

# Going Outside Toastmasters

A Guide To Giving Effective Presentations Outside the  
Toastmasters' Environment

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## Going Outside Toastmasters (GOT)

### Introduction

#### YOUR BIG MOMENT

This the moment you've come to savor. You're up there on the podium and moving successfully towards the end of that thirty-minute keynote presentation. You pause. There is silence. The audience is hanging on every word. There is not a sound in the whole auditorium as three hundred people listen intently to what you are about to say next. *This is it!* This is your moment of triumph. There is nothing like it in the world. The crowd out there is rapt...and *you've* put them that way because...

Because you're a presenter with a riveting, inspirational message which you know in your heart these people want to hear. But more than that, you are an experienced speaker, an orator or storyteller, who has had years of experience. A man who has confidence in himself; confidence to deliver such presentations, not just once in a lifetime; or even now and again – but on *a regular basis*.

#### INITIAL SKILLS - TOASTMASTERS

You learned your initial skills in Toastmasters, an organization to which you still belong, but you honed yourself to a fine edge of expertise by going beyond...*going outside* of the Toastmasters' environment. After you'd done that for the first few times you knew there would be no going backwards. You knew you were on the road you always wanted to tread.

#### TAKING THE NEXT STEP

This little book is about how you - you as a Toastmaster. It is about how you can take that next step: going beyond – going outside of Toastmasters.

Toastmasters is a tremendously successful organization with the best part of a hundred years of experience behind it. To get the optimum benefit for you, as far your speaking and leadership skills are concerned, you joined this great organization. You then started to improve your communication and leadership skills. And as time went by you became very good.

#### YOUR SKILLS ARE TRANSPORTABLE

These skills are, of course, transportable. If you're able to lead in Toastmasters you're able to lead outside. If you're a good speaker in Toastmasters, you'll probably be a good speaker in any environment. Yet there is a considerable difference between addressing a Toastmaster audience, be it Club, Area, Division or even District, than there is to being a guest speaker outside. The differences are important enough, I believe, for someone who has experienced

both environments to a large degree, to step up and help those who might also wish to give speaking outside of Toastmasters a try – hence *this book*.

## CHOOSE TO GO OUTSIDE

At the outset I wish to explain that this volume is not intended to advise you how to set yourself up as a *professionally paid* speaker. This is not a how-to-run a business manual. There are many texts on the market which can help you with that. Should you eventually opt to go on to a professional career, that is entirely your business. No, this volume is meant to both encourage and to advise you how to go outside of Toastmasters as a *non-paid*, volunteer speaker. To go onto what is commonly called, in Australian professional-speaker parlance, “The Freebie Circuit.”

Should you choose to do go on The Freebie Circuit, and I hope you will, you will grow enormously in experience. The world is a big place, filled with billions of people: Toastmasters, though an enormous world-wide organization, is miniscule in comparison with these billions. A point that needs to be borne in mind if you are to keep your experiences in Toastmasters in perspective.

## BUT STAY IN TOASTMASTERS

This is not to say that Toastmasters’ International is not an outstanding vehicle for learning communication and leadership skills. I venture it is the leader in the world today. I would *never* advocate that a person leave Toastmasters. To me, who resigned and rejoined on no fewer than three occasions (because of work life commitments) it calls for lifelong membership. And I certainly intend to stay for the rest of my life. But to change the subject somewhat.

Today there is much talk about political correctness when it comes to both speaking and writing, and this can become quite a ponderous issue when writing a long text. The way around it? In an endeavour to get away from using a lot of “his and her’s” and “she and him” I am going to refer to the speaker as being masculine and the audience, no matter how large, as being female. Additionally, any other person other than the speaker will be referred to as a woman. I do this for expediency and for no other reason.

This book will approach the subject of Speaking Outside of Toastmasters as if a Toastmaster were asking *questions of the writer*. There may be other questions the author hasn’t thought of or considered. However, it is hoped that most of what you’ll need to know will be covered.

I hope that you’re able to gain from this book. I wish you well in your speaking career.

## GOT One – Are You Acceptable?

We judge ourselves by what we feel  
capable of doing, while others judge  
us by what we have already done.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### **WHO IS THIS GUY?**

One of the differences between speaking at your Toastmaster club and speaking outside of the Toastmasters' environment is the likelihood you'll be among strangers. Few will have seen you before. At your club, unless you've only recently joined and have yet to give your Ice Breaker there, everyone will know you to some extent. You'll be regarded by your audience as "One of us." Outside, this won't be the case. You'll be an unknown quantity. To these strangers you'll have to not only prove your worth, but be regarded as acceptable.

### **WE JUDGE A PERSON BY?**

When we meet a person for the very first time there are only five ways in which we can make an assessment; only five ways in which we can judge him. These ways are: how he looks, what he does, how he sounds, what he says, and how he says it. This is important to remember, for when we go along to an audience who has never seen us before, this evaluation begins from the moment we are sighted. Yes, when we are *first sighted*, not necessarily when we get up to speak.

We know that when people meet us – or even see us at a distance and know we're going to be involved with them in some way – they make a very quick value judgment about us. This takes place in seconds – yes, seconds! It might take a little longer for that judgment to establish itself in her mind, but your first exposure to her is very important. This is why it is essential that we are viewed in a positive light right from the outset.

### **SO WHAT'S THE FIRST THING WE NOTICE?**

For most of us, our primary sense is our eye sight. First we see. So what do we see when we see a person for the first time? Our gaze takes in what they are: a human figure, male, stands so tall, is slim or stout and about...so and so years old, posture good, dressed so and so, clean and tidy, is smiling.

"Yes, I like." Or, "No, I'm not liking what I'm seeing."

The person who is making this snap judgment of us is coming from their own memory, their own likes and dislikes, their own prejudices about how they think a speaker coming to speak to their

group should look, according to their norms. They like what they see: you're 80 percent accepted straight away. They don't like what they see, and you've got an uphill battle to change their opinion.

### **SO WHAT DO YOU DO IF THEY'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE?**

So what does this mean as far as you as a speaker before a group who have never seen you before? It means you need to make a fairly sound assessment of your audience *before* you turn up. You need to do your research. So ask yourself questions such as: "What do I expect my audience to be like? Will they be a formal lot? Friendly and open minded? Conservative? Stuffy? Will they be dressed casually, informally. Will they be a fun crowd? What sort of occasion is it?" You wouldn't turn up to a funeral wearing a bright orange T-shirt, sky-blue stubby shorts and thongs, would you? On the other hand, you wouldn't turn up at a barbecue picnic wearing a tuxedo. You might think I'm belaboring this, but it is important. Wear what is appropriate! Immediate approval of how you look is important!

### **WHAT IS APPROPRIATE ATTIRE FOR A SPEAKER?**

Already mentioned is the need to ascertain how you expect the audience to be dress-wise. What will the average attendee be dressed in? What will they mostly be wearing?

"Okay," you think. "They'll probably wearing casual." - so you do the same. They will be formally dressed - you do the same. There is one little proviso here. You have to look as well-dressed as any of them, *preferably a little bit better dressed*.

A little bit better: not so much that you are *not* regarded as "One of us" because you've gone too far - or not far enough. So if it's a casual affair, you might wear sports slacks, a nice open-necked shirt, and maybe take your sports jacket. If you think some of them there will be wearing coat and tie, you definitely wear coat and tie. In the case where you're liable to find a *majority* of the audience wearing coat and tie, you wear a *suit*, plus tie. The objective is to be creditable by appearing as a leader who is savvy with those he will be addressing.

So we've got the first part of that 'Four-part quick value judgment' out of the way - the all important way you look. What about the other three?

### **AFTER HOW A PERSON LOOKS, HOW ELSE DO WE JUDGE HIM?**

There are two scenarios when we're the guest speaker. Either we are seated in a position whereby the audience we will be speaking to later can see us, or we're out of sight and won't appear before that audience until we're called upon. In the majority of instances the former prevails. Let us have a look at this.

The audience can see you before you go on. They're already making some judgments simply by how you look. But what are you *doing*? They look out for anything that can give them a clue

as what to expect. They want you to be able to take charge, be a leader. They want you to get up there and take control so they can just sit back, listen and –with luck – enjoy.

### **WHAT DO YOU DO AS THE AUDIENCE SIZES YOU UP?**

If you are sitting listening attentively to what is already going on, they see you in a positive light. “He’s interested in us.” “He’s interested in what we’re doing here.” It might be something as mundane as the organization running through some of their business before going to a break. Fine. However, if they see you take a seat and then get out a book to read, for example, they will feel you’re not really interested in them, so why should they be interested in you? These are the sorts of thoughts which could well go through their minds. So, if you’re under their gaze, be careful to ensure you don’t do things they might regard as rude.

Chances are you come in and are seated at the back of the room, the audience facing away from you at this time. This is atypical at many a club meeting. Only the top table, at which sit the committee, can see you. If so, you can do such things as read their program, take a last look at your notes if you need to, maybe take a comfort break and check you look right before being introduced.

### **SO HOW DO WE SOCIALIZE TO BE ACCEPTED?**

It could well be that this is also being judged. Did you go up and introduce yourself to the group’s leaders when you got the chance? Did you initiate the action? Or did you leave it up to them? Did you circulate a little after that? It doesn’t take much of an effort to move around, smile at a few people, exchange pleasantries.

All right. The break’s still on. After everyone’s had coffee and biscuits – or a major meal – you’ll be on. But at the moment you’re to meet the organization’s spokespeople. Your host, we’ll call her Elizabeth, introduces you to various committee members, the president, treasurer and one or two others. It is at this time you ask such questions as who will be introducing you. Get a *name*, if only the first name, for this is the person you will thank when you walk up and shake her hand. People like to hear the sound of their name and you’ll also endear yourself to a certain degree with you audience for doing this, rather than just saying a thank you.

### **WHAT SORT OF QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK?**

You ask questions about the organization. Just a few. Not deep questions which will involve a lot of explanation on the part of those you’re talking with, but enquiries such as: “When did the club form?” “How long at this venue?” And one I always take the trouble to ask – generally going to whoever is taking the registrations – “How many people are here today/this morning/this evening?” I do this last so I can keep ongoing statistics as to how many I’ve spoken to, where and when.

Okay, so as far as that *committee* is concerned, and anyone else within earshot who is interested, you've already been checked and met the Five Criteria: how you look, what you do, how you sound, what you say, and how you say it. How the audience will see you when you are actually introduced and what you'll do as you are called up to the podium will be discussed in another chapter.

## GOT Two – Venues : The Difference

### **OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE HERE?**

As a Toastmaster, the chances are that you meet regularly at the same venue and that you have done so for a considerable time. Invariably the room is set up the same way. It is set for approximately the same number of members; generally a U-shape or, in smaller clubs, one long table with chairs on either side. It is all familiar to you. It is familiar to most of the audience. The venue is only an issue if, upon arrival at the time of your scheduled speech, things have not been laid out as you expected they would be.

