

ABHAYA

DAFFODILS TOASTMASTERS

More than a Club!

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Daffodils Toastmasters Newsletter

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Editorial



TM Sanjay Khandelwal.

"TALENT AND ABILITY ARE LIKE THE PARTS OF AN AUTOMOBILES BUT COURAGE IS THE FUEL THAT DRIVES THEM."

Toastmasters, it isn't as difficult to release a newsletter as it is to find a theme for it because that is where it all begins. It's the very first step that shapes the rest. While I was meandering around my house to come up with a theme one day, my 14 year old sister dropped my most cherished table topics contest trophy while doing her finest job - cleaning my bookshelf. I ran into the room, held it in my hand and thanked god for it was totally intact.

TABLETOPICS! YES TABLETOPICS! Wow! It suddenly struck me. I had got my theme. It was something I had always associated with my table topics experience at toastmasters – Being fearless.

Impromptu speaking had always been my greatest nightmare. I would not only stay away from competitions that required me to think on my feet but would also not witness them as that would remind me of my inability to speak. I carried that fear to toastmasters too. However, here you didn't have the choice to not participate. One glance by the table topics master and you were there on the stage waiting to be sliced, but it took me just two topics to realize that it wasn't that difficult as I thought it to be. My third topic was at the Club contest and I had sealed a place for myself in the top three. As Zig Ziglar said "You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great" - I had learnt my lesson.

Toastmasters, it is not the talent to do it perfectly, that you need to start but courage and fearlessness to take it as it comes. Talent and ability are like the parts of an automobiles but courage is the fuel that drives them. We have that fuel in us. we just got to use it to break the barriers we built around ourselves and move ahead in our pursuit to achieve whatever you want to.

As you go through this newsletter you will come across experiences of people who were just as scared as you and I to begin but they utilized this great platform of toastmasters to shed their fears and emerge as extraordinary speakers and leaders. I hope their messages in this newsletter heralds a new journey in your life.

To conclude, I express my utmost gratitude to authors of all the articles for their invaluable contribution. I'm greatly indebted to TM Lekha, TM Arjun and TM Poornima for parting with their crucial time and shaping the newsletter. Last but not the least I thank TM Shwetha for bringing out a beautiful and intriguing cover illustration and TM Apoorva for down our memories into beautiful collages.

Your journey into Abhaya begins here.

President's address.



TM Smita Jayaram.

"I HAVE STRETCHED AND GROWN AS A LEADER, A SPEAKER, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY AS A HUMAN BEING."

The year 2013 was full of milestones for Daffodils. From celebrating our 500th meeting to marking a decade of our journey, we have come a long way. As we near the end of this term there are a lot of things that I have learnt along the way while also understanding that there are areas that still have room for improvement.

At the start of this term in the officers' training program, I was told that someone in the committee will always back out, or not turn up and that the president will have to take over and plug the gaps. I am extremely proud to say that my committee did not allow such a thing to happen and more importantly proved that what is considered a norm does not apply to Daffodils. It was amazing to see how much effort each committee member put in to ensure that the meetings went on smoothly. The experience, skill and enthusiasm that were brought in by the officers and members were tremendous and certainly helped in the growth and success of the Club.

I express my gratitude to my committee members who have contributed immensely in all the club activities. They were active not only at the club but also beyond the club at various District events and conferences and in the process, have brought more laurels to this club. With your tremendous dedication over the few months, you have all, the committee as well as the members, made a difference to me and, more importantly, to this outstanding club. I have stretched and grown as a leader, a speaker, and more importantly as a human being.

I would like to urge all Daffodilians to enjoy every single moment at this club. We joined Daffodils to overcome our fear of public speaking and to get better at it. Several people have come and gone but the club is where it is today because of the people who stayed back and made a difference for the better.

Stand up and be counted for you will realize just as I have...

Leaders speak



DTM Kumaran Pethi.

District Governor, District 82 2013-14.

“I LISTED THE THINGS I LIKED, DISLIKED, CRAVED FOR AND LONGED TO POSSESS. I CONNECTED THESE TO MY EMOTION AND NEEDS, AND A FLOOD GATE OF SPEECHES OPENED.”

The VP Public relation of my club asked me to write a message for the clubs newsletter and told me that the theme was “fearless”. Fearless? Huh? Well, that is something I absolutely wasn’t. Especially when I was already writing an average of four messages a week.

