



# Real Toastmasters Share Their Stories

District 25



# Motorcycle Club Motivation

- Joined Toastmasters not long after I became the president of my motorcycle club. Leadership skills were lacking, especially in getting my point across and organizing my thoughts.
- Once, several members left before the meeting was over. My manager recommended Toastmasters.
- After joining Toastmasters, my motorcycle club meetings were much smoother and on time.
- **Driving excellence:** Setting the example lets those following you know that you would not expect them to do anything that you would not be willing to do.

*“Competing in the speech contests has given me lots of joy. I get to share something that I craft and get the praise and positive feedback of a worthy story.”*



Larry Harmon, CC, ALB  
Connection Communicators  
Irving, Texas



# A Life-Changing Moment

- Realized I could not grow professionally without overcoming my fear of public speaking.
- Toastmasters provided safe and comfortable learning environment.
- Now confident and prepared to speak publicly.
- **Shining moment:** Served as delegate at the Annual Meeting for a professional association. Spoke against proposed amendment; it was defeated by a landslide.

*"I received many kudos from other attendees on my powerful message. I freely told everyone at the conference, 'I owe it all to Toastmasters.'"*



**Jacquelyn Hudgins, ACS, ALS**  
**Out on the Town Toastmasters**  
Fort Worth, Texas



# Encouraging Encounters

- Toastmasters helped me become a much better encourager. Now, motivate by encouragement rather than criticism. Still point out areas for improvement, but sandwiched between praise (like evaluations).
- Attended the Spring 2011 Conference after accepting a leadership role. There, went to presentation about changing your mindset. Purchased the book offered.
- **“A ha” moment:** Now, this book is prompting me to change my entire life. What a benefit!

*“I am much better at thinking before I speak, and planning what to say in an effective and meaningful way.”*



**Mittie Blackburn, ACS, ALB**  
**Clearly Speaking Toastmasters**  
Abilene, Texas



# Real Résumé Reviver

- Toastmasters became a major addition to my CV. When I had to answer the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities questionnaire, I had something about Toastmasters for each of the 16 questions.
- When people ask me how I learned to conduct meetings, I easily say "Toastmasters taught me leadership."
- **Relocation assistance:** Lived in a few different states and have always been able to meet new and different people and be welcomed into a new club when I relocated.

*"It is great to have Toastmaster friends everywhere!"*



**Mary Feltman, DTM**  
**Heart of Texas Bridge Gappers**  
Hewitt, Texas



# A Principled Path

- ▶ Toastmasters taught me that we are all friends here to help each other.
- ▶ Through leadership roles, I realized that leadership is more about influence than about authority. Everyone can have an influence for good in others.
- ▶ **Missing link:** Never aspired to be a leader, but assumed the role of leader when there was a void in the leadership of a group. Through DTM process, I realized the missing elements to my service.

*"I am impressed with Toastmasters principles... Toastmasters can benefit anybody and everybody. Maybe not everybody will opt for joining Toastmasters, but I feel all could benefit from association with great people and having the influence of a great set of standards as a basis."*



**Larry Vance, DTM**  
**Waco Wordsmiths**  
Waco, Texas



# Getting to the Point

- Very outgoing personality and communication is my passion. My friend, a member, urged me to go. Went to a meeting. Been addicted to Toastmasters ever since.
- Because Toastmasters helps me organize my thoughts better, I'm more confident that my messages are fully understood.
- **“Too much gab,” now fab:** I have a strong ability to lead others; however, I used to get long-winded which tended to confuse the people I led. Now, I know how to say the key elements quickly so people do not get confused.”

*“...Members live and breathe the positioning statement of Toastmasters International ®...I also strive to impact people I come in contact with in a positive, encouraging way.”*



**Peggy Corino, CC,CL**  
**MidCities Achievers**  
Bedford, Texas



# A Proud Moment

- My best friend asked me to speak at her mother's funeral. That day, I knew why I joined Toastmasters. Proudly able to say, "Yes, I would be honored to speak."
- At each and every Toastmasters meeting that I attend, I'm inspired, encouraged, and/or entertained by the members and their stories.
- **Amazing audience:** It is an incredible organization with amazing people.

*"When I look at my first officer role at the BNSF Toastmasters club and where I am now as District Governor, I'm truly amazed at how much I've developed as a leader."*



**Diana Patton, DTM**  
**Southlake Toastmasters**  
Southlake, Texas



# Take On Any Topic

- Because of Toastmasters I am heading up projects at work that I never thought possible.
- Learning to lead without thinking about “what’s in it for me.” Becoming much better overall individual willing to give more than I receive.
- **“Flock” finder:** In Toastmasters, I’m able to surround myself with like-minded individuals that have a positive influence on me.

