



THE PRIDE MOMENTS

TOASTMASTERS INDIRANAGAR PRIDE

A Newsletter of the Toastmaster Indiranagar Pride | Chartered Club of Toastmasters International
USA Club No. 3078424 | Area 1 | Division A | District 92

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July - December 2016

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We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth



Welcome to the **13th Edition** of
Toasters Indiranagar Pride
newsletter!

Location: Rotary Club, Indiranagar

Toasters International

www.toastmasters.org <http://indiranagarpride.in/>

We meet every Sunday from 4:45 pm to 06:45 pm



Editors Desk

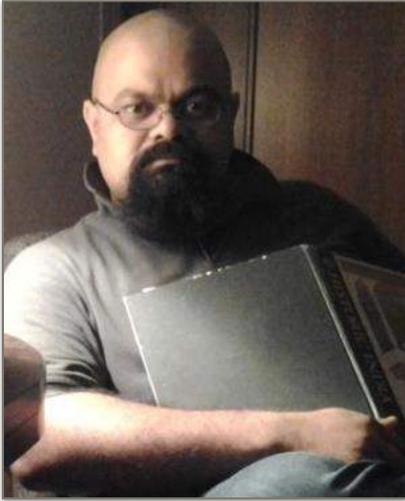
TM Nishtha Ramakrishnan

“If you can't explain it to a six year old, you can't understand it yourself” - Albert Einstein

Right from time immemorial, communication has played a key role in various walk of life of every human being . Whether it's the cry of a small baby for food or a brand using Public Relation to reach out to its stakeholders, all form a part of communication. The very thought that the correct use of words at the right time can play such a dynamic role in a person life thrills me.

A good communicator, someone who has command over the English language is definitely bound to be a brilliant leader. Being in position of power and being an effective leader are two completely different things. A leader is not someone who has a group of people work for him but a person who can motivate, inspire others and more importantly be a patient listener.

As a new member of Toastmasters, this journey of becoming a better communicator and leader has begun!



Presidential Address

TM Kausthubh Rajendran

Presiding Officer

It's New year!

There is a mystery around New Year. Even when one set of people in a certain geography are celebrating it, one half of the world has already welcomed it and another half is eagerly waiting for it – all at the same moment. Even the ones who follow the same calendar seem to be in a time warp!

The crux of the matter is where each pins the new beginning. Varied as we are geographically and calendar-wise, what matters to each of us is where we plot that point of new beginning. Ironic and surreal as it may seem in the larger picture, our lives revolve around that point plotted.

It is unequivocally a new beginning for the Pride; a new set of leaders, new set of ideas and the promise of a new future. Let us thank ourselves for the year that has been and look forward to the promise of the year that can be.



TM Chimmu Kutty

Division A Director

Rule of 12

Let me ask you a question – How many of you would like to make a great first impression? It's true that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. And sometimes, these impressions last for a lifetime! Would you like to know the secret of making a good first impression, first time, every time? Today I will share with you a little secret that if applied correctly, will help you breeze through that job interview, girl grill and boss question session from the get go. We all agree that a favourable first impression actually makes things easier for us in continuing our interaction. This is called the Rule of 12.

First Rule of 12. - The 12 feet rule.

Sunitha is standing 12 feet away now. What do you notice about her? Is she well dressed? Is she dressed for the occasion? Is her appearance pleasant? Do I feel like talking to her? Oh yes! Our dress code and grooming says a lot about who we are. These are all non-verbal signals which our brain absorbs automatically without us being aware of it. Eg. When attending a job interview or Toastmasters meeting, you are expected to be in business attire. While going to the beach or hanging out with friends, you obviously would not choose to wear a suit and tie. In the first nanosecond of setting eyes on Sunitha, I have processed all this information. I see that she is well groomed, dressed well and appropriately for the situation. I am feeling favourably disposed to meeting her just from that first look.

Second Rule of 12 – The 12 inches rule

As she walks towards me I notice how she carries herself. She is walking sedately, not strutting or doing the catwalk. I focus on the first 12 inches from her shoulders up.. I also notice that her attention is focused on me. Not on her mobile or her attire or hair. I notice that she has a lovely smile. She smiles with her eyes and is not just showing teeth. Grooming especially includes your face. Be sure to put your best face forward. Use makeup to showcase your best features. But remember, you are never really dressed unless you wear a smile.