### **WHAT ARE VENUES OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS LIKE?**

When going outside of Toastmasters this is not the case at all. You will in all likelihood be going into an environment you're unfamiliar with. Each guest speaker invitation taken up by you will take you to venues you may never have visited before. Not only that, when you get there, what you find might be very different from what you expected. It is not uncommon to get to a venue to find that the seating arrangements are far from your liking. The room is obviously too big for the small audience. The room's acoustics are lousy. There is a lot of noise coming in from unexpected sources. One of the fluorescent lights is winking on and off. God! It's a L-shaped room and half the audience are around the corner! Yes, this last has happened to me.

### **HOW CAN I CONVERT THE VENUE TO MY LIKING?**

What can you do to ensure that things go as smoothly as you are likely to get them, bearing in mind that there is nearly always some aspect in which your environment that is not absolutely perfect? The object is to have it sufficiently arranged and organized that you can *forget* about any shortcomings and get on 'get on with it.' -Find out as much as you can about the room layout, audience size, seating *over the phone* when you're taking the booking.

Here are some of the things you need to ask when you receive that phone call asking you if you'd be willing to come along as guest speaker:

First question: Who? (their name, their organisation) Second: When? Third: Where? All very obvious. Generally, in the caller's introduction you *will* be told who is calling and on who's behalf. A telephone call might go something like this:

"John Toastmaster?"

"Speaking."

“Hi, Jessica Adams. I’m the speaker organizer for the Yup-Yup Club. I heard about you from my friend, Jill Merewether. You spoke at her Rotary Club and I’m wondering if you’d be available to come to give us one of your talks?”

“Hi, Jessica. Never heard of a Yup-Yup Club. Tell me a bit about it?” You listen...

“Do you have a particular date in mind, Jessica?”

“Well, we would like you to come on 24<sup>th</sup> November, if that’s possible. Otherwise next year, March 16<sup>th</sup> or April 17<sup>th</sup>. We always meet on the first Thursday of the month...”

“Right, just hold on for a moment, I’ll need to check my calendar?”

I won’t go on with the rest of this imaginary conversation other than to say you it would be advisable to ask the following:

“Venue? Where? Time you’d like me to arrive?”

“Parking – any problems?”

“Have I spoken to your club/organization/group before?” (if you can’t recall)

“How many people do you expect to be there?”

“Men and women?” (unless you’re already pretty certain)

“Their ages, roughly?”

“How will they be seated?” Theatre style? Around tables? Round or oblong tables?”

“Do your meetings usually call for a microphone?”

“What sort of mic? Long cord – I’ll need that – or a roving mic?”

“How long do your guest speakers generally go for?”

“Okay, Jessica. Can you please give me your telephone number?” (very important) “Oh, and please give me a call a week or so before, just in case, eh?”

You’ll probably be asked such questions as: “What you’ll be speaking about? Do you charge a fee?” “No – then what would you like for a present?” There may be some talk regarding petrol money and whether you’d prefer a bottle of red or white wine. Remember, we’re not negotiating a professional speaker’s fee here.

So you’ve both asked each other all the appropriate questions. The conversation is over and you’ve hung up.

(That's when you invariably remember something else you should have asked. That is why you must have a contact phone number)

## **SO WHAT DO I DO NOW? WHAT FOLLOW UP ACTION?**

I'll go into the actual Record Keeping later, but the first thing I do is check my records to see if I've ever spoken to this group on an earlier occasion. If I have, my records are such that I can glean quite a lot about the audience I will be addressing in the future.

When you've had a lot of experience with certain types of organization, the requirement to get to the venue before anyone else becomes a thing of the past. However, for the beginner going beyond the Toastmasters' environment, it is highly advisable to get there very early....well before the audience comes in a starts filling those seats.

## **HOW EARLY SHOULD I GET THERE?**

Now when I say, "With experience, you don't need to get there early," I do not mean you should get there ten minutes before you go on. That would be very unwise. You should always ensure that you have plenty of time: plenty of time to make the *journey*; plenty of time to *park*, find the actual meeting room, where the men's room is, and where would be a good place to place anything you might have brought along, such as a bag or briefcase. Why work yourself into a flurry of worry when you don't have to. Get there early!

In a great many of the presentations I do outside of Toastmasters, the meetings are broken up into two distinct halves: business before the break – coffee/tea break – and speaker on immediately afterwards. I try to time it so I arrive ten minutes or so before the coffee break is called. This gives me time to survey the room, look at the audience – probably from the back of the room- note the microphone and how it's being used (is it very sensitive, is it a little too loud or soft and the like) and to see if any improvements can be made to the speaker's speaking position. For example, moving the lectern, moving the head table whilst the committee are on their tea break - always with their permission, of course.

## **HOW DO I DETERMINE WHERE TO STAND?**

Generally it's obvious. Sometimes, though, the obvious place is not good from you point of view. So here's what I do:

At the actual break, once I've said the niceties to those people I'm been introduced to, I go to the front of the room. Where will I stand? What's behind me? To the sides? I choose the optimum position, always leaving enough room around me to walk around a bit. I choose not to use a lectern. My preference is a roving mic. But this is not always possible. More on microphones later.

If the seating is tables, I might move them slightly. If it is theatre style seating and I noted that there were only forty in the room and around eight chairs, I might even remove some of the chairs. This is all happening whilst my to be audience-to-be are socializing. I wouldn't remove coats or bags, of course. But any chairs without apparent pre-ownership which might detract from the presentation by being redundant or a barrier, are removed. Not always, but quite often.

The general rule with an audience and speaker is: the smaller the audience, the closer the speaker needs to be. The tighter-knitted the audience is, that is, the more closely they're grouped, the more dynamic the atmosphere. If you can, get them to sit close together. There is a technique to doing this and I shall explain it now.

### **HOW DO I GET A WIDELY SPREAD AUDIENCE TO SIT CLOSER TOGETHER?**

Suppose the members of a club come back from their morning tea to hear you speak and resume their seats. You notice that there are lots of empty seats at the front and in the middle of the floor. You want to fill those seats. So fill them from the back. This would be done when the amount of vacant chairs is obviously going to detract from the ambience of the meeting. Here's what you do.

Firstly, you have a word with the emcee. You'll probably have to explain the technique to her. You say. "When they come back, I want you to get them to move forward and fill up the front and middle seats." That, in itself is not enough, however. The emcee's announcement will probably end up in a shuffling of bottoms on seats with only one or two moving – if any at all.

"When they come back in and after they're seated, ask them all to stand up."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, would you mind standing, please."

Once they are all stood up, *then* direct them to fill up those seats. Point to 'em." Make it plain the speaker wants them filled. There might be some grumbling, but once these people are *standing* many of them realize that it would be rude to not do as they're told. If even then the results you're after do not happen, then after the speaker has introduced you – with a smile on your face – ask them to do it again.

### **IS ALL OF THIS MOVING AN AUDIENCE AROUND NECESSARY?**

"Ah, " you say. "Is all of this really necessary?" *It is*, if you want your presentation to hit the mark. If you're talking to three or four isolated groups and a sea of empty chairs, your presentation will suffer for it. Not because you delivered it badly. But because the necessary room energy was lost. A close-knit group creates its own energy, its own dynamic. Don't ever ignore it. It can make all the difference between a speech simply noted, or one both appreciated and remembered.

## GOT Three - Introductions

### YOU KNOW ABOUT TOASTMASTER INTRODUCTIONS – RIGHT?

In Toastmasters, introductions of speakers is fairly standardized. At a club, the Toastmaster will mention the speaker's name, perhaps their status, for example, Advanced Toastmaster Bronze, name of the speech, name of the evaluator. The Toastmaster could ask the speaker's evaluator to read out the objectives of the speech, and then tell the Timer what light to turn on and when. Earlier, she might have asked the speaker if he will be using the lectern, or would like he it to be removed. Things are made easy for you.

This does not always happen outside of Toastmasters!

### WHAT SORT OF INTRODUCTIONS WILL I GET OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS?

Outside of Toastmasters formal introductions of the speaker can range from the *very best* to the *very worst*. Coming from the very best, the audience is told that they are in for a treat. They will be told why the subject about to be presented is *particularly important to them*. Then they'll be told of *the speaker's credentials*. They will be told why this particular speaker is *just the man for the job*. The master of ceremonies, compere, host, toastmaster or emcee (we'll use emcee throughout this book for convenience) will build up the anticipation of the audience. She will pave the way for a smooth and friendly transition to the guest speaker. Such wonderful introductions occasionally do happen. At the big, formal, well organized and important events it almost always happens. - In the majority of cases, however, such perfection is generally lacking. So don't expect it.

Some of the worst introductions I've been given comprised a few simple words muttered by the person who should have been introducing me, but who is not even standing up saying:

“You're on now, Tom.”

And you're left to it. Many others are just as weak.

“Well, gentlemen. Bit of Shuss, please. Here's our guest speaker.”

No name, no details – nothing.

The best and the worst are exceptions, though. Generally the emcee does take *some* trouble to find out a bit about you. She then goes out and makes up a lot of things which in all probability aren't quite correct. But who are you to correct her once you get on. She is one of theirs, after all. Unless she has made a blatant mistake, best keep quiet. You're after an alliance with these people, not their enmity.

## **IS THERE A WAY I CAN ENSURE A REASONABLY GOOD INTRODUCTION?**

Yes. The way to circumvent problems with your introduction is to ensure that you always have a *written prepared introduction available*. One you can hand to the emcee well before you go on. Oh, and make sure it's in a large print: 14 font or greater. This saves the emcee lots of time asking questions to sound you out. It also gives her a feeling of security knowing that she can simply place it on the lectern and read it out. Of the roughly 700 presentations I've done since my retirement in 1995, I expect 90 percent of my introductions outside of Toastmasters have been done in this way. You can also send the 'speaker seeker' a copy in the mail, directly after initial arrangements have been made. She'll probably mislay or lose it, though, so always make sure you have an updated copy in your inside pocket.

Hint: So you don't forget: I always have a copy in the inside jacket of every suit-coat and sports jacket I own. That way I know I'll always have one available. They will probably keep that written introduction, so be sure to replace it with another copy when you get home.

## **HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M SPEAKING WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME?**

There are no timer-lights when you speak outside. In Toastmasters we grow accustomed to those lights: Green light when you're safely within the time-span allocated; amber when you should be moving into your conclusion or 'rap up;' red when you should stop. That doesn't happen in the speakers world outside. So how do you know that most essential aspect of one's presentation: speaking for the optimum length of time according to your program organizers?

You find out before hand. You ask them how long they want you to speak. Better still, ask them *when they want you to finish*.

"We have to be clear of this hall by midday, so could you finish up just before then?" or "The program allows for three speakers, each for twenty minutes. You're the last of the three and we must be finished by 11 O'Clock at latest."