*“Recently, our company president asked me about the status of a project that had been put on the “back-burner” several months ago. I gave him a clear, concise answer on where the project stood using three main points. He was amazed and asked me how I was able to provide that answer on a moment’s notice. I beamed and said, ‘TOASTMASTERS!’”*



**Chuck Mencke, ACB, ALB  
Plus-Two and Top Notch  
Toastmasters**  
Fort Worth & Hurst, Texas



# Pay It Forward

- Enhanced my communication skills by teaching me how to organize my thoughts on a moment's notice, think on my feet, and have confidence in myself to get my point across to others effectively.
- **Door opener:** Opened doors for me at work. Have gotten opportunities I would never have had. Also, would never have believed in myself enough to take on certain work roles without Toastmasters.

*"I feel a whole new world opened up for me when I stepped outside my local club and competed in my first Area Contest. Shortly after, I attended my first District Conference. I have never looked back. I cherish the friends I have made and the opportunities I have are priceless. I look forward to continuing to pay it forward."*



**Cindy Hinckley, DTM**  
**Medtronic Toastmasters**  
Fort Worth, Texas



# Know When to Take Charge

- People like to talk. I like to listen.
- Toastmasters is a safe and comfortable learning environment.
- Top benefit is the opportunity to meet people.
- **Golden opportunity:** Toastmasters is a family that exists because of the same interests of speaking in front of people, desire for professional growth and stepping out of our comfort zone.



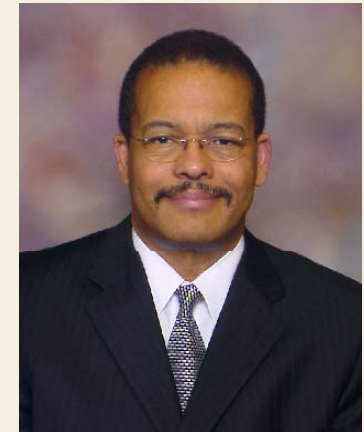
**Karen Hagar, ACS, CL**  
**Fighter Enterprise Toastmasters**  
Fort Worth, Texas

*“I am better equipped to know when to take charge of a situation that needs communication or a resolution. Knowing when to taking charge can save a meeting or a life.”*



# Global Leadership, Global Impact

- Speech Evaluation instrumental in honing speaking skills. Table Topics helped immensely in presenting hotel development projects to cities across the U.S.A. Prepared me to answer questions of which I had no advance knowledge.
- **Living, learning and leadership:** Learned a lot from previous leaders. Also, learned how to encourage and motivate others to find their truest selves by looking deep within for hidden talents and abilities.



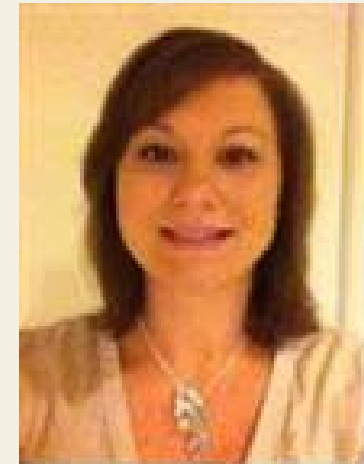
**Maurice Taitt, DTM**  
**Thumbs Up Toastmasters**  
Irving, Texas

*"I am a citizen of three nations and the Toastmasters International convention is the only place I can go and be guaranteed to meet people from all three nations. There is little to match the rush of being in a room with more than 2,000 Toastmasters from around the world."*



# Better Communication Begins With Better Listening

- Toastmasters has strengthened communication skills both in and out of work.
- More effective leader due to increasing confidence and honing “off-the-cuff” thinking gained by serving Toastmasters in various roles.
- **Networking goldmine:** Toastmasters has been a great place to meet folks inside and outside of work. I’ve been exposed to various communication and leadership styles—ones I might not have been exposed to at work.



Tara Sanger, ACB, ALB  
Shining Stars Toastmasters  
Irving, Texas

*“I have become a better communicator because I have learned to actively listen to others. In return, I have gained a better understanding of what is being said and am able to more effectively respond.”*



# Comfort-Zone Stretcher

- I used to NOT want to be a leader. When leadership opportunities arose, I avoided eye contact and took three steps back as quickly as possible.
- No longer afraid to take risks and sign up for opportunities out of my comfort zone.
- **Evaluation application:** Evaluation approach makes conversations a lot less confrontational. Increased my effectiveness as a parent/coach.

*“With my kids and in group situations, I use the evaluation approach—talking about what they did well, what they could do next time to improve and provide encouragement.”*



**Cindy Jones, ACS, ALB**  
**Lakeside Toastmasters**  
Lewisville, Texas



# Aim High; Never Give Up

- Toastmasters has taught me that I am capable of far more than I ever dreamed.
- Took me 15 months to do my first 10 speeches. This year, I expect to complete 27 speeches by Christmas. Now, I speak on average more than once per week.
- Five years ago, I would not have even considered being a leader. At best, was a good follower. Now, I know I can step into leadership roles and excel. Past success helps me know I can do it again and again.
- **Simple, successful equation:** Toastmasters= Great organization for cultivating self-confidence.