I now am definitely impressed and she has already made a positive impact on me. I'm looking forward to making her acquaintance.

The last Rule of 12 – is the first 12 words that you utter.

Be friendly and try to focus on the other person.

Hello! Nice to meet you! I'm Sunitha!

Good evening! Happy to meet you! My name is Sunitha!

This is where Toastmasters CC project 6 – vocal variety can help you. Your tone, pitch, pace and pause all play major roles at this time.

Be sure your voice shows the happiness you feel at meeting a new person. Your eyes should be smiling and you should maintain eye contact. Show the other person that they are important to you.

That's it! The Rule of 12! Here's a recap.

Rule 1 – 12 feet away – Dress well and for the occasion. Be confident in who you are. Believing that you're good enough makes you appear more attractive and approachable to people around you.

Rule 2 – The 12 inches up rule - Make and maintain eye contact. Smile genuinely. Develop good posture and carry yourself well. If you are approaching the other person first, walk over confidently. Slouching is a no-no. It gives the impression of insecurity. Introduce yourself with a firm handshake. In today's business culture, it is an acceptable practice for both men and women to shake hands. Be sure to offer a firm handshake and not a 'wet fish' one. A firm handshake says you are a confident person.

Rule 3 – The first 12 words. Your voice says a lot about you. Be sure to sound genuine and sincere. Smile with your eyes too. Let it not just be a show of teeth.

It takes just a quick glance, maybe 3 seconds, for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. So the 'picture' you first present says much about you to the person you're meeting.

Is your appearance saying the right things to help create the right first impression?

The key to a good first impression is to present yourself appropriately and use the Rule of 12 to make a great first impression, first time, every time!



TM Nishanth P K

The 3 aspects of a speech

When we prepare a speech there are 3 parts to it. The scripting of it, the content and the delivery.

No doubt all 3 aspects are equally important. Let's explore how the 3 aspects impact the speech, the audience and the speaker.

First, the most visible aspect of the speech, the delivery. Delivery is crucial to grab attention and create an impact. It makes an impact on the audience but its impact can be short lived. It's super critical to win contests.

Secondly, the content (the language). This is the flesh and bones of the speech. This is what touches the hearts of the audience. Between delivery and content, content is king. An average delivery and good content stands a better chance of creating an impact over average content and great delivery.

Now the third aspect, the scripting of the speech, the part that is hidden from everybody's eyes. It's the inward journey that a speaker undertakes before stepping on stage. However the time spent in this phase cannot be overcome by putting in more effort in the other two aspects of the speech. This aspect of the speech is like the invisible part of an iceberg, while not visible it is essential to keep the speech 'standing'. The scripting of a speech has tremendous impact on the speaker for he/she is engaged in a small self-exploratory trip.

So the next time you have an opportunity to present a speech think about the 3 aspects and spend enough time on all 3.

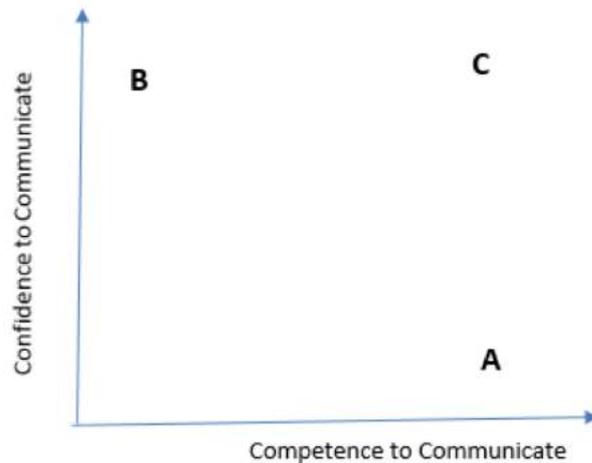


TM Shubodeep

Did you miss the elephant in the room?