Coming to the fear of writing. Isn’t that one of the most common fears of a toastmaster? More than speaking on stage, is not the fear of not finding a topic to speak about a greater one? The theme reminds me of the days, when I started my journey as a speaker. My VPE would coax, cajole and coerce me to give him a date for my speech. “What happened to people’s commitment and promises”, he would say at club meeting, addressing everyone. But I always knew it was meant for me. So, I would give him the title for a project speech without having even started work on the script. Fear and anxiety would creep in. I’d research, read multiple books and magazines. When that didn’t help, I’d turn to the all-knowing GOOGLE for my answers. I slowly started to learn and understand that all this information would help only if I first looked within, into my own life. They are just tools to help me get better but serve no purpose until I know what it is I want.

This realization made things easy. I listed the things I liked, disliked, craved for and longed to possess. I connected these to my emotion and needs, and a flood gate of speeches opened. I completed my speeches in a speed that amazed me. It made things so much easier that today; I can conjure up a speech without even batting an eyelid.

I am today, by all means, absolutely fearless in giving speeches. Toastmasters, go for it, be fearless in your thoughts, actions and deeds. Speak and communicate with confidence. Try your hands at leadership for it is only at this platform that we encourage and engage your fear with compassion, kindness and warmth.

We allow you to fail, for we have giant hands to lift you up and make you better. I speak these from the experience of having failed and being helped to become better.

You don’t have to use the whole staircase to reach the top. Put your first step with confidence and faith, we will be waiting to receive you.

Leaders speak



DTM T.K Ramesh

LGET DISTRICT 82A

"THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY, ENTHUSIASM AND CAMARADERIE THE DAFFODIL MEMBERS BRING IN MAKES EVERY MEETING AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER."

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured and far away."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

(1817-1862)

Dear Daffodilians,

The Toastmasters movement exemplifies the above statement of Thoreau like no other movement. Here every member finds his space to follow the music of his life. In every Toastmasters meeting the structure and project guidelines are common. However, each and every member finds the drummer of his choice in his/her growth. Toastmasters is one place where each and every person walking into a club finds his space to learn and grow.

- ◆ Here there is no rigid time frame time for your learning process and hence you can set your pace of learning
- ◆ Here there is no boundary condition for choosing a topic for your speech and hence sky is the limit for your choice of topics
- ◆ Here there is no pass or fail and hence you can decide the right time to move ahead in your journey
- ◆ Here the opportunity to lead is common to all and hence who ever grabs the opportunity grows
- ◆ No one else but you are responsible for your learning in this movement and hence your attitude determines your altitude in this space

Even in such an independent learning environment, the amount of energy, enthusiasm and camaraderie the Daffodil members bring in makes every meeting an experience to remember. This aspect is exactly what presents great speakers and leaders to the Toastmasters fraternity

My best wishes to this wonderful youthful club.

Leaders speak



TM Geetha Prasanna

Division Governor, Division B 2013-14.

“ OVER THE YEARS FEAR IS FELT NOT SO MUCH FOR SELF PROTECTION OR WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTION, BUT MORE AS A LIMITATION TO BE OURSELVES, TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT, TO TAKE A RISK. ”

No man is fearless. From the moment we are born, fear is ingrained in us in small portions at appropriate times to ensure that they last for a lifetime. Starting from the fear of the dark, monsters, pain & of being punished, it moves on to fear of failure, being judged, expressing oneself, or of losing a loved one.

Fear is such a strong emotion that it slowly but deliberately controls our actions, sometimes subconsciously. We are conditioned to think of the associated fear even before we embark on the journey. Over the years fear is felt not so much for self protection or weighing the consequences of our action, but more as a limitation to be ourselves, to do something different, to take a risk.

Imagine a boy who jumps into the water to save a drowning friend. Or the soldier who stands guard at the border line. Are they fearless? No. They too feel fear like you & me. The only difference is that they are driven by a motivation, a value, an emotion or an attitude, that is much larger and more appealing to them than fear.

Friends, as the year comes to an end and we begin a new year, let's look beyond our fears. Let us bring out our true potential fearlessly. Let us find that motivation in us that can overcome our fears and also support our loved ones to be fearless in pursuing their aspirations.



The Daffodils family with Division governor Geetha Prasanna at division B conference—FUNTABULOUS

THIS... IS.. AFRICA.



DTM Sudarshan Srinath

The movie Blood Diamond is the first thing that comes to my mind when I think about Africa. Born and brought up in the great city of Bangalore, it is only natural to view the African continent as a place of War and Chaos. Enscorced in the usual rigmarole of work and home, in the month of June, I was asked to set up shop the city of Lagos for a few months by my employers. If Blood Diamond is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear 'Africa', then you know how it feels.