So when you have that important information you can plan to present accordingly. Chances are, you'll go on later than expected. You therefore have to modify your presentation, shorten it, but still keep it good. This is a challenge. You have to be up to that. Or you must be willing to perhaps change the presentation you *intended* to give for another. Versatility is required.

## **CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT TO DO IF I'M SQUEEZED OUT OF TIME?**

There is a story of a famous speaker who was the last on after a series of university lecturers. He was to be the keynoter. He was the big draw card. And, being the most important man there, and the presentation most looked forward to, he was scheduled to come on last. This how it normally goes. Most important – last.

All day the other speakers had come on, each going *just those few minutes over time*. Our keynoter was supposed to be on a 10-15p.m. to finish at 10-55p.m. The function was to wrap up at 11-00 p.m. at latest. Everybody was expecting this. But because every preceding speaker had gone over time – the emcee being too weak to chastise the first of these, thus setting a precedent – it was 10-50 in the evening before the keynoter was introduced. A very experienced hand at this sort of thing, here is what it is purported he said.

“Thank you Madam Emcee - Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Tonight I was undecided whether to present my long speech or my short speech -

“I have decided to give *both*...

Groans from the audience. One can imagine the anguish of people who were thinking about missing their last buses, trains and the like.

“Here is my short speech: ‘*Thank you.*’

“And here is my long speech. ‘*Thank you all for inviting me to speak to you tonight. It was indeed an honour – goodnight - Madam Emcee...*’”

And he walked away and sat down.

Not many have that sort of empathy with their audience. Or the temerity to do that. The keynoter was well aware that the day had been a long one. He was aware that everyone was tired and wanted it over with. He got it over with!

But I’ll tell you this: The organisers of that particular conference probably resolved never to have that emcee work for them again.

What you need to remember to *act graciously*. Don’t get uptight.

## **SO WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF MY PRESENTATION?**

In Toastmasters, after you’ve given your presentation there is usually a brief “Thank you.” from the Toastmaster. She then gets on with introducing the next item on the agenda. The Toastmaster does not evaluate, does not comment on the speech. Well, mostly. There will be others to do the evaluating. Evaluation is a central part of Toastmasters.

The outside of Toastmasters the scenario goes entirely differently. After the applause dies down, the emcee (who you gave a little nod or signal to earlier, indicating the speech was nearly over) comes up front and enthuses on what you’ve done. *She does not evaluate or offer advice on how she thinks you could have done it better!* Any spoken evaluations about you get are done ‘out of earshot’ behind the scenes. Any written ones you will also not see. The emcee might ask the audience if they have any questions of you. Then, after you’ve dealt with these -

and you are still in charge, remember, if you have that microphone in your hand. You might say,

“Well, there being no further questions, I’ll hand back to your emcee, Margaret (or whatever her name is)

### **WHAT SORT OF ‘THANK YOU’ CAN I EXPECT?**

The president, or the emcee in this case, then calls upon a member of the audience with whom it has been prearranged, to give the “Vote of Thanks.” A mini-speech is given, where you may be presented with a pen, a bottle on wine in a bag, or perhaps an envelope containing a card and a little cash (petrol money) You shake their hand and accept this. Smile and wave at the audience – and then you’re done.

Well, maybe.

### **WHAT ELSE MIGHT HAPPEN BEFORE I LEAVE?**

Chances are people will come up to you – swarm up to you if you were particularly good and it was a large audience – to do one of two things: tell of *their* own experiences, or, more importantly, *get your details* so they can contact you. And, if you’re good, you will inevitably be asked if you’d come again. It is always a propitious sign when the President asks you if you’d be willing to come back again. It’s almost a certain promise of a further booking. Oh, and if you get lucky, you might even be asked to stay for lunch at the organisers’ expense.

In the next chapter we’ll talk about obtaining bookings to speak outside of Toastmasters in more detail.

## GOT Four – Getting Bookings

### SO WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTING IN GOING OUTSIDE?

Back in 1982, when I decided to go for my Able Toastmaster Award, it was mandatory to do five speeches outside of Toastmasters before being accredited. In fact things were considerably different back then, making advancement through the Toastmaster ranks a lot slower than today. For example, the Competent Communicator Manual (now C & L) contained fifteen speaking assignments not ten. There were no ACM's Bronze, Silver and Gold. And there was no Leadership trail. There were only those three awards: CTM, ATM and DTM. So seemingly difficult it was to obtain an ATM that at my club, Parramatta, No 2774, although it had been running since the late 1960s only three previous people at made it to ATM and above.\* I was the fourth. It was quite a triumph.

### WHY A REQUIREMENT TO GO OUTSIDE?

Perhaps it was because the phrase 'Distinguished Toastmaster' implies that that person has distinguished himself not only within an organization but in the world at large. How could we have somebody regarded as *distinguished* if nobody outside of TMI knew about him? A distinguished person is generally well known. Anyway, it was a requirement to go outside Toastmasters, so I had to set to and do this.

### HOW DID I GET OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS?

How to go about it? This was before the Internet and E-mails. I tried writing letters to various organizations: Service clubs such as Apex, Jaycees, Lions, Rotary, Inner Wheel, even women's business clubs such as Soroptimists and Zonta. I didn't have much success. No one answered my letters. The few phone calls in reply made it plain they weren't really interested. I was told I needed *experience*. It was the old 'Catch 22' situation. As it was, I thought I already had plenty of experience. I was not only a member of Toastmasters International but Rostrum Clubs of NSW. I'd also attended a number public speaking courses at evening colleges over the years. Eventually, however, after quite a number of phone calls I managed to get my first booking.

\*Ken Rennie, Gary Wilson, and Archie Barclay preceded me. Ken and Gary went on to become DTMs and, later the first International Directors-at-large. Parramatta Evening No 2774 was indeed a prestige club.

## **WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT LIKE?**

That first speaking engagement was quite a challenge: addressing around a dozen severe-looking business women in a restaurant in the Sydney suburb of Eastwood - a Zonta Club. The small talk over the meal was something new to me. Nervous as I was, both the conversation and my speech went well enough. But when a week or so later I sent them a letter asking if they'd give me a 'Letter of Recommendation' on their business head stationery, I was told that

“That is not our policy.”

It was a direct snub, and I thought, “Well here I go again...this finding speaking jobs isn't going to be easy.” Nearly thirty years that have elapsed since that time and I have never had a single club or organization make the same refusal. Needless to say, I didn't ever attend that particular Zonta club again.

## **HOW DID YOU GET FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS?**

It was now a little easier. I rang 'em up and told 'em I'd *already spoken* outside of Toastmasters – then I *asked* them if they'd like me to come along.

My second gig was equally as daunting. It was the Parramatta Rotary Club. They met in the Parramatta Leagues Club, a big, busy, bustling place. Problem was, they did sit in a large room with tables right around the outside walls. Where there were no tables, there were open doorway spaces. The only place I could stand, it seemed to me at the time, where I could be heard by all, was right in the *centre of the room!* This meant that no matter what direction I faced, I always had my back to at least some of the audience. Moreover, the background noise was awful, music, talking, laughter - sound coming in raw and hard from all manner of directions.

But enough on that. Once I had performed at that Rotary Club word started to get around. I got another Rotary Club, then another. Then, a friend at work who was in Apex, asked me if I'd address their club. And so it went on. I got my five, produced Letters of Thanks as evidence, and put in for my ATM Certificate. It arrived dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 1984. I was also presented with a nice red ATM pocket-badge which I have to this day. Oh, yes, and I was to remain a plain ATM for a long time... All this bronze, silver and gold stuff was yet to arrive...

## **AND AFTER THOSE FIRST FIVE OUTSIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS?**

There is nothing like the confidence one gains with success. I simply phoned people and asked if they'd like to have me along. “Ask and it shall be granted unto thee.” If you don't ask, you have to wait for word-of-mouth referrals and for people to call you.

But now the outside speaking engagements started to come in one after the other. I did twenty-nine in 1982 and they were still rolling in mostly due to 'word of mouth.' In 1983, between 1<sup>st</sup>

February and 16<sup>th</sup> of November, I did thirty-six. That's a total of sixty-five (65) outside speeches in two years.

*Then I resigned from Toastmasters.*

I wanted to write a book or three, so I put public speaking 'on the back burner.' I was also a member of Rostrum Clubs of New South Wales at this time, having made it to their State's Grand Final, held in the Wentworth Hotel, Sydney in 1980. I also got as far as the finals in Sydney's Festival of Sydney's Oratory Competition two years later. Perhaps it was burn out. Whatever it was, I'd temporarily had enough. It was time for something else.

### **DO YOU THINK SPEAKING TO AUDIENCES IS ADDICTIVE?**

It wasn't to last. Once you've had a taste of success, speaking can become addictive. By 1988 I was back in Toastmasters with a vengeance. By then I'd already belonged to Takapuna Club in Auckland, New Zealand, Parramatta, and Enthusiastic Epping in Sydney, New South Wales. Rejoining, I went to Sydney's Karingal and Western Lectern, two clubs that met on alternate Wednesday evenings. Then an old friend, Elizabeth Wilson, DTM formed a club in my place of work, the Parramatta Taxation Office, and I very soon found myself involved in this club, too. And, once again, I was also attending a Rostrum Club. It was all go again!

Also, around 1990, I found myself once again re-introduced to really big audiences: 100, 200, 300 hundred. This came about because a friend and fellow Toastmaster, Bob Hince (runner up at the International Competition in the USA in 1986) had referred my name on to a Christine Lewis. Bob was doing the occasional presentation for Christine, who happened to be the coordinator for no fewer than six big shoppers groups sponsored by Westfields, the owners of Roselands, Macquarie Centre, Parramatta Mall, Chatswood Mall and Miranda Mall. Later I was to be introduced to a woman who ran a big group at Carlingford Mall. Needless to say, one success, and you not only get invited to *all the other* venues they run, but get called back again and again - So you have to have a few presentations up your sleeve!

### **WILL I NEED TO HAVE A *REPertoire* OF PRESENTATIONS?**

I've just stated that. If you're good and they enjoy you, you will get asked back. That invitation will probably happen in the following year, that is, twelve months later. This is pretty normal. If they're a big organization who regularly pull in first rate presenters, you might have to wait two, or even three years. But you will, in all probably, be asked to speak to them again. Remembering that they will still have many people in that audience who heard you on that first occasion, *you need to be able to give them something different.*

### **WILL MY TOASTMASTER QUALIFICATIONS HELP?**

What is your ATM or DTM worth outside of TMI? Frankly, not much. To most outsiders these things have no meaning. It really is true that you're *only as good as your last speech.*

Qualifications might help you get that first booking. Might even get you a few more if you don't goof up. But don't expect a string of Toastmaster accomplishments, or even National Speaker Associations merit badges, to get you continually booked. No, this comes by word-of-mouth referral. And if you're good enough, that referral gets you placed on speaker-seeker lists.

However, I will qualify that. Once you have spoken before a particular audience, you can get back to *that* group's organization years later. Simply ask if they'd like to have you out there *again*. Once in, you're in!