So what if your Fairy Godmother appears in your dreams and grants only option of the following – Immense competence to communicate or Immense confidence to communicate?

Obviously, you will say both. But that will make it 2 wishes, and Fairy Godmother has mouths to feed; hence you have to choose one. So you can either take A or B, not C.



Now, let me explain the phrases “Immense competence to communicate (A)” and “Immense confidence to communicate (B)” with examples.

“A” would mean you would have outstanding control on language, right body language, vocal variety, persuasiveness, etc. In short, you can easily defeat Kausthubh in the next speech contest. But your capability to speak in a public forum would be low, you would be last to introduce yourself in a group, you might not participate in any fun activity involving interacting with a larger audience, etc.

“B” would mean you wouldn’t blink an eye-lid to ask your company’s CEO in the next town hall meeting about the product launch strategy of an upcoming blockbuster product. Of course, that would leave the other 500 attendees spellbound. But because the assumption is your competence to communicate is not quite there, so you would stutter and stammer to complete your 30-second question and might end up using 5 “you knows” and 6 “I means” in addition to some grammatical mistakes.

The next obvious question is, if we achieve “A” then don’t we automatically achieve “B”? Yes, that true. But would you not agree that achieving “A” is a time-consuming process and might need years of hard work, sincerity, determination and expert guidance? So, why am I putting you in this quandary of choosing “A” v/s “B”? Why can’t we stick to the regular learning curve of day-to-day life and keep improving our communication and hence gain confidence?

The reason is, I have seen countless people never speak-up in their lifetime or not as much as they should. They choose to keep quiet despite possessing all the necessary competence. They choose to keep quiet despite having brightest ideas and the most pressing questions. They are waiting for that magical moment when they will muster the courage to speak up and they wrongly blame their lack of competence for that.

Now, I would connect the above-mentioned points to the take-away of Toastmasters. While, it's very obvious that while you attend meetings and attempt projects, you improve your communication and move towards "A". But, what is not very obvious is when you make progress in your Toastmasters journey, you also unconsciously move towards "B". And thus progressively you become bold enough to speak-up at all possible forums, at meetings, at town-halls, at family gatherings, on social media. You are no more the hoi polloi.

I earnestly believe that considering Toastmasters just as an avenue to improve your communication is missing the elephant in the room. The much bigger contribution is the confidence that the club adds in you! So if your fairy Godmother comes again then tell her to gift you "A" as Toastmasters will certainly gift you "B".

Cheers!



TM Saurabh

The King's Speech

The King: "Listen to me."

Voice Coach: "Listen to you by what right?"

The King: "By divine right if you must, I am your king"

Voice Coach: "Why should I waste my time listening ...?"

The King: "Because I have a right ... I HAVE A VOICE!!!"

Voice Coach: "Yes you do."

This scene from the movie 'The King's Speech' is the turning point in the story of the protagonist, King George's life. In 1930s Europe, before the second world war, in a world dominated by Public speakers, like Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill, George was expected to speak to inspire a nation. There was only one problem ... he used to stammer and had a crippling fear of public speaking.

Challenges often come up in unexpected ways. Navigators face oceans, mountaineers face mountains and drivers face bumps in Bengaluru's traffic. Unexpected, untamed, overwhelming. But through their occurrence, they sometimes bring out that latent strength that awaits the spark of challenge. Such was the case with King George the sixth. He, as the King of England, bore the responsibility to become the voice of his people by addressing them in public and on radio.

He visited a teacher who taught him many exercises. Tongue Twisters, breathing exercises, strengthening his diaphragm, loosening his jaw, finding his flow, using abusive language, and many other things, but George was unable to find his groove. His teacher, a man called Lionel Logue realised that the thing that kept George from speaking was fear. Fear of his own Shadow. The parts of life he do not wish to acknowledge. And because he did not acknowledge them, he found ways to run from them, just like a child afraid of monsters fears looking for them under his bed.

This hesitation, this period before he actually get to work, was the dark night of the soul. Because in order to break a new dawn, the Sun too has to travel through the night. And it was only after he acknowledged a reality that he was able to receive help. George was not supposed to become the king. His elder brother was the next in line for the crown, but was on the cusp of abdicating the throne to be with a woman he loved.