It's always a great feeling to tell your friends and family that you are going abroad especially if it's to the US of A or Western Europe. The news will most certainly be greeted with glee and merriment. Your pride swells when you hear 'Congrats', 'We are proud of you' and 'Take care and have fun'. The first reaction I got when I informed my friends that I was going to Lagos was "What is that?" When I told them that it's a City in Nigeria and I would be there for a few months, I got in return amusement, jokes and 'Good Luck'. It seemed like they doubted if I would come back and if so, in one piece.

Locked and loaded, I departed Bangalore not knowing whether to tell people back home I'll see them soon or wait for them in heaven. It was my first time flying out of this Continent to a place hitherto

unknown to my folks in Bangalore and I was already looking forward to my return journey. A journey across two great deserts and a day later, I landed in Lagos. As I walked out of Murtala Muhammad airport, I had mixed feelings of being independent for the first time in life while also realizing I was well and truly alone.

My next few months were spent living in a big apartment with a beef munching Bangladeshi as a companion. Although I was a Gen-X Palghat Iyer, I had to adapt myself to new people and a new culture. I grew resistant to the smell of beef as the days wore on and got accustomed to the smell of alcohol. My typical Tam-Bram name was too complicated to pronounce for the Nigerians and I had to go by the name of 'Nath'. It's usually said 'Be a Roman in Rome'. I became a sheep in lion's cloth in its own den.

"WHEN I TOLD THEM THAT IT'S A CITY IN NIGERIA AND I WOULD BE THERE FOR A FEW MONTHS, I GOT IN RETURN AMUSEMENT, JOKES AND 'GOOD LUCK'. IT SEEMED LIKE THEY DOUBTED IF I WOULD COME BACK AND IF SO, IN ONE PIECE."

My primary purpose in Lagos was to work. The thing about work is that, no matter which country you go to, it is still work. Who cares anyway? It's not something you write about.

One day I was being driven to a meeting by my driver, Christopher Ukchekwu (and they say my name is complicated). En route he accidentally parked at a no parking area to ask for directions. Out of nowhere, we were hounded by cops who threatened us for the violation. In Nigeria, when cops see an expatriate, they see money. When it's an Indian expatriate, they see more money because they know even we bribe.

Seeing that I did not have any money with me, they got into the car and told the driver to take us to a police station on the outskirts of the city. I was flanked by machine gun carrying cops on either side and given a silent treatment. It's one thing to see guns in a movie going bang-bang. It feels like the best toy you've never had. However seeing two big machine guns painted green and yellow, up close and a few inches away on either side is a different thing. The guns looked alive while I was dying from within. Take a guess which movie was playing in my mind...

After an hour or so, throughout which they forbade me from making a phone call, they took me to a ramshackle building which they called a prison and asked me to sit outside the cell. They told me to make a call to anybody who could come and 'bail' me out. After making a frantic call to my local contact, he finally arrived a couple of hours later during which I was trying to compose my own epitaph. He really did bail me out. My release was being negotiated like a hawker bargaining over vegetables. I was finally let go and the amount they settled on made me wonder if I should be proud that I am worth so much. Some experiences are priceless, this certainly wasn't one.

"SPENDING A FEW MONTHS AS A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND HAS GIVEN ME A FRESH SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE ABOUT HOW I LOOK AT MANY THINGS IN LIFE AND ALSO MY HOMETLAND."

After having completed more than 2 months living a solitary life, the final stretch seemed the hardest and the most painful one. Being an unsafe country to venture out anywhere, I was largely confined to my apartment. There were long hours of boredom and loneliness. Notwithstanding the fact that the country was largely underdeveloped and methods of communication were both expensive and inadequate, I was still trying to keep in touch with certain people back home. Amongst the friends that I was in contact with, there were a few very special people - past as well as current members of Daffodils to whom I used to speak once every week. There were times when speaking to them was the only thing that I was looking forward to. They helped me retain my sanity and gave me good company throughout my stay. It also reaffirmed my faith that at Daffodils, relationship with people is not just limited to the four walls of the meeting room, but extends above and beyond any obstacle.

Spending a few months as a stranger in a strange land has given me a fresh sense of perspective about how I look at many things in life and also my homeland. Having lived in Bangalore for 25 years, I have always taken things for granted be it Family, Friends, Food, Shelter or the little comforts of life. I have nagged and complained about simple things like traffic, roads, weather or people in general. It is only when you go outside the country that you realize the true worth of your homeland.

I stayed in a country where people lived like animals, where eating one morsel of food in a day is considered a privilege, where there are no roads, where there is electricity two hours a day, where anything that we in India take as granted is nearly nonexistent. At a personal level, there is nobody to greet you, nobody to check how you are, nobody to tell you to stay safe, nobody to tell you to come back home early and not at the least nobody to care that you even exist.