**Tip here:** Keep a supply of business cards or even blank cards in your wallet. You can write your name and telephone number on those blanks. Because once you've given your presentation it is very likely someone will come up to you afterwards and ask for your card. They are doing so, so that they might phone you later, or to give it to a friend who may well phone you later.

In an earlier chapter I dealt with the sorts of things to ask the enquirer should such a phone call be received. Now we move onto something which, toastmasters might not regard as important: keeping good records.

## GOT Five – Record Keeping

### SHOULD I KEEP ALL MY RECORDS ON COMPUTER?

Today it is very tempting to keep records entirely on computer. Certainly I keep most of mine in this way. But in being a speaker it is often useful to have both computer and written records and I will explain why shortly.

When I began to get my first few outside of Toastmaster bookings I kept everything in my head. But as things began to snowball I realized this wasn't possible. So I turned to what was in the 1980s a very logical way to keep records of the type I needed: a card index. I bought a box, and a few dozen 5 by 3 inch cards and set to. The box expanded to two boxes and several hundred cards as time went by. I still have these cards. And I still use them.

So what do I put on them?

### WHAT DO I PUT IN MY SPEAKER'S RECORDS?

Well, here's what I do. I shall deal first with the **cards**: I write the *name* of the organization. I record where they *meet*. Also, the *number* of people expected to be in the audience. But most importantly, the name of the *particular story or stories* I told (I'm a storyteller) and the *date* I delivered it/them. The beauty of this last is that should someone phone, you can race to the box, see if you have a card on them and, if you do, ascertain when you were there last and what particular address you gave. This saves you heaps of angst trying to figure out what to talk to them about next and worrying about whether or not they've heard it before. You can find out in a glance.

### WHAT OTHER NON-COMPUTER RECORDS WOULD IT BE WISE TO KEEP?

The other written, that is, non-computer records I suggest you keep are: your kitchen calendar, an exercise book, your pocket diary, and in my case, a list which I can quickly look at to ascertain how *long ago* it is since I told a particular story. The idea here being not to just be repeating your favorites at the expense of ones you like a little less. There are ways to ensure that you can recall a dozen or a score of good presentations over the long-term and I will go into that in another chapter. This last record helps with that.

### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO NOTE?

Initially it is what you've written on that **scribble pad** when you were called to the telephone. Don't lose that! Keep it until you've recorded all the relevant details everywhere else. Come back to this as you write up and type up your various records. Don't ditch it until all of this is done.

## SO WHAT'S THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT RECORD?

Your **calendar**! The kitchen calendar' use is obvious. You keep it right nearby the telephone. Someone calls and you can see immediately if you are available on the day they want you. If you accept a booking *fill this in immediately*. If you don't, you could have all the rest of the stuff done and still miss your appointment. Make it a habit, of course, to check your calendar to see what you've got coming up every day.

The cards, the notebook, the exercise book, and the computer entries can all be done later, but it really is a good idea to get these done right away.

The card index I've already mentioned. In the pocket diary it is advisable to keep the following details: Contact name, phone number, name of group, meeting place, time and date. *Don't forget to take your pocket diary with you.* It is possible to end up going to the wrong venue. I know, I've done it on more than one occasion!

**Tip:** Check the name of the group and venue very carefully. Lots of places and clubs have very similar-sounding names. I can recall going to one place only to be told that, "Yes, we're called that. But it must be the one over in so-and-so street. They meet today, too." And sure enough, it was the second group who had booked me. Because I'd left home early, as was my practice, I still managed to make it on time.

## WHAT IS YOUR MOST *DETAILED* RECORD?

The **exercise book** becomes your main record. A half page for each booking. On the front of the book I write the year. Then I divide the pages into equal numbers to cover the twelve months. Each page – as it is required – is ruled off so that one entry can take up (with the book turned into scenic view rather than portrait) five columns which are headed thus:

Time and date, Organization, Venue Address, Contact's details. Remarks.

The first four are obvious. The Remarks Column will carry such details as: when booked, how many expected in audience, e.g. 80 men and women. Then: What story I'll tell. How many times I've been to this group before. When last there? And: any special requirements? Anything of relevance in fact. It is far easier to go my filing cabinet and grab one of my exercise books than to boot up a computer that takes five minutes or more to load up.

## WHAT DO YOU PUT IN *YOUR* REMARKS COLUMN?

The Remarks Column in that exercise book can contain a wealth of information which, if not written down, would probably fade from easy recall. No, nothing we ever do is forgotten; it's *recall* which gives us the trouble – especially as we get older and a lot more is piled up in our memories. So in that Remarks Column you can put such things as: "microphone and amplifier system unsatisfactory- cord too short. " " No mic provided." "Had to see management of club

to obtain new batteries for hand-held mic.” “Room layout poor; rectangular tables placed around outside walls” - whatever you want. Even (and I’ve never done this myself but have felt like it on the odd occasion) “Never going back there again.”

You can also record the good stuff: “Very well received. “Was approached by five people after the presentation for my details.“ “Felt I stepped up a level with this one!”

When I first began to keep records I did so by writing in every detail inside large manila folders. And I kept them under various titles according to the organization I’d addressed, e.g. Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, Golden A Retirees, etc.. However, I found that with exercise books, boldly printed with the year on the front, and pages for each month inside, it was a lot easier to keep a chronological record. Thus a lot easier to find things. A chronological record is the most convenient for viewing both the past and what is coming up.

### **HOW FAR AHEAD AM I LIKELY TO BE BOOKED?**

You need to remember, you might be booked to speak five months ahead with your first call that year. The second might be to book you for two months time. The third, for a date eighteen months ahead – yes, you will get bookings that far ahead. And a fourth might be an emergency call where a speaker has cancelled and they want you to come the day after tomorrow!

So, although it might be a somewhat boring subject, I advise that you keep good records. For once you become known, you could have a dozen or more bookings ahead of you at any one time. Keeping all of that organized in way that you can still enjoy the other facets of your life is well worth the effort.

## GOT Six – Using Microphones

### **WILL I NEED TO USE A MICROPHONE?**

In the majority of Toastmaster speaking situations the member doesn't use a microphone. Generally the group is small enough, compact enough for all to hear without one. In the world outside of Toastmasters the opposite is the case. It is rare not to have a microphone. Except, in the confines of clubs such as Lions, Rotary, Inner Wheel, where member numbers are on a par with our own Toastmaster meetings and table layout is the same, microphones are pretty standard. Generally, outside of Toastmaster gatherings are bigger: forty, fifty, sixty. In speaking to Probus Clubs in Australia, for example, you can expect the majority of audiences to be around sixty to eighty people. Biggest Probus club I've addressed had a membership of 150. You cannot not use a microphone with such a crowd. It's essential.

Because most Toastmasters are not used to a microphone, when they are called upon to use one all sorts of troubles prevail. So we'll talk a little about mics here. The theory might help you. However, the only way to really learn about them is to use them, and to use them often. As an old ex Aeradio operator who used microphones daily for years, their use is second nature to me. Hence I feel qualified to talk about them. Even so, in the public speaking situation you still need to remain aware of that microphone in your hand – or pinned to your jacket, or worn as a headset – as the case may be.

### **WHAT SORTS OF MICROPHONE?**

Let's go first of all to the most popular microphone used by meetings today, the hand-held radio mic. It is wire-less. The old phrase for a radio receiver, as some of you might know, was a 'wireless set.' Here, the speaker holds the microphone in his hand, speaks into it and – lo – his voice is heard coming out of loudspeakers in various parts of the ceiling or walls. How does it work?

### **HOW DOES A RADIO-MICROPHONE WORK?**

The hand-held radio microphone is actually a small, battery-powered transmitter. You'll often see a little aerial sticking out of the base of some models. In others it is completely hidden in the handle. When you're switched on, the microphone emits a carrier signal unheard by the audience – unless you drop it, scrape it on something, or blow into it. Of course, when you talk into it, your voice is superimposed onto or modulates that carrier wave. But it does not go directly to those ceiling-mounted loudspeakers. They, in themselves can't convert your words into intelligible sounds. No, what happens is the frequency modulated sounds emanating from that hand held mic are picked up by a converting and amplifying device that sends them to a

build in sound system. You may have noticed that little box with an aerial on it standing somewhere? This is the pick up point.

In most situations you'll not be aware of *how* this is happenings, but it does pay you to *know*. And I'll explain with a little story why this is so.

### **WHAT IS A SHADOWED SIGNAL?**

Some years ago I drove up the F3 Freeway from Sydney. I was heading up the North Coast of New South Wales bound for the Gold Coast in Queensland. I decided to stop in to one of those big roadside service stations for a bite to eat. On going to the counter and placing my order I was given one of those electronic devices which would sound or vibrate when my meal was ready. Then I went and sat down, placing my sounding device on the table to await my turn.

I waited. I waited some more. Seemed a long time. I waited even longer.

By now I was becoming a little exasperated because there were other people eating their meals who had obviously come in a lot later than I. In the end I could stand it no more. I strode to the counter and said words to this effect. "What's going on here? I've been here for thirty-five minutes! I only ordered a hamburger. What's the trouble?"

"Oh, we'd thought you'd picked it up."

"No. "

"Well, we called you four or five times. We thought you might have left."

I had my electrical calling device in my hand.

"Maybe it's faulty. Hang on, I'll call it now and see if it's okay."

It was okay.

Only then did it dawn on me. As an old radio operator I knew that the system was direct, line-of sight. The transmit point, in this case, was somewhere around the serving counter area or possibly up high on a back wall - and I had been sitting a table *partly behind a pillar*. My sounding device - a radio receiver in fact - had been shielded from receiving that signal by the pillar. The pillar had caused a radio shadow and no matter how many times the counter staff called, my little sounder had failed to go off.

So what's the story here?

### **WILL A RADIO MICROPHONE'S SIGNAL REACH EVERY PART OF THE ROOM?**

Be aware that with a hand-held or a lapel or headphone microphone, the signal from that device has to be picked up. It is possible for you, as a speaker, to stand in certain parts of the room

where that signal is blocked out. It could be a pillar or stanchion. It could be anything really, that *blocks the line-of-sight signal* from your microphone to the receiver/amplifying device that then sends this on to the auditorium's sound system. You need to be aware of this.

### **LAPEL MICROPHONES – GOOD OR BAD?**

The lapel microphone is a wonderful invention. In theory – and in practice if you're using it correctly – you can stroll around talking using both hands to gesture and practically forget that you have a microphone at all. Or can you?

What you've got to remember is that the mic itself is not transmitting that signal we talked about earlier. What is, is the little square, box-like gadget you've got affixed to your belt or in your side coat pocket. That is what is sending out the signal. And that little box-like gadget has an aerial in it radiating a signal *that needs to be picked up*. Do you want to be embarrassed?