To everyone, it was obvious that George would be the next king. However, this thought, that he would take up the crown and replace his own elder brother was treason to him. It was betrayal to blood. And in this dilemma, George stayed with his fears.

His transformation came when he acknowledged reality - that to be king was his share of life's bargain.

From that day, his real preparation began. He was not an overnight sensation. He worked hard at each speech, taking help from Lionel, struggling through the pauses and shutterings, but he did his part. His part to inspire his people through the second world war. And the thing that helped him the most was a sentence spoken by his teacher. A sentence that can help many speakers make heart based connections with their audience - "Forget everything else, and say it to me. Say it to me as a friend."



TM Ranjani

A Toastmaster's Tale!

Eight months, nine exams and countless assignments later, life seems to have taken a nostalgic pause to reminisce 2016. I started the year with a thought for the club – “If we could fly to our dreamlands.” Dreamland. To me, it is the 5-minute coffee breaks that I take during the day to escape from the dreary realities of life. But, do I want it to last longer? Absolutely not. Otherwise, it loses its charm. Speaking about charm, how often do you rekindle the child inside of you?

Most of us in this club are working professionals or are in a position in our lives where we are responsible for more than just ourselves. In such situations, being silly and childlike is next to impossible. However, we are all here because we wanted to renew our sense of wonder about our skills and abilities and try something new. To (re)-quote Benedict Cumberbatch – “*The further you get away from yourself, the more challenging it is. Not to be in your comfort zone is great fun.*” By getting away from the familiar, we are building our strengths to handle the unfamiliar better because this is where the magic happens...

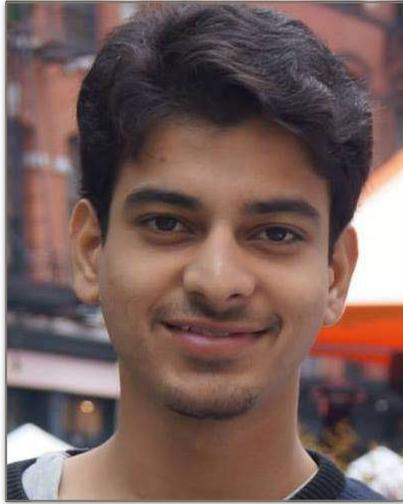
For all those who didn't realise by now, I was trying to string a few of my favourite VP-Ed moments together. It has been a long journey of over two and a half years with the Pride, and I have cherished every single one of them. Although it's been a while since I left the club, I relive my times almost every week (or, whenever I get time) through the meeting videos. To me, being a toastmaster was more than just attend meetings and deliver speeches. It was a fulfilling experience in many ways.

The most important one of them was I gained more confidence talking in public as well dealing with different kinds of people. I had many opportunities within and outside the club to expand my skills which only increased my self-confidence. What this meant to me was, my hesitation to taking risks considerably decreased, and I became more open to trying new things. The next one was the heaps of encouragement I received from this club. Every member here encourages you to be your best self, and we celebrated every member's success and accomplishments. In a cut-throat atmosphere filled with mostly Type-A personalities (my MBA program here), I could transfer this sense of encouragement for one another with all the groups I worked.

Finally, the members of this club are very friendly, and they are genuinely interested in each other's growth. This movement works because of clubs like the Pride where everyone is welcoming, positive, and supportive of each other. I met so many people during my time here most of whom are my good friends even now. What I learned was by being warm and appreciating and encouraging the best in everyone you meet, you get to know so much about each other because of the sense of camaraderie you feel with each other.

This club has encouraged my growth at every step of the way. It was indeed an incredible experience to be a part of something bigger than myself and grow with my fellow members!

Thank you, Pride!



TM Apoorv

Version Control

From computers to cars to shaving razors, we're continually inundated with advertisements about a 'new version' for some product. Be it by using tags like 'neo', 'advanced' or for the more subtle consumers - '2.0', the idea behind these nomenclatures is to signify novelty and improvements in the latest iteration of the product. This process, science and art of formally tracking iterations under different names or versions is called 'version control' or 'versioning'.

