, asking them "Why did you come to us? What was the greatest need you had that we were able to meet?" This knowledge can direct your efforts. If a big percentage of your customers come to you for a specific reason, there's a good chance you've uncovered your brand in the marketplace. And if your current customers had that need, other people will too.

▪ **Create a catchy title.** You know how critical a compelling title is to grab your audience's attention and get them into the seminar. What would *you* respond to? For example, if you prepare tax returns for a living, imagine for a moment that you didn't. Wouldn't *you* want to attend a free seminar called "Tax Tips: How to Avoid 10 Costly Common Errors"? Or "Always Avoid an Audit: Secrets the Pros Know." Think about your potential clients' pain, something they would seek to avoid or that they desperately want to achieve.

▪ **Stretch a little.** You certainly have the speechwriting skills, but you're used to writing five- to seven-minute speeches, so you'll have to flesh out your speech somewhat. Give all that detail you've always wanted to include in one of your weekly Toastmasters speeches. Plan on the program lasting 45 minutes to an hour, with 30 to 40 minutes for the seminar itself and 15 to 20 minutes of questions and answers.

▪ **Don't give everything away...** Use Toastmasters presentation techniques; know your topic and communicate it

in an informative and entertaining manner. Your goal is to deliver value and give your audience some useful ideas. Show them their needs and then how you can satisfy those needs. Deliver more of the "what" than the "how"; the how is what you're going to sell them, eventually, whether it's information or products.

▪ **... But do give something away.** Sample giveaways, door prizes, coupons and hands-on demonstrations all add value. A live demonstration of a massage technique is guaranteed to motivate everyone in the room to want what the volunteer received. A free oil change is a good motivation to bring a car in when it also needs a more costly maintenance procedure. A free evaluation

"If you showcase yourself as confident, articulate and trustworthy, people will come back to you to buy your product or service."

of their current investment situation could very well turn them into clients of your financial services.

▪ **Deliver a call to action.** It can be soft or hard, depending on the industry and what your comfort level is. The coupon or other giveaway is part of that call for action. Maybe you ask your audience to fill out a form for additional information or have them sign up for a free evaluation. Maybe you allow them to request a free estimate or to come by the store and try this or that. It doesn't have to be for the final sale, but your call to action must ask these potential clients and customers to move to the next step, whatever that is in your business or industry.

▪ **Use a follow-up system.** Through the registration process, you will capture everyone's contact information. Take advantage of this opportunity so you can target potential clients. Thank attendees after the event and then regularly follow up, moving them into a buying situation. If you collect the registration information

properly, you will get an idea of the attendees' current and future needs. Then when you run promotions, you can address those needs specifically.

For example, if you did a seminar on "winterizing" your home, and you have learned that a couple has recently replaced their windows but might eventually want siding, you won't send them a mailing promoting a window sale. However, when you run a promotion on siding, they've already told you they might be interested, so you can target them based on the information you gathered at the seminar registration.

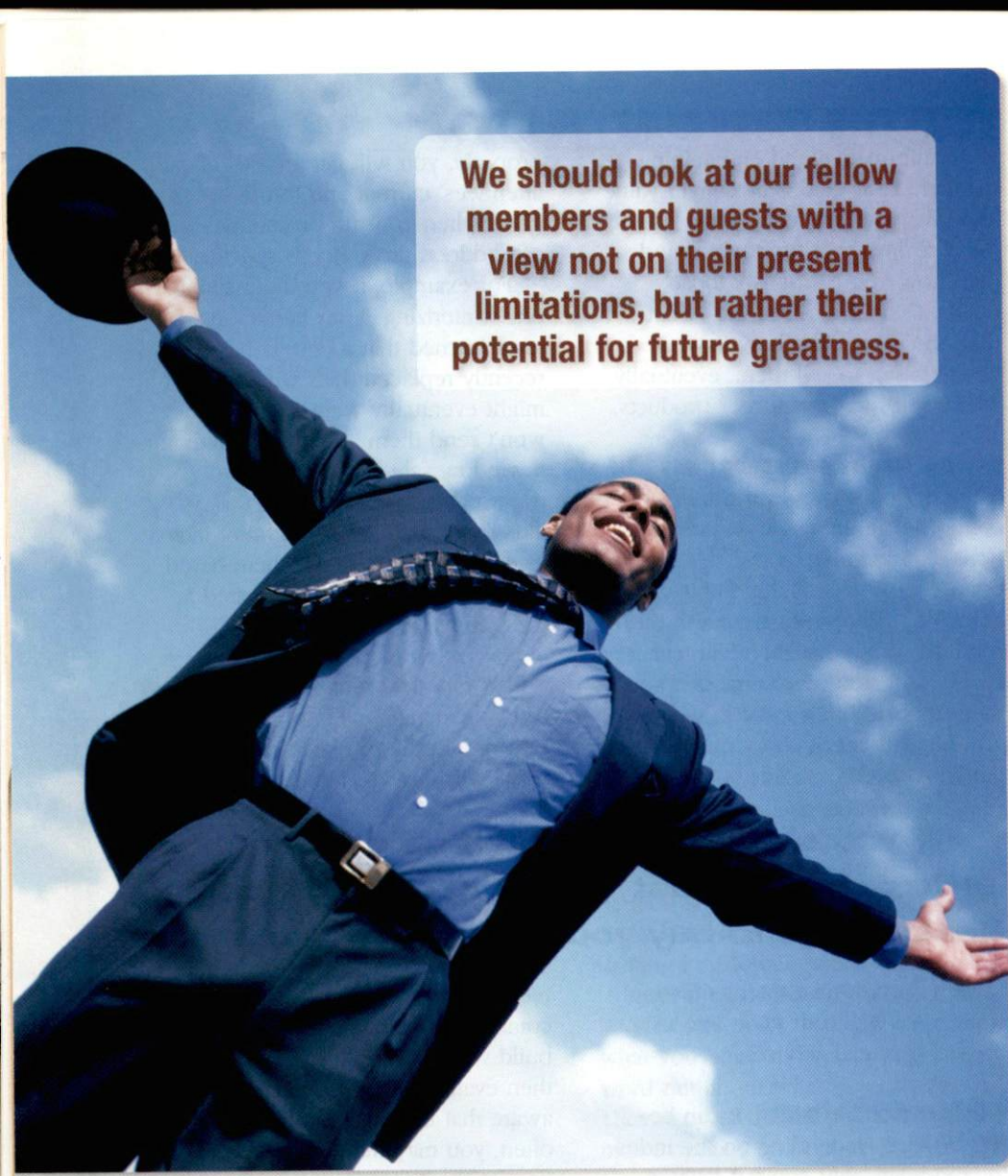
▪ **Plan your next seminar.** The first one or two seminars may not have a big turn out, but if you keep doing it, the word will spread as you build name

recognition. Set up a budget and commit to a certain amount of time to build word-of-mouth exposure and then evaluate as you go along. Be aware that if you do seminars too often, you may dilute the effectiveness of them, but if you spread them out too far apart from each other, then people tend to forget about you and what you have to offer.

Toastmasters + Trend = Success!

Most businesses would get a major bottom-line boost from public seminars. Many are already using them to build their customer bases. If your career would benefit, you need to tap into this trend. Here's your chance to let your creativity and Toastmasters training help you become a market leader. **T**

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



We should look at our fellow members and guests with a view not on their present limitations, but rather their potential for future greatness.

The greatness of Hockey Hall of Famer Wayne Gretzky was in his ability to skate not to where the puck was, but where it would soon be. We, as experienced Toastmasters mentors and leaders, must look at our members' talents as building blocks to future greatness. We must see their potential and envision where they're going. Especially since they cannot always see it themselves yet. Whether through slow methodical progress or leaps and bounds, members are nevertheless on the road to self-improvement. Our ability to see beyond their present limitations, their perceived shortcomings or their lack of experience and confidence in a given area, may be just the springboard they need to realize new successes and new milestones.

Milestones as Stepping Stones

Remember your first Table Topic? Your Ice Breaker? The first time you were the day's Toastmaster? Each was a milestone you at some point may have doubted your ability to achieve. Yet upon reaching that milestone, suddenly new ones emerged. The newfound confidence derived through achieving each milestone helped turn it into a stepping stone to further greatness. As we mentor and coach newer members in our clubs, we can help them experience the thrill inherent in achieving each of these key milestones. With our experienced eyes, we can also envision what might be next for these novice members, who aren't yet familiar with the various programs and opportunities available within Toastmasters.

Accentuating the Positive

Our speech evaluation training actually teaches us to look beyond what a speaker needs to improve, to initially focus on what he or she already does well. By identifying what core strengths they possess, we can help them build on their solid foundation. This doesn't just apply to speakers giving their Ice Breakers. By accentuating the positive in our new members, we reaffirm their competency and help them build confi-

Greater Things to Come:

By Craig Harrison, DTM

Projecting Potential

The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to them their own.

— BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Professional Speaker Jim Cathcart can look at an acorn and see a future oak tree. After a dozen years in Toastmasters I can now see similar potential in new members. Just as others saw the diamond in my rough, I now relish the opportunities to stoke the flames of newcomers, encouraging them to greater pursuits. You can too!

I believe we should look at our fellow members and guests with a view not on their present limitations but rather their potential for future greatness. We should also look at what we can do to help them realize their vast potential. The fact that someone saw beyond my ums and ahs, my rough edges and lack of polish, and thought enough to invest time and training in me, has helped me become the communicator and leader that I am today. Even now, I'm a masterpiece in progress. Aren't you too?

dence as they grow. When a member leads an effective meeting, competes admirably in a contest, or effectively recruits others to your club, each task portends greater things to come. We

In each case, the evidence I saw was just the tip of their talent iceberg. Recently each member has come into his and her own, in part through the supportiveness of

Today Cindy Ventrice, ATM-B, is a professional speaker and author of a book on employee recognition. Long before she was a professional speaker or author, her potential was recognized and nurtured by seasoned Toastmasters. "I know that many of the evaluations and notes that I have received over the years helped me to see that I had potential as a public speaker. If not for the members of the Downtown Toastmasters (#1803-4) I wouldn't have had the courage to become a professional speaker!"

“The newfound confidence derived through achieving each milestone helped turn it into a stepping stone to further greatness.”

should validate what's evident as a way of nurturing and also encouraging potential to be tapped.

experienced members who recognized sparks of brilliance in each and nurtured it. Once they saw it in others, they could cultivate it for everyone's benefit.

The Eyes Have It

What do you see when a new member joins your club? Look for sparks of creativity, trace elements of confidence and evidence of leadership potential you can then nurture. It may be just beneath the surface, so you must look closely. But when you look for it, then it's easier to find. The key is to look for it.

In my home club one new member, though shy and quiet by nature, had a strong and confident voice. A foreign-born speaker struggling with English nevertheless had a wonderful sense of humor that began to emerge within a few weeks. Another new member had an air of authority around her; credibility oozed from her even in her initially tentative speeches.

Translating Potential into Reality

The fun really begins when the potential is realized. Suddenly new horizons appear when members master their core competencies. That's why we emphasize achieving one's Competent Toastmaster status. The CTM forms the cornerstone for future communication success.

Similarly, when members successfully serve as club officers, their taste for leadership whets their appetite for more nourishing assignments. Many district leaders got their start as club officers. I could never have served my district as its governor if my club mates hadn't supported me during my infancy as a green and tentative club president.

You have the power to launch professional speakers, politicians and corporate leaders through your nurturing of others' potential. Step into your power by helping others translate their potential into potency!

You'll take special pride in knowing you helped a fellow member spring from tentative to talkative, from raw to ready, from meek to mellifluous. And in the process of nourishing others' potential, you'll be extending your sphere of influence as a Toastmasters leader. **T**

Craig Harrison, DTM, is a professional speaker and member of Laugh Lovers Toastmasters #596430-57 in Oakland, California. Visit www.craigspeaks.com for more tips on communication and leadership.

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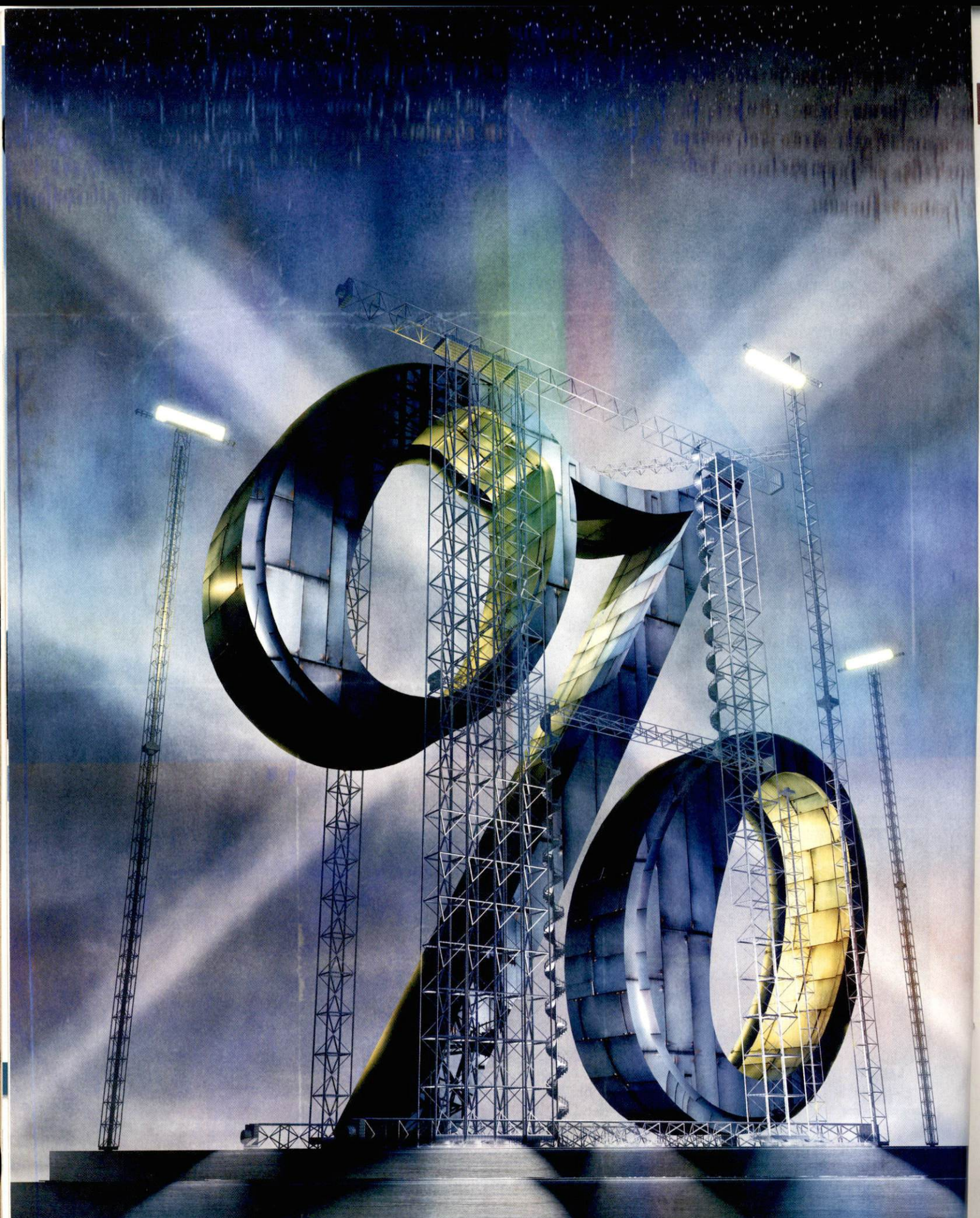
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DEBUNKING

If you have been a student of public speaking for any length of time, you probably have heard of the so-called 55%, 38%, 7% Rule. This rule states that 55% of the meaning of communication is body language, 38% is in tonality, and 7% rests in the words themselves.

Most of us have blithely accepted this precept at face value. In fact, I've heard several Toastmasters glibly refer to this rule when making a point about the importance of gestures and vocal variety in public speaking.

Have you ever wondered where these percentages came from? Have you ever considered that they may have been misinterpreted and applied erroneously? Would it surprise you to know that the 55%, 38%, 7% Rule is a myth?

Words Are Only 7%?

No one would argue that non-verbal expression and tonality are inconsequential to effective communication. Yet, logically does it make sense to relegate words to a meager 7% of the message? Examining the origins of that rule, Dr. C.E. "Buzz" Johnson, a Certified Trainer of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, wrote in a 1994 issue of *Anchor Point* magazine:

"...If these percentages were really valid it would mean that the learning of foreign languages could be greatly abbreviated. After all, if the words only account for 7% of the meaning of communication, we should all be able to go to any country in the world and simply by listening to the tone and carefully observing body language, be able to accurately interpret 93% of their communications!"

the
55%,
38%,
7%
Rule

By Judith E. Pearson, DTM

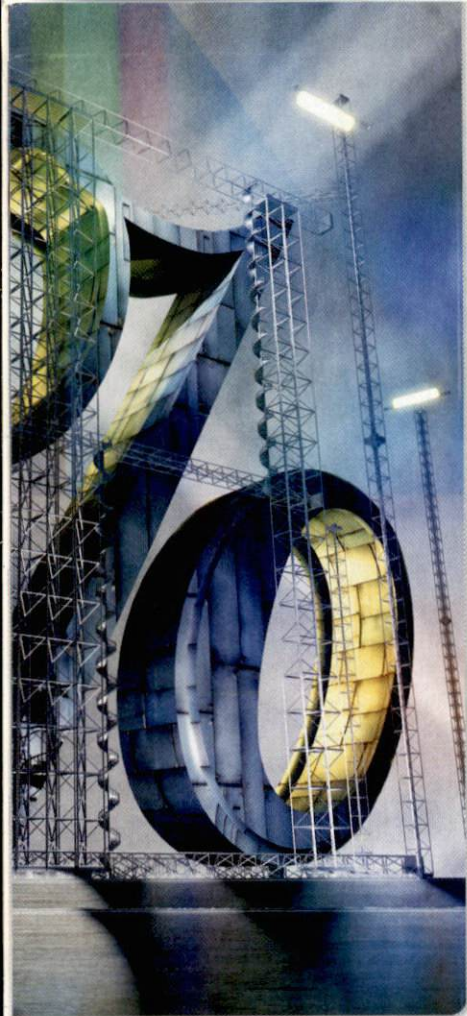
How many of us have 93% accuracy in immediately discerning the cause of a baby's cry, or even in understanding the communication of our pets? When a baby cries we know she is unhappy, but does it mean she is wet, hungry, lonely or sleepy? When a dog barks, we know it is drawing our attention to something, but is it a visitor, an intruder, or simply a strange noise? Without the words, we still miss much of the meaning.

As Toastmasters, we learn to work with words, because a few well-chosen words can make the difference between a mediocre speech and a speech that enralls, entertains and captures the heart. The right word can evoke our emotions, touch our values and stir us to action. Words, chosen conscientiously, can mean the difference between helpful feedback and hurtful criticism. Would words really be so important if they carried only 7% of the message?

Imagine if Nathan Hale had said, "Okay, I'm willing to die for my country," instead of "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." Imagine Franklin D. Roosevelt saying "Don't be afraid," instead of "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." Imagine John F. Kennedy saying "Do good things for your country," instead of "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country!" The words themselves make the difference in the intensity of the message, even when we no longer hear the tonality or see the body language with which they were spoken.

The Research

So where did this rule come from? Professor Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D., of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is credited as the originator of the 55%, 38%, 7% Rule. He and his colleagues conducted two studies on communication patterns and published the studies in professional journals in 1967. Mehrabian later discussed the results of the studies in two books in the early 1970s.



The results of the studies were widely circulated in the press, in abbreviated form, leading to a misunderstanding of the original research and inaccurate generalizations of the conclusions.

Mehrabian and his colleagues were attempting to decipher the relative impact of facial expressions and spoken words. Subjects were asked to listen to a recording of a female saying the single word "maybe" in three tonalities, to convey liking, neutrality and disliking. Next, subjects were shown photos of female faces conveying the same three emotions. Then subjects were asked to guess the emotions portrayed by the recorded voice, the photos and both in combination. The photos drew more

accurate responses than the voice, by a ratio of 3:2.

In the second study, subjects listened to nine recorded words, three meant to convey liking (*honey, dear and thanks*), three to convey neutrality (*maybe, really and oh*) and three to convey disliking (*don't, brute and terrible*). The words were spoken with varying tonalities and subjects were asked to guess the emotions behind the spoken words. The finding was that tone carried more meaning than the individual words themselves.

Abra-cadabra! A theory is born! Mehrabian combined the statistical results of both studies and came up with – you guessed it – the 55%, 38%, 7% Rule. Mehrabian published the results of his work in two books, *Silent Messages* (Wadsworth Publishing, 1971) and *Nonverbal Communications* (Aldine Atherton, Inc., 1972). In these books Mehrabian makes the point that for inconsistent messages, or incongruent communications, body language and tonality are probably a more accurate indicator of emotions and meaning than the words themselves.

Mehrabian has stated (*Anchor Point*, 1994) that he never intended his results to be applied to normal conversation (and probably not to public speaking either). He only wanted to help his readers resolve incongruent messages regarding liking and disliking. Thus, his research has useful, albeit limited applications, which have been blown out of proportion.

Equal Emphasis

So now you know the 55%, 38%, 7% Fallacy. The spoken word has so many intangible components with the speaker, the listener and the context that, realistically, it would be folly to assign percentages to those components. There are some things that just can't be quantified, like values, meanings, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. Yet, these components are what make communications rich, penetrating, moving, appealing and human. We can never live inside another's mind or duplicate another's experience. In public speaking, words, tonality and body language are the only means we have to relate to one another our individual understandings, experiences and feelings. Let's continue to place equal emphasis on all three avenues of communication. **T**

Judith E. Pearson, DTM, is a member of Galloping Governors Club 8539-27 in Fairfax, Virginia. She is a licensed psychotherapist in private practice. Visit her Web site at engagethepower.com.

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It takes practice to be a pause master.

The Science of Silence

The effective use of pauses turns an average speech into a dynamite speech. Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan all used pauses with dramatic affect. Some of their speeches have become legendary. King's famous statement, "I have a dream" and Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you" both ended with well-timed and -executed pauses. Had President Kennedy or Rev. King blurred these words by rushing through them, they wouldn't have had the same impact. Enhanced with pauses, they are inked permanently into our minds. This is the science of silence. It worked for them; it can work for you. The most important part of your speech is when you say nothing.

There are three types of pauses, each used for a different situation.

- 1) The *change of phrase* pause
- 2) The *logical or emotional reaction* pause
- 3) The *conclusion* pause

Toastmasters are most familiar with the "change of phrase" pause. This is a one-second pause used to give the audience time to catch up to what you are saying. If you write out your speeches, this pause is normally placed wherever you would have a comma or a period. Without placing these pauses in your speech, your presentation will turn into one long run-on sentence. Failure to place one-second pauses in your speech will cause the sound of your voice to be tedious to the listener and you will be tuned out.

The second type is the *logical or emotional reaction* pause. This is the

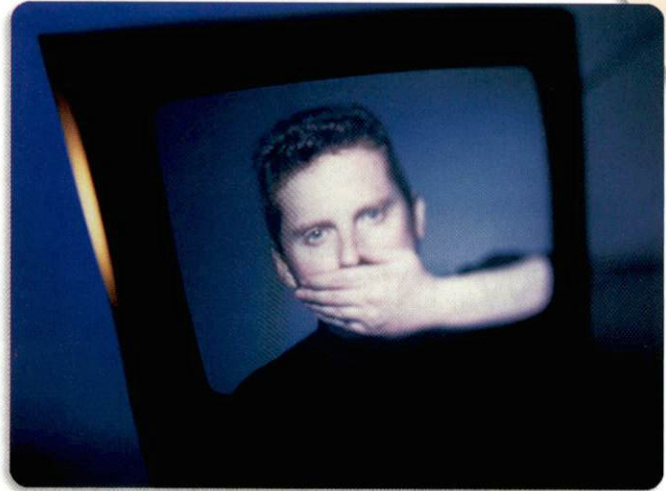
amount of time people need to react to your last statement. It takes two full seconds to achieve the reaction. When you are first practicing this pause, count to yourself: one thousand one, one thousand two, before you speak again. At first, this may seem a little awkward. When you are on stage, two seconds can seem like a long time. To your audience, experiencing the reaction will seem like no time at all. Trust in the impact of your statement and you will begin to get subtle head nods from your audience letting you know they understood your point. I love head nods. Don't you?

Let's look at some sample points in your speech that could use a two-second reaction pause:

- "Would you like to save money on your taxes?"
- "... and then my aunt got very sick."
- "Our government spends two billion dollars a year on wasted forms."

At the end of each of these statements, you will elicit a reaction. Reactions take two full seconds to form. Give your audience the time to feel their emotions and grasp their thoughts.

The third type is the "conclusion" pause. It is used when you want your audience to form their own conclusion. Often, this pause will be used after a question. This is the toughest pause to execute. This pause takes a full three seconds. The three-second pause allows the listen-



er to absorb what you've said, the next second allows them to have a reaction and the third second gives them time to form a conclusion.

Let's look at some spots in your speech where this pause may be appropriate:

- "What is holding you back?"
- "What do you think happens to you when you die?"
- "The time has come for you to act."

Notice that the first two examples are questions, but the last one is not. The last example is a call to action as discussed in your *Communication and Leadership* manual. This is also a perfect place to use the three-second pause. But one or two of these pauses in a five- to seven-minute speech is plenty. Overuse of the conclusion pause will desensitize your audience to its effect.

So there you have it, the *science of silence*. Even though the pause can be broken down and analyzed scientifically, the use of pauses is more of an art. It takes practice to be a pause master. But hey, isn't that what Toastmaster meetings are for? **T**

Cliff Suttle, ATM-G/CL, is a District 28/Region 6 humorous speech and Table Topics champion as well as a professional public speaker and speaking coach. He can be reached at www.CliffSuttle.com.

How to PowerPoint

By Kevin Lerner

Create a great presentation in less than four hours.

Most people dread presentation design. Tell someone he needs to make a PowerPoint presentation and you'll likely hear a sad list of excuses:

- "I don't know where to begin!"
- "It takes too long!"
- "I don't know how to make it look good!"
- "I hate PowerPoint!"

Let's face it: In today's world of short attention spans and audiences hungry for visuals, the oft-maligned PowerPoint has become a helpful – even essential – tool for helping speakers communicate their messages with greater impact.

But creating PowerPoint presentations doesn't have to be a painful and tedious chore! After years of creating professional presentations (for both myself and many professional speakers), I've come up with a time-management process of developing a great-looking and full-featured PowerPoint presentation without frustration and in less than four hours.

The key to easy and efficient PowerPoint design is to have your speech/outline already prepared. Many speakers who have to create a presentation start by working in PowerPoint and waste precious

hours tinkering with the graphics and effects. Or they think the program will help them to automatically create their presentation. Not true! Save time and headaches by doing what you normally do to craft your speech and when it's all ready, fire up PowerPoint and start the clock.

00:00 - 0:45 (45 Minutes)

Create the look and feel, develop the template and master slides. Creating the look and feel and choosing a template can be a fun but time-consuming creative activity. By limiting this front-end design to 45 minutes, you can quickly set up the shell for the presentation to allow for more efficient development.

Choosing an effective template is the most critical step of creating a good-looking presentation. To speed development, choose a title from an existing template package (such as Digital Juice's *Presenter's Toolkit* or Crystal Graphics' *Ultimate Combo 15*). In my opinion, PowerPoint's built-in templates are often overused and too generic. Modify and customize your stock template in a program such as Photoshop and import it directly into PowerPoint (go to the Master page, then go to the formats menu, then click on Background, Effects and Image).

Then, establish the master color scheme, fonts and type sizes, bullets, body layout and line spacing.

By taking these steps early on, each slide you create will automatically conform to a standard look, have a consistent text size, and your presentation will maintain a polished and professional look, putting you on the fast-track to completion.

0:45 – 1:45 (1 Hour)

Text Importing and Editing. On-screen text is vital for effective presentation graphics. Indeed, studies have shown that bullet points, phrases and quotations help people remember the core concepts of a speech. But in a PowerPoint presentation, it's essential to keep the text brief and not overwhelm the slides with bullet points.

You can type your text, converting it to bullet points, or copy and paste the text directly from your word processor program.

How much text per page? Less than you'd think. As a general rule, to maintain audience attention, I like to keep my presentation moving at the healthy pace of one or two slides per minute. At this pace, a 20-minute speech would have 20 to 40 slides.

Pay careful attention to the amount of text on screen. If any page is too crowded, split it onto a secondary page (Topic: Part 1 and Topic: Part 2).

1:45 - 3:15 (1 Hour, 30 Minutes)

Graphics Development. Before you dive into finding pretty pictures to support your text, take a quick moment to estimate the number of pages that will need graphics and then divide that number by 90 minutes. That will give you an average of the amount of time you should spend on each page. So 30 slides should equal an average of three minutes of development time per slide for the text and graphics. By pacing yourself at this rate for development, you'll find the presentation comes together much faster. Some people actually work better under a deadline, and



“A live orchestra, costumes, scenery, fireworks, jugglers, elephants, The Rockettes? Can’t you just use Power Point like everyone else?”

setting an average time per slide (or overall timeframe) may actually make it easier to develop graphics.

For efficient graphic selection, it’s helpful to use the clip-art library built into PowerPoint, especially when it’s linked to the Internet. Alternately, there are numerous other services for good graphics. Try collections from Digital Vision or Photodisc (copied to your hard drive for fast access), or again, *The Presenter’s Toolkit* or *Ultimate Combo*.

Don’t get too stuck on any single graphic or thought process. If you’re having trouble, move on to the next page and return back to that trouble spot. Keep the pace moving! I often go through the presentation in various iterations, making a few more

enhancements each pass. The empty spots will ultimately fill themselves in. Just keep going!

3:15 - 3:30 (15 Minutes)

Slide Transitions and Animations.

Spend a quick 15 minutes to assign transitions to all the slides, and make sure they are consistent, as well as animations to the master-page bullets. A simple wipe effect is a good no-nonsense effect. But note that just because PowerPoint has some really cool transitions doesn’t mean they should be used. Too much can detract from your presentation. And most of the time, a simple wipe or dissolve will suffice. Also, it’s good to make the transitions consistent throughout your entire presentation.


3:30 - 4:00 (30 Minutes)

Final Edits and Revisions.

Run through the entire presentation in slideshow mode to ensure that the transitions and animations work effectively, and identify any areas that still need refinement. Then, go back and make any necessary edits.

Ensure that the graphics are consistent and relevant to the textual material on screen. Use the guides and grids to keep the graphics from jumping around. Make several more passes, and keep tweaking until you’re satisfied.

While working, keep saving versions of your presentation to prevent any catastrophic data loss or to allow you to revert to something that was deleted. I like to save every 30 minutes: Filename-v1.ppt, Filename-v2.ppt., etc.

By sticking to a focused process and defined timeframe, your presentation will be developed more efficiently and effectively than by an ad-hoc approach. It’s a simple but workable strategy: plan...prepare...present! 