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HAZARDS OF THE LAPEL MICROPHONE?**

Quite obviously not. With this in mind, one of the most embarrassing things that can happen to a speaker using a lapel mic is to affix it and test it before going on stage and then to *leave it turned on!*

A signal is going out. Unlike the hand-held mic, it is unlikely that you'll bump it or scrape it and hear a giveaway sound. So it is possible you'll forget that it *is* on. However, should you talk to someone, cough, gasp, break wind or worse - go to the toilet before going on stage, the audience is going to hear some sounds which you could later find somewhat embarrassing. No. It hasn't happened to me. But I have been told of it happening to others!

What did happen to me on one occasion was I made the natural assumption that I was speaking only to the audience before me. As it was, my mellow tones were being picked up in every other room in the club: dining rooms, the foyer areas, the gym, the coffee shop, every other room in the place including the swimming pool in the basement! Once you're on an electrical circuit anything can happen!

So check your lapel microphone before hand. Then turn it off. Do not turn it on again until you're about to be called up to speak.

### **WHAT ABOUT MICROPHONES WITH LEADS?**

Microphones with a lead generally do not give you much trouble providing the lead is long enough, not damaged, and the wall socket into which the lead is plugged is not broken in some way. Always ensure before hand – generally when your talking on the phone at the booking stage – that if it is a lead-type microphone the lead *is long* enough. Ask them this. Tell 'em you want at least a five metre or ten metre, or fifteen metre, whatever is your preference. It is almost impossible to have a lead which is too long. You can always coil it. You cannot uncoil

a two metre lead. You are stuck next to the amplifier and loudspeaker. You cannot move around. Such restrictions could ruin your day. And your listeners! Why?

### **WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS WITH A SHORT LEAD?**

Big problems arise when your mobility is cramped in this way. Firstly, you have a very good chance of getting terrible screeching feedback if you let your microphone get anywhere near the loudspeaker. Worse, if you can't move the amplifier/loudspeaker you are dictated to where you have to stand. And where you stand in relationship to an audience is a critical factor in being able to present effectively. If the audience is too far away...

### **WHAT ABOUT MICROPHONES AFFIXED TO THE LECTERN?**

If the mic is affixed on a lectern and you don't want to speak from the lectern, ask for a roving mic. Ask for a radio mic. If the venue at which the function is being held doesn't run to one, and you still don't want to use that lectern mic, the only alternative - if you haven't a sound system of your own (many professional speakers have their own) then you'll just have to move the audience into as tight a group as practicable and speak without a mic.

Sometimes, of course, even this isn't practicable and you will *have* to use that lectern mic. Be brave. Use it. But if you are an entertaining speaker who likes to 'own the stage' as it were, being tied to a fixed point is, to me, something far from desirable. But let us move on to another aspect of going beyond the Toastmaster environment: your Subject Material.

## GOT Seven – Recalling Your Material

### HOW LONG IS THE TYPICAL OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS PRESENTATION?

In Toastmasters it is routine to find a subject, research it, then prepare and present short speeches, 5- 7 minutes being the norm. Occasionally, and with the leave of the Vice President Education or whoever is putting together the program, we might present an 8 – 10 minuter. We may even prevail on her to let us go longer: 10 – 12 minutes. Anything beyond that being regarded a taboo, simply because it will cut much into the scheduled time for the whole meeting. After all, it's a participative club and everyone wants some input.

There are exceptions to such rigorous time limits. Quite often Districts, even Divisions of Toastmasters, run events whereby the Toastmaster can practice a longer speech, even a workshop. However, in the main, Toastmaster clubs do not ready their members for what goes on outside : the forty to fifty-minute keynote presentation, for example.

Forty to fifty minutes! To the new chum in Toastmasters the thought might make you want to run away and hide. Just having to get up for *five* minutes in front of an audience whose faces are familiar is difficult enough. Before strangers! Besides, how will you *remember* all that stuff?

### ARE THERE TECHNIQUES FOR REMEMBERING ALL THAT MATERIAL?

Let me let you into a secret. There are techniques which will enable you to remember 'all that stuff.' Also, 'all that stuff' does not amount to thousand of hours of subject matter, or hundreds, or even dozens. Most professional speakers who do the rounds have a quite limited repertoire. A few hours is the norm. For example, on questioned on how much prepared material he had, the late Ron Tacchi, an Australian professional speaker who was at the top of his game, answered: "Five hours."

"Five hours!"

"Yes."

In effect, this meant that Ron had enough well-practiced material to present for that time. It did not mean he could not 'wing it' – speak impromptu – for longer. But as a professional, he would not as a rule 'wing it.' A professional presentation is a professional presentation. It must be polished. It must do what it is meant to do with a minimum of risk. It is therefore practiced over and over again...and presented over and over again.

Another example. The world famous, motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar, visited Australia many years back. A number of journalists, seeking a news-story, went along to hear him speak.

Ziglar was back in Australia twenty years later. A television journalist who'd heard him speak on his first visit went along on this second visit. Two decades had elapsed. The journalist's remarks- and this on National Television.

"But Ziggy. This is exactly the same speech you gave us twenty years ago!"

"So... It does the job. Why change it." Or words to that effect from the motivational master.

Why indeed?

### **ARE REPEAT PERFORMANCES THE NORM?**

All right, perhaps you think this is not the rule. Well let me tell you something more. Some professionals don't even have two hours up their sleeves! I attended the District 73 Annual Conference at the Handorf Resort in the Adelaide Hills in May 2009. I was there to present a workshop on Storytelling. The keynote speaker – can't recall his name – gave a resounding motivational-type presentation which went for around fifty minutes. And he was good – very good. Afterwards, I approached him and asked if he'd be coming back to deliver another keynote, perhaps to another Toastmaster District. Here's what he said in effect.

"Well, not here. I can't really. *You've heard all my material.*"

Can you believe that! Here is a man probably earning his living going around the world giving a motivational keynote, and he says that he only has one speech. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

So how do you remember all of your dozen or twenty long presentations so that each and everyone of them remains relatively fresh in your mind? First thing: become aware of how your memory works. Read about it. Read, remember and practice. There are a lot of good books out there on this subject.

### **WANT TO KNOW HOW TO KEEP THOSE MEMORIES FRESH?**

Imagine a graph as follows: A vertical axis containing the information learned, and a horizontal axis which depicts time elapsed. When you learn something with 100% efficiency, your 'line of learning' commences at the top of this vertical axis. You're right up there. But as time goes by, the 100% of your learning drops away. You can recall less and less.

The main point to be observed is that the steepest drop on your Memory Graph begins *right away*, the moment you stop your learning process. Then, gradually, it begins to become less steep. It curves away, still dropping, until after a few weeks it becomes a graph line *almost paralleling* to the Time axis. When you reach this stage, forgetting has been slowed down to the point it is almost non-existent. To put it succinctly, we lose an awful lot of information over the first full day, a little less over the next, a little less over the next, to the point where, if enough time has gone by, we are hardly forgetting anything at all.

## SO, IN ALL PRACTICALITY, WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Here's how you practice a particular speech so you can bring it to recall months, even years, after you delivered it for the first time.

Firstly, in getting it ready for that initial delivery before a live audience you will have already practiced it over and over again. You probably researched your topic, or lived it and therefore know it backwards. You really *prepared* your presentation. By the time you actually present it to the audience for the first time you know it very well.

Okay, but from the moment we learn something it begins to fade from our conscious recall. If we learn, say, a list one hundred facts, by tomorrow we'll have forgotten half of them. By the next day probably we'll be down to a two fifths. And by the week's end, we'll be lucky to remember ten percent. So how do we overcome this tendency to lose data this way?

We over-learn. We learn 100 percent on Day One. On Day Two we run through it again, bringing ourselves back to 100 percent *a second time*. We can now miss a day. On Day Four we go through our list again. We again come back up to 100 percent. We can now miss *two* days. We do the same thing again. We can now miss *three* days. Then *five*. Then *eight*. Then two weeks, then a month! We check our list after the month's interval and we can still remember that close to 100 percent it doesn't matter. After a month off, we can go to *six weeks*, then *two months*, then *three*. After a year, we're only looking at our material for this particular list of data (in this case our speech) *once every six months*.

We do the same with our second speech. Our third...fourth...fifth. Gradually we *bring on line* into our long-term memory banks our whole repertoire of speeches or presentations. By the time we've been going for a two or three years we only have to review each of our presentations, say, once every three months, to feel comfortably in knowing that they will be ready in our memory when we're called upon to deliver them. Yes, this is how it is done.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW IT WORKS?

I know it works for I have been using this system for well over fifteen years for the score of stories I've been delivering over that time. Most of those stories have been told dozens of times – one, probably more than a hundred times!

Of course, you need a system to keep you on track with this reviewing process. I do it with a list. Beside each speech I write the date I delivered it. For example: "*Information Please*" (Title of one of my stories) Looking at my list, which is mounted on a cork board in my study, I can see that I've delivered this speech as follows: 18/11/08, 18/5/09, 28/5/09, 17/2/10, 27/7/10 and 20/10/10. There would have been an earlier list or lists, as I've been telling this yarn for maybe a dozen years.

As you can see, there are some fairly long gaps there: six months, nine months. But because it is a story, it is easy to remember. The only thing which might concern you in presenting a story are names of people, places, corporate and trade names, ships names, et cetera. The actual flow of the story is the easy part. With a lot of hard data such as facts and figures, you would probably need to review your speech a little more often. But two to three months intervals should be plenty.

If I actually deliver the speech to an audience, I write in the date and put a circle around it. If it is just a memory-jogging review done at home, I simply write in the date. Simple system, but it works.

## HOW DO YOU DO IT?

I do it using a second card system - a series of cards. For example, on my "*The Sixty Milers*" - story, which is a fifty-minute presentation about the New South Wales collier fleet; a sort of eulogy to the hundreds of sailors who lost their lives on this little coal ships - I have sixteen cards. I keep an elastic band around them. On one side of a card I write, for example, name of the captain of a particular ship, on the other side the ship's name. On another card I've written: 'Pilot Vessel Captain Cook.' On the card's reverse side: 'Steamed out to search 10 minutes behind the William MacArthur.' That's all I need to remind me of all the ancillary facts that are associated with those few words. The cards simply contain key words or phrases. Our memories work by association, so a few key words can bring it all tumbling back.

So, here's what I do: I take the sixteen cards, shuffle them, and then read what is on one side. I remember what is on the other side of the card, say it out loud, *and* write it down. I do this through the whole sixteen cards. Then I turn the cards over and check my written answers against what is written on my sheet of paper. I tick off all those I've answered correctly. Any wrong ones and I run through them again a few times until remembered. Then go through these. When I've got them *all* 100% correct, I know I can put any worries about recalling what's in that speech away for at least another three or four months - even longer. It is very gratifying to know that one can do this. -And it really does work.

It works because of knowledge of the Memory Retention Graph. So learn about these things. As a speaker doing a lot of work outside of the Toastmaster environment, perhaps your even becoming a professional, it will pay you dividends to do so. So how do you remember all of your twenty to fifty-plus minute presentations so that each and everyone of them remains relatively fresh in your mind? First thing: become aware of how your memory works. Read about it. Read, remember - and then practice.