Versioning allows companies to market the product better and pushes them to improve it faster. After all, Apple would hate to be stuck with 'iPhone 6' if Samsung is launching an 's7'. They're just names, but underlying them is a connotation of advancement that is very inspiring to humans. Any savvy mobile owner will tell you with lit eyes that their phone is the 7th phone in that series and the most refined one till date. Interestingly, if you ask the same owner which version they are at as a person, they'll dismiss the question as ridiculous.

Every new year, 40% of American adults make resolutions and so do many people in other countries. A University of Scranton study suggests that only 8% of these people keep their resolutions. Failing to achieve goals in life is largely attributed to lack of written plan, motivation, proper scheduling and accountability. Versioning your personality is one of the best ways to overcome those pitfalls. Imagine you start the year at version 1 which marks your initial state of mind. To give a tangible meaning to this 'state', draw 2 columns on a piece of paper. These are your Strengths and To Do lists. Say this is how your table looks like -

VERSION 1:

Strengths	To Do
- Personal connect with people - Painting	- Communication - Give a public speech - Health - Train to jog 5kms in one go

3 things to note, when preparing these versions:

- To Dos are tangible. A test to check if your goals are tangible is that you should be able to clearly visualise them. You can't visualise abstract goals like 'get fit'.
- Under health, I didn't mention 'lose weight'. Besides being vague, it is a typical negative goal. Try to move towards something, not away.
- There are only 2 items in To Do - because that's all human mind can focus on at once. Any more than 2 or 3 will spread you too thin, and you'll fail at all.

Now let's create a plan of action to move things from To Do to Strengths.

Plan of action:

1. Communication

- Join Toastmasters club (event)
- Deliver the first table topic (event)
- Deliver the first speech (event)

2. Health

- First jog for 15 mins (event)
- Jog every morning for 15 mins (habit)
- Replace cookies on table with small apples (event)
- Jog 5 kms for the first time (event)

All our points are either an 'event' that you need to make happen, or a 'habit' you need to follow. Studies suggest that if you do something for 21 days continuously, it becomes a habit and is effortless thereafter. Try to maintain streaks of a habit by registering it on a calendar. Every event you tick off your list, moves your personality by a 'minor version'. Say you joined Toastmasters Pride - you're now at version 1.1! Later you removed the cookies at your desk - you move to version 1.2! To move from version 1 to 2 you either clear out all your areas of improvement or you reach the 3 month deadline (whichever is earlier - and yes, there is a deadline!). Say you ticked 5 events and reached version 1.5 at the end of 3 months and you could jog 4 km. This how your newer self looks like -

VERSION 2:

Strengths	To Do
- Personal connect with people. - Painting - Communication - delivered a public speech. - Health - can jog 4 km.	- - ?? (Slot for a new endeavour has opened up) - Health - Train to reach 5 km

Create a new plan of action and reiterate. At the end of the first year, you'll be a refined version 4 of yourself! By version 12, the accrued changes will appear almost magical. How do I know it ? I have a versioning system custom made for myself. I reach version 12 every 3 years and then reset the counter symbolising that it's time for a complete rethink of my life.

Finally, versioning is as creative as you. Name your versions after your favourite places signifying a milestone! You could name your plans for action after your favourite characters! Imagine how cool embarking on 'Project Sherlock' sounds! Enjoy the journey, and any time someone asks you - "How are you?". Proudly answer - "I'm new and improved!"



TM Darshana

How it all began

It was a personal decision to check out a typical Toastmasters meeting and upon hearing some good reviews about Indiranagar Pride, I planned to drop by one Sunday evening as a guest.

The crisp welcome of the different members and guests by the presiding officer, and the efficient portrayal of the different roles and responsibilities on the floor during the meeting caught my attention. The meeting unfolded in such a beautiful fashion that even as a guest being there for the first time, I was at an amazing ease lending my ears to some well-crafted and well-practiced speeches.