TM Sudarshan with his driver Christopher Ukchekwu

There is a saying that distance makes your heart grow fonder. It certainly did for me and in the process reinvigorated my faith that home is where my heart truly lies. As with regard to my African adventure, I returned home with all my limbs intact, a little rounder, a little stronger but more importantly a better Indian!

WAKA WAKA !!



Be afraid, be very afraid!



TM Srinath Narasimhan.

Ladies & Gentlemen, this newsletter is not just a prelude to my article. Its theme is one that has perhaps been my biggest learning at Toastmasters. Now, what does one do at Toastmasters? Speak, Lead, Make Friends and have fun - is that all? Well then let me shed light on something that perhaps you too are acquainted with. My 3rd speech was one that I had practiced countless times. I got onto the stage and... I was suddenly confronted with the enormity of the situation - 50 people staring at me, waiting to hear what I have to say. Some were already nodding eagerly. But with all the practice that I had, I survived through it. As I sat back on the chair post the speech, feeling feverish and red, I ran through the entire speech in my head. I was good when I practiced - What happened here? Why did I forget lines, mess up the well-rehearsed structure and not feel as good? As I began to ruminare, it "HIT ME".

I realized I was afraid of what the audience would think of me. I was afraid that I might fail. I was mostly afraid that I would be afraid! Fear had gripped me each time I took stage. Thanks to that, all the preparation, all the looking in the mirror proved futile. Fear took precedence over all and played havoc. Now, no one - from your evaluator to your mentor to your friend- will tell you that you messed up because of fear (Honestly, no one is even going to tell you, you messed up!)That is something only for you to know. Only you know how much you had practiced and what pulled you down. Yes, it is natural, even for seasoned speaker to feel fear

when he takes the stage. However, these accomplished speakers do not stop speaking. They go out there and grab every opportunity to speak. Becoming better than the last time and restricting fear to the back seat. As world Champ Darren La Croix says –"Stage time, Stage time, Stage time". What I did though was slightly different. I started taking risks. Tackling fear with fear itself. Doing things I was completely uncomfortable with – Giving humorous speeches, speaking on weird topics like diabetes and giving speeches without preparation (It doesn't work). The Fear still took precedence, even more now since I had got out of my comfort zone of giving serious speeches - but each time I took these risks, it felt good. Even if I had failed, the fact that I went up there and managed to do something new was a fulfilling feeling. Had I not done these things, I would not have discovered I had some humor in me, that I had that pluck in me.

"EACH TIME I TOOK THESE RISKS, IT FELT GOOD. EVEN IF I HAD FAILED, THE FACT THAT I WENT UP THERE AND MANAGED TO DO SOMETHING NEW FELT FULFILLING."

Ladies & Gentlemen - Start taking those risks. Start getting out of your comfort zone and do something new once in a while. Are you a really a serious speaker- Try Humor or vice versa. Do you constantly look up that piece of paper for introductions when you are the Emcee – Throw it away? Volunteer at table topics and speak about anything however irrelevant it is to the Topic- But speak, even if you fear. Start taking those risks and "Kanna, fear will be afraid of you ". My experience reminded me of the line from the movie Rocky -

"You see Fear is a man's best friend you know, it isn't anything to be ashamed of, Fear keeps you sharp, it keeps you awake and it makes you want to survive. But the thing is you got to learn how to control it. Alright! Because Fear is like this fire, and it's burning deep inside, if you control it, it's gonna make you hot! If it controls you... it's going to burn you up. "

Far forgotten martyr



TM Pannaga Prasad

Lee Kyung-Hae was a quiet boy born to wealthy parents in 1947 in united Korea. He graduated in agricultural science and decided to take up farming on the hilly slopes of what was now South Korea. Hilly slopes are no fertile river plains and it required great planning, knowledge and effort to grow diverse crops. Toiling day and night he built a large farm which boasted of colorful different varieties of fruits and vegetables and many cows. His farm attracted students and scientists from across Korea who visited it to learn the secrets of his high yielding and environment-friendly farming. In 1989, Lee was awarded the "Farmer of the Year" by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization.

This is when things started to change. South Korea by this time was a major export oriented economy, manufacturing hi-tech electronic goods and sending them to the developed Countries such as USA, Australia etc. To maintain balance of trade, these countries wanted South Korea to import some of their rice, which they were producing cheaply because of government subsidies. The big multinational corporations knew that rice is the staple food of Koreans and that there was a large untapped market. So the World Trade Organization (WTO) forced South Korea to open its borders to cheap food imports and the big companies entered the average Korean kitchen.