*"I know I am good, but someday I can be great, if I just keep trying, learning little by little, and never give up. We can do more than 'get by,' we can all improve with help from our friends!"*



**Gary Lee Webb, DTM**  
**Waco Wordsmiths**  
Waco, Texas



# A Positive Purpose

- Giving a variety of speeches, as Toastmasters requires, has stretched my skills. More aware of time requirements and adept at incorporating humor, body language and vocal variety.
- **Servant leadership:** Benefitted greatly from the leadership opportunities I've accepted at the club, area and district levels. View the future differently having seen what's possible if you first earn the respect of others, then leverage your relationships and influence for positive purposes.

*"I have a network of Toastmasters friends and colleagues I didn't even know a few years ago and have greatly enjoyed getting to know them. It's really rewarding and fun."*



**Dean Lampman, DTM**  
**Public Health Speakers**  
Fort Worth, Texas



# From Pen to Presentation

- Years ago, as a budding author, I learned that being able to promote my writing is as important as my writing.
- At a writer's conference, another writer I barely knew invited me to Toastmasters and told me how much it had helped her speaking in public and also on-the-fly with agents and editors.
- **Prose to Pro:** The next week, experienced the professional warmth of Toastmasters. Now, three books later, I speak to women's groups at least once a month all over Texas.

*"I'm no Beth Moore or Joyce Meyer—yet! But, what I write I can now more effectively convey. More than that, I receive loving support at every club meeting. They are my coaches, fellow players and cheering fans all in one in this life game of effective communication."*



**Julie Cosgrove, ATMB, CL**  
**Top Notch Toastmasters**  
Fort Worth, Texas



# Career Builder

- Joined first Toastmasters Club in March 1977 after college graduation. Because I underperformed in school, I felt I could not compete with my fellow engineers on the job.
- **Career advantage:** Toastmasters helped to teach soft skills. Purdue University says soft skills are the greatest skills a student can learn. Outperformed 90 percent of my peers by joining Toastmasters.

*"I am the national distributor for XLR8R Studios. I will be briefing Congress in late summer on our software. The earlier a person can join Toastmasters, the better they can be in their career."*



**Ron Clark, DTM**  
**Denton Club and**  
**Speakers Exchange**  
Denton & Fort Worth, Texas



# Passion for People

- Toastmasters has given me the platform to practice my delivery of any message I need to convey in a self-assured and effective manner.
- Because of Toastmasters, I know how to get my message across by using everything I have—communicating with my voice, eyes, hand gestures, and body language.
- **Passionate leadership:** I used to fear taking on a leadership role. Toastmasters made me a leader by showing me how to delegate to each person's strengths and passion.

*“I used to not be a ‘people person.’ Now, as the new president of my club, I am one of the people always reaching out to others to tell them about the benefits of Toastmasters.”*

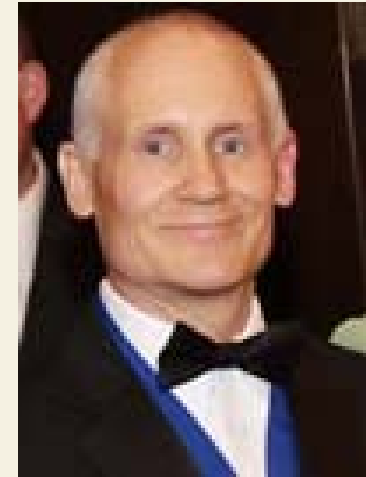


**Karen Chilton, ACS, CL**  
**ICE Breakers Toastmasters**  
Irving, Texas



# Enthusiasm Effervescence

- Prior to Toastmasters, terrible self-confidence. Broken man.
- Toastmasters helped me find purpose and a reason to live.
- Now, brand new person.
- **Contagious caring:** Every day I seek new challenges. I'm excited to face every new day. In fact, most people would call me "Mr. Enthusiasm."



James Hansen, DTM  
Waco-Early Birds Club  
Waco, Texas

*"A Toastmasters experience is far more than learning communication and leadership skills; it changes lives!"*



# Find Your Voice

- For years, I sat in business meetings. Had some great ideas for discussion but wasn't comfortable speaking up.
- Toastmasters helped me to present my ideas.
- **Exponential exposure:** Currently the chair of The Southwest Forum, a ten-state area. Toastmasters has helped me speak at our conferences, chair business meetings and communicate better with the board members.

*"For people just starting their careers, now is the time to join Toastmasters and become an active member... This will help you in your family, community and work to be a better communicator, leader, plus a better listener."*



**Mary Walker, DTM**  
**Lakeside Toastmasters**  
Lewisville, Texas