But was that enough for me to decide on being a member? Had not I always known that the more you speak in public, the better you become? Public speaking is often a challenging task for most of us. But we often overlook the fact to be an effective communicator, it is one of the many skills we should possess. Probably, I am scared to speak in front of public, but did I ever pay much thought to my interpersonal skills? Often, only when someone does something so brilliantly, that we realise that we have so much to learn and improve upon. TM Indiranagar Pride did just that for me. The process of conducting the meeting, the formal yet unreserved feedback, the impromptu speech, the member relations; TM Indiranagar Pride is way beyond just public speaking; it is a continuous endeavour at improving your basic communication skills in your attempts to conquer the fear of public speaking.

The biggest transition in me as a TM member has been to develop the urge to get up and face the audience. The fear and the butterflies are still there but now I enjoy it. This only happens when the audience has patient ears and an encouraging smile. The healthy ecosystem of the meeting makes sure that I learn not just from my take but also others'. The manuals and speech objectives make sure that I focus on content and speech delivery. Each meeting for me is an experience in discerning and improving the subtleties involved in delivering a successful speech. Each meeting for me is an experience in learning to understand the audience and communicating with ease.



TM Vedit

Leadership

There is a lot of content on Social media about what is leadership, why is it important in every aspect of our lives, but most of it is theory which we can't relate to unless we have experienced the exact same things.

Leadership is a trait, a quality and a way of life which is acquired over time by witnessing challenging experiences, heart breaking failures and motivation to stand back again.

I will highlight my personal perspective which I believe makes an effective leader :

Are leaders born OR made?

I beg to differ and shift the gauge to read both. Leaders are both born and made. The Pareto principle also known as 80-20 rule states that for many events, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. I believe leaders are 80% made and 20% born. Behavioural Theories believe that people can become leaders through the process of teaching, learning and observation. Leadership is a set of skills that can be learned by training, perception, practice and experience over time. Leadership learning is lifetime activity. Good leaders seek out development opportunities that will help them learn new skills.

But... Can enrolling for a programme on management and leadership make someone a leader upon completion? Can Charisma, Influence, Integrity and the ability to Inspire be taught? I believe there is a bigger force that pushes a person to lead in muddy waters. I believe a leader always has a deep rooted spark if not an intense fire within. And where does that come from?

Failure and Attitude

A person who has failed many times in his life but also carries the attitude to stand up and fight back again will always lead the path to progress. Some people are born with such instincts which they refine and perfect over time with education, training and experience. Then there are others who are initially introverted low-confident but ambitious folks who carry big dreams on their shoulders. When they witness a heart breaking failure in their dreams, they develop this attitude, a sense of fire within to never let themselves down again. They set their journey inwards, compete with themselves and slowly and steadily achieve their dreams. But in this whole journey, the fire that was ignited in the heart never fades away and they become the trendsetters inspiring millions with their "Never giving up" attitude.

Development is Powerful

I have seen two types of people - Leaders are developed when they put themselves in overwhelming situations, humbly seek feedback, read and learn, and practice and seek instruction. Contrary there are also very “talented people” who are lazy and lack passion and conviction. Over time, those who develop themselves are the ones looked upon as leaders.

If the fear of leading overrides the willingness to take on the responsibilities then one is a follower.

Hence, leadership is also a choice that you make which is again defined from your inherent/acquired attitude.

Embrace change

In today's world change is the only constant. A very important trait in leadership is to be able to embrace change courageously. A leader will have to make some really difficult decisions to try new things that will put him in a zone anything but comfortable. Such decisions will only test whether you're aligned to your core values.

First step to be a leader is to become an open slate, embark a journey inwards, be transparent and accept your strengths and weaknesses honestly, discover the goal/value that you truly believe in. Hold onto your values and work towards your goals, failures will come only to make you a stronger person. Learn from your mistakes and keep moving.

One day you'll reach that stage, you'll turn back and say “It was all worth it”



TM Senthil

LSU Algorithm

Do you want to be a better leader? Then, you reached the right place. You can ask me a question, "Senthil, do you think are you a good leader?". Good question. Few things in this world are easier said than done, such as how to become slim, how to become rich and how to become leader. But, I am confident about one thing, in the 21st century, we won't be successful without leadership skills. From my childhood onwards, I have been interested in finding a common pattern in everything. Recently, I tried to find a pattern between myself and Virat Kohli. Both are at the same age. Both of us got first Cricket bat at age of 6. Hmm. He became the Captain of Indian Cricket team. I am not even a school team captain. Recently, I found a pattern from the great leaders in the world and invented LSU algorithm.