Lee Kyung-Hae was deeply disturbed by this development. More than 60% of his countrymen were

small farmers and they could not compete with the flood of cheap foreign food. The poor farmers could not even recover their cost of production, let alone make a profit. Factories, highways and luxury villas were being built on the fertile agricultural lands of debt-ridden farmers. His village which was teeming with life was now being deserted as more families, migrated to the cities to work as drivers, watchmen and construction workers, living in slums. Even Lee's flourishing farm, a symbol of agricultural prosperity, was taken away by the bank because he couldn't repay his loans.

He fearlessly went on hunger strikes and protested all over the world. At the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 5th Ministerial conference at Cancun, Mexico in 2003, Lee Kyung-Hae led a large army of small farmers and peasants who were still fighting for their right to grow food. On September 10th 2003, when the protest reached the final barricade which separated the farmers from the palatial resort where the meeting was taking place, he stood atop the barricade and plunged a knife into his heart and killed himself.

"DO WE URBAN INDIANS HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR OUR FARMERS? CAN WE BE FEARLESS IN THE FACE OF CORPORATE MIGHT?"

Was this an act of courage or cowardice? Lee Kyung-Hae immortalized himself by his extreme act of courage and concern for his fellow farmers. He showed the world that the WTO, with their big companies is killing farmers everywhere. If it was Lee in Korea, it was Vittal Arabhavi in Karnataka who committed suicide over the low price of sugarcane. Farmers are strong enduring men, weather-beaten by years of fighting against failed monsoons, corrupt governments and greedy merchants. They are the reason we are alive today, for they have toiled in the hot sun, to grow the food we eat. Do we urban Indians have the courage to stand up for our farmers? Can we be fearless in the face of corporate might? Can we defend our right to food sovereignty? We most definitely can. The question is, do we want to.?

Evaluations



DTM Dr Ram Jayaraman

Speech Evaluation is one the most important activities of the Toastmasters program. While members give speeches as per the program design, they can only enhance their competence with input coming from the evaluation. This is the uniqueness of the Toastmaster program. A good speech evaluation helps even the best speech to get even better. As an evaluator your focus should be to help the speaker become less self-conscious of environment and gain more confidence and become an effective speaker. The evaluator must attempt to give positive and constructive feedback. Every aspect of the speech has to be commented upon. The speaker will be more interested to listening to the criticism if positive statements surround weak points.

I recall that John, a fellow toastmaster won the prepared speech contest in which I too had participated. Although I lost at the division level contest, he asked for evaluation of his speech. Although, my evaluation was tough, he used the comment as good feedback and eventually went on to win the International championship!

In another experience, I really feel remorseful about Clifford. At a regular club meeting, I "tore him to pieces" with my evaluation comments. He eventually quit the Toastmasters club- (that's why you should not get destructive).

To derive value from a good speech evaluation also requires maturity on the part of the receiver, that is, he must be ready to accept the criticism. A method for evaluation that works well is the sandwich method. There are three things that one should focus on in a speech evaluation.

- a) Content of speech
- b) Delivery of speech
- c) Grammar of content spoken

Content: As an evaluator state what the speaker said by saying- you said and give your opinion by saying 'perhaps you could also try'. Give your viewpoint and respect the speaker for the effort he has put in to say few good things.

"THE SPEAKER WILL BE MORE INTERESTED TO LISTENING TO THE CRITICISM IF POSITIVE STATEMENTS SURROUND WEAK POINTS."

Delivery: From the speech delivery aspect bring out the points on body language and voice modulation.

Grammar: Grammar of the spoken language is something that has to be correct even though the speech might have been written. Although the grammarian may point it out, you can also mention a couple points in this regard. In a typical speech contest there might be 5 points for grammar part and it can make all the difference in the final scores.

Also do appreciate if the speaker has used the word of the day. You can also mention about the appearance of the speaker. Always use statements like "if I were you I would have said/done." Have a positive approach about the evaluation role that you are performing.

A navigator always points out the right direction. He/she may not know how to drive. Don't shy away from taking on the responsibility of evaluation; it will make you a confident speaker too.

Dr. Ram has won the 1st place in the Evaluation contest in District 16 in 2002.

Why you all are idiots!



TM Keshav Somasekhar

Pardon my extreme attempt to convey a point! If you were to have a cursory look through any newsletter, I would imagine the chances of reading this article would fare higher than most. The title would seem intriguing in most contexts but in a learning and supportive platform such as this, it's downright outlandish.