Kevin Lerner is the executive director of the Presentation Team, a Florida-based company that develops presentations for companies such as Motorola and Office Depot. Reach him at klerner@presentationteam.com

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 Theodore H. Richard 4896-39, Elk Grove, California
 Charles L. Morris 736891-39, Fernley, Nevada
 Aimee Sanatkar 9833-39, Sacramento, California
 Eve E. Carlos 985-39, Sacramento, California
 Mark D. Carlos 985-39, Sacramento, California
 Michael Brickley 1802-40, Columbus, Ohio
 Nandini Venkatesan 590114-42, Calgary, AB, Canada
 Jade P. Gritzfeld 6161-42, Regina, SK, Canada
 Brenda L. Purdie 6901-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada
 Tina Concetta Elacqua 6086-43, Jackson, Tennessee
 Marilyn Page 4557-45, Raymond, New Hampshire
 Timothy W. Smith 7268-45, Portland, Maine
 John A. Kostecki 4242-46, Corona, New York
 Mary S. Neff 863-46, West Harrison, New York
 Richard I. Cooper 1667-47, Tampa, Florida
 Barbara L. Hardin 1958-47, Sarasota, Florida
 Lisa M. Newman 2262-47, Lakeland, Florida
 Benjamin C. Delmonico 704393-47, Marathon, Florida
 Dennis O. Rookwood 8437-47, Port St Lucie, Florida
 Phil Mazur 2364-50, Dallas, Texas
 Rodney D. Butler 5509-50, Texarkana, Arkansas
 Linda Lee Rummans 5736-50, Richardson, Texas
 Nancy Sue Bateman 5736-50, Richardson, Texas
 Jack Balko 596735-50, Dallas, Texas
 Ronke T. Abbey 6661-50, Dallas, Texas
 Dennis K. Wade 778007-50, Sherman, Texas
 Renee Wade 7879-50, Sherman, Texas
 Dorothy A. Schipper 9022-50, Dallas, Texas
 Gerald Quinten Sylvanmani 5611-51, Petaling Jaya, SEL, Malaysia
 Shankar K. Kailainathan 7071-51, Georgetown, Pennsylvania
 Lila A. Suhelman 8039-51, Jakarta Pusat, Jakarta, Indonesia
 Ronald M. Coyne 147-52, Sherman Oaks, California
 Mary Ann J. Milam 2702-54, Pekin, Illinois
 Laura J. Knowles 4290-54, Morris, Illinois
 Larry R. Johnston 5845-54, Moline, Illinois
 John R. Moffitt 3189-56, Houston, Texas
 Linda Rice 2973-57, Berkeley, California
 Patricia A. Welsh 598-57, Concord, California
 Jo Ann Juhala 998-57, Walnut Creek, California
 John T. Murphy 7735-58, Columbia, South Carolina
 Hildegard Knowles 1609-60, Aurora-Newmarket, ON, Canada
 Marilyn Latchford 3568-60, Toronto, ON, Canada
 Doug Daye 4656-60, London, ON, Canada
 Alex T. Brown 5456-60, Mississauga, ON, Canada
 Muriel A. How 1935-61, Ottawa, ON, Canada
 Alan Mills 2959-61, Cornwall, ON, Canada
 Louise-Veronique Scotte 3200-61, Montreal, QC, Canada
 William T. Butcher 5600-61, Dorval, QC, Canada
 Manfred H. Schuck 616346-61, Arnprior, ON, Canada
 Wayne Kines 8290-61, Kanata, ON, Canada
 Charlane M. Ward 1719-63, Tullahoma, Tennessee
 Douglas J. Ward 1719-63, Tullahoma, Tennessee
 Darryl Gervais 8444-64, Winnipeg, MB, Canada
 Janet K. Leaton 8662-66, Fort Lee, Virginia

Glad Kingdom 9334-69, Ballina, NSW, Australia
 Mike Kano 1865-70, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia
 Daniel Tucker 2107-70, Concord, NSW, Australia
 Joan F. Abela 2274-70, Parramatta, NSW, Australia
 Audrey Frances Dargan 4974-70, Acton, ACT, Australia
 Joan Rinaldi 7255-70, Bossley Park, NSW, Australia
 Debbie Lyn Murphy 753888-70, Revesby, NSW, Australia
 Gary Sander 6844-71, Dereham, Norfolk, England
 Jan C. Shelton 7144-72, Christchurch, New Zealand
 Graham Manley 1179-73, Bayswater, VIC, Australia
 Charmaine Reece 1644-73, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
 Andrew Weatherhead 3831-73, Box Hill, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
 David Nicholas 5769-73, Fremantle, Washington
 Gregory J. Lipschitz 1150-74, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
 Rosslyn Heyman 1150-74, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
 Lois S. Strachan 2249-74, Cape Town, South Africa
 Rod Taylor 4500-74, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
 Abdon A. Patagoc 265-75, Maguindanao, Philippines
 Brenda Reyes-Go 4494-75, Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines
 Raul A. De La Vega 799702-75, Quezon City, Philippines
 Akira Sasaki 4855-76, Saitama-shi, Japan
 Gwendolyn May 3934-77, Birmingham, Alabama
 Miguel Restrepo 8932-78, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 Thomas P. Thomas 1836-79, Manama, Bahrain
 Katherine Tan Ah Neo 813783-80, Singapore, Singapore
 Pradeep Kumar 2104-80, Singapore, Singapore

Anniversaries

December 2005

70 YEAR

Totem 41-2, Lynnwood, Washington
 Jim Hazlett 42-11, Indianapolis, Indiana

60 YEAR

Evansville Number One 337-11, Evansville, Indiana
 Cleveland 351-10, Cleveland, Ohio

55 YEAR

Marin 890-57, San Rafael, California

50 YEAR

Vernon 1929-21, Vernon, British Columbia
 Huntsville 1972-77, Madison, Alabama
 Bangkok 2010-80, Bangkok, Thailand

45 YEAR

Harbor Court 1886-5, San Diego, California
 Silver State 3017-26, Aurora, Colorado
 Lima 3098-U, Lima, Peru
 Ozaukee 3210-35, Grafton, Wisconsin

40 YEAR

Kansai 2244-76, Kobe, Hyogo
 Spartan Speakers Wenel 2376-6, Bloomington, Minnesota
 Greeneville 2673-63, Greeneville, Tennessee

35 YEAR

Sun Valley 998-57, Walnut Creek, California
 Harbord Diggers 1126-70, Harbord, NSW, Australia

Greater Olney 1999-36, Olney, Maryland
Capitol City 2998-78, Pierre, South Dakota
Fox Valley 3399-54, Geneva, Illinois
Last Word 3853-53, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

25 YEAR

State Farm 96-60, Scarborough, Ontario
Albert Lea Area 534-6, Albert Lea, Minnesota
Laurel 956-77, Laurel, Mississippi
South Towne Orators 1775-15, Murray, Utah
Free Speakers 2630-26, La Junta, Colorado
Metro-West 2894-18, Baltimore, Maryland
Speakwell Honeywell 3569-3, Phoenix, Arizona
Successmasters 4401-2, Seattle, Washington
Progressive Speakers 4405-5, El Cajon, California
Osaka 4408-76, Osaka, Japan
Transportation 4409-49, Honolulu, Hawaii
Aerovision 4419-1, El Segundo, California

20 YEAR

Golden Mountain 864-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Tara 3141-71, Dublin, Ireland
Plant City 4051-47, Plant City, Florida
Talk-Eaze 4167-65, Syracuse, New York
Confidence Builders 4699-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Alberton 5031-74, Germiston, Gauteng, South Africa
Box Hill 5036-73, Box Hill, VIC, Australia
Off Broadway 5206-5, San Diego, California
Farmers Northstars 5215-55, Austin, Texas
Northpark 6043-50, Dallas, Texas
All Rounders 6046-43, Germantown, Tennessee
A E D C 6048-63, Arnold Air Force Base, Tennessee
Top 5 6049-78, Rapid City, South Dakota
Express 6052-6, North Oaks, Minnesota
City Lights 6053-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Money Talks 6055-27, Washington, DC
Northwest 6058-55, San Antonio, Texas

Warehouse 6061-57, Oakland, California
Terrace 6062-21, Terrace, British Columbia
Bunya 6063-69, Albany Creek, QLD, Australia
Spellbinders 6065-39, Citrus Heights, California

January 2006

80 YEAR

Anaheim 2-F, Buena Park, California

65 YEAR

Mankato 175-6, Mankato, Minnesota

60 YEAR

Vancouver 353-7, Vancouver, Washington

55 YEAR

McKeesport 901-13, White Oak, Pennsylvania
Hub 924-78, Aberdeen, South Dakota

50 YEAR

Sunrise 160-9, Spokane, Washington
New York 1949-46, New York, NY
Timberline 1965-26, Denver, Colorado
Desert Professional Speakers 1969-12, Palm Desert, California
Kent Evening 1994-2, Kent, Washington
Great Fort Lauderdale 2004-47, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

45 YEAR

Yawn Patrol 1187-78, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Revellers 1796-24, Omaha, Nebraska
Greater Communicators 2114-24, Council Bluffs, Iowa
Lakeland 2262-47, Lakeland, Florida
Delaware County 3204-38, Media, Pennsylvania

40 YEAR

Executive 408-10, Boardman, Ohio
Red Bank 2091-58, Goose Creek, South Carolina
Epsom Speakers 2487-71, Ewell, England

35 YEAR

Greenfield 53-11, Greenfield, Indiana
Missicroix 2813-6, Hastings, Minnesota
Tampa Noonshiners 3909-47, Tampa, Florida

30 YEAR

San Marcos 2504-5, San Marcos, California
Northrop Grumman Motivators 3689-18, Elkridge, Maryland

25 YEAR

Northern Marin 166-57, Novato, California
Westminster Communicators 899-26, Westminster, Colorado
Bemidji Area 1640-78, Bemidji, Minnesota
Dale Elec. Nooners 3424-78, Yankton, South Dakota
HP Speakeasies 4427-15, Boise, Idaho
Wallmasters International 4428-7, Tigard, Oregon

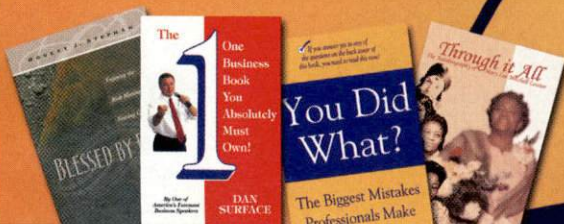
20 YEAR

Lakewood Piners 6070-38, Lakewood, New Jersey
Elder Gate 6078-71, Milton Keynes, Bu, England
SimiSpeak Professional 6083-33, Simi Valley, California
Downtown 6084-47, Orlando, Florida
D39 Computer 6085-39, Rancho Cordova, California
Day Break 6086-43, Jackson, Tennessee
Baer Field 6089-11, Fort Wayne, Indiana
Mission 6095-21, Mission, British Columbia
Peachtree 6096-14, Atlanta, Georgia
Paragon 6097-42, Edmonton, AB, Canada

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