Lead Yourself

One day, my friend came to me and gave a box of sweets. I took one and asked, "Why?". He told he got promoted as a leader in his office. Surprised, I asked, "What does it mean?". I believe everyone is a born leader, but they forget that they have this skill. We all are thinking about how to lead others. We never asked ourselves "Why do we need to control others?". Because others won't come under our control. That is the reason, they are called Others. The biggest resource in this world is our own self. We need to learn how to lead ourselves. It will start to create lot of magic in our lives.

Serve Others

I am not asking you to be like Mother Teresa. You don't need to spend money. You can share a little bit of extra time and a little bit of extra energy for the people, expecting nothing in return. We can't buy everything through Money. The leader will care about the people and spend time with them. When you enter into your office, you can start saying "Hi Dude, Good Morning" or ask "How are you, John?". If they are in trouble, you go and voluntarily ask "How can I help you?". Leaders will think only about "How better they can serve People?". Leader is always the person first to fight and last to eat.

Understand People

I know it is really a tough job to understand people. But, the business which run only towards Money never live long in the industry. In a business, there is only one unwritten rule and it is always Customer satisfaction. As leaders, if we start caring for our people, they will start caring for our customers and our business will grow.

We can't do anything alone, we need a team in which all of us are having common thoughts, common beliefs and common goal.

I have some kind of feeling that Beggars are not doing their job perfectly. They need some kind of training or coaching academy. I am not kidding. Every day, they are saying same words "I am hungry, I am homeless and I am jobless". Instead, they should say like "If you want to go to heaven, donate money and you will definitely go there." Nowadays, People who call themselves as leaders they are also telling similar thing, "I did MBA, I managed a team for five years and so on." We have to stop speaking about ourselves and start to speak good about others. I am not saying LSU algorithm is enough but, this is definitely a road towards a perfect leader. A perfect leader is a person who always faces danger, helps others and understands people.



TM Monindra

Leading a Leader

All of you want to be a leader but none of you want to lead. I believe there are only two types of leaders. One kind is like Ralph C Smedly (a born leader) and others are made in toastmasters club. If you are not a leader don't worry. Mankind has found the science and the arts to make leaders

There are so many crash courses, training module, self-help books which can make you a leader in 90 days.(yet we have Rahul Gandhi) Anyway jokes apart, but food for thought, Why are we failed to produce another Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, or Nelson Mandela?

“Are leaders are born or made” it's like as “which came first chicken or egg”

Behavioural theories suggest that people can become leaders through the process of teaching, learning, and observation. Leadership is a set of skills that can be learned by training and practice. Yet there is a lack of leaders around the world in every field.

You may be cognizant of the fact that MS Dhoni, the most successful cricket captain of India always wanted to be a footballer as a child. But it is because of his coach Keshav Banerjee who saw a cricketer in him and led him to a place where he belongs. To become a leader you need a true mentor, a guide, a philosopher. Without him, you can't emerge as a true leader. Arjun wouldn't have emerged as a leader if it wasn't Krishna who was his friend philosopher and guide.

And once you become the leader you must transform yourself and become a mentor without which you're incomplete as a leader.

You all love your comfort zones, but that's not where you will develop your leadership skills. Leadership requires challenging yourselves and being willing to raise your hand for a new role even if you are not sure you can do it. The more you step outside our comfort zone, the more you can learn about yourselves.

A leader is someone who will lead you where you want to be but a true leader is someone who will lead you where you ought to be.



TM Smitha

My Journey in Toastmasters

I had heard about Toast Masters on- off all through my corporate career & knew that it was something to do with Public Speaking. I was interested in improving my Public speaking skills, but my mind did not think so – it had associated the word “Toast Masters” to “raising a toast” & had concluded that there would be wine/alcohol in these meetings & that was not something I wanted to do , so I ditched that idea.

Well – I was destined to join Toastmasters – when I would truly need it & understood the importance of it. Recently I met one of the senior ToastMasters & understood what it was all about. I connected with her journey in ToastMasters & how it had changed her life & was inspired enough to find out more about it.

Then began my search for the right Club – the timings, the location etc. The Club’s name –“Indiranagar Pride” soon caught my attention as Indiranagar is one of my favourite shopping haunts. Just to convince myself that I was not biased – I did call up other Toastmaster clubs – but did not find them suitable enough. So – one Sunday evening I decided to check up on the ToastMasters session – I loved it, than the speeches, was impressed by the evaluations. Most of us would have heard speeches before – but how to evaluate to improve on speeches – it was quite an eye opener.

So before I lost my nerve again, or my mind could think of various reasons, that I would not find time for it – I joined Indiranagar Pride as a Toastmaster. On my 1st day - I thought I shall relax since it was my 1st day & enjoy the session, as I would not be giving any speeches, alas the President didn’t think so. Imagine my shock & my dismay – when my name was called for the Table Topics. I don’t remember what I spoke, I would not make any eye contact – my knees were shaking, I was moving my hands all over the place, I lasted for 30 secs & got back to my seat.

The first thought that came was “Smitha – what on earth were you thinking- when you signed up for this – how are you going to put yourself through this week after week”. I had 2nd, 3rd & n’ number of excuses –not to go next week, but realised that I will regret it even more – if I did not face my fear & so I went. That 1 -2 mins of Table Topic session was not going to drive me away from the 89 mins of fun & learning.

As the sessions progressed – I learnt something new from each speaker in the session – that I could incorporate to my journey – be it from the SAA – who innovatively introduces the President every session – it’s a Treat for the ears – on how the President addresses the audience, how the MC weaves the session together, how the General evaluator – summaries the session.

Last but not the least –i.e the Table Topics – how to have fun while learning.

As I look back on my Journey – I have made progress in every session & given a pat for myself. I Have progressed in making eye contact & even connecting with the audience. Though my knees are not shaking any more – still have butterflies in my stomach before every speech. I am proud that I have lasted 1.5 mins in a Table Topics session. Surprisingly won the “ Best Speaker award for the “Icebreaker Speech” . This got me to realize / understand my strengths & weaknesses & that was the objective of the 1st Speech.

For Me – joining Toastmasters is just the start of an incredible journey & I hope this journey is for an entire lifetime.



TM Amith

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Be A More Effective Communicator – Tell A Story

Whether we are pitching to a customer or speaking at a Toastmasters' meeting, there is an innate requirement to engage with the audience else we run the risk of 'failure to communicate'. In any case, the question that we must ask ourselves is - why does engagement make a difference to such an extent?

All said and done, our aim in these meetings is to impart our experience to another person with the expectation that it will have a call for action. What's more, as Denise Withers, an award winning communicator and storyteller says: 'Engagement matters, because research by academic giants such as Daniel Berlyne, Jerome Bruner, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget shows that we learn, remember and participate better when an activity is engaging.'

The best approach to draw in our audience is by storytelling: individuals are wired for them. Our brains often don't recognise fiction and reality, in this way we are drawn into stories as though we were a piece of them. Stories make us experience information, as opposed to just consuming it.

Many of us feel that storytelling is a difficult exercise in communication and that it is challenging enough to come up with a good incident or experience that is worthy of narration. Making a story isn't hard; actually, we do it everyday. People have been recounting stories for many millenniums, from great works of art to a humble visit to the green grocer.

Here are 3 simple steps to develop a story. To start, break a story into three parts:

- The problem – What issues did you identify in your area of work or industry?
- The journey – How did you go about researching a solution to this problem
- The solution – How will your product or service change the nature of work or solve the problem?

Keep the story simple yet relatable. You needn't bother with a plot and its character segments; you require a story that will resound with your audience. In case you're pitching to a customer, adjust your issue to something they've encountered themselves.

The best communicators today are the ones who connect with their audience on a personal level, welcoming them to hear their story and ensuring it lives up to the expectations they had in mind. Ace this aptitude, and you will be well on your way to turning into an effective communicator.