Well, apologies if you took offence and doubly sorry if you came here genuinely looking for an answer to that title, but the point of it was to highlight the value of a gutsy opening statement in any venture. In our country, a cricket analogy goes a long way in driving home a point. So think of Sehwag, Gilchrist, Jayasuriya, and Afridi. Common factor?? They were all known for their fearless aggressive style of batting and they were all renowned openers. This wasn't a coincidence, but a consequence. The general idea is, a great start would set the tone for the overall performance and take note of that trait required to get the great start!

The same could be said for speeches as well. In fact, a common tip given to nervous speakers who fear that they may forget lines in their speech is to keep recollecting only the first two lines of their speech. The idea is, once the opening goes well, you'll gain confidence and remember your lines. But what makes those jitters go away faster, is the type of audience response you get. If the audience is visibly enjoying your speech, then there is no better confidence booster than that. So I would always try to get the audience to REALLY like the opening of my speech to get a good

reaction, to put myself at ease to go on with the rest of my speech .

There are many different ways to begin a speech: Question, Quotes, Queer statistics... But in my opinion, the best possible way, and therefore the toughest, is using Humor! Having a humorous speech opening is like, digging a gold mine – if you get it right, it's worth its weight in gold, if you don't, you may well be digging your own grave! The risks are high, but the gains are unmatched.

The most proven way so far to get good at humorous speech opening, is to try your hand at it over and over again which requires that important trait– fearlessness. You don't need to be fearless for a humorous speech opening, you need it after every attempt that doesn't go well to try the next one and you can bet your last buck, that you will come up with openings that are damp squibs before one that tickles. But when that does, it'll be worth the wait.

That said, there are certain aspects worth noting to keep that wait short. Whenever I've come across high-quality humor, it's always had the BIS hallmark:

Brevity – Shorter narratives lends itself to humor. The longer you take to get to the punch-line, the longer you are expecting the audience to stay with you and it's always risky to rely on the audiences' attention span.

Innocuous – Good humor is always harmless. It's pivotal you take care to not hurt any section of the audiences' feelings. So if the only way you can get laughs is by making fun of someone, by all means you have a go at yourself!

Specific – Keeping your humor specific to an audience evokes a great response. For example: If I were to say *"Toastmasters is the only place where I get applause from everyone whenever I go late to a meeting"*. This line would probably make sense only to Toastmasters, or lesser still, our club members, but not others. So try to keep your humor exclusive to your audience but inclusive of everyone in the audience.

Ultimately, a great opening doesn't guarantee a great speech but it gives you the best platform to get there. So try to get the audience to laugh at first, then, in many ways, you increase your chances of having the last laugh!!

The Art of listening.



TM Tarak Goradia.

“When is the wedding?” I asked my wife. Little did I expect that this innocuous question would infuriate her. “What have I been talking about for the past 20 minutes? Aren’t you listening?” she quipped. As a matter of fact, I was hearing but not really listening to her detailed account of our friend’s daughter’s wedding plan. Lack of interest on my part was probably the reason in this case. In general, there could be many reasons for not listening attentively: distracted mind, bias against the speaker or the subject matter, preparing a response, lack of necessary background, emotional blocks, and so on. Whatever the reason, poor listening often hurts relationships. As they say, *every good conversation starts with good listening.*

Once a seasoned toastmaster was given the table topic: “It does not matter how slowly you go, as long as you don’t stop.” Beginner table topic speakers are nervous while approaching the podium and the butterflies in their stomachs prevent them from listening clearly. However, we expect better from seasoned toastmasters. This gentleman eloquently presented the description of how to be considerate of people walking slowly and not rush past them. Halfway through his table topic speech, looking at audience faces, he realized that in his overzealousness or complacency, he didn’t take those few extra seconds to let this profound quote sink in. *Good listening*

involves processing what we hear in multiple contexts before assigning an interpretation.

In professional context, higher the responsibilities associated with your job, more important is the role of Listening. The CIO of a large telephony service provider was faced with a major crisis: one of the key servers had crashed and left many clients without a dial tone. He impatiently grilled all of his subordinates. The chief engineer said: it must have been either the O.S. upgrade last night, or a hardware memory failure, or may be just a loose connection. The CIO shot orders in all directions to roll back the O.S upgrade and replace hardware memory. After several hours, the customers were still without a dial tone; none of the fixes had worked. Just then, a junior engineer went and fiddled with the connecting cable and within a couple minutes, everything was up and running normally. In his impatience, the CIO hadn’t listened carefully to the third possibility mentioned by his chief engineer!

Patience is an important ingredient that separates good listeners from the bad.