## GOT Eight – Outside audiences want?

### **WHAT DO TOASTMASTERS AUDIENCES WANT?**

Inside Toastmasters your listeners, your audience, comprise people with goals pretty similar to your own. They want to learn how to speak well, to overcome their fears to the point where they're first of all confident and, eventually, competent. Some will want to go beyond the simply competent stage. Such want to become really outstanding speakers. Nearly all Toastmaster audiences are motivated to some degree in wanting to improve their leadership and communications skills. Not so outside Toastmasters.

### **WHAT DO NON-TOASTMASTER AUDIENCES GENERALLY WANT?**

Outside of the Toastmasters environment there is a very wide range of audiences and motivational energy. Some people who would be attending to hear a non-Toastmaster presentation maybe every bit as ambitious and motivated as the typical Toastmasters. Some will not. You will have people coming along eager to learn. You will have others who are attending out of sufferance because their husband or partner pressured them into it. You will have some who want to be uplifted, inspired, entertained. If a professional, you will have others who been told to attend by the boss. Your audience's motivations for being there will be far from uniform.

All manner of audiences come along to hear speakers perform. You'll have groups who are after special knowledge. They might want to learn about investment banking, or how best to renovate a home, or how to grow a good vegetable garden. Unless you have expertise in these areas, are motivated to speak about them, then you'd be wise to leave such subjects alone. One of the five requisites of the great public speaker is to know more about the subject matter being presented than the *average member of the audience* you're speaking to. Another is *a burning desire to succeed* at what you're doing. If you don't have these, you will fail abysmally.

### **WHAT DO THE MEMBERS OF NEARLY EVERY AUDIENCE WANT?**

Fortunately, there are a great many potential audiences out there who are not after particular knowledge. They don't mind learning a thing or two. Indeed, they welcome it. But what they really want is to be entertained. Entertainment, escapism from the hum-drum; to be carried away in their minds; to have their emotions aroused, this is what draws them along. Or, it maybe that they're regularly attend a meeting for other reasons and a guest speaker is part of the routine. They come along for the business side of things, and then stay on to hear the speaker.

Many of the groups I address are of this genre. The service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, View Clubs come into this category. To a lesser extent so do the Probus Clubs. These are clubs set up by Rotary for the benefit of seniors and there are thousands of these all over the world. Other

organizations in which you might be asked to speak are Church groups or Historical Societies. Others again, are clubs set up to provide *entertainment as a lure* to getting people to attend and perhaps purchase things. In Australia, the big shopping complexes, malls with scores, sometimes hundreds of shops, have an auditorium where shopping club members can attend. The Westfield's Golden A Clubs, VIP Clubs. In the Sydney suburb of Carlingford, for example, in the big shopping mall there, meets the 'Carlingford Tuesday Club.' The audience is mostly made up of women who come in to spend a morning – or maybe the best part of the day – buying things. The club, and the speaker is simply part of the draw card.

### **WHAT ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' AUDIENCES?**

Then there are those audiences which are made up of groups who have, or have had, common backgrounds in one or another of the professions. You might think that such are out of your range as far as your own particular areas of expertise. Could be. But maybe not. As an ex-radio operator who has worked in both the Aviation and Maritime fields, I've actually presented on a number of occasions to the Master Mariners Association (mostly ex ship's captains) and the Australian Navigators Association (also ship's officers and airline pilots) and the Legatees (ex military officers) Your topic does not have to be technical. All they want is to be entertained.

So your gear your speech to the particular audience. This not only includes the material but the length of that material. A Rotary or Lion's club like a 20-30 presentation after everyone has eaten. You go on when coffee's been poured. A Probus Club will probably have a tea/coffee/biscuits break between their business session and when the guest speaker is called. They probably still have an hour of their meeting time left when you go on. So you need to be ready to present for 45-50 minutes. Then again, you might be called upon to a group who want you to entertain them for two hours. I've had such on a number of occasions. In this case, you insist there be a break after an hour – if only to give everyone a rest.

Most audiences are fit and well enough to give you their full attention for the time you're on. If they start talking among themselves or nodding off to sleep that is your fault, not theirs. You're the speaker. You're the entertainer. You're the person who is supposed to keep them fully focused. But there are occasions when, no matter how good you are, you need to change tack to keep people attentive. I'm a Storyteller. Some of my stories go for 40 – 55 minutes. I would not attempt to tell one long story to an audience made up of very elderly people in a nursing home. Not any more, anyway. It does not work. The way you'd do it here is a bevy of shorter presentation or stories, with a lot of audience interaction wherever possible.

### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME WAYS TO GET AUDIENCE INTERACTION?**

Wherever you can, let the audience 'own the action' by asking them to participate in some small way. The simplest is to ask for 'a show of hands.'

“Hands up those of you who have ever...?”

And ask this question if you're pretty sure many have. If you think very few will have had the experience you intend to ask about, don't ask. Many people are shy and don't wish to become the centre of attention. If a lot of people do raise a hand, then you can single someone out and ask a further question. This way you are allowing the audience to 'own the subject matter,' and this will enhance the alliance between you and them.

### **DO SESSIONS OUTSIDE TOASTMASTERS HAVE A 'QUESTION TIME.?'**

This depends on the sort of presentation it is. Certainly it is very common. You need to find out before you go on if this is liable to be the case. If it is, allow sufficient time between the end of your presentation and the scheduled finish time. Often a Question Time will elicit no questions at all. At other times only one or two questions will be asked. Then again, on others there might be a swag of questions, so many, in fact, that you – or the emcee – has to put a time limit on it. You can finish off here by simply saying, "I'll take one final question."

### **SO WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU'RE ASKED A QUESTION YOU CANNOT ANSWER?**

You be honest about it. "I'm sorry, but I don't know the answer to that one." There is no point in pretending knowledge you don't have. You will be found out. And when you are found out you will lose at least some of that thing every speaker must have: credibility.

If they really do want to know and you sense it is important to them, you can say something like.

"I will endeavour to find out for you. If you could see me after the event..." That puts the onus on them to come up and see you afterwards. If they don't, your off the hook. If they do, then do your damndest to find out and to get back to them.

## GOT Nine – Leadership and the Speaker

### HOW IMPORTANT IS LEADERSHIP FOR A SPEAKER?

For the last few years Toastmasters has had both a Communications and a Leadership Stream. It is interesting to note that the Leadership Stream came into being a great many years after our organization was founded – decades in fact. I suspect the reason for this is that public speaking and the leadership role go naturally together. The concept of leadership emerged well before the idea of an official Leadership Stream in Toastmasters. It did this simply because when a man or woman gets up to speak to an audience they are *naturally assumed* to have donned the magic ‘mantle of leadership.’ They’ve done that simply by their very actions of choosing to become the focus of attention. They are expected to lead. And lead they must.

### WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF ME?

This is probably the primary reason why a novice speaker finds public speaking so daunting. “I’m putting myself up in the spot light (as a leader) Who am I to do that? Maybe I’m not good enough? What will they think of me?” Whatever they think of you will be determined by how you lead. You have automatically become the leader once you’re up in front of an audience whether you like it or not.

The point to remember is that the audience automatically assumes you will take charge. They expect you to be assertive. They are completely neutral to you at this stage. They are neither for you or against you. Or if they are biased, it would be *towards* you’re succeeding in giving them something good to listen to. Unless it is an anticipated heated trade union debate, or something which will cause them to be fearful, they will want you to succeed. At this stage, though being generally neutral and non-committal, they genuinely expect you to take charge and to *succeed* in being in charge.

In a Toastmaster audience we generally have everything smoothed away for us. There is a Toastmaster. You are introduced. She shakes your hand and leaves the lectern. You move to it. You may choose to speak without a lectern but that’s not the point. Once you step into that area from where you will speak, you are expected to be the audience’s leader. They might want a friendly, benign leader, but they certainly prefer a firm one.

There are many good texts on Public Speaking, so I won’t repeat what others have already written as to how to approach the lectern, begin speaking and the like – except to say this:

An audience fears vacillation and procrastination. These indicate indecision, not a good sign in a leader. Also, the audience doesn’t want to hear excuses as to why everything is not as perfect as you’d like it to be. To them, this indicates weakness. If something goes wrong, remedy it with a minimum of fuss. Be the leader!

## WHAT IF THINGS DO GO WRONG?

Earlier in this book I mentioned that in every single situation in which you present it will seem that nothing is ever 100 percent perfect. There will always be some area, significant or so negligible it is hardly noticeable, that be less than that 100 percent. It could be the acoustics aren't quite right. The microphone isn't. The room layout isn't. The background extraneous noises from the kitchen. The lighting. If there is anything that can be fixed, endeavour to have it done before you go on. If something occurs after you gone on, such as a microphone failure – simply stop - look at the audience and smile. Somebody will come to help you. You might need to mention that the mic's dead. Don't try fixing it yourself. If you do, and you cannot fix it, you will lose a little bit of leadership credibility. “Here's this guy trying to lead us and he can't even fix a faulty microphone.” You are in charge. You do not need to order people around. The people who arranged this meeting are right now feeling embarrassed as they hurry to sort things out.

## HOW SHOULD I ACT IF THINGS GO WRONG?

Quite often you don't need to do anything when something goes wrong except stop speaking and stand still. I recall speaking to an audience of around a hundred people when a smoke alarm was activated. This triggered the club's fire alarm. I stopped speaking and stood still. No one moved except a couple of the organizers. After around two minutes, the alarm went quiet. I thought back to where I'd been in my presentation, went back an idea or two, and continued on.

*The fire alarm went off a second time.*

Same action again. Couple of minutes of cacophonous sound and it went off again.

I started again.

*The fire alarm went off again!*

This time I made some joke about my presentation being so bad even the club's wiring wasn't happy with it, or some such off-the-cuff remark. I was now beginning to think I might not be able to continue. But a moment later a lady came in with an apologetic look on her face.

“Somebody in the next room was illegally smoking a cigarette.” That person was now being spoken to severely by club management. The whole club was a declared non-smoking environment. Somebody had been naughty.

So, whatever happens, you retain your leadership role. In modern parlance, “You play it cool,” no matter whatever is happening around you. You have the microphone in your hand –or on the lectern before you – and are the strongest voice. Let that voice come across as that of a leader. Out there in front of the audience that is what is expected of you.

## GOT Ten – Want to be a professional?

### **WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER?**

As I mentioned in the introduction, this book is *not* written with the objective of turning you into a paid professional speaker. Goodness knows there are enough books out there to instruct you in how to go about this. A professional speaker is a man or woman running a business, or at least working for someone who *pays* them. I'm not advocating that. True, going outside of Toastmasters might eventuate in your becoming so proficient that you decide this is what you will do. But that's up to you. So let us imagine, just for a moment, that this is where you'd like to be heading. You would like to become a professional.

### **HOW DO THE MAJORITY OF PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS EARN A LIVING?**

Professional speakers fall into a number of categories, the most common being that of a Public Speaking Teacher. There are, of course, many more. However, we'll deal with the professional public speaking teacher.

In my few years with the National Speakers Association of Australia it became clear to me that the preponderance of professionals earn their living running educational workshops of one type or another, and teaching people the rudiments of public speaking was easily *top of the list*.

Still, there are many other types of workshops being run out there. So it behooves anyone wishing to go outside Toastmasters to realize the fundamental differences between what the paid professionals do, and what we do in Toastmasters.

Toastmasters run a number of workshops: Speechcraft courses held for the general public and new members are very common. As are Youth Leadership courses for high school students. Less common are Speechcraft courses for business people. Then there are specialized courses such as the use of PowerPoint and the like. These last generally being run by our more experienced members.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORKSHOPS HELD INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS?**

The sort of workshop run *outside* Toastmasters closely parallels what is done within. Generally, however, the fees paid by 'Outside of Toastmasters' course participants are considerably higher than what we charge, so they expect top-value for their money.

They also expect a professional to both look and behave professionally. This means not only knowing your stuff, but knowing how to *facilitate*. Facilitation is the key to running a good workshop. So if you do intend to become a professionally paid presenter, perhaps running your

own business, I strongly recommend you gain experience in workshop presentation within Toastmasters first. This will develop those facilitation skills.

### **HOW DO I ESTABLISH RAPPORT EARLY ON?**

At one of the earlier adult learning courses I attended back in 1961, our facilitator, a Ken Cross, used a method to establish rapport that I've yet to see equaled. It was simply a matter of humility; a 'We are equals here' technique. Here is roughly what he said.

"As I look around this room I can see a lot of experience... There are twelve of you and one of me, so there is no way that I can know as much as all of you combined. My expertise covers a narrow field compared with all of yours..."

There were a few more words, but they hardly needed to be said. And as it turned out, Ken turned out to be one of the most motivational, inspirational and knowledgeable of teachers. I will never forget him.

There is nothing like experience when it comes to running workshops well. You can plan everything perfectly, only to find you've missed out on some aspect. It could be as simple as failing to provide adequate sized name tags to the participants. Remember in Toastmasters, at a normal meeting anyway, you not only know the first names of all or most of the members, if you do forget, you can use such formalities as, "Thank you, Madam Toastmaster," "Or it's now over to our General Evaluator."

With a workshop of eight, ten, and dozen or more strangers you have no such 'out.' And people don't like being referred to continually as *You*. So those name tags could make the difference between *establishing rapport early* and running a good, friendly session, or bringing on a resentment, even hostility. Oh, and the name tags must be big enough for you to read from a distance! Answer, have big cards on the table or desks in front each person, *as well* as lapel name tags.

### **DO YOU THINK I SHOULD JOIN THE NATIONAL SPEAKERS' ASSOCIATION?**

If you seriously intend to become a professional presenter it is a good idea to join the National Speakers Association. It is an organization made up of professional for professionals. They run many internal courses, courses not generally seen in Toastmasters. For example, I have attended two courses run by two different professional women on the subject of dress or attire. And what I learned certainly goes well beyond the brief descriptions and advice I've given you on dress here.

Then they have their courses on how to market yourself. How to negotiate a fee. How to get the best deals – all manner of things. However, as I've said a couple of times now, this book is for people intending to go outside Toastmasters firstly, at least, on the Freebie Circuit.

## **CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I CAN RUN CLASSES OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS?**

Another area outside of Toastmasters is the Class Room Environment. There are a great many organizations in which there is a requirement to teach. I'm a member of two of these so can speak from experience. The Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA) is the parent body of an ever-growing number of Seniors – or retirees – computer clubs around Australia. They have their tutoring programs. As does the University of the New Age (U3A) which runs classes in many countries around the world. I ran a number of U3A classes for eight successive years from 2001 to 2009 and enjoyed every moment of it.

The success of a U3A presenter or teacher can be generally measured by the ongoing popularity of his class. I'm vain enough to lay claim to being successful in that one of my classes was ongoing for eight years – and some of the students who attended the inaugural session were still coming along regularly eight years later!

## **TO WHAT DOES THE WRITER OWE THIS SUCCESS?**

I put it down to a solid grounding in presentation and facilitation techniques picked up in large measure from my years with Toastmasters, Rostrum, and the National Speakers' Association. I must add to that the three Train-the-Trainer courses I've undertaken, plus the workshops I carried out in my former place of work. In public speaking, practice never makes perfect. But it does move us along towards that ever-elusive goal. Speaking and presenting is one of those few areas where one continues to improve lifelong.

In an ongoing class room situation you *will know* the names of the participants. After some time, they'll likely become old friends. But do not for one moment allow that casualness of acquaintance to detract from your preparations: good research, adequate preparation, maybe a rehearsal or two, before you actually run that class. You'd do that in Toastmasters, wouldn't you? You need to do so in those workshops and classes you run outside of Toastmasters as well.

## **CAN YOU TELL ME MORE I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY AUDIENCE BEFORE I GO ON?**

In GOT TWO I dealt briefly with the questions you need to ask when you are approached to give a presentation. If you are being asked to speak to an audience of the type you've spoken to on a number of occasions, those questions will probably suffice. But even then, you need to take into account the socio-economic factors of that group.

For example, if I were called upon to present to a Probus Club (I often am, having presented to 144 clubs at last count) I would dress somewhat differently when attending a club in the blue-collar, working class suburbs than I would if invited to attend one in the Central Business District of Sydney. The dressing might be simply a matter of wearing a sports coat and slacks to

the former, and really smart business suit to the latter. As I've already pointed out, you need to be dressed in attire which will neither intimidate or offend.

### **DO I NEED TO DO MARKET RESEARCH?**

Should you be invited to attend a group of a type that you've never spoken to before, then you need to get into 'market research' mode. You might not be selling a service or product; you are selling your message. Also, your credibility as a speaker. So you need to find out about this group, and you need to know how to do so.

One unfamiliar group I was invited to were Catenians. I had no idea who they were. I'm still a bit vague on it, having only done the one 'gig, and that was in 2001. It turns out they were sort of the 'opposite number' to the Masons; formed in opposition or to counteract. They were a Roman Catholic organization. Now, knowing this, I did not make the gaff of telling them that I'd presented at a number of Mason's Lodges. They might not have been impressed.

I was invited to present to a Justices of the Peace Association gathering. I must say I was a little worried how they would be. I was thinking of wigs and gowns and courts of law. Of course, it wasn't like this at all. Had I made a few enquiries earlier, it would have taken away a lot of my anxiety. These were ordinary, everyday individuals, and nothing like what I'd expected.

I have been asked to speak to ex members of the Sydney Water Board, a state government authority. Also, the Westpac Bank's Retired Officers' Association, The Korean and Southeast Asian Forces Association, and a World War Two Army Battalion, this last three times. In all these instances I was not particularly concerned, as I knew that storytellers telling stories are not likely to get into a lot of trouble. But if you're intending to give some *other* type of presentation do your *research*. Find out about them!

Mostly when you're invited to speak to an audience outside of Toastmasters you are the solo guest speaker. You're the star. This is not always the case, however. You might be just one speaker on a program containing several. If this is the case, you need to be aware not only of the audience you'll be addressing but a number of other things as well. Let's look at a few of them now:

### **HOW IMPORTANT IS THE TIME OF THE DAY TO A SPEAKER?**

Time of day? Very important, as an audience is generally more alert and willing to pay attention in, say, the mid-morning, than they are when they've just come back from a leisurely lunch, or late in the evening. If you're stuck with one of these less propitious time-slots you need a presentation which will both motivate and liven them up. It's not good for one's ego to have audience members nodding off to sleep.

## **ANOTHER QUESTION: WHERE ARE YOU IN THIS LIST OF PRESENTERS?**

At the top and first off the ramp? In the middle? At the very end? What are the chances one or another of the others will *go over time* and reduce my time slot? If they're not Toastmaster trained or real experienced professions, *every chance*. So can I modify or shorten my speech if necessary? As I said in an earlier chapter, I've often been obliged to shift from my planned presentation to another because of time constraints. Be prepared for this eventuality.

Remember, everything you can plan in advance is going to not only take away your anxiety, but also goes towards ensuring that it will be as successful as you can make it. Don't skimp on your preliminary planning. It might make all the difference between failure and success.

## GOT Eleven – Listeners – Really?

### WHO IS REALLY LISTENING TO YOU?

How many times have you been at a Toastmasters club meeting and wondered just who is really listening to you? You look around that U-shaped table arrangement and find that of the dozen people in attendance you're lucky if even half of them are paying attention. A trio are busily scribbling notes. Your speech evaluator, the general evaluator are figuring out what they will have to say when their turn comes up. The secretary is busy recording proceedings. The two speakers scheduled to follow you – I'm assuming here, you're delivering the first of the three prepared speeches that evening – are not *really* listening. You know that. It's obvious by the way they're staring into space or are having one final read of their notes. The Toastmaster is also not looking either, as she goes over details of how to introduce the next speaker and what brief remarks she'll make between your speech and the next. You've hardly got a 'riveted audience.

Do the visions which come to mind from this description seem familiar?

### IS A TYPICAL TOASTMASTER CLUB AUDIENCE AN ATTENTIVE ONE?

A club Toastmaster audience is not like an audience outside of Toastmasters. Not only is it a *learning* environment, it is an environment where you will probably not get the full attention of your audience no matter what. Well, perhaps if you produced a revolver and fired a shot in the air, or blew up and exploded a paper bag. Unless you're absolutely magnetic, I'd say that if you get *half* the club's attention *half* the time you're doing well.

Even at bigger Toastmaster events this lack of total attention by a significant proportion of the audience prevails. In Australia, a typical Area Competition might be attended by fifty people. So what do we have? Six contestants worrying about their own upcoming performances. Four judges and a chief judge making notes; analyzing, not enjoying; wondering how things will go. A chairman, Toastmaster, someone to deliver a toast, another to give a vote-of-thanks, all very concerned with how *they* will perform.

I think I've made my point. A Toastmaster audience – except in very exceptional circumstances – does not facilitate the ready attention of all audience members. They're too worried about themselves.

### SO WHAT IS THE LISTENER-SITUATION OUTSIDE OF TOASTMASTERS?

In most outside of Toastmaster gatherings you, as a guest speaker, are likely to be *the* speech-giver. You're the act. You're the focal point; the main draw card. There might be some

business to be carried on beforehand, but after that's been cleared away everyone is free to focus on you – and they do.

Let's say you have the same U-shaped table set up with a dozen people sitting around it as you have in the typical Toastmasters Club I mentioned above. This time however, instead of being at a club Toastmaster meeting, you are guest speaker for Rotary or Lions. The business has all been conducted, everyone has eaten a nice meal, main course and desert. Now they're into the coffee. The president stands, rings his little bell and either introduces you herself or has someone else do so. This is done. You rise from your chair and walk to the front.

“Thank you, Madam President...Ladies and Gentlemen...

You are on. Every one of those twelve people are paying attention. All of them! Twelve pairs of eyes are on you. Twelve pairs of ears are attuned to the sounds coming from your voice. Twelve brains are interpreting your words, visualizing the pictures you putting into their minds. If they are not listening, it is entirely your fault. Certainly there is nothing in their schedule to have any of them *not* listening to you.

### **SO WHICH IS THE MORE DIFFICULT AUDIENCE?**

This is why you will, in all probability, be pleasantly surprised at how it is actually easier and far less pressuring to deliver a speech to a non-Toastmaster audience than it is to your own Toastmaster friends. In Toastmasters, people have already put you into some sort of mental box. They've categorized you. If you're a very good speaker, they expect you to be consistently very good. There is a certain amount of pressure in this. If you're not so good, they expect you to be not so good – and often you feel you shouldn't disappoint their expectations. One becomes blasé' about one's performance. And if you're very experienced and feel really secure, you can become almost too casual. The adrenaline no longer pumps as hard as it used to.

Okay, it's a nice relaxing club atmosphere. You've known these guys for years. You're a DTM who often exhibits what has come to be a joke with DTMs – Don't Time Me. You waffle when you should be succinct. You might be getting to like the sound of your own voice too much. Whatever it is, if you don't go outside Toastmasters once you reach a certain level of expertise you will begin to stop growing. Worse, your actual presentations will no longer have the power of earlier days. Without further goals that stretch us, without more to reach out for, we can find we become stale.

### **CAN WE CONTINUE TO GROW IN TOASTMASTERS AFTER WE GO OUTSIDE?**

Of course we can. As I've reiterated time after time, Toastmasters is a splendid organization. It does have ongoing programs that challenge us to grow. We work our way up through these, picking up different types of qualification as we go. There are always things to do. On reaching the highest Toastmaster Award, the DTM, a great many go on to involve themselves in

the 'Event' side of things: being an emcee, co-coordinating Area, Division, and District competitions and conventions. Also running websites, creating magazine articles. To use the vernacular: 'They give back.' And giving back is wonderfully rewarding. By this time these people are very capable speakers. They have enormous experience, great knowledge of presenting, and are often very dynamic and energetic. But it seems that it does not occur to them to go outside! And to me this is a pity.

We can make almost our entire social life a Toastmastering experience. There will always be audiences there. We can go to our own club or clubs. We can visit other clubs. We can go to Area, Division and District Conferences. Even go overseas regularly to the International Conferences which are generally held in the United States. We can involve ourselves in Speechcraft and Youth Leadership. Yes, there will always be audiences who will listen to us, or Toastmaster speakers to whom we can listen. *But it's all Toastmasters!*

As I said in an earlier chapter, Toastmaster is an enormous organization. But compared with the world at large, the seven billion human inhabitants, it is a miniscule segment of what is available to the speaker. So I urge you. Take the challenge! Be prepared to expand your horizons. And *go outside of Toastmasters!*

## GOT Twelve – Toastmaster Benefits

### HOW DO TOASTMASTERS BENEFIT BY YOUR GOING OUTSIDE?

Going outside of the Toastmasters' environment will quite obviously gain you experience in how speakers approach the 'Speaking Game' out there. But will there be the benefits for Toastmasters? How will members benefit? Well, if you like it so much out there that you decide to move outside permanently never to return, nothing at all. Should you, however, decide to spend your time in *both* arenas, remaining in Toastmasters but sallying forth from time to time, then *bringing back what you have learned*, then Toastmasters will gain a great deal.

This is my advice to you: Stay in Toastmasters. Never leave. And if you do have to leave – come back! Make Toastmasters a life-long commitment. But at the same time, go outside. Go outside and bring back.

Okay, a page or so on my own history within our organization.

### THE WRITER'S TOASTMASTERING HISTORY IN BRIEF.

Over a period of nearly four decades I have seen the enormous benefits that have accrued to members who have stayed in over the long term. I've also lamented the years I missed out by being obliged – by work commitments mainly – to drop out for lengthy periods of time. I attended my first club meeting as a visitor in 1970 but was unable to join until 1972 (the now defunct) Takapuna Club in Auckland, New Zealand. Takapuna was a great club; one of the best. I immersed myself in it, becoming the club's magazine editor and also joining its three-man debating team. To use the vernacular, it was a 'steep learning curve.'

I moved back to Australia end of 1973, transferring my membership to Parramatta Club (No. 2274) - the club I'd originally visited twice in 1970. Staying less than a year, I was obliged to leave. I missed out on *six years*, returning to Parramatta Club in 1980.

In my absence two of my club's members, Ken Rennie and Gary Wilson, has risen not only to become DTM's but had also become Toastmaster's first two International Directors-at-Large. That is, the first outside of the United States. Terrific kudos for both them and Parramatta. This is not to infer that I'd have gone on to have achieved anything like this. But what I noticed most of all were the *tremendous abilities* these men now had, how much they had *advanced* with their communication and leadership skills in the six years I'd been gone. To me, it was absolutely astounding! I was beginning to realize even then that one should never leave Toastmasters.

Parramatta club founded a number of other clubs one of which was Enthusiastic Epping. I became a founding member and was now in two clubs. My membership didn't last.

As it was, I left and came back to Toastmasters a number of times. But these were shorter breaks. There was my membership of Karingal, Western Lectern, Parratax (a corporate club) as a founding member. But it was when I rejoined Parramatta Club for the third time (1995) that I could see just how much my missing out on membership of what I still regard as probably the highest profile club in Australia, had done to hold me back. How that club had forged ahead! It was a club that churned out leaders – still does! I venture that it has turned out more District Officers than any other in Australia. And I'd chosen not to be in it!

I remained with Parramatta until 2004. I also joined another new club, Dundas (2296) in 2003, leaving Parramatta once again two years later. But I still revisit from time to time.

### **WHAT OTHER BENEFITS DO TOASTMASTERS PROVIDE OTHER THAN LEARNING?**

The benefits of the learning and practicing of communication and leadership skills can hardly be overstated. Such skills change one's life in a more positive way than probably any others. But there is even more to Toastmasters – a lot more.

Probably the most wonderful part of staying in a huge organization like Toastmasters for many years is *the number of long-term friends you make*. At every club you visit you are circulating and associating with people who have shared interests. It's a lasting interest, for the most part. This isn't like an office or factory working environment where, once you leave, you quickly switch to new relationships outside of the place you just left. People who remain in Toastmasters love speaking, love participating, being a part of it. So do you, hence the mutual interest can be lifelong.

There is so much more than just the regular club meetings: Area, and Division meetings, District annual and semi-annual conferences, District special training and special events. None are obligatory to attend, so you pick and choose those to which you want to go. But when you get to anyone of them – if you've been in Toastmasters for a while – chances are you will run in to a lot of people you know. In a way, it's like one huge family. And a very gregarious and happy family it is. So why would you want to leave it?

Okay, I've said enough about staying in Toastmasters. What are the benefits you can bring back by going *outside* Toastmasters?

Once again, Toastmasters have it all sassed out. They have the machinery, the wherewithal and the willingness for you to *bring back what you have learned*, thus giving Toastmasters an even stronger pool of knowledge from which members can draw. So how can you, as someone with outside experience, relay that knowledge on?

### **IN WHAT WAYS CAN YOU BRING YOUR OUTSIDE EXPERIENCE TO TOASTMASTERS?**

You can talk about it in one-on-one relationships with close friends. You can give presentations on it at your club. You can perhaps arrange to talk about it, even run a workshop or two on what

you've learned at various Area, Divisional or District forums or special educational events. That's the oral presentation side of things. But there is more.

You can present advice in your club's blog. You can subscribe short written articles to your club's bulletin. Same for Area, Division and even District publications. And you can even do what I'm doing: placing articles on Public Speaking on the Internet's Hub Pages. Or if you're of a real literary bent, you can write an E-book on the subject. \* I had one posted on District 70's website under Resources for Members a few years back.

Now I come to something which could be controversial...

### **SHOULD TOASTMASTERS HAVE A THIRD LEARNING STREAM?**

I'm of the belief that Toastmasters International should have a Third Learning Stream. For decades we had one only - Communication Skills. Then a few years ago we brought in the Leadership Stream. I suggest a third prong to make it a trident. I don't have any particular suggestions for a name. It could be the Ambassadorial Stream. It could be the External Link Stream – anything which suggests what it implies: going outside Toastmasters to gain skills there, with the intention of bringing them back to TMI.

It could inspire its own set of Advanced Manuals. It could entail particular awards: certificates, badges, various icons in which this Toastmaster service is given recognition. An idea which springs to mind for a badge: a microphone; something used in almost every major speaking engagement outside of Toastmasters.

This third prong to the Toastmasters' Trident could take Toastmasters to a new level as far as recognition by other speaking organizations. At the moment, people assume – if they know about us at all – that we are an entirely internal, for members only, organization. With the exception of a few Districts which have a Speakers' Bureau, this is the case. With encouragement to 'go outside,' and with rigorously held assessment to ensure the quality of those who are speaking outside, the professional organizations such as the National Speakers' Associations of the world would be getting some real competition.

Just as we have CTM, ACM-B, S, and G, we could have three levels for those who go outside and who can successfully bring what they have learned back to TMI by way of training seminars and the like. But I've said enough on that.

\*Go to <http://hubpages.com/profile/tusitala+tom> See: Speaking Hints. Also <http://www.d70toastmasters.org> and go to Speaker Resources : see Storytelling, and 'The Raconteur.'

## **WHAT ARE THE PERSONAL BENEFITS IN GOING OUTSIDE TOASTMASTERS?**

It would probably be difficult, if not impossible to quantify the benefits one gets from going outside Toastmasters, but this much I know. Once you have done it, it seems to you that you have arrived on a somewhat higher plateau. You have stepped up. You have climbed. And once you reach that level, that new plane, it can never be taken away from you. You've made it out there in the real world. There is enormous satisfaction in this.

So I will finish this text on this note. Go outside Toastmasters. Go out and enjoy. And then bring back what you have learned both for your own satisfaction and for the benefit of all of those great people who make our wonderful organization – Toastmasters.

The End

## Recommended Reading

**Finding Your Voice – Ten Steps to Successful Public Speaking.** Mary Atkins.

**There's No Such Thing As Public Speaking.** Jeanette & Roy Henderson.

**Teach Yourself Public Speaking.** Peter Westland.

**The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking.** Dale Carnegie.

**Red Hot Public Speaking.** Edward J. Hegarty.

**In the Spotlight.** Janet Esposito.

**Good Better Best – Become the Consummate Toastmaster.** Craig Harrison DTM AL

**The Raconteur – Speaking to Entertain.** Arthur Thomas Ware.