The most powerful form of listening extends beyond spoken sound to include body language and what is not spoken. This reminds me of an amazing story from my days at Minneapolis. My mother was visiting from Mumbai and I had taken her to the international dance festival where I was to perform in a Gujarati garbaras. We were enjoying dances from different parts of the world. When my turn came, I left with my dance team and then returned after the performance. I was surprised when a Scottish lady sitting next to my mother congratulated me on my upcoming marriage, asked me about how my research project was going at Honeywell, and encouraged me to follow my dream to do a Ph.D. I was even more surprised when I found out from my mother that the Scottish lady *had* two sons, one divorced; she was visiting Minneapolis to spend time with her grandchildren for a couple weeks, but had to stay longer due to a leg injury. The reason for my surprise: my mother didn’t know any English beyond thank you and you are welcome! The two ladies must have done some incredible LISTENING.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

POWERED BY DAFFODILS TOASTMASTERS.

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

- Nelson Mandela



All of us have felt fear at different instances in life. It's not possible to expect all of us to be fearless. But what we can all strive for is to overcome our fears. The only way to overcome fear is to face it head on!

For all those of us who have stood frozen in front of a microphone, stood rooted to the ground in face of an audience or struck dumb by the thought of speaking to a mass, it comes as no surprise that public speaking is one of the most feared things in the world. Most of us can remember those days when we were young and the worst possible thing that could happen to us would be to speak in front of a class. Yet we knew that speaking in public was not something we could avoid.

It is precisely that fear of public speaking for that very reason - that it is essential, Daffodils Toastmasters Club strove to address in our Youth Leadership Programme (YLP). In this, volunteers from Daffodils have taken on the task of enabling sixty VIII standard students of KV Malleswaram to face their fears head on. The team, guided by the experience that **Dr. Tarak Goradia** has in conducting YLP, comprises of 15 toastmasters handling 3 batches of students. While planning for The 12 week programme, it became apparent that the young participants must be given valuable information, but at the same time should not be under the impression that the YLP is like a classroom setting.

In the YLP, mentors from Daffodils help the YLP participants conduct toastmaster meetings. They are Provided with the necessary background through several educational sessions on writing a speech, body

language and voice modulation. Practical experience is given through various activities designed to put the theoretical knowledge into practice. The camaraderie in learning with friends, the comfort of a of a friendly audience all add to the joy of speaking in public.

"THE STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH THE NECESSARY BACKGROUND THROUGH SEVERAL EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS ON WRITING A SPEECH, BODY LANGUAGE AND VOICE MODULATION."

The YLP has just taken shape and has quite a way to go. Yet there are already memories that the mentors will cherish – be it the roaring enthusiasm with which the first YLP meet was greeted, the students stating in the very second week that they loved YLP or the rapt attention they pay to the proceedings. By the time that YLP concludes, I'm sure that we mentors will face many humbling moments and several joyful ones. We hope that we would have successfully played a small part in enabling these youngsters to blossom into confident and capable youth leaders.

- **TM Lekha E M**

VP – Training. (YLP)

Honors and laurels

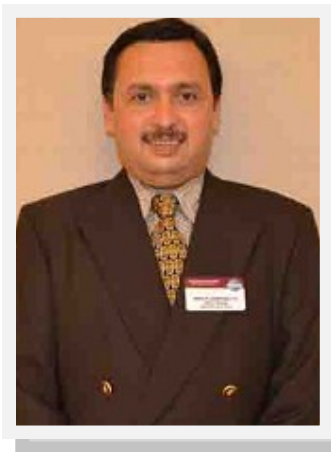


**DTM Dr. Ram Jayaraman was honored with DISTRICT GOVERNOR AWARD
by District Governor DTM Kumaran Pethi at Toastmasters
semi-annual conference REVERBRATIONS 2013**

@ DAFFODILS



**TOASTMASTERS OF THE DECADE
(2003-2013)
DTM SUDARSHAN SRINATH and
TM VAISHNAV KAMESWARAN.**



**TOASTMASTER OF THE YEAR
(JULY 2012– JUNE 2013)
TM ASHOK UPADHYAYA.**



**TOASTMASTER OF THE TERM
(JAN 13 - JULY 13)
TM MAITHILI KUMARAN**



TM Siddharth P was placed Third in Evaluation contest at the recently concluded division B conference - FUNTABULOUS.



TM Himanshu was placed second in Debate contest held at Smedley Speakers Society.

Have you registered?

Ovation 2014
Paradise is calling

For more details: log on to www.d82.org.

Contact: M. N. PAI—Public relations officer DISTRICT 82.

E-Mail: mizarpai@gmail.com

Con-tact No.: +91 98454 93400



TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of meeting locations. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, the organization's membership exceeds 292,000 in more than 14,350 clubs in 122 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people of all backgrounds become more confident in front of an audience

DAFFODILS TOASTMASTERS

Daffodils Toastmasters Club was officially recognized on 12th June 2003 by Toastmasters International.

The club is devoted to the improvement of individual communication and leadership skills

Daffodils has been distinguished ever since inception and our biggest testimony comes from the Executive Director of Toastmasters International, Daniel Rex who termed Daffodils " *The Best Club in the World* "

We meet every Saturday evening from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the venue mentioned below:

Rotary Club, Bangalore West
Next to Government Girls College
Between 12th and 13th Cross, 4th Main
Malleswaram, Bangalore

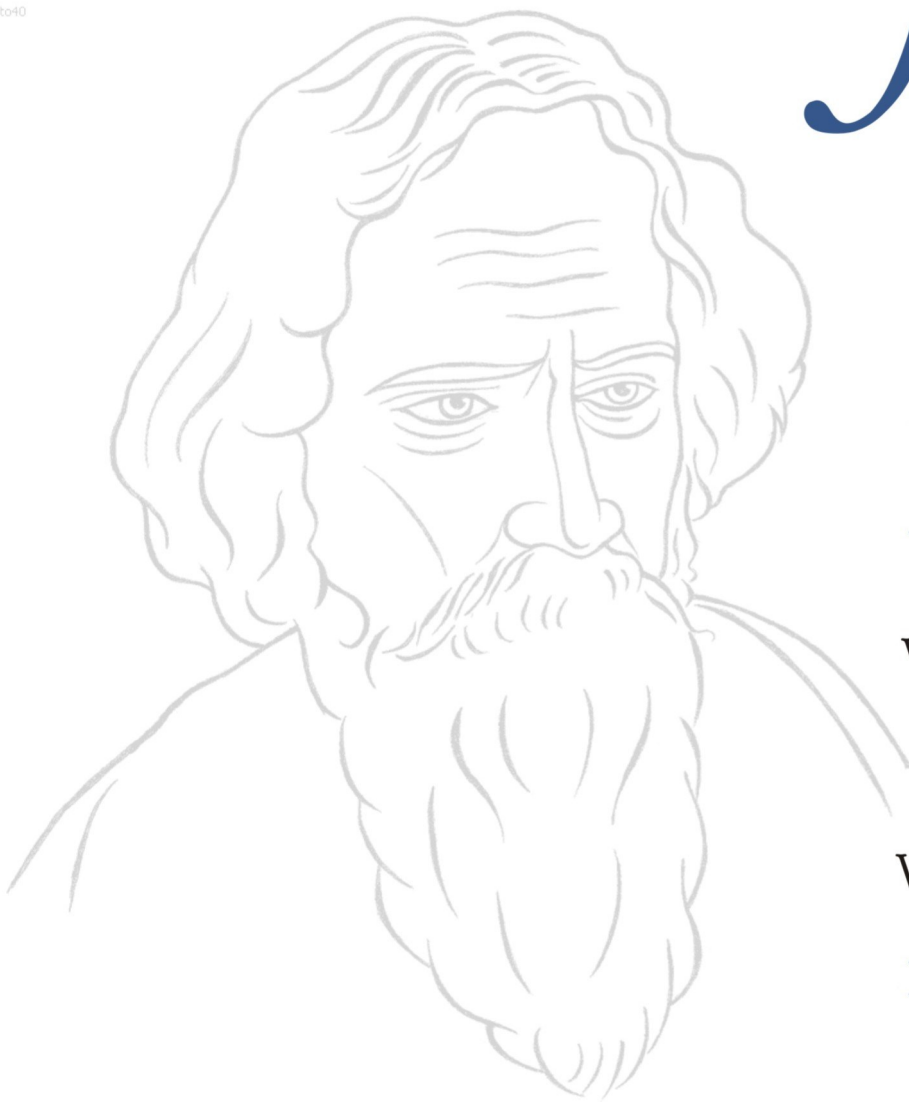
More than a Club!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE TERM 1ST JULY 2013 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2013 WITH DISTRICT 82 GOVERNOR DTM KUMARAN PETHI



L-R: TM Sanjay Khandelwal (VP-PR), TM Prithviraj Muniraj (VP-M), TM Arjun Sundar Raj (VP-E),
TM Smita Jayaram (President), DTM Kumaran Pethi (Dist. Governor),
TM Vidyamritha Singh (Secretary), TM Karthik Alva (Treasurer), and TM Poornima Srinivasan (SAA)

Where the mind is without *fear*



Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the
depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches
its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by
thee
Into ever-widening thought and
action
Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake