

DIVISION O, DISTRICT 41

OPUS

Message from the
International President

RICHARD E. PECK, DTM

**EXPERENTIA
PRINCIPES**

Taking the helm at
Toastmasters

YOU
ARE
OPUS

DEC 2020



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Newsletter of Division O, District 41*



Richard E. Peck, DTM

2020-2021 International President

November 2, 2020

Fellow Toastmasters in Division O, District 41,

Congratulations on launching the December Newsletter OPUS. What a great way to keep the members of your division connected to one another during this challenging time. Despite the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Division O has demonstrated the power of resilience by fulfilling the club mission and supporting clubs to achieve excellence last year! Thank you for your service and dedication to Toastmasters organization.

Reflecting on this past year and the challenges that our members continued to face, you remained undeterred in your commitment to helping one another pursue individual goals. You found new ways of staying connected, becoming technology experts in using video-conferencing platforms. There has never been a time when we have been required to stay so far apart yet needed to be so close together, and you made it happen.

Despite all the challenges, you remained unwavering in your commitment to the club, District, and Toastmasters International missions. You continued to uphold the organization's four core values: integrity, respect, service, and excellence. Your dedication, diligence, and ability to combat the hardship of this global pandemic prove that Toastmasters are unstoppable.

In the 2020–2021 Toastmasters year, it is highly likely we will again face unexpected adversities and will need to look for new opportunities to overcome them. Your actions have already shown that you've got this. It is my sincere wish that each and every one of you accomplish all that you set out to achieve in this new year and that this be the best year of your lives yet!

As your 2020-2021 International President, I look forward to working with and serving you during this program year and witnessing what we will achieve, as together we write the next chapter of Toastmasters history.

Toastmasters: Where Leaders Are Made!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. E. Peck".

Richard E. Peck, DTM
2020-2021 International President





PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

RANJIT ACHARYA, DTM
Program Quality Director
District 41

You don't have to be a star to start but to be a star you definitely will have to start.

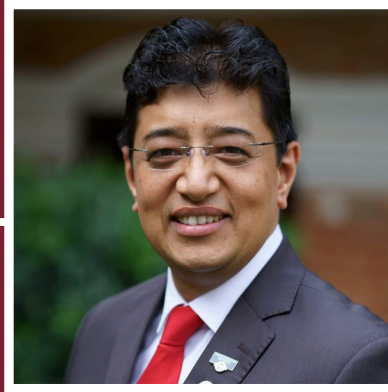
Congratulations Division O for this new beginning - OPUS, a division newsletter that will definitely inspire, motivate, and encourage members to explore this beautiful learning journey of Toastmasters. The camaraderie between the members strengthens with mutual interest and mutual respect, these endeavors help build them. With recognitions and promotions in the newsletter, every member and leader gets an opportunity for comprehensive engagement with the community and gets motivated further to do better.

I believe Division O's leadership is ensuring that each member is getting quality experience of

the Toastmasters program and receiving lots of leadership opportunities. OPUS will definitely bring the members together and bind them with each other through special recognitions, stories, and articles.

Sincere gratitude to the leaders of Division O for making OPUS a reality. Now, this is the pride of Division O and to make it more effective every member must contribute to it. Let us all together help each other to grow and become better.

Wish you all a Happy New year 2021!



DISTRICT PARLIAMENTARIAN'S MESSAGE

SUMAN SHAKYA, DTM
Parliamentarian, District 41

Magnum Opus

Little did I understand when my uncle used to wish us 'May every day become your masterpiece' on our annual Mha Puja during Tihar festival in November many years ago. Newars in Nepal and abroad conduct 'self-worship' or Mha Puja worshipping the 'body' that hosts our 'self'. If the 'body' is not kept healthy then the 'self' ceases to exist! We were still small to understand the significance of his wish.

It is often said, we have two choices when we wake up every morning and find ourselves still breathing. To go back to sleep and continue dreaming or get up and chase those dreams. One of those dreams to chase, as Toastmasters, is to become a better version of ourselves every day. So apt were the wishes of my uncle that it even applied to my Toastmasters journey.

As Toastmasters, we have three opportunities to better ourselves and create a masterpiece every day. One, as a new member you can become more comfortable to speak in front of an audience by attending meetings and taking up roles. For new members who can speak well, you can challenge yourself to follow the objectives provided by Pathways.

Two, as a Toastmaster who has been a member between 18 months to 4 years, you have the

unique opportunity to not only develop yourself but also start guiding new members. While speaking abilities would have sharpened, the growth will be immense with leadership opportunities that abound as the Toastmasters community expands in Nepal.

Three, as a Toastmaster who has been a member for more than 4 years, there are bigger responsibilities in the Division and District to expand your knowledge, abilities and acumen in the regional arena. As a Toastmaster with experience, you will be able to lead, support and help others grow to become better speakers and leaders.

What is your reason to create a masterpiece every day? I am delighted to see the collective work of Division 'O' team members put together a masterpiece 'OPUS' newsletter. I am sure it provided many moments to collectively cherish, relive and dedicate the efforts, hard work and success of the Division to reflect in the pages of OPUS. I congratulate the editorial team, contributors and members involved.

May OPUS become a masterpiece, a magnum opus that will be treasured.



DIVISION DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

AVISH ACHARYA

Division Director
Division O, District 41
Toastmasters International

Petit a petit

Vous n'êtes pas encore arrivés

mais vous êtes plus proche qu'hier

(You haven't arrived, but you are closer than yesterday).

I remember asking myself, "When will I be as good as he is?", watching in awe as one of my first mentors performed on stage five years back. Today, after having a good share of experience performing on stage and organizing events, I ask myself a new question, "How can I become better?" This! This, I believe has been my transformation through Toastmasters.

Il meglio è l'inimico del bene (Perfect is the enemy of good). Each of us has a different point de départ (starting point) as we join Toastmasters to become confident speakers and compelling leaders. The beauty lies in how we cross paths in our individual journeys and paths. The mindset that I had when I compared myself to my mentor figure was partly motivating but also partly fear-provoking. It felt like a reality check when it was not. Comparison often leads us to have one-dimensional views of progress and ability without factoring in the second dimension: time (effort).

At Toastmasters we learn that comparison helps when it is with the self. The learning curve in most of our lives gets flatter as we start to get comfortable with what we are doing in our personal and professional lives. This 'being comfortable' could be the biggest risk we are taking with our lives as it not only robs us of enthusiasm and excitement but could lead to us being redundant in today's fast paced world. Qui n'avance pas, recule (Who does not move forward, recedes).

Our 'Toastmasters' progress can be hard to measure – may be slow at first, and fast later on – but I can tell from experience that life skills we learn at Toastmasters become life skills in the 'external' world as we unconsciously expose the Toastmasters in us in whatever we do, wherever we are. One day at a time, one meeting at a time. Petit a petit, l'oiseau fait son nid. (Little by little, the bird makes its nest).



One thing that I keep doing a lot these days is - going back. Going back to the first day all 6 editors met to plan for OPUS, and I keep laughing at how Toastmaster Johnson and Toastmaster Devana instantly connected on a whole different level. And then before we knew, stories started pouring in from different parts of Division O. Stories of how one honest effort of mentorship changed someone's entire experience of Toastmasters, of friendships and love that have blossomed due to this platform, how the benefits of Toastmasters go beyond public speaking. And well, once we had the stories, I firmly believe that all five brilliant editors and I put every ounce of effort possible to bring all of them together, to do justice to all the amazing tales.

OPUS was/is not a small feat (modesty can go rest today), but it was such a fun experience. And for that, I have to thank the most amazing team of editors (and friends) I could ever ask for - Toastmaster Niladri, Toastmaster Devana, Toastmasters Johnson, Toastmaster Bibek, and Toastmaster Subina; our Division Director Avish Acharya and the entire Division Council who have this magical quality of always making us feel accountable without ever pressurizing us; the most amazing support system Toastmaster Asira Khanal and the entire Division PR team); the most incredible contributors who trusted us with their stories; and most importantly all you readers who will now bring OPUS to life with your minds and hearts.

Shraddha Shrestha

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



BIBEK DUTTA
CO-EDITOR

It is with pleasure and enthusiasm; also some trepidation that with this issue, we begin our editorial stewardship of the OPUS. Toastmasters who submitted their articles are our most important asset, followed closely by PR members and all the helping hands. Personally, it was a startling experience to be a part of such incredible editorial team. Let me close, however, by saying that I believe the stature of the OPUS resides in not what has been published but in the feedback from reviewers; so we keep improving. Wish you a great year ahead. Happy reading!



SUBINA SHRESTHA
CO-EDITOR

For me, toastmasters has been more than just a platform to learn public speaking. For an introvert like me, toastmasters has been a escape, a safe space where I can express my feelings and thoughts without worry. And this newsletter is the written medium of the same. I am glad to be a part of the editing team and glad that I could help other fellow toastmasters pour out their thoughts and feelings editor team and glad that I could help other fellow toastmasters pour out their thoughts and feelings for the world to see. I hope this you enjoy reading the newsletter.



DEVANA SINGH THAPA
CO-EDITOR

What a wondrous journey this has been, diving into the depths of a sea of words and expressions and bringing out the pearls of your articles with an impeccable team. Truly humbled and grateful to be a part of this momentous voyage.



JOHNSON SHRESTHA
CO-EDITOR

Movie Trailers and Editorial Notes are fairly analogous. Both need to be exciting enough for the viewers while being discreet enough to not reveal too much, also adding to it, a fun element. I'm sure my fellow editors have said all that there is to be said and all of you are excited. And I don't want to reveal too much. So, here's a cute picture of a duck instead...



"You will change as soon as you become the Area Director," one of my Toastmaster friends had said to me.

I thought maybe I would change for good and the fear of uncertainty was always there in my mind.

July 1, 2020 – I was officially appointed as one of the Area Directors of Division O. However, many rounds of meetings had already been done for this leadership journey of mine. I was mentally prepared to take up this challenge amidst the current COVID-19 situation. I knew this year, we would all be conducting virtual meetings and that was a blessing in disguise, for me. Having to visit all the clubs in person would have been quite difficult.

From day 1, I did change – numerous District and Division meetings had prepared me for my role as a leader. I was ready – to serve, take responsibilities, and be accountable for my actions. Less than a week after being appointed, our Area O3 team geared up to conduct the first virtual Toastmasters Leadership Institute training in our district. Since this was the first event of its kind, all eyes were on us. We had numerous mock sessions before the actual event and the team spirit among the role takers was really high! With the support of the Division and Area and Area O3 council members, we successfully conducted TLI 1.

LEARNING TO LEAD



JENNY MANANDHAR
Area Director, O3
Division O

Then, there were numerous club wise special events with guest speakers – and that helped me connect with members of all the clubs under O3. The true spirit of Toastmasters could be seen in these events – every member contributing in some way, giving their best, and helping each other to make these events a success.

And when our Division announced a one-of-a-kind video challenge, INVICTUS, our area was eager to host one of the training sessions (a storytelling session) for the participants. We saw over 100 participants in the event, and this made us even more ecstatic as the event had been planned only 4 days prior!

I feel the bonding and the team spirit that we have created in our area have helped us in organizing events successfully. Whenever we are in need, we find many of our members ready to help. I felt like I had to become a role model for our members and be ready to serve in my capacity; and only then, will they feel the joy to serve by volunteering.

As an Area Director, I have learned to be positive and patient, accept, serve, work in a team, and be accountable for my actions. The journey so far has had its ups and downs. However, with the constant support from my Division Director, TM Avish, and my fellow Area Directors, I have sailed smoothly.

As you continue your progressive journey in Toastmasters, there is a great chance that you might be asked to or perhaps have a desire to lead as an Area Director. Therefore, in hopes of providing you some insights, I share my thoughts and experience today with you all.

Being an Area Director is certainly not an easy obligation. There are lots of club reports, visits, meetings, conferences, etc. There are several occasions where you need to manage expectations of clubs, the division, area council members, and the district.

But it also provides us an opportunity to touch the lives of people in the Toastmasters community and beyond. We, as district officers, get to hone our leadership and communication skills while giving back to our community.

We learn to work together with a diverse team in the area council and our successes and satisfactions largely depend on the area team.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



PRASHANT SHRESTHA
Area Director, O1
Division O

As an area director, we are responsible for our area team's motivation and engagement. An area does not exist on its own; it exists to serve the clubs it represents.

Therefore, selecting the area council members from the clubs in the same area would be a safer bet in building your team.

Once the team is set, it's imperative to see challenges as opportunities because there are bound to be ups and down and many unexpected waves that will rock your boat.

However, these are also the same challenges that enable us to grow as fine leaders.

"A great Leader is born." Is that the only possibility? Can we train and breed the Leaders? Anecdote of being elected as an International Assembly Member for South Asia and Middle east for ACCA in 2013, idyllic blessings to be born in a family of leaders with my late father chairing organizations professionally, passionately and persistently; these factors and my dream to shine at the annual conference in London among global Finance Leaders made me join Toastmasters since June 2014. Serving as the founder President of Professionals Toastmasters Club inspired me to broaden my leadership experience to wider networks and needy ones. Mentoring Butwal Toastmasters Club and its bright toastmasters further captivated my attention and articulation on professional training. I deliver to commercial banks, the private sector and the development sector.

Leading my life by example, I feel honoured to have served the Member Advisory Committee of ACCA Nepal as its first chairperson. My own life and my father's impeccable body of work while he shone in community, clubs and country keeps me ignited to be a humble human and a loving leader. In these three months as an Area Director, I am exploring the human connectivity inside me with numerous souls. Life offers us the opportunity in a plate which we savour and succeed with our own consistent efforts.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE



BIRAJ PRADHAN
Area Director, O2
Division O

Sometimes when there's a call from District on a family weekend or a reminder note from Division Director late night, I introspect if this is the price I pay to serve many toastmasters around. Then the beautiful mind inside me trained with humanity and humility serving as Area Director reasons "Biraj when a handful people get chance to serve in such tiring situation, when people flee to hibernate fearing these unprecedented times then you are the one gifted to make most of your network, resources and communication skills."

I take pride being surrounded by the best people from whom I learn, share, interact along. Recent Techmaster training initiated by our Area impacted every participant and imparted them with life lessons to deal with virtual meeting setups. The bonding and benefits I received from the trainers, moderators, officers and participants is beyond the words I can describe. Our council team is enthralled to work for the wider community use and this one small example with the first quarter of serving would aspire me to broaden my horizons – Life indeed is a path we choose to lead and to live.



QUANTUM ITINERIS

THE JOURNEY SO FAR AT TOASTMASTERS

I joined Toastmasters in 2018 and initially found it daunting. As someone totally new to a platform like Toastmasters, I was flabbergasted by the speaking abilities of speakers; their ability to deliver stories in such delightful ways. While public speaking had never been my strong suit, I was even more intimidated by Table Topics sessions and always tried to avoid the eye of the Table Topics Master. How were you supposed to go in front of all those people, prepare a speech in real-time and deliver, all the while, not making a fool out of yourself? As a person who never had much to say anyway, trying to deliver an impromptu speech seemed futile.

Time passed and one fine day I was first to raise my hand to speak for a table topic when the question about your favorite football club was served. As a lifelong Liverpool FC fan, this was a topic I felt I could deliver a few lines on without blanking out. I managed to raise my hand within a couple of seconds and went on to deliver a few lines that made sense to say the least. It was not long after that I went on to deliver my Icebreaker Speech and won the Better Speaker Award (albeit I was the only speaker). Fast forward two years and I have given a few more speeches and taken up various roles at clubs and divisions. Although there is a lot more to come in my journey as a Toastmaster, the experience so far has taught me quite a few things. Toastmasters is a platform where one can make



NIRAJ LEKHAK
LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THERE IS NO RIGHT MOMENT

mistakes and grow out of them. We have an awesome community where incessant encouragement and support is a custom. Of all the things I have learned out of Toastmasters, one thing that strikes out to me is that you must grab opportunities to learn and grow. This holds true for any aspect of life. Always waiting for the right moment may not be the best strategy. There are times for that and there are times where you should just take a leap of faith. It may seem to get worse at first, but it can and will only get better.

A NEW ME

Hello Fellow Toastmasters, and potentials who don't know they are going to be future Toastmasters. Speaking our mind helps us resolve conflict, relay love, and reassure peace and prosperity. In my life I always found that I had to improve in these areas and go from expressing hate, anger and disgust to bringing harmony in the lives of people around. So, I was desperately searching for a platform where I could ignite the fire of change. Fate was already decided. A friend of mine suggested that I go to a Toastmasters meeting. I joined a couple of meetings as a guest and my life, as I knew it, changed. I learned newer communication styles, new vocabulary, and new ways to network with my peers.

It was the dawn of a new me. A new confident person who was not afraid of public speaking, who was not afraid of taking leadership roles. I could speak on technical projects in a way that was easily understood by non technical people. I was thinking from and in the shoes of my audience. I was trained to organize my speech. I

was trained to give motivating, inspiring, and persuasive presentations that really mattered for growth and success of an organization.

If you are not able to communicate the why behind your idea to your colleagues, juniors, and seniors, they are not motivated enough to pursue it. They are not motivated to go the extra mile. They are not able to love it in the same way you love it. Toastmasters helped me improve the way I communicate the why behind my idea and now I am more excited to learn newer communication strategies to develop myself further. I find myself always excited about each club meeting and the enthusiastic Toastmasters around make each meeting worthwhile. I sincerely hope to contribute this learning to a greater audience and for greater good. Sometime later becomes never, so take a chance and join Toastmasters.



SUGANDHA AMATYA
HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

GETTING STARTED...

The world today is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity; popularly referred to by its acronym VUCA. Survival, growth, and progress today and in the future, hence, requires a completely different range of skills from what our traditional education system focuses on developing. Skills like communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and people management are now the most sought after skills.

ACCA Members as professional accountants are traditionally perceived to be technically oriented with in-depth knowledge of accounting and finance. Technical skills, however, increasingly, are the domains of software and machines.

Being in the role of Country Head for ACCA Nepal, I have always been pondering on how ACCA Members can continue to be relevant in these dynamic times. To continue being relevant, it is imperative that ACCA members hone their communication and leadership skills on top of their technical skills. With this in mind, I have been having conversations with individuals from different walks of life.

I was introduced to the Toastmasters platform by TM Biraj Pradhan and TM Nirajan Kandel. I also had the opportunity to attend a couple of meetings. I was thoroughly impressed by how the meetings were structured and could immediately see through the different tangible and intangible benefits that this would provide to ACCA Members. Two outcomes

were very apparent to me. First, the meetings would be a getaway for our members from the world of numbers to one where they could network and connect with fellow Toastmasters from different fields. Secondly, the obvious outcome being a very structured path for them to work on improving their communication, presentation, and leadership skills.

I, then, wasted no time in connecting with ACCA Members and discussing the prospects of a Toastmasters club of our own. I was further motivated by the fact that our members were very welcoming of this. This endeavor would not have been complete without the support of our dynamic TM Prabal Shrestha and a proactive ACCA Member.

I could not be more thankful to all the mentors and fellow TMs who right from conducting the demo meeting to helping us conduct the very first meeting of ACCA Nepal Toastmasters club have supported us with undying enthusiasm. The demo meeting and the subsequent meetings we have been a part of further cemented our observation on how vital a platform can Toastmasters be especially for Finance professionals like us.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. With the very first steps now undertaken, we look forward to many more of these steps and a rewarding journey for us all involved.



RABIN KATWAL
ACCA NEPAL TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY TOASTMASTERS EXPERIENCE



PRASANNA BHATTARAI
HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

I was looking for a change in my life, especially the company of the people I hung out with. I didn't know how I was going to do it. It's not easy to come out of your social bubble. And one day, perhaps a week later, I got a call from an old friend asking to catch up. We met, talked about old and new things. He told me that he has been part of a club, a Toastmasters club for the past few months. The word "Toastmasters" sounded funny to me but the idea was very attractive, a club for public speaking. I was very interested and showed my desire to visit his club. I was invited to his club a week later.

It was my first time being in a productive social gathering. The first day I visited Himalaya Toastmasters was on the day of the club level

contest. This gave a perfect opportunity to get a first impression of the club. There was going to be 2 events that day, evaluation and humor contest. I had very low expectations to be fair, but to my utter surprise it turned out to be much better than I had expected. Everyone was so talented, with amazing oration skills. I got to listen to fantastic speakers who were of the same age group as me. I was blown out of my mind when I heard the word "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" which sums up my first experience of the club. Later, seeing how friendly and open minded the club members were, I decided to join the club!

T. Harv Eker, author of the book 'Secrets of the Millionaire Mind' once said, "Nobody ever dies of discomfort, yet living in the name of comfort has killed more ideas, more opportunities, more actions, and more growth than everything else combined. Comfort kills!"

Yes, comfort kills and I am the live example of it. It was my comfort due to which I was unable to act against discomfort of public speaking.

I encountered my fear of public speaking exactly two decades ago. It was a closing ceremony of the emcee training program where one of my friends' father was an instructor who taught it in Newari language. I was in that program to assist my friend capturing closing remarks on a video camera. When the ceremony was about to conclude, my friend's father asked me to say something in mic in front of those unknown people and at that moment, I froze completely. I was cursing my friend and scolding myself on agreeing to attend that event. When my turn came, my mind went blank and my heart was pumping like a racing car engine that hits its topmost gear. But somehow, I managed to slip one joke in Nepali language in the Newari public speaking program. Few days later my friend told me that his father commented about me that I appeared comfortable talking in front of a crowd, but the truth was with me. He also mentioned that his father hadn't understood the joke that I said but he just laughed at it just because others had laughed.

After that day I enjoyed being in my comfort zone by not taking any risk to stand in front of a mic, in front

STEPPING OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE



PRATIK MANANDHAR
PROFESSIONALS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

of a public crowd. I was shying away from public speaking and avoided numerous opportunities due to this fear. Here I remember the lines from one of the publications, 'We all tend to gravitate towards our comfort zones. They're the places where everything is orderly and predictable – we know exactly what we're doing, who we're dealing with, and why certain decisions may or may not work. WHEN WE'RE IN A COMFORT ZONE, LIFE OR WORK IS JUST EASIER'.

After being fearful for these couple of decades, I tried stepping out of my comfort zone stressing my brain simply by attending the beautiful public speaking platform of Toastmasters and taking roles. To all those suspicious minds and fearful hearts of yours, take my example and enjoy the journey of Toastmasters and hone your public speaking skills. You're the only one who creates your reality. For no one else can think for you and no one else can do it. It is only you.

TOASTMASTER TILES

It has been a year since I joined Toastmasters and a lot has happened ever since. For starters, we are living in a pandemic. But, at Toastmasters we have the mindset that the show must go on. We have managed to gracefully transition from vibrant in-person meetings to enthusiastic virtual zoom meetings. While the learning curve continues, we have transitioned from being larger than life characters on stage to tiles in our computer or mobile device screens. We have transitioned from shaking hands to clicking "reactions" on zoom. We have become Toastmaster tiles.

During the pandemic, there are a lot of things that have had to take a backseat for many. But, the format of the Toastmasters and modern day technology has allowed us to continue our personal growth through this platform. The only difference is the medium of this growth. Even for the least tech savvy Toastmaster, the pandemic has provided a situation where technology is a staple in our meetings. We have all become tech savvy Toastmaster tiles.



One year ago if you told me how I felt about giving a speech on zoom, I am sure I would be a little apprehensive. A year later, it is a skill I have honed through many Toastmasters meetings. Imagine living through the pandemic in the era before the pandemic. We would not have the option to continue many of the things we are able to continue in the online space in today's world. So, let us appreciate that we have the option to be reduced to a Toastmaster tile and continue the learning. At each toastmasters meeting we find a better way to optimize the Toastmaster tile on our devices that we have made our own.

Here's to many more meetings being a Toastmaster tile. Here's to many training sessions being a Toastmaster tile. Here's to many international workshops being a Toastmaster tile. Here's to continued growth in our Toastmaster journey being a Toastmaster tile.

KRITI PANTH
PROFESSIONALS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE ROAD SO FAR...

I am Yamuna Manandhar and I would like to share the journey from my school life to Bodhi Toastmasters Club. Being born in a middle-class family of seven children, I attended a government school. Despite being a good student, I was poor in English which made me feel shy and reserved. Although I took tuition classes for English, I failed in S.L.C. The English tuition classes didn't help me because I had difficulties understanding the words, as the teacher only focused on the course and did not quite help me understand.

In 1993 A.D., I came across one of my local friends. I am thankful to him as he was the one who suggested that I join a language class. My first language class began at Language Linkage, New Road - an American language institute. Here, my new challenges started as the instructors were all foreign. I could not understand them properly. But luckily I met an instructor, who was friendly and helpful.

Furthermore, I faced economic problems because my parents did not understand the importance of English as well as they had to think about other children. At that time, fees were expensive and only 20 classes were available per month. Anyhow, I studied there for four months and found a drastic change in my English. After the course, I passed my S.L.C. At that time, I was happy, being the only daughter in my family who had passed S.L.C. and was even joining a college.

For two years, I joined the Practical Language Center situated at Ason, Baalkumari, where I completed the course Level D along with teaching training. Then, I worked there as an English trainer. I had a busy life with college, work, and maintaining my economic status.

Then, I got married. I had to leave my Bachelor's level studies and my job due to personal reasons. But as we know, "Where there is a will, there is a way," after ten years of my marriage, having a 6-year old son, I joined the Bachelor levels again. After that, I worked in several places. I worked in two schools. Later, I started a pre-school as well as took Teacher's training with Montessori techniques-Level 1 Step 1, one year course in ECD, Leadership training, curriculum development program, etc., and many more workshops. Then, I also did a Postgraduate Diploma in education from Kathmandu University.

Subsequently, I started my own school - Wonderland International School, Dhapasi. After running the school for seven years, in 2018, I participated in the International School Awards where I met Mr. Chandrayan Shrestha sir. He invited me to join the Bodhi Toastmasters Club. And I am grateful to him because, without his invitation, I wouldn't know about this club and become a member. I have been learning many things and have got to know many people here. My purpose for joining this club is to build up my public speaking skills and relationships with people.



YAMUNA MANANDHAR
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP

My weaknesses, my reasons for an inferiority complex, and the skills that I have always postponed trying to improve – communication, leadership, and networking. I was determined as I'd said to myself, "Now I will do things differently – I will focus on my overall skill development" as I joined MBA. And then, Toastmasters came as a blessing as I joined Ace Institute of Management.

Initially, I was terrified, observing how every speaker spoke so eloquently while failing to recall the last time I gave a speech. It took me many meetings to gather enough courage to even take a table topic; and it was the same story for giving my ice breaker speech and taking the role of TMOE. I did not do an amazing job on those, but I could feel my confidence strengthening as a communicator and a leader.

"Toastmasters International – Where Leaders are made" – the tagline says it all.

I certainly wanted to be a better leader. But more than that, I wanted to get some leadership experience. And as I started taking roles in our club meetings, I understood the Toastmasters Internationals' tagline better. Here, members explore the leader in themselves by taking different roles to organize meetings and events collaboratively. The opportunities to take various roles in club meetings taught me various aspects of organizing an event. Furthermore, I was fortunate to get to work as the Associate-VPE for the club, which provided me some more leadership experience that I wanted as a management student.

I have miles to go before I sleep – and it's only the morning. I have thousands of mistakes to make, hundreds of failures to mourn; but most of all, uncountable lessons to learn as I move ahead with my journey as a Toastmaster.



PRABIN SHRESTHA
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

I FOUND MY TOASTMASTERS FAMILY AND YOU ?

I held the microphone, filled my lungs with air, remembered my God and with trembling feet moved towards the stage. That was my first attempt to deliver a speech in English.

Born in a place like Sarlahi, the eastern part of Nepal, where the sun rises but not in people's mind. A place where education was like a drop of water in the desert and a girl from that place was moving to Chitwan which is a parallel universe.

I was enrolled in one of the best schools of Chitwan where English was the language of instruction. And me, being the nerd I am, wanted to participate in the English Speech Contest even though I didn't know how to say a simple hello in English. This was back in grade 6, I enrolled for the competition where I was given a white sheet of paper with some 50 words on it. Even after memorizing it for two days, I wasn't fluent in what I had to say.

On the day of the contest, I was terrified. My face was red and my hands were shaking. I proceeded and delivered the speech, I could acknowledge that the judges had hardly understood words that I had uttered. As I completed my speech, I felt like a clown! Each person in the attendance was laughing at me. One of my closest friends fumed at me and said, "Why did you participate in the competition? I am ashamed to call you my friend. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO PRONOUNCE A SINGLE WORD CLEARLY?"

I was so demoralized that even when my teachers asked me questions in class I didn't answer fearing that again I will utter some nonsense and my friends would mock me. Nevertheless I didn't stop talking to myself. I started to think in English, and communicated only in English with my family members. I used to look in the mirror and talk to myself. A hair comb used to be my microphone and my family; my audience.

A year later I decided to give myself a chance. Remembering the incident, my friends started gossiping. I didn't care and just focused on my speech. I took help from my teacher and family members.

The big day finally arrived.....

Just like the previous time, I took a deep breath, held the microphone, remembered my god and started. The topic was "Education the Light of Life". As I concluded my speech I noticed teachers were amazed, their jaws had dropped. Judges stood up and clapped for me. I could hear a clap, then huge noises of clapping and people calling out Prasama..... Prasama.... I said to myself bravo! Prasama, you did it!

From then onwards I never let myself slide into the second position; at least not in my head.

This is how the journey of my speaking started.

Four years back I took part in a national level public speaking competition, where I met DTM Saurab Lohani, in Kathmandu. There I was roused by the way he communicated with us. There for the first time I heard about Toastmasters from him. Since that day this organization occupied a strong hold in my head.

Luckily seven months back I came to know that Landmark is planning to establish a Toastmasters club here in Chitwan. It was a huge opportunity for me. I joined the demo meeting.

Frankly speaking, my mind was unable to grasp a single thing in that meeting. I was nervous thinking how big this organization was, as there were well established, professional people who were its members and I kept thinking that there was no chance for a kid like me, who was just doing her second year of BSc, to join this club. Later I realized that I was wrong. It was the best place for youths like us. Where we link with people among different-field, perceptions and views.

After seven informal meetings everything was finalized. A nerd whose first speech made a disaster of herself was chosen as the VPPR of CHITWAN LANDMARK TOASTMASTERS CLUB. The only toastmasters club in the whole Chitwan district. Not the post but the potential that they saw in me, uplifted me.

It's been seven months now and I have learned to:

- believe in myself,
- accept myself,
- keep on going,
- be positive,
- learn from mistakes but not to repeat it,
- come out of your comfort zone and
- think outside the box.

In these seven months I have been reborn, I have found a new family, where you have your members to support you. Even though you don't want to, they raise you up, they push you for betterment. In today's world where people snatch others opportunities, here you are given the opportunity to prove yourself. Here none of the members are embarrassed because of your pronunciation or your personality.

I have found my Toastmasters family- Family not of blood, or from sharing the same roof but family through the relation of knowledge, positivity, understanding and humanity. This family has taught me to embrace my inner nerd to be bold, to be fearless and to live your dream. Hope you also have a family like mine and will be delighted to be a part of Toastmasters brood.



PRASAMA POUDEL

CHITWAN LANDMARK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY EXPERIENCE WITH TOASTMASTERS

Toastmasters truly is a place where you can develop certain skills which you would never be able to develop even if you attended the most exclusive seminars. I am not paid by Toastmasters International to write this. This is my personal opinion after I've reviewed the whole Toastmaster curriculum, program and membership events. I have even read many of the specific booklets created by Toastmasters International. I've come to this conclusion by comparing it to many other offers on the market. I can truly state that Toastmasters is a truly beneficial investment and an astounding way to help you succeed personally and professionally.

I like public speaking, having done an ignite talk and spoken at my high school graduation, but I think I could get a lot better. I'm particularly bad at off-the-cuff speaking. I tend to freeze up and sound neither natural nor professional. I remember once looking around for Toastmasters clubs when I lived in but they were never very convenient to get into and it seemed like a big commitment.

So far, I have given two talks. There's a sequence that Toastmasters pathways manual wants you to follow and the first speech is the Icebreaker, a 4-6 minute speech designed to give the group a sense

of who you are. The second is "Organize Your Speech", a 5-7 minute talk.

My first talk was about the journey of my life where I talked how I got into toastmasters and my schooling and work experience. The second speech was about my trip to Pokhara where I shared the whole travelling experience and natural beauty of Pokhara.

I really loved the environment of Toastmasters which is very supportive. Everyone claps when you take the podium and claps again when you finish. There's always a standing ovation for your first speech. The Speech Evaluators are generally very positive, in fact, at times I wish they gave more actionable feedback.

Still, there's a bit of nerves when you give your speeches. Having someone tally all those up keeps you honest and while it's a little painful to know exactly how many times to restart your speech, I really think it helps you improve.

Overall I am very happy to be a part of Toastmasters club. I am looking forward to continuing to develop my speaking skills.



UDDAV SHEJWAL
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY JOURNEY AT TOASTMASTERS

I joined Professionals Toastmasters Club in 2020 with the aim of improving my public speaking and leadership skills. And, well, I also wished to be in a friendly club environment – one that focuses on quality as opposed to quantity, and to be amongst people who would encourage me through my Toastmasters journey.

When I first attended a Professionals Toastmasters meeting, the benefits I received from this club were beyond my expectations. I still remember the very first time I stepped into the club, I was impressed by the orderly arrangement of the chairs and tables that were put together for the meeting. I felt great joy and a sense of professionalism and I felt like a major event was about to begin!

The people at the meeting were friendly and warm. I looked around and saw a lot of interaction happening amongst the attendees. Some attendees were deep in conversation while others were engaged in lighter conversations. My first impression of the club was definitely a good one.

I quickly signed up to become a member and I was further impressed when I realised that each member would have access to a mentor.

At first, I had opted for a senior member in the club as my mentor. However, later I looked beyond the club and took TM Brijendra Joshi as a mentor. What would we have in common? In the end, I decided to be rational and at least give this arrangement a try. Was it fate? Was it, as people say, pre-planned?

In a short span of time I took on an executive committee role at Professionals Toastmasters Club. I was offered the Associate VP Membership role and soon I was appointed as the VP Membership of the club. I accepted the decision of the club executive committee and was happy with my progress.

My journey continued beyond the club as TM Biraj Pradhan (Area O2 Director) offered me the Area O2 PR Manager role. With these experiences, I was able to gain so much more than the membership I signed up for in a short time. A big shout out to TM Biraj Pradhan and all the members of Professionals Toastmasters Club for making my journey so far.



SAMIR DHUNGANA
PROFESSIONALS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

HOW I RE-DISCOVERED TOASTMASTERS

Enriching, full of learning and development, an opportunity to contribute.

It's difficult to put it in words, and one must experience it personally!

It is a place where you push your boundaries! Be it public speaking, leadership skill development, impromptu speaking, networking, even confidence! That's what Toastmasters is!

My Toastmasters journey actually began 30 years ago. Young and ambitious me, wanted to do so much and speaking was one of my greatest strengths already. So when I was asked to join Everest toastmasters then, I eagerly agreed and started preparing for my Icebreaker. Compiling my short life was not an easy task! There was so much to say and so much to not disclose. With the help of my mentor, I did prepare the speech and got it delivered.

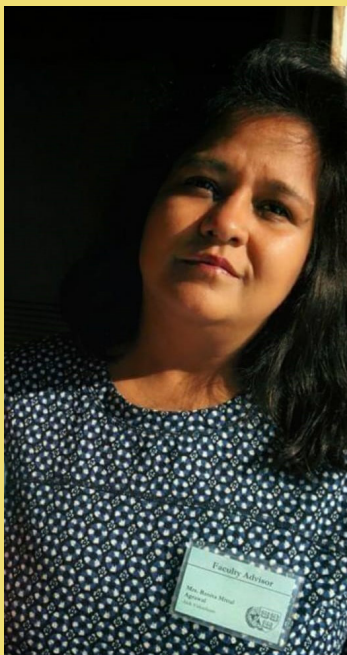
I was able to bag the 'Best Speaker' award, the little wooden figure!!

But soon after that everything came to a halt as suddenly there was no time for hobbies and all the effort was being put in achieving the dreams of doing something in life. The passion for speaking took a back seat and the responsibilities of work and raising a child took precedence.

I did not even realize how and where the next 25 years passed!

And again after all those years, there was plenty of time to be utilized. Again the urge to pursue the art of speaking started taking the front seat and this time I went to Shangrila Toastmasters as a guest, "just to see" is what I told myself! Once again, I was back in familiar surroundings with people prepared to give speeches, some geared to evaluate and others to encourage. How could I just sit and do nothing? I took part in Table Topics, where guests could take part. Once again the passion yielded the result and I got good feedback and the Best Speaker award!

I was happy that I was going to be a Toastmaster once again, fulfilling my desire of giving prepared speeches and getting constructive feedback! But again there was a setback and I could not do anything for the next 4 years!! The COVID pandemic brought a lot of obstacles to the world, but for me it came with the opportunity to challenge myself and I joined Bodhi Toastmasters!!



And, that's when my life changed! As in any Toastmasters club, in Bodhi too, you get to learn to face people, how to manage people, how to encourage people, how to evaluate. You can compete and get advice from experts on your skills. In one word its "EVERYTHING" we need in this professional world! Most of the people who sell specific training, courses, seminars still need to learn how to actually provide people with benefits instead of continuously selling hopes and dreams. Toastmasters is different in this aspect, it doesn't try to sell you anything except the fact that you will reap true benefits by continuously improving. Your fellow toastmasters are not your competitors rather they are the ones who help you and take you ahead.

Therefore, if you take my suggestion, do join Toastmasters – don't wait as I did for the longest period of my life. Enrich, learn, grow, develop, and contribute to your life and to the lives of others in the fraternity.

BANITA MITTAL
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Four months into my journey of Toastmasters, the COVID-19 pandemic began, and within a short period of time, everything changed. We were under a lockdown and our meetings shifted online. I won't lie when I say I was awfully saddened by not being able to deliver speeches in person and was also skeptical about how I would benefit from the online meetings so early in my learning curve.

However, it gives me immense pleasure to share that not only did the whole Toastmasters fraternity and my club, Bodhi Toastmasters Club but also did a commendable job of transitioning to virtual meetings. It enhanced certain experiences in the club. First, the possibility of joint meetings with the clubs outside one's area and division was largely expanded. Second, the technological know-how and comfort with the medium of communication I

gained as a part of the virtual meetings really helped me replicate that in my professional engagement as well. Lastly, in these trying times, the networking opportunities and the interactions within the meeting really helped fit the life of Lockdown into a routine – a perk I really appreciated.

Looking back, Toastmasters has been a blessing in disguise and the blessings get more distinct with each passing week! From helping me maintain my sanity to bringing about a visible change in my communication and public speaking skills, it has been a platform for constant growth and enhancement when others have ceased to be agile.



SHREYA PAUDEL
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE NEED FOR A STRAIGHT ROAD

"Great speech!"
"It was really good, keep it up"
"Loved it!"

The most frequently heard words in a Toastmaster setting – for guest appearances, veterans, and newcomers alike. While this educational organization aims to turn its members into effective communicators, the approach of doing so seems... limited (for lack of a better word).

In no way, am I good enough to judge this century-old acclaimed platform. My Toastmaster journey, by the time you read this, will have completed only one revolution of the sun. But the reason I say this is, I have been, often, led astray by some of the feedback given to me.

Toastmasters prides itself in encouraging members to forever go forward – through positive comments, always. And it's not a wrong approach by any means but there has to be limitations. A gentle encouraging feedback goes a long way – sometimes shaping the speaker but also – at times, misguiding a not-so-good speaker to believe he/she was really good; maybe better than he/she actually was.

The first time I was cold-called for a Table Topic, I didn't even know the rules well. I went up there, fumbled, shuffled, stuttered, and made a mess. And I have done this multiple times. Yet, I was given comments like "Ramro thyo", "That was really good", "Nicely done" ...And while it was evident they were being nice, a part of me wanted to

believe it, badly. Of course, no one wants to belittle someone who's on his debut table topic, but while sugary treats taste great, they are bad for you in the long run.

However, this is a frequent scene. I have been in enough meetings by this time to know that some DO take the "all-is-good" feedback – what is meant to be an encouraging note – lightly. I have witnessed the same speakers take topics repeatedly on different meetings, yet not improve much. In each meeting, they are given similar feedback – that it was good, if not great. It's up to you to think whether this example is hypothetical but one thing is for certain – these speakers could greatly benefit with the right, honest feedback but they seem stuck because they're led to believe they are good.

This may be improper coming from a youngling of Toastmasters but I have a feeling someone has to say it, so might as well be me.

We could learn from Mark Manson's Disappointment Panda here. For those unfamiliar, Disappointment Panda is a superhero whose powers are to tell people the harsh truths about themselves – so that they can come to terms with them and take action. It does not care about your feelings, it relies on facts (mostly); it is bitter, but it is honest. And rather than going on to believe that we have done great, we could all use someone like Disappointment Panda in our lives. It would not be very encouraging, but it would lead us down the dirt road – difficult, yet short and straightforward.



JOHNSON SHRESTHA
LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TOASTMASTERS, AN ACTION MOVIE

Have you ever witnessed an incident where someone knows exactly what's happening without even looking at it? If you have, do you remember how it felt at the moment? Well, I do.

This happened some 8 years back. I experienced something I found heroic; that man was no less than a hero and what he did was no less than any action either. This action movie is none other than the first ever Toastmasters meeting I had attended during my BBA-BI while studying at Ace Institute of Management.

One of the subjects we had to study during our 1st year was Business Communication. While our teacher taught us theoretical perspectives and made us perform some class activities, he explained to us why it was necessary to have practical exposures in order to help our mind convert knowledge into action effortlessly. He announced that he would be taking us to witness a real time meeting which focused on enhancing our communication and public speaking skills. He then mentioned a club named Toastmasters while also disclosing him being a member of it. "Toastmasters??, what kind of a name is that?" was the first impression I had in my mind followed by the imagination of a toaster which just threw a bread after toasting it. I was not able to connect how "Toastmasters" could actually improve one's communication skills. But then, it was a Schrodinger cat's experiment. I had to witness the meeting to know if it really did what our teacher said it would.

The Mon-day came and we were ready to experience a real time Toastmasters meeting. We were led to Hotel Himalaya, 1st the entrance, next the elevator and finally to the hall filled with strangers sitting in a U shaped arrangement. As I walked towards the hall, I recall feeling excited, nervous and curious at the same time. We got seated while the meeting began and I remember clearly how just sitting there made me feel like having a minor tachycardia because I suspected that we would be asked to introduce ourselves.

The meeting started. A person announced the format of the meeting along with the timing limitations. That moment I had thought it was not possible for those speakers to finish their speeches within time. Slowly the introductory session left the station and the meeting started to move on its pre-defined track. Speakers came and performed on the speech that they beautifully orchestrated. As they spoke, I was still confident that the speeches would exceed time as they

wouldn't be able to keep track of time. Or even if they did keep track of time, they would not be able to deliver the entire content. Or if not, they would definitely not be able to deliver the entire content. Or if not, they would definitely not be able to speak fluently after the colorful cards were flashed because they would be nervous about the time slipping away. In my mind, there had to be a reason where at least one speaker wouldn't be able to deliver the way my teacher had told they would. Therefore, as they spoke, my eyes periodically met the wall clock hanging behind them as I secretly wished for at least one speaker to miss but every time they ended on time, I was awestruck.

Among them, one speaker caught my attention. Again, I don't recall his name nor his speech title but I do remember the ending of his speech. He ended his speech with a bang of a howitzer by saying that he would now end his speech exactly on the 6th minute and then turned behind confidently yet gracefully. His and my eyes must have met the clock at the same time. I could not believe my eyes, it was exactly his 6th minute. That moment I felt as if a hero blocked an attack without even turning back. For me, the hero was that speaker in his shining armor and the attack was from the clock. His speech was without doubt no less than any action movie.

That meeting was the reason for my paradigm shift. My imagination of Toastmasters being a toaster was replaced with people speaking conveniently and on time. For someone like me who was satisfied with repeated sentences during the presentation, the meeting made me believe that I could do better. The fact that even the evaluators were evaluated taught me that learning is for everyone. Since then, even if I didn't associate myself with the club I tried implementing the ideas from the club during my own presentations and other activities. Even today as I write this article, I am on my quest of improving myself while being a proud member of the JGI Toastmasters club.



KRITI PRADHAN
JGI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY PSYCHOTHERAPY

As a country boy, I started my English alphabets only at the age of 9, in the 4th grade of my schooling. Later, at the age of 11, when I had to interact and mingle with my friends in an English medium school in Kathmandu, I had extreme nervousness and anxiety. Since then, I developed an inferiority complex in speaking English.

However, in my school and college life, I was good at mathematics. Therefore, with a passion, I started my teaching career and have been doing so for the last 25 years. As I progressed in my teaching career, I didn't limit myself to just an educator but by compulsion, I also involved myself as an education manager in different colleges.

Again, the one thing that bothered me was my fear of public speaking – Glossophobia. For me, teaching the subjects of my domain was a “walk in the park” but when it came to addressing a mass or presenting to an unfamiliar audience, I used to get rapid heartbeats. I used to be trembling and sweating. I had a real fear of being judged, embarrassed, or rejected.

I had heard about a Toastmaster Club in the city, Kathmandu Toastmasters Club, and I had attended a meeting as a guest once in 1999 but hadn't taken a membership. Years and years went by and one day, I strongly felt that because of my weakness in public speaking, I've had many setbacks. This fear was limiting my career opportunities. When I researched, I found the fear of public speaking was quite common – even in developed countries and I was no exception. And according to various sources, 4 out of 10 Americans have a fear of public speaking!

One day, I found out some academicians and academic managers had chartered a Toastmasters Club in Kathmandu – Bodhi Toastmasters Club.

And as it is said “Better late than never”, after 2 decades of initially attending a Toastmaster meeting, I joined Bodhi in May 2019. The proven education program of Toastmasters of over a century and the uplifting nature of the peer learning environment has immensely helped me to overcome my Glossophobia.

Today, instead of thinking “I can't make any mistakes,” I accept that everyone makes mistakes or errors when presenting. It's perfectly okay to make mistakes than to fake perfection. Most of the time, the audience is not aware of the mistakes. So, instead of thinking “Everyone will think I am incompetent,” I focus on the fact that the audience wants me to succeed.

At present, I have found a tremendous change in my public speaking ability. I have become a more effective communicator, a great listener, improved my grammar & vocabulary, exercised time management skills, and learned to give specific, helpful, and positive feedback. Yet, I think this is just the beginning of a journey of overcoming the fear of public speaking. For me, life is a continuous process. Although it is very short, my Toastmasters journey has proven to be my psychotherapy.



DINESH BASNET
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB



NUEVA EXPERIENTIA

NEW MEMBERS SPEAK OF
THEIR FIRST EXPERIENCES AT TOASTMASTERS

A MOVE TOWARDS THE RIGHT STEP SO FAR

"Toastmasters"; before a few months, I was even unaware about this word. I had never heard this word before. But now I am addicted to it. My morning usually begins with a Toastmaster meeting whether it may be of home country club or an international club. So what has Toastmaster given me so far?

I am a firm believer that leaders are not born, they are made. There are a lot of things I have gained through Toastmasters. Toastmasters made me realize what I was lacking in my personal as well as professional life. It made me sit and think for once and recall all those opportunities I missed, only because I couldn't make my voice audible, I just let it pass by me. I was shy, I was not confident enough to speak even though I was competent enough. After I joined Toastmasters, I began to feel that until and unless you believe in yourself that you can do everything, no one is going to push me for the things I want in my life. It's me who should be pushing on myself. Life works that way. Never ending support / guidance, getting my confidence back, making myself vocal on the things I want are just the normal things I have come up after joining Toastmasters.

The most interesting feeling about Toastmaster is everyone is treated equally with equal opportunities to develop oneself. You get polished on every step/role you are willing to take in the meeting. In every club meeting, you will get a feeling that you are attending your own club whether you attend others clubs meeting or your home club meeting, they made you feel like home. That is the beauty of Toastmaster. Apart from that networking in toastmaster is far better than I could have imagined.

I have noticed a lot of change in me in both my professional and personal life so far after joining Toastmasters. Now I am quite sure that I would rarely be recalling my missed opportunities and many more lost options only because I could not make myself vocal lacking confidence, cause that is not going to happen anymore.



BISHAL UPRETI
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Everything happens for a good reason. This quote is quite suitable for me in this current situation. It's because in these unprecedented times, every single life is being affected. However, in my case due to my enrollment at Ace Toastmasters club as a VPM and chartered member, this difficult situation was fruitful for me in terms of learning, knowing more people and enhancing various skills required for my personal and professional growth.

Well, with the huge increment in the numbers of COVID-19 patients in our country Nepal, the government implemented strict lockdown throughout the country because of which every sector including the education, health, business, services etc. were hugely affected. And, slowly and gradually people were locked inside their home and the situation and lifestyle of people totally changed and people were forced to adapt to the new normal situation. Students from school level to university level started taking virtual online classes by staying in their homes. Business



SAGAR SHRESTHA
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY EXPERIENCE OF TOASTMASTERS CLUB

professions and job holders started working from their homes. And every meeting was conducted in zoom, which made this world truly a small village.

Talking about my experience like others, I was also trapped inside my home where almost every routine and my way of doing things changed and I started working, studying, meeting people virtually. But overtime, I got bored by following the same routine every day.

And, one fine day on June 28th I got a mail from my college, Ace Institute of Management regarding a meeting for the interested people who want to join Toastmasters club. and I attended the meeting and I was impressed with the formats and models of Toastmasters. And after some days I took the membership and eventually I started attending each and every meeting of my home club as well as of other clubs. I liked the way the meetings are conducted and I also felt that the lockdown has now become more fruitful for me as I am able to learn so many things, as I got a chance to know many people from different clubs with many ideas, views and knowledge. And the most important thing is that I was able to enhance my communication skills.

So this is my short and brief experience during the lockdown and my enrollment at Ace Toastmasters club. And, I am very happy to share these experiences among other fellow Toastmasters.

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE!

“Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary” ~ Margaret Cousins.

The silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic is that we have learned several lessons for a lifetime, of which the most important lesson is that of Gratitude.

I had read and heard a lot about various Toastmasters Club before, but I did not pay much heed to it initially. Just a few weeks before I joined Bodhi Toastmasters Club, I was in conversation with TM Niladri S. Parial and was invited as a guest to one of the sessions to witness the exemplary meeting full of energy, zeal, and enthusiasm topped with a wide range of peer learning. It was very interesting to know that we not only speak and express ourselves in the Toastmasters sessions but also receive instant feedback due to which we can improve ourselves when the things we said are fresh in our minds.

My first Icebreaker speech was an empowering experience for me - the appreciations, the virtual applause, the recommendations - all these have had a profound impact on me and has definitely made me believe in myself even more!

‘Feedback is the champion’s breakfast’ and that’s what I got to know in the little time I’ve been here with Bodhi! I am and will be beyond grateful to all those who have supported me and will support and influence my learning journey with all the Bodhians in the coming days. Thank you for having me!



ROHINI PRADHAN
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

When I reflect back on the first step toward the journey of Toastmasters as a chartered member, I will call it to be an impulsive decision. At that point, I had no idea what Toastmasters was all about except the word public speaking. As a newly formed club, most of the members in our club were new to this. We were able to attend international club meetings which was overwhelming and exciting at the same time.

On the day of the first icebreaker speech, I was anxious because the piece of paper which was intended to introduce me to the club, I might be using it to portray myself as a weak, insecure person still attached to the childhood memories. While preparing the speech, I used to be thinking in the back of my mind that I had to share it with my assigned mentor. I was preparing myself to be judged by a bunch of people whom I hadn’t yet met in person. Firstly, by the mentor and secondly, other members and guests attending the meeting. The response I received



PREKSHA JHA
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE VULNERABLE LEARNING

and the learning environment in toastmasters had put me in a thought for a while. Summing it all up, the vulnerable learning title best suits it. Each time a toastmaster is giving a speech they give their best to use all the possible ways to make it more meaningful and add value whether through voice modulation, singing, dancing or any other creative ways. It allows us to explore and break through the limiting beliefs people often impose on themselves.

In Toastmasters, we get to meet people from various backgrounds who keep celebrating the idea of learning, unlearning and relearning. It not only sounds beautiful but feels too, to be a part of such a platform. While being here, I got ample opportunity to clear my misconceptions about public speaking which was not just about sharing facts and figures to the audience rather connecting through stories. Even if those stories are vulnerable, it would not mean being apprehensive, miserable or weak while delivering the speech or even after, rather it makes a person feel empowered while sharing those. We all have stories in our life which makes us relatable, understandable and more humanly.

During my A-Levels, I remember this particular English class where our teacher asked us to speak about a topic in front of the whole class. Up to this point, I had never given a single speech in front of a mass. And I so clearly remember when it was my turn – I was literally speechless! I could not utter even a single word because of nervousness and the fear of what my classmates might think.

Fast forward a year, I joined Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA) at Kathmandu University School of Management (KU-SOM), where I had to give a lot of presentations. This slowly helped me gain confidence but I always knew I could do better with my speech delivery. When I first learned about Toastmasters, I knew I had to join to overcome my fear of public speaking and master some other skills. However, I could not join it due to several other commitments and time issues.



MANASI PARAJULI
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Finally, when I was pursuing my Master's Degree at Ace Institute of Management, I heard that the college was forming its own Toastmasters Club. My happiness knew no bounds when I first heard that. The club was formed during the lockdown and I knew it would be an excellent opportunity for my personal growth despite the lack of face-to-face interactions. Without a second thought, I joined Ace Toastmasters Club and even got the post of Secretary for the term 2020-2021.

Then came the day when I had to deliver my first-ever speech. While I had taken the role of a TMOE before, I still had butterflies in my stomach. I had been practicing my speech for a whole week and I knew that not everything might go as planned. When my turn came, however, I started feeling confident and fully ready to break the ice.

If it had been any other platform, I would not have been this confident but the positive energy that my fellow Toastmasters gave me was what helped me gain confidence. Once I was done with my speech, I was proud of completing this first step towards achieving my personal growth. The feedback that I received from my evaluator helped me understand what I excelled at and how I could do better.

My journey from then on has been exciting so far. I look forward to learning and growing at Toastmasters Club.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

I was first introduced to Toastmasters while I was doing my undergraduate degree. I was aware that it was a platform where we could practice our public speaking skills but I did not know the details of how it worked. I thought of joining the club but I was reluctant because of my comfort zone. I didn't want to put myself in a situation where I had to stand in front of everybody, where everyone would be glaring at me. I did plan to attend one meeting as a guest for the experience, but I did not follow through.

When Ace Toastmasters Club was established, I was happy but was still skeptical about joining because sessions were going to be conducted virtually. I was motivated to join because of the special offer for the first batch of people. Eventually, I started getting the hang of it but having to take up roles would irritate me and I used to question my decision.

I did not feel any improvement in myself even after joining Toastmasters. I realised that it was because I was not

putting in extra effort - I would take up the role, prepare myself just a couple of hours prior the meeting and then hurriedly move on to other things after the meeting ended. Now I realize that I need to put more effort and make the best out of this opportunity.

I used to enjoy toastmasters special occasions meetings with music and games over regular meetings. But now I try to attend all the meetings of various other clubs to meet toastmasters members from all over Nepal, to hear amazing speeches and get insights on various interesting and diverse topics. Overall, my experience till now has been filled with lots of excitement and learning.



GRISHMA GURUNG
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

FIRST THREE MONTHS OF TOASTMASTERS JOURNEY!

Enhancing interpersonal skill is most probably the goal of every young mind. I too was wondering where I could achieve my goal of upgrading my communication skill. I gave thoughts on joining some public speaking classes. Unfortunately, due to the inflexible class schedule of my MBA degree, I couldn't join anywhere. So when I came to know that our college is chartering a Toastmasters Club for the Acers, I joined some meetings of other Toastmasters clubs to know more about Toastmasters. I felt it's a right platform for me to build up my confidence, upgrade my public speaking and interpersonal skills. So, I took a decision to be a part of Ace Toastmasters Club.

In the very first month of joining Ace Toastmasters Club, I felt that we can learn more than interpersonal skills and public speaking from the club. Those captivating themes of every toastmasters meeting helped me learn something new everyday as themes are always so informative and fun. I also realized that I have improved my listening skill, which I lacked previously.

So how do you improve your listening skills in toastmasters? Taking roles like ah-counter, grammarian, and others. Believe me these roles compel you to listen

actively. Likewise, we can improve our leadership and anchoring skills through the roles like Toastmaster of the day and Table Topic Master. Also, when I gave my second featured speech, I realized that I have already gained fluency and confidence in my speaking compared to my first featured speech.

It has just been 3 months of my toastmasters journey and I have already found so many new doors open for me to improve myself. Apart from Speaking, Listening and Leadership skills, I always had a great passion in graphic designing and here I got a chance to show my graphic skills by becoming a part of the public relation team of Ace Toastmasters Club. Now, I look for growth of myself and growth of our club at the same time.



SANSRITA SUBEDI
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Toastmasters club is a platform to enhance communication and leadership skills. The main objectives of toastmasters is to work as a team and help each member to enhance their communication skill. Talking about the journey of toastmasters, until now I have completed my ice breaker speech only but having a chance to attend every meeting has been a fruitful learning experience for me. I learn something new from every meeting.

Featured speakers, table topic masters and the collaboration with other toastmasters clubs always make toastmasters' meeting special and has changed my description of learning. Enthusiastic people come together to share their experiences, knowledge and take away their improvements. Analysis made by the team members is accepted and the cooperation level is always 100 percent. In the beginning I Couldn't figure out what was going on,



SONIYA SHRESTHA
PROFESSIONALS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

NEW EXPERIENCE, NEW LEARNING

but as the time passed, the purpose and the objective of toastmasters became more clear to me. I am not an active member of my club but I try my level best not to miss any meetings as just attending a meeting teaches you a lot.

Toastmasters feel like a different world to me. A different world where we can see people working, not only for themselves but for the betterment of team members. Co-operation, preparation, hard work, improvement; one can find these things here. Despite having a busy schedule, people make time to be involved in toastmasters, for their own and other people's growth. Surprised to hear that? Yes, I was surprised as well.

I never got involved in any club before but I am glad that I made the right decision to join toastmasters. Every meeting has made a strong impression in my mind and heart. The opportunity to make mistakes without hesitation and getting constructive feedback is a desire of every learner. And the best part about toastmasters is that everybody can learn and grow, regardless of your existing skill: if you are a fresher or an experienced speaker. No one is looked down upon. No discrimination, no partiality and no unfair behaviours. Just a message or a call is enough for club members to help you.

Born and brought up in a well-educated family who always kept education as the top priority lead my life to live with my uncle and aunt during school days as my father was posted outside the valley. Staying away from the parents and younger sibling always used to make me feel sad and unhappy, which I feel cocooned me to become shy in nature. Being an introvert, I used to be impressed with people who could speak effortlessly and endlessly regardless of their age, gender, and occupation. I started dreaming of possessing good public speaking skills and desired to be able to express my thoughts and ideas eloquently.

The desire turned into passion. As, Abdul Kalam, an Indian aerospace scientist and politician once said, "if you dream the same dream again and again, it doesn't remain only as a dream, it turns into a passion to make that dream come true". The same happened in my life. When I learnt about Toastmasters, I was already engaged in the role of senior leadership management which kept me professionally engaged 24/7 and I wasn't able to live my dream due work engagements and priorities.

Like we say, every coin has two sides, the lockdown regardless the adverse side of it, was a blessing for me as I could manage time for Toastmasters club meetings that were being held virtually. I started visiting the club meetings as a guest. It was inspiring to see the speakers deliver their speeches with so much flair. I immediately decided to join as I saw this as a portal to my dream coming true. The desire of learning and leading pushed me to shoulder responsibilities and I volunteered to be the Table Topics Master for an upcoming meeting.

With zeal and excitement, I got into my toes and started coordinating with the Toastmaster of the Evening, TM Dinesh Basnet, started researching about the roles and responsibilities and suitable table topics, and scripted the

BREATHING THE DREAM DURING PANDEMIC 2020

lines. I was actually enjoying every bit of it. On the final day, I could accomplish the task in a harmonious way for which I was commended by the team and was awarded as the "Better Auxiliary Role (TTM)" on the 112th meeting of Bodhi Toastmasters. I would like to express my gratitude to the Bodhians for the encouragement and support that they provide to the team and especially the new members.

Bodhi Toastmasters Club is an example of the saying, "Dream Works when a Team Works." I am thankful to TM Chandrayan, TM Anjila, my colleagues and friends for their motivation to be a part of Bodhi Toastmasters and helping me make my dream come true.

Thank you. Stay safe, stay blessed.



SHIRISH SHRESTHA
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

An individual's potential and competency is defined by the skills and qualities that they acquire over the years such as attitude, behavior, sense of responsibility and individual skills. To begin with my experience, I would take a moment to go back to my school days where we used to have debate competitions. Though personally, I was one of the talkative persons and compatible with friends, but when it comes to



AJAY KUMAR SHRESTHA
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

public speaking, I would pray to god to prevent me from facing the crowd and always used to hide behind, so that I could manage to escape from the embarrassment back then. Fortunately, I got an opportunity to attend a few virtual toastmasters meetings during the current global pandemic of COVID where I got to learn a lot. Here I came to realize that it is a platform to excel myself in the field of public speaking. I was really enthusiastic to become a part of it. Eventually, I came to know about the formation of a club in my college. I didn't have a second thought to grasp it as an opportunity and enrolled as a part of Ace Toastmasters Club which was a very heart-warming moment for me. This is how I started my journey of Toastmasters.

In addition, I acquired many skills such as time management, communication, organizing and many more. I participated actively in taking roles and performing as speaker, timer, grammarian, sergeant-at-arms and TMoE. Through this journey, I am finding myself more confident and more organized while I face the public.

Last but not the least, I am really thankful to my colleagues, mentors and all other fellow toastmasters who directly or indirectly provided me immense support in boosting my confidence and also helped to shape myself. I also would like to encourage everyone to join Toastmasters dropping your fear and bring yourself in front of the beautiful world.

BREAKING THE ICE WITH A PICK OF FEAR

A room full of audience present just to listen to you, unknown faces with an unknown experience and the objective is to turn this unknown to an opportunity by which everyone will get to know you. The ice-breaking speech is the first of many speeches that we have to give in the path of Toastmasters, and so for many, it is tough to crack the ice.

Just like for many of us, planning what, or how I am going to tell my own story was a quite unique thing to think about. And so for this session, I chose a topic which was most meaningful to me - about the important part my friends play in my life.

After finding a topic it was quite easy to connect my life with it. Starting from my childhood, going through my college years, and making it an open-ended with my current journey, was an exciting topic that I might never have put into words if it was not for this platform. Finally, I prepared my script with the help of my mentors, but little that I knew, it was the easy part.

I believe that whenever we are alone we all love to talk with ourselves, from having a conversation to winning an argument with whoever it may be is quite easy there. But a non-stop speech in front of a virtual audience needed a lot for an ambivert like me. And that's why it took me weeks just to say, greetings Toastmasters my name is Ishwor Khanal...

Between volunteering for an ice-breaking speech and delivering the speech, a week to be precise, it took me only a few hours to write what I will say and took a whole week, just to raise confidence to deliver the speech. In this time I had many conversations with my mirror and many contradictions with myself. I still remember the first try that I gave, which lasted for 15 minutes which was completed in 5 minutes when it was delivered.

It's not that I have never taken a center stage before, I too have given many speeches but there were a significant number of people with whom I was comfortable. And at Toastmasters, there are only a few faces that I knew personally. This single fact was my fear to overcome. Honestly, I practiced a hundred times over.

Countless changes were made to the original script, many paragraphs were converted into a single line to fit the time, many words were replaced to ease the speaking patterns and lastly, many suggestions were made by my mentors to further improve the script. Many of these things were left out in the final speech. My speech did not go as well planned as it was on paper, this was because I was quite scared.

I broke the ice with the pick of fear. Indeed, the speech did not go as well planned as in paper, but it's also true that it went far better than I first feared it to be. This experience has taught me something that now I think I should have learned earlier. I never practiced my previous speeches so wholeheartedly, and that's why sometimes they went well and at other times they did not. This time I practiced and practiced a lot, that's why I did better than I thought, but not as better as I wrote and there lies my place for improvement. For this, I am looking forward to a new word to weave a new story to tell.



ISHWOR KHANAL
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MY TOASTMASTERS JOURNEY



SANDEEP DHAREL
ACE TOASTMASTER CLUB

Dear Toastmasters,

To be honest, I had a wonderful time in the Toastmasters journey to find my best version out of me. I always had a goosebumps whenever I found my colleagues with transformational change overnight. I keep on motivating myself with such characters. Like a rudder help us to change a direction of ship, Toastmasters is that platform for me to navigate my journey to be an excellent speaker and a great leader. I always go to my flashback to crack joke with my horrible attempt to be a public speaker. For a second, I burst into laughter. However, afterwards each jokes will show me an area of improvements. This is how I am constructing a Bridge between my deeds and my potential.

To put it in a nutshell, toastmaster is school for me where I find a excellent mentors. I will tick upon my weakness to make it my strength in my near future. I am fortunate enough to be a part of Toastmaster family.



EXPERIENTIA PRINCIPES

TAKING THE HELM AT TOASTMASTERS



TOASTMASTERS KEEPS GIVING, I KEEP ON TAKING

I was in my first year of MBA when I first learned about Toastmasters, a public speaking platform. We were enterprising students craving to soak in anything we could grasp. However, being a part of it did not really come to fruition back then and remained an unfulfilled longing. Imagine my sweet surprise, when I found out my workplace had an in-house Toastmasters Club. Over a period of two years, public speaking started coming naturally to me, which I witnessed especially during conversations, and my meetings with non-Toastmasters. This year, however, I saw a different side of being a Toastmaster, as with the beginning of the third year came opportunities to be part of an Area as the Area Program Quality Director and the Vice President Public Relations of my club, respectively, both amidst the corona pandemic and lockdown.

From being responsible for only my growth, I was now responsible for helping provide equal learning opportunities both inside and outside my club, in the larger Toastmasters fraternity. I started experiencing teamwork at its core, albeit virtually, both at the Club and Area levels as due to the pandemic most of us had not physically met each other. Still through the mentorships, Distinguished Club Programs and Moments Of Truth that came along different shades of leadership, that many of us might have analyzed in some project of level 2 of Pathways, started showing light. Adapting ourselves to the resources at hand and situations started becoming easier. Collaboration became the main theme. Empathy became the guiding light, as the need for putting ourselves in the other person's shoes had never been this relevant before.

So, while I was trying to find my leadership traits and styles in my speeches and past experiences, in the new role I was assigned, I was navigating the different aspects of leadership that are slowly becoming inherent to my nature. Over the period of five months, Toastmasters has now transformed from a public speaking platform to a platform that guarantees your interpersonal growth i.e. if you allow yourself taking any opportunity that it gives. I sure am glad I did.

AASTHA SHRESTHA

VP-PR, LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

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On charting the course to leadership, improvising started becoming easier, collaboration became the main theme, and empathy became the guiding light... as the need for putting ourselves in the other person's shoes had never been this relevant before...



KEEP PUSHING ONESELF



"When all is said and done; there is more said than done." – Lou Holtz

A leader keeps pushing oneself and then instigates others to achieve more.

I was fortunate to chance upon into a leadership position in the club, Ace Toastmasters Club as a chartered member – as the Sergeant-at-Arms. I remember being given this title over the phone and instantly googling the meaning.

I was shocked when Google answered, "Servant" (It really does mean Servant in Latin)! I went crazy...all of my excitement halted.

Soon, a demo meeting happened, where I was an observer, but I hardly understood what was happening. It was only after receiving the SAA training, I had a clear picture of what my title and role was and how important and determining it could be. As SAA, I had that platform to transmit my energy into the meeting at the very beginning, and that is what I've been doing so far – trying to give more gravity to that role which is crucial.

And just a few weeks back, I was again fortunate to acquire another leadership role as Area O2 Treasurer. My job briefing made it sound simple and stress-free. But once we take up a role, I learned that one has to do his/her level best and go beyond expectations. I believe that more can be done – a challenge to myself.

Ever since I joined Toastmasters, networking has been a valuable asset. And it was this network with Toastmasters that allowed me to experience yet another leadership role as one of the Editors of the Division O Newsletter. My experience as a leader within the club had specifically taught me to keep pushing myself and set standards for my own self. Hence, I had no hesitation at all to take further leadership roles in the Division.

In just a few months in the Toastmasters fraternity, I have gained significant leadership roles in the Club, Area, and the Division. What more could I expect? The only expectation from me, for me, is to keep pushing myself and do justice to all the leadership roles I have signed up in. At the end of the term when I look back, I want to take that pride of having done more than what was said... That will be the test of clinical leadership!

BIBEK DUTTA

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB



THE RIGHT KEY TO LEAD

My first thought looking at the Toastmasters tagline “Where Leaders are Made” was somewhat skeptic. Although I knew good communications are managerial attributes, I wasn’t too sure about how it would help people grow from managers to leaders. Throughout four years with Toastmasters, as much as I have learned about the ‘HOW’ of communication, I have completely unlearned and relearned the ‘WHAT’ of communication.

Speaking with customers, drafting emails and responding to emails, were what I was taught as communications under the syllabus of Office Management. Likewise while communication can be taught, leadership can only be developed. An important brick on my leadership development under Toastmasters was that I got to revisit my understanding of communications.

The positive mindset and supportive culture fostered by Toastmasters brings out a new dimension of communication – empathy, which is the difference between management and leadership. Leadership becomes incredibly easier when we communicate with empathy. A show of empathy towards our teammates can help us break the highest of barriers.

Four years back, in circumstances of conflicts or complications which demanded the compassionate self of me to get involved, I would have easily gone away by maintaining silence and expecting time to magically heal everything. However, today I choose to try to lead by communicating with empathy. This gives a better sense of self-satisfaction, content and belongingness.

Communication is the key to leadership. With empathy, we find the right key. I have always received empathy as a Toastmaster, and I have been trying to replicate that to others whenever I find a room to lead. With my gun of communication loaded with bullets of empathy, I can afford to take a shot at every challenge coming my way. If I hit, I win. If I miss, I learn.

DIPESH CHALISE

PRESIDENT, LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB



INVICTUS 2020

INVICTUS 2020 – THE ROAD

The unprecedented thing about the COVID-19 pandemic was probably not the outbreak itself, but the way it suddenly put a halt to almost all aspects of society and economy. The world, from the confined spaces in our homes, became distant and that realization was indeed disconcerting. Fortunately, the internet has been around since the 1960s, and our thriving spirits have found a new way to stay connected. Virtual interactions became the new norm, and Toastmasters – where leaders are made – also started meeting online. This transition in the clubs that met physically, however, was not easy...as the charm of physical interaction was missed by many members and audiences. The situation was, probably, exacerbated by personal insecurities amid the uncertainties posed by the crisis. As a result, leaders within Toastmasters were challenged by waning member engagements, membership retention, and club strength.

INVICTUS 2020, by Division O of District 41, was introduced as a platform to share stories of perseverance with the motive to empower each other and remain strong during the crisis. This was an open video challenge where participants submitted their recorded video speeches of 2-3 minutes on the theme of Resilience. While those heroic stories inspired us to remain strong, the event also became an excellent opportunity for us to bring Toastmasters closer to other communities, since it was an event open to everyone in Nepal, irrespective of their affiliation to Toastmasters. It also became a platform to underscore the importance of virtual communication skills in the contemporary context. By the end of this event, we saw increased Toastmasters brand recognition, openness towards online meetings and increased member engagement.



INVICTUS 2020 started in August with a call for participant registration. In the duration of the submission time of 2 months, the participants got an opportunity to take part in Toastmasters International Curated Speech Development resources and attended two webinars on storytelling and vocal variety by renown international trainers Deepak Sharma, DTM, and Ms. Barbara Quesada.

The Grand Finale of INVICTUS 2020 sponsored by College of Business Management, Dillibazar, and Nepal Cancer & Research Center, Harisiddhi, was broadcasted live from Janata TV on 28th September, 2020. It also included a panel discussion on 'Leadership and Communication in Crisis' with Moon Pradhan, DTM, Bhanu Dabadi, DTM, and TM Avish Acharya who shed light on how effective leadership and communication can help shape the future of development, academic, and banking sectors. During the event, the Club Growth Director of District 41 – comprising



of clubs from Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and India – Ayan Pal, DTM, also expressed his regards for the success of the event via his video speech.

The winners of the video speech challenge were announced in 2 categories: Toastmasters and Non-Toastmasters. The winner of INVICTUS 2020 from within Toastmasters was TM Bijaya Mishra while Ms. Rinki Tibrewal became the winner from the Non-Toastmasters category. The winners each received annual membership fees of Toastmasters International sponsored by Division O of District 41, a gift hamper worth NPR 30,000 each from Skin Arts Aesthetics and Shopping Voucher from 7 O' Clock Bakery Café. A gift hamper from Mates Premium was also presented to the winner of Toastmaster category whereas a gift hamper from Chya Pasa was presented to the winner of Non-Toastmaster category. Apart from this, Ms. Reeva Khanal and Ms. Yubragee Dangal, two minor entries in the challenge, won Rising Star Award for demonstrating stellar public speaking skills in their video and were awarded shopping vouchers from 7 O' Clock Bakery Café.

The success of any event is not only measured by what happened but also how it happened. And INVICTUS 2020 was a propitious and pleasant journey because of the team that was involved. Everyone associated with organizing this event worked as a single, solid unit making decisions and executions quick, which led to meeting deadlines timely.

There were times when we had to conduct events within a week or connect with all registrants in a single day but everything went smoother than expected. When we started, the event only had Division O as the sponsor but by the end, we had two big organizations willing to sponsor our finals on National TV. We had increased outreach to the media and several businesses and social organizations of the country. And it was all possible because of the trust we had among each other in the team, mutual respect for the different working styles, and sincerity with which we accomplished our tasks. All in all, we learnt with fun and in the end, we emerged as better team members and better team leaders.

MY INCREDIBLE INVICTUS JOURNEY

"If you believe you can, you probably can. If you believe you can't, you most assuredly won't. Belief is the ignition switch that gets you off the launching pad" - Denis Waitley

The twist in my story is that I have an immense fear of public speaking. I never believed in myself. Recording a video for a challenge was not in my farthest sights and winning it was an almost "impossible-to-achieve" dream.

When I first heard about the INVICTUS Video Challenge, I asked TM Asira if it had to be done 'live'. Her 'not required' response put me at ease. To participate, I had to record a 2-3-minute video on Resilience. My mind was ready for the challenge, telling me, "It's just 2-3 minutes, take it anyhow" I was happy knowing I was daring enough to take the challenge, at least, mentally.

Now came the hard part – preparing the script.

Where to start?
What to share?
How to express?

Sitting down with a pen and paper, I started looking back at my life. Flashes of all the beautiful scars of pain, tolerance, and resistance flashed before my eyes and I could feel my story of resilience as I jotted down the memories. We are all stronger than we believe because stories of resilience are found in every moment, every day of our lives. Don't you think so?



When the script was ready, the next challenging task was to shoot the video in a single take. Sounds easy, right?

I don't know about you but it took me 3 days and over 45 takes to produce the final video. And this, too, had one small hesitation...but only I could notice it. There were times when I'd forget words, hesitate, or say something else, or forget the first words in the beginning. My patience was tested. I had to do multiple takes until it became what I had expected it to be.

Finally, the video was uploaded and sent to the INVICTUS team. And I was satisfied with myself, which was a victory in itself. Honestly, I had no expectations of being selected in the top three, let alone winning. It feels...surreal.

I remember the day of the results – 28th September, Monday. We had our regular club meeting at Dharan Toastmasters Club; I had just finished my speech and the event started LIVE on Janata TV at 6 pm. As the Top 3 videos were announced, I could hardly believe when my name was called out. I was super-duper excited! But I had to remain calm as I was still in a club meeting. And then, it was time to announce the winner...

In the club, Toastmaster Alex was evaluating me on the speech I had just delivered a while ago. I was acting normal and was trying to focus on the evaluation. I remember, after the evaluation, the GE, TM Niladri saying, "I have an announcement to make. I don't know if TM Bijaya will approve of this but I was watching the LIVE broadcast of INVICTUS Video Challenge on TV, and TM Bijaya has just won!"

Everyone in the club started congratulating me. I was overwhelmed with all the wishes and messages I was receiving on WhatsApp. Yes, it was an incredible feeling. And I didn't know that the victory would include certification, awards, and gifts.

As Oprah Winfrey said, "You don't become what you want, you become what you believe."

I had never thought about doing what I did – sharing my story of resilience. But I took a chance, I believed in myself and shared my story. Preparing the script and sharing my story made me realize that we are stronger than we believe. This is my journey of the challenge. And I am sure you will be able to share yours someday. Until then, don't stop believing.



BIJAYA MISHRA
DHARAN TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MENTORA DE EXPERIENTIAS

FROM THE HANDS THAT GUIDE

SPARKLE LIKE A DIAMOND

Every day we all are in the cyclic process of improvement. To become a better version of ourselves, we all need mentoring. Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push into the right direction.

Thinker, Lucia said
 "A mediocre mentor tells
 A good mentor explains
 A superior mentor demonstrates
 A great mentor inspires."

As my final defense was approaching nearer, I was so much gripped by fear and anxiety and I was worried about facing the audience. I shared this with TM Binay. He suggested that I join Toastmasters Club to overcome my fear of public speaking and become an eloquent speaker.

I was quite excited to join the regular meeting of Himalaya Toastmasters Club. Each of the members were very friendly and cooperative. At the first meeting, TM Binaya hinted to me to raise my hand during the impromptu speech segment, Table Topics. Without thinking much I raised my hand and spoke. To my utter surprise and delight I was able to win the Table Topic session of that meeting. The credit goes to TM Binay who mentored me on how to deliver my speech fluently and the points to be considered while delivering a speech. I was so fascinated by the ambience of Toastmaster meetings that I decided to become a member. TM Birendra was assigned as my mentor, who helped me a lot to significantly improve my presentation skills from speaking slowly to make breaks at intervals and smiling while speaking so that I could connect with the audience. He also helped me to figure out some important aspects of public speaking like body language, gestures and gimmicks.

From the very first day, TM Birendra guided me for my icebreaker speech. He thoroughly reviewed my first draft and suggested points for improvements. I incorporated them and practiced a lot. I also sent him my practice videos. He was happy with my efforts and suggested further improvements. Finally, I gave my first ice breaker speech and won the best featured speaker award. My mentor was so happy and he suggested that I take the role of TMoE. At first I was quite nervous to take the role, but his continuous motivation made me take it up. Thanks to his continued guidance I was again awarded with the title of the best role taker of the meeting.

Due to my regular office and research, I became quite busy and couldn't attend regular meetings at Toastmasters. Still, I was connected to fellow Toastmasters virtually through social media. TM Ayushi and TM Ekta kept on encouraging me to deliver speeches and take roles. I couldn't deny their humble suggestions and started to deliver speeches. For the past two months, I have been regularly taking roles and

delivering speeches. And now, I have started venturing out of Himalaya Toastmasters Club and taking roles in other clubs as well.

During my school days, I did not understand any other subject except Mathematics. My English teacher disliked me so much that I stopped going to school. But my Math teacher visited me at home and encouraged me to come to school at least for Math. Encouraged by that I rejoined school and started studying all subjects. Till today, every year during Guru Purnima, I do not forget to call Pemba Sir to wish a Happy Guru Purnima. He had always motivated, inspired, and encouraged me.

Although Dr. Kalam, the former President of India did not consider himself to be very qualified, his mentor, Dr. Sarabhai saw great potential in him, and nurtured him. Dr. Sarabhai is a perfect example of what makes a mentor truly qualified to lead a mentee. The mentor-mentee relationship of Dr. Sarabhai and Dr. Kalam has led to many remarkable scientific achievements.

Here, I would like to quote Benjamin Franklin
 Tell me - I may forget
 Teach me - I may remember
 Involve me - and I learn

Joining Toastmaster fraternity, and winning all the awards that I have till date, is the result of the wonderful mentoring that I have received throughout. A mentor is a person who believes in you, pushes you out of your comfort zone and helps you grow with greater knowledge and perspective. Actually, I feel that each member of this club is my mentor. I am really thankful to all the mentors.

Mentors have the ability to spot a diamond before it shines and make that diamond shine bright.



MADHU SUDAN DAHAL
 HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

WHY A MENTOR?

"Happy Guru Purnima! Thank you for mentoring me so kindly and nicely. Blessed to have you". That was a text from Sumina, my mentee that popped up in my whatsapp on the Teachers' day and I could honorably mention it to be the best moment that has happened to me so far as a Toastmaster.

Mentorship has been that one-word relationship that always has a crucial role in Toastmasters.

When I joined Toastmasters, I had no clue on how I was going to go up the stage and speak without turning the pages or without any nervous breakdown. Then, I had mentors within the club who always turned up to help me come out of my self-built comfort zone with every role and speeches I appeared for. However, I still had instilled in me the fear of humiliation I might come across during the journey I had chosen to walk through. But, as quoted by Oprah Winfrey, "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself", with the best people around, named mentors, this has happened to be the journey I would wish to travel all lifelong.

Toastmasters formally became a part of my life in October 2017 when I got a membership of Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club. Every meeting since then has been a moment of learning and embracing possible changes in me to bring my own better version. But, just running through the manuals and seeing the lined up roletakers alone may not always help us pave our way forward. Therefore, at Toastmasters, we have always believed in assigning a mentor, to uplift members as well as to help them grow personally and professionally, especially when we aspire to lead by example, and the journey becomes beautiful when we have a good mentor.



ARCHANA THAPA
LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

As mentioned by Anthony Tjan: "Mentorship is a two-way street — a relationship between humans — and not a transaction." The journey of mentorship not only benefits the protégé, but also the mentor as we share ideas, information and varied perspectives both the ways.

As a protégé myself, the guidance, support and most importantly, the encouragement I received from my mentors in and outside of the club allowed me to see the hope when I wasn't able to trust myself. That made me believe there is no fear in not knowing how to craft our speech or control pitch, hand gestures and the body movements. But with the grooming and accolades from mentors, allowed me to understand how much having a mentor matters and how exactly I would want to be when assigned a mentor.

Apart from a few within my home club, I have been assigned a mentor to some members of neighbouring clubs and this ride with my protégé has been equally beautiful and meaningful in every possible way. I could empathize with them and be EXACTLY how my mentors had been to me throughout and be the kind of a mentor, I always loved to have. Mentorship is not just about getting the speeches right, it's about travelling the whole journey together and being better not just as a speaker but as a human and lead by example in every possible way.

With time and through this cycle as a mentee and a mentor, I have been able to realize how wonderful it is, to learn and to improve in the most positive environment you could ask for. The mentees and mentors I have been blessed with have further made me believe that it's about the differences we bring in someone's life and how reachable we are, that makes us better not just as a Toastmaster but a human as a whole.

ISLA DE CREATIVA

PICKS FROM THE ISLAND OF THE CREATIVES

HUMILIATION AND SOCIETY

Millions of dreams have died with this phrase, "What would Society think?" or "What would people think or say?"

I never got the logic behind people being affected by others' opinions or perceptions towards them and completely changing or walking away from things they believe in.

The sheer amount of pressure that our culture imposes on us to be a "good person" in the eyes of others is beyond my understanding. In reality, that's actually not who you are and people shouldn't have any problem with that.

People say that in the Nepali business market, there aren't enough female leaders and that's true to some extent. But is it because the women in our country are not capable? Don't they have leadership skills? Or they simply lack the technical skills?

None of the above statements are true. Slowly, we are seeing women rising in the business sector - this should have been the situation 10-15 years ago. But at that time, women didn't have the platform to shine; as soon as they completed their bachelors' education, the only thing that parents did was to arrange their marriage. If they wanted to pursue higher education and/or wanted to start jobs, their parents would say that it was their age to get married, start a family, and all. But if you give her a platform and give her a chance to shine, people would talk about her, people would praise her, she could have been a role model for society.

In reality,
that's actually
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and people
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with that.

In today's age as well, many dreams have died and many relationships have been broken due to the fear of humiliation of society. One of the funniest things that we have been told is that "If you want to fall in love, do so with someone of your own caste - one that matches your religion." This is the most absurd statement; they are literally changing the definition of love just because of the fear of being humiliated in society. People are forced to leave the person that they would be happiest with!

When will this trend end? It's your life, it's you who has to spend the rest of your life with your partner; you should choose someone whom you are happy with. When will people understand that the humiliation of society will never end? Let's say, due to the fear of humiliation from society, you left the person you love and married someone of your own caste; but you are not happy, you are suffocating in that marriage, and you are slowly losing yourself at that time...you won't be able to end your marriage and the reason will be the same - fear of being humiliated in the society.

Be proud of who you are. Do things that you love. Make decisions that make you happy. Because no matter how hard you try, you can never ever satisfy everyone nor can you make everyone happy. So, it's not worth sacrificing your dreams and happiness just because you are scared about what people would think or what society will say about you. Your life is your own journey and you can take as many turns as you want.



ASHUTOSH POUDEL

LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB



RIDING MY BICYCLE

Bicycling is one of the safest forms of ground transportation. Cycling is a perfect natural health booster of many highly successful people. This extremely pleasant physical activity exerts a profound influence on almost all systems of the human body.

"One of the most important days of my life was when I learned to ride a bicycle."

Just before the lock down started this year, I decided to buy my first bike. I've never regretted my decision because I have found cycling the most reliable mode of transport. Cycling is a kind of positive addiction. Though I find Kathmandu a very dangerous place for bicycle users, I have been exploring the city every morning with my friends. There's nothing better than having a morning cycle adventure in a big city while the roads are still empty. When I ride around the city and its suburbs, I broaden my horizons understanding new places of interest, beautiful landscapes and challenges I have never seen and experienced before.

Since the beginning of the lockdown brought by COVID-19 crisis in Nepal, my bicycle has become a godsend for me. Amid the pandemic there is the added benefit of safety. Commuting on public vehicles is very dangerous at this time as it is impossible to maintain social distancing.

"Commuting by bicycle is an absolutely essential part of my day. It's mind-clearing, invigorating. I get to go out and pedal through the countryside in the early morning hours, and see life come back and rejuvenate every day as the sun is coming out."

Besides health benefits, cycling is also contributing to a cleaner environment. We all know that it's crucially important to care about the environment. I hope we do. Caring for the environment can start

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**I hope this
article is
getting you
interested
in riding a
bicycle.**

small. It can start from ourselves- let's do everything possible to reduce pollution caused by human activities. This little contribution to the environment will improve both our health and the environment.

While there are numerous benefits of cycling, I will share some risks and challenges of cyclists in Nepal. For us there are risks around safety in the roads mainly due to the lack of cycling rules and its implementation and people's awareness and patience with cyclists. The government has been taking some affirmative actions for cyclists: the construction of cycling lane from Jawalakhel to Kupandole. However, more needs to be done to raise awareness among people on the importance of cycling and its benefits and traffic rules (cycle).

The past few months of my experience tells me that cycling is a wonderful and unique friend that can give you both safety and freedom. Of course, if you wear a helmet and follow the rules of the road. I hope this article is getting you interested in riding a bicycle. You may not know, but your bicycle can be the key to a new world of joy, communication, health, success and entertainment.



SRISHTI CHAUDHARY
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THINK SAFE

How often have you been booked by traffic? Probably Once, twice or more. In my case, I have left my counting of bookings after 20 times. Out of these, today, I want to share my three experiences.

The Yellow light

5 years back when there were working traffic lights in Kathmandu, the most difficult situation was when you are at a yellow light and you feel like you can make it to another side within time. So, I was going to Putalisadak. The lights suddenly changed to yellow and I chose to take a chance and go on to cross the light. Just then, a traffic police appeared out of nowhere. It almost felt like he was waiting for me to cross the lane. "How dare you make a cross in a red-light?" -he demanded. "Please sir, do consider, it was yellow when I was passing." - I said. But he didn't care. But then i went on saying: "Sir, actually, it's a fault in my bike. The brakes are loose and don't work". "Really huh, let me check". "Yes, brakes don't seem to be working". He then ticked one more offense making it two - Crossing in a red light and vehicle not in condition. Penalty for the latter was more than for the prior offence. Such reckless driving is one of the prominent causes of road mishaps. In 70% of cases, reckless driving is a major fault.

Haphazard overtaking

Back in my college days, I was waiting in the traffic on my Bike. My friend sitting behind suggested, "Bikes are the kings of the street. let's not wait here, let go in front of all vehicles". It sounded justifiable so I overtook and reached in front of all vehicles. Just then, "I saw a traffic police coming towards me. "License please", "Why, what have I done wrong?"- I Said, "You have crossed the barricade line."

Crossing a barricade line, meant a serious offense. I got a fine of Rs. 1000 plus a class of 2 hours. In this class, I learned that there are single barricade lines and also double barricade lines. Double barricade line is like virtual walls which should never be crossed. Haphazard Overtaking and changing lanes in the barricade line is the cause behind 60% of all accidents.

Just then, a traffic police appeared out of nowhere. It almost felt like he was waiting for me to cross the

Drinking and Driving

Consequently, those virtual walls didn't help much. People freely crossed or overtook, disregarding double barricade lines due to which the frustrated traffic police put portable concrete blocks in the middle of the road. My next unfortunate event took place with these blocks four years back. One unfortunate evening, I was returning home from an office party. I had more than a couple of drinks. As I reached Maharajung, I saw traffic police checking everyone for alcohol consumption a kilometer away. I was heading straight to the checkpoint. I made a decision to take a turn to the next lane. In that mid-summer night, that new yellow-black, 2 feet blocks, were shining. I thought they were made of plastic. I mistook it for those orange colored Traffic Cones. In a rush to escape, I kicked the block hard with my left leg to remove it. Suddenly, I could count all the stars in the Milky Way galaxy. Furthermore, the bike fell down over me. Those nearby Traffic Police rushed to save me. I was caught red-handed in a drink and drive case. The geg guard in my bike protected me. However, I had to have my left leg plastered for a month.

A month later, I took a 2-hour class with drunkards caught from all over the valley. They conducted only 3 classes a day no matter how big the queue is. However, this initiative of traffic police has reduced accidents in the valley by 40%.

Above all, we humans learn only after committing mistakes. Likewise, I have learned from all my mistakes. As per statistics, in the last 9 months. There were a total of 8000 road accidents recorded all over Nepal. Total of 1,800 lives were lost with an average of 6 people daily. Scary, isn't it? Drink-driving, mechanical breakdown, haphazard overtaking, are major causes of accidents. Let us be careful and not make ourselves the headline of any newspaper for any bad cause. Finally, "Donate Blood, but not on the street".



BINAY RAJ DANGOL
HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE ESCAPE KEY

Press the “Full stop” key, using the ring finger in your right hand, in the third row of the QWERTY keyboard, to end something. Press the “Enter” key and a new line begins. An endless combination of words, numbers, and punctuations and that’s how stories are made. And we are every day, every minute, every second feeding in those words, reshaping our stories. We keep on pushing our fingers into the keyboard in an endless continuous process.

This year the “Escape” key in my keyboard broke; some new virus in the system. In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives we rarely give a thought to that small little key in the top left corner of our keyboard. But now that I cannot use it, I have come to realize how important it is.

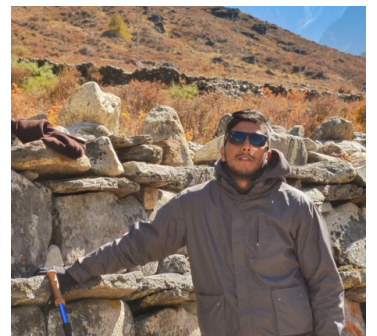
For me the “Escape Key” in my story has always been travelling; an escape from 9 to 5, boatload of emails in my inbox, obligatory social interactions, countless frustrating defeats in FIFA and endless barrage of social media notifications. Travelling has always brought a sense of freedom for me. A week of doing what I want to do and not what I need to. A week of looking forward to the beginning of the day rather than the end.

A lot of my travels involve mountains, huge and very dangerous structures but yet so calm and peaceful. Their sheer sizes can make you feel very miniscule in the grand scheme of things and yet

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**2020 has
left me with
a broken
escape key.
But our
stories do
not stop.**

every time I have stood in front of one, has brought me a great sense of achievement. When you go to the mountains it’s almost like a trip back in time. A whole day of walk through unpaved rocky, muddy paths and a longing for just three things: food to eat, water to quench your thirst and a warm bed at the end of the day. The views are always breathtaking but more than that it’s the freshness of the air, the smell of the earth and warm, welcoming and untainted smiles of the people that has always filled me with a deep sense of satisfaction in my travels. An escape from the adulterated material things that we surround ourselves to a place so pure and simple.

But not this year. 2020 has left me with a broken escape key. But our stories do not stop. And now I rework my ring finger to press the full stop key to end this part and my pinky finger to press the Enter key, onwards and upwards to the next paragraph of life.



RIKESH MAHARJAN
JGI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

WHO RUNS THE WORLD CURLS

Imagine a woman (John Lennon takes over)
It's easy if you try
She is very short
She is slightly chubby
Imagine she has curly hair
All is in one woman

Whenever you imagine such a woman, 9 times out of 10, it's probably either a cute, bubbly person from a movie or the witches/step mothers from Disney stories. I am not a mind reader but I assume you looked at my photo and probably thought I was a witch. You are wrong, I am not a witch even if my personality makes me like them. But since my letter from Hogwarts didn't come even after I turned 17 (Harry Potter's age when he killed Voldemort), it was then I knew I was a muggle – and not even like Hermione.

As a member of Curly Hair Community, I get offended when people stereotype us. We are not always cute or cruel (Although I am. But not because I have curly hair). One of the most frequent questions we get is whether our curls are natural.

Let me tell you how you can avoid our judgements and get your answer.

Observe; if the curls are too good to be true, it's probably not. Because God made us unique – just like the curls. Some curls are like instant noodles, some like Kurkure, some are the steel scrubbers in your kitchen, dry and lifeless. They change every morning; therefore, you don't see natural curls dancing happily on heads. They need to be controlled by scrunches, clips, and hair bands. They go wild, and it's not very pretty.

Then there are the fakes – curls, straight-haired girls envy. There are two types of such, one achieved with money and the other needing tremendous patience and hard work (usually done by students, narcissists or unemployed), others don't invest that much time every day. Can you imagine spending 4 hours every day to get perfect curls? Think of all productive works you can do - attending 2 toastmasters' meetings, writing speeches or...just Netflix.

**Straight hair
is like silicon
anyways –
everywhere
and nothing
special. The
grapes are
sour - I don't
like them
anyways.**

When ladies compliment my hair, I feel like Spiderman - with great power comes great responsibility. It is both a boon and a curse – to be noticed, easily. Half the time, that's great...but what about when your boss is looking for someone to complete a report in a line of perfectly aligned staff and you stand out like a buffalo popping out in a mustard field? Or when a table topic master is looking for someone to cold call?

Every naturally curly person has gone through hair crises – exiting the theater with popcorns stuck, fighting with your hairbrush to pass through your bushy hair and cry out when the hair wins; when you go to the salon, look at those beautiful haircuts - shaggy, layer, bob, etc. only to get a step-cut because apparently, stylists care as much about curly hair as politicians about climate change. Finally, you have had enough so you decide on a permanent solution - hair straightening. I never knew I could comb my hair when dry.

But, like a honeymoon, it goes away quickly. Your hair is straight at the bottom but curls on top with a battlefield in between.

So, only when you truly accept your curls and embrace them, they shine. When you start to love them, they love you back. I love my hair because it's truly splendid.

Straight hair is like silicon anyways – everywhere and nothing special. The grapes are sour - I don't like them anyways.



KUSHMA K.C.
LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

IT

STARTED

TO RAIN

It started to rain,
but turned to be a hailstorm,
flowers getting thrashed slowly.....
I moved to bring the cup closer, and suddenly
a feeling arose. Couldn't figure out what it really
was...

Hands were shivering, and the cup was still warm.
Perhaps, I haven't had enough. Somewhere I
was enjoying the idea of those tiny drops dripping
from the distant clouds to the grass to finally
the ground like an aftermath. I questioned, 'is
something missing here'? Realised that I was
too exhausted to take anything in. All of sudden,
someone banged on the door so loud, the bubble
broke and shattered to pieces...

PREKSHA JHA
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MEMORIES

While writing this article, I recall many memories that I have preserved in my life as everybody does. Memories can be sometimes good and sometimes bad. Some memories help us feel cheerful and some help us get by on tough days. Even though we have some tough memories we value in our life. It all depends upon us what memories we want to take along with us for a lifetime. We save memories as photographs and gifts, sometimes as places we visit and foods we eat and sometimes as sensations in our minds. Even from small conversations with each other many memories are formed. And simple things bring them back to our mind like it was only yesterday.

We all have our childhood memories. When we see children we recall our childhood days and how we used to go to school, play stickers cards, eat lunch during our classes and so many things. It's not just schools but also memories with family, friends, and teachers. Those were the most precious memories which you get to experience only once. But I feel, if we keep our childhood memories alive, no matter how old you are there's always a child inside each one of us that we can express.



JYOTSNA CHAUDHARY
JGI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

I was told by someone that when we are in nature we must see the inner beauty of its own. We capture them in photographs but the best way to capture those memories is in our minds and hearts. When similar events or situations happen we instantly recall those moments. All this happens because it reminds us of the times associated with the things.

In these years, so many things happened I did things that were right or wrong that I got to experience and I am happy that I have those memories even if it didn't turn out as I expected. I learned that by doing things that nobody approves of is not so bad as long as you feel comfortable doing it. It's all about how you carry those memories.

Memories are those precious moments which have deep value in our lives and teaches us how far we have come in this journey. Life is filled with memories. Memories make us who we are.

FAR FROM THIS MADDING CROWD

Out of this barbarity
And away from the cruelty,
I want to fly very high, up in the sky, above the cloud
Far from this madding crowd.

For the pains I have been through
I want to howl, cry aloud
Needless to say,
I want to fly very high, up in the sky, above the cloud
Away from the raging people – immensely proud
Far from this madding crowd.

For this world is a mess
People here, for survival, are creating an awful race
So, leaving this stress
I want to fly very high, up in the sky, above the cloud
Departing this monstrous world – full of fraud
Far from this madding crowd.

Fed up with the people
Betrayers, rowdy and scaly
Exhausted completely
And I am saying it; proud.
I want to fly very high, up in the sky, above the cloud
And travel someplace
Where there is no madding crowd.



HIMAL ACHARYA
CHITWAN LANDMARK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

Without you, I would not have known what care and compassion is, what selflessness means. I would not have known that keeping others' needs above your own needs can make you feel even more rich and fulfilled. I would not have known that friendship is not only praising each other but also pointing out each other's flaws and helping each other grow and be better.

Friendship ! What is it really?

It is the unique relationship of two hearts and souls where they have unconditional love and support for each other. It is not just tolerating the wrongdoings of each other but also correcting them and showing them the right path. A friend is the bright light whose influence and company is enough to fill our hearts. Friends not only help each other strive but also thrive and they are the true definition of purity and truth.

A true friend might not always be there with you but they will always be there for you and will prioritize you when you need them. Spending time and talking to a friend is the best therapy a person can have. They are the living versions of angels of heaven that have been sent by God .The value of friends cannot be expressed in words.

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**A true friend might
not always be there
with you but they
will always be there
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you need them.**

Thank you dear friend, for filling my empty life with joy and enthusiasm. You give me a reason to live my life to the fullest and make me strong. Your smile is all that is needed to fill myself with happiness. You have given me so much more than I can ever give you in return. I don't know how to Thank you enough for being in my life and for making this journey so enriching with your presence. Thank you for giving me the most precious gift, the gift of friendship.



AYUSHI GUPTA
HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

PUSH

THE BOX

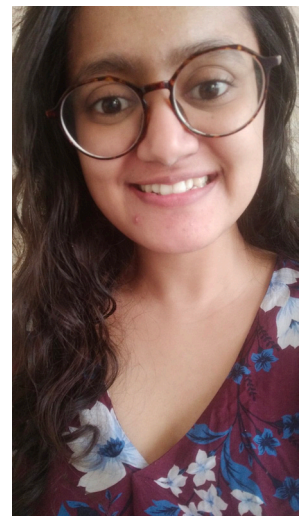
OPEN



My 8 months old niece says "Bababababa.." and we laugh. She doesn't care why we are laughing and she continues. There is not much of a difference between the two of us but why is it that she learns things so rapidly and I don't? When I started scavenging for the answer in the depths of my thoughts and memories, I found one. The only difference between the two of us is that she practices the freedom she is born with and I have put myself in a box like all other adults. I did not realize when I started caring about other people's opinions and started putting myself in a box suppressing my curiosities. When did "It is so embarrassing" become stronger than "I want to really try this"? Sure, I saved myself from a few embarrassing moments but at what cost? Sooner or later, everyone will realize that they have paid a huge price just for saving themselves some embarrassing moments. As a result of our inability to shed our inhibitions we have paid dearly - in terms of our confidence, self-worth and growth.. However, there is good news--all of us have quite a few installments left and we can choose to save those and also get the principal amount back in full. All we have to do is just try to push open the box even if it seems funny to other people who are still confined in their own little boxes. When we start doing that, we will realize that it is not that tightly closed. We just push a few times and the box will open up. That is bound to open up newer possibilities in life .

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**When did
"It is so
embarrassing"
become
stronger than
"I want to
really try
this"?**

So, now when you get curious, push the box. Instead of thinking about other people, start thinking about the price you have already paid. Push the box and if you are someone who genuinely wants to break free and explore your potential. The tool that I recommend and which works wonders is "Toastmasters." Toastmasters will not bring a whole new world at your doorsteps. Let us make sure that we live to our full potential and keep learning and growing all our lives. Let us make sure that we keep our confidence and self worth intact and step out from this bubble of validation. Let us make sure that we do not pack ourselves in little boxes.



SALONI BAGARIA
HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

STAY TUNED !

Introducing to you someone who takes naps right after she wakes - that is how lazy I am. So, Stay Tuned! Let's start with talking about my laziness, I am somebody who does not have any hobbies. I can neither sing nor dance. I am the worst at anything to do with art and Gordon Ramsay would definitely sue me for trying to cook. I do love going to Bhatbhateni for no reason to buy things that I do not need though. I am someone who doesn't know what I like because I personally think I discover new things about myself every day.

My friends call me a crybaby. I would like to repudiate that claim but I have this talent of crying on momentous occasions. I was shedding tears out of happiness during my commencement in 2018, I cry every time my friends throw a surprise birthday party for me, and you will probably see me crying on the day I finish my MBA. I am that friend who gives you the best advice, but does everything wrong herself.

Most of you might have been to Mustang, I am part of that Nepali population that hasn't been on a trip to Mustang because COVID-19 happened. Hanging out with me would not lead to a trekking trip to Langtang but it might lead to discovering new places to eat at.

Another fun fact, I am also very impulsive. I lived in the US for 6 and a half years. A lot of people ask me why I returned home permanently. I missed home, went on a road trip across the US, shopped till I dropped and flew home just like that. I still do know what life goals are, and I don't even have a bucket list.

I have
always
believed
that we
should
stay
tuned.

Nevertheless, I have always believed that we should stay tuned. I would like to share something that has had a huge impact on me. Although I did not physically experience the earthquake in 2015, it was a life changing experience for me. I found my true calling and then I knew, I wanted to do more for my country and others like it. I want to help bring about change and thus, am very passionate about gaining experiences, that will help me in working for organizations which strive to help build and support nations like ours.

Fellow Toastmasters, no matter where you are, no matter how you are, whether you are lazy or impulsive, even if you do not have any goals, or if you have the power saving mode ON like mine, wait till you hear the "knock-knock" of your true calling.



ANUSHKA SHRESTHA

VPE, SOUTH ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (SAIM) TOASTMASTERS CLUB



MY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

It was an early Friday morning when I was checking my mobile. I was shocked to see my COVID Test. To my dismay, I had tested positive. It was just a slight fever that had got my family and I worried, so we had gone to get tested. I was confident that I would not test positive but I was wrong. Despite taking all precautions, I didn't know how I got the virus. We, along with so many others in Nepal, became victims of the pandemic. My wife and my elder daughter had also tested positive. Only my younger daughter was spared. We had to isolate ourselves in separate rooms.

For three days, I did not feel very well. I had a fever and my body ached. It was only from the fourth day that I started feeling a bit relaxed. Within the confines of my bedroom and the attached balcony, I thought of ways to use my time effectively. I got out of my bed and started working on it. Every now and then, I felt lethargic and unwell but I kept at it. In such a situation, it is most important that we feel intrinsically positive.

I politely apologized to all my contacts, canceled my engagements and wanted to see how best I could use the time for myself completely. I took my meals and medicines timely. I enjoyed sunbathing at my balcony every morning sitting on my favourite chair. I did some yoga and exercise in the morning and during the evenings whenever I felt alright, watched my favorite series on Netflix. I watered and tended to the plants in my balcony and completed a few courses that I had started at Coursera. I took an afternoon nap, and quietly attended Toastmasters'

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As I waited for this storm to pass, I realized that sometimes we just need to take a break from everyone and spend time alone to experience, appreciate and love yourself.

meetings and training programs. I played online games with my family and before I knew it, the day would be gone.

As Tiber Hawkeye has said, “You can't calm the storm, so stop trying. What you can do is calm yourself. The storm will pass.” Sometimes we need this pause and nature has forced this much required pause at least for two weeks to reflect upon ourselves. As I waited for this storm to pass, I realized that sometimes we just need to take a break from everyone and spend time alone to experience, appreciate and love yourself. There is no choice but to make the very best of the situation and enjoy this state of my positive experience.



CHANDRAYAN P. SHRESTHA
BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

THE UNKNOWN

You try to know what went wrong
You try to know where your conscience's gone
You try to know but can't know why
Why your feelings are tangled inside

You feel you're lost, lost among the thoughts
That piles up, increasing their size
You try to know where they came from
While they're creeping, crawling and consuming your mind

You want to ask, please tell me how? please tell me when? and please tell me why?
But it won't tell, it won't tell a word
You are desperate to seek the truth
But the truth isn't your side

You try to hold on hoping you'll find
Secretly beg for mercy, hope hopelessly fading from your eyes
You start to slip, you start to fall and you start to drown
In the burning ocean of invisible tears you cried

You try to fight the battle though there's no hope to win
But still you try, frantically searching for the answer WHY
As the time passes, you start to lose
You don't get the answer though that's not what you choose
Because you don't see the truth that's not shown



KRITI PRADHAN
JGI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

MODERN PHANTOM

Haunted by a modern phantom,
Gearing up on weapons to venture outside in search of our lost freedom

Neighbors smile silently with suspicion In their eyes,
They keep their distance and so do I,
In mute concord with a constant fear that nobody denies

Time feels like a turtle crawling on its way
And here I am assuming I've just wasted yet another day
Cooking, eating, reading, watching movies, sleeping – all drawn up in an array

The tranquility of dusty roads,
Who knew? The only escape you needed was your home

Realizing we were admiring the wrong heroes
Show gratitude and respect to doctors and nurses for their relentless vital roles

Some, with their wealth, could manage through this
Others desired they had a genie's wish,
The days are dark and dreary, but all we want to do is rest
With each day, just trying to do our best.

Maybe there will be times we walk out again
Become free, see the beach, the sunset, and the mountains

Even with this distance, the world feels painfully close
The world is different than the world we used to live in before
The virus has taken the lives of many families they adore

We learnt that we can only truly trust the abstracts – hope and love
The intangible is all we can really take home with, and that's enough.

It's been tough but I'm hoping you know...
A bitter truth learned – you reap what you sow!



RITU BHUSAL
ACE TOASTMASTERS CLUB

CLUB, AREA AND DIVISION NEWS

1. Area O2 sings Deusi Re

After a hectic period of pandemic, we had a moment to cherish one of the major festivals of all Nepalese. As all the tedious works had resumed after the Dashain vacation, people were again starting to get bored with their busy schedules. Therefore, TMOE Toastmaster Ajay Kumar Shrestha came up with an innovative theme of "Deusi Re" so as to welcome yet another major festival Tihar. So, a fellowship joint meeting between clubs under Area O2 ie. Ace, Laxmi Bank, Professionals and Dhulikhel Toastmasters Club was held on 5th November 2020. We had amazing speakers in the form of Toastmaster Deepanjali Bajgain from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club, Toastmaster Uddhav Shejwal from Ace Toastmasters Club, Toastmaster Pratik Manandhar from Professionals Toastmasters Club and Toastmaster Archana Thapa from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club who delivered Ice Breaker speech, Level 1-Project 2, Level 2-Project 2 and Level 4-Project 4 speeches from Toastmasters Pathways manual respectively.

Table Topics Master Toastmaster Kriti Panth replaced Toastmaster Biswas KC from Professionals Toastmasters Club in the final hour who managed to roll out quite amazingly. The first topic was taken by Toastmaster Johnson Shrestha from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club and the final topic was grabbed by Toastmaster Kazol Khetan from Sanskriti Toastmasters Club, who was also awarded the better Table Topics Speaker that evening.

The General Evaluation session was led by an amazing Toastmaster Anup Shrestha from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club. He smoothly took forward the meeting with Direct Evaluators Toastmaster Bibek Dutta from Ace Toastmasters

Club, Toastmaster Bismriti Sharma from Professional Toastmasters Club, Toastmaster Kushma KC from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club and Toastmaster Kumar Thapa from Bodhi Toastmasters Club. Toastmaster Kumar was the one to be awarded with the Better Evaluator Award during the joint meet. From the team of Indirect Evaluators, Toastmaster Niraj Lekhak from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club had been placed as a Grammarian, Toastmaster Parikshya KC from Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club as the Ah Counter and Toastmaster Samir Dhungana from Professionals Toastmasters Club in a dual role as the Timer and Ballot Counter who were phenomenal with their respective roles.

Despite willingness to add some more fun activities, we were not able to make it happen because of the time constraint. Having said that Toastmaster Pratik Manandhar began his speech with an apology for not being prepared at the beginning made all the participants believe that he was actually not prepared and hence backing out but surprisingly, it was a part of his script to act such which added more fun in the meeting. Similarly, TMOE Toastmaster Ajay Kumar Shrestha recited the Deusi song with all the participants. Meanwhile, Toastmaster Bismriti had also brought "Madal", a popular hand musical instrument to play with the Deusi song. Noticeably, there were as much as 40 participants at one point of time including six Distinguished Toastmasters. The meeting was adjourned by Toastmaster Dipesh Chalise at 7:50 pm with Tihar wishes and a virtual group photograph.

2. Bodhi Toastmasters Club's 110th Meeting

When we were all confined to our homes during this pandemic, the TMOE TM Chandrayan P. Shrestha came up with a very fun and innovative theme "Laugh out Loud" for the 110th meeting at Bodhi Toastmasters Club on 12th Oct 2020. The idea of the LOL theme was to spread laughter among the members and guests so that we could relax and think positively in these difficult times. We saw our amazing speakers, TM Niladri S. Parial and TM Diptee Acharya, both of whom, had been our IPPs and both delivering their Level 5 Project 1 speech.

Table Topics Master TM Ranjeet Thapa, who was also the better Auxiliary Role Player of the day, rolled out amazing topics in an interestingly innovative manner – which were immediately taken up by equally enthusiastic members and guests. The 1st topic was taken by Guest Bisestha Chaudhary, the 2nd by TM Kajol from Sanskriti TMC, and the final topic by Guest Bidushi Pradhan, who was awarded the Better Table Topic Speaker.

The General Evaluation session was led by another veteran of the Toastmasters fraternity of Nepal, TM Alfa Maiya Shakya from KU-SOM Toastmasters Club. She smoothly took the meeting forward with dynamic direct evaluators DTM Moon Pradhan and DTM Saurabh Lohani along with a team of indirect evaluators: TM Banita Mittal (Grammarian), TM Anjila Bista (Ah-Counter), TM Bishnu Paneru (Timer), and TM Dinesh Basnet (Ballot Counter). DTM Saurabh Lohani bagged the Better Evaluator title, and the Better Speaker was awarded to TM Diptee Acharya by default as TM Niladri S. Parial overshot his time limit.

Finally, we had TM Seema Golchha – the only ventriloquist in Nepal and a TEDx Speaker – who cast a magic spell of laughter on the topic "How to be a good Humor Being". She gave everyone some interesting ideas of how we all had humor in ourselves and could entertain people with our humor. She finally introduced her friend Jack Denial who amazed us again. Supercharged with humor, the meeting ended with some good laughter and some amazing learning. The meeting saw 85 participants with 4 DTMs and was adjourned by TM Kumar Thapa at 7:40 pm.

3. ACCA Nepal Toastmasters Club conducts its first meeting

ACCA Nepal Toastmasters Club, the new addition to the Area O2 of Division O, conducted its first meeting on November 13, 2020, while still in the process of being chartered with the theme "Lights" complementing the vibes of the festival of light.

The SAA for the meeting, TM Bishal Panta, who was on his maiden role brought the meeting to order with his vibrant energy and zeal. TM Rabin Katwal, President of the club, spoke encouraging and authentic words dedicated to the good number of members present to support the club. TMOE Kriti Panth briefed the agenda and introduced the role takers, among whom TM Aashuki as the timer and TM Nibedan as the ballot were also on their maiden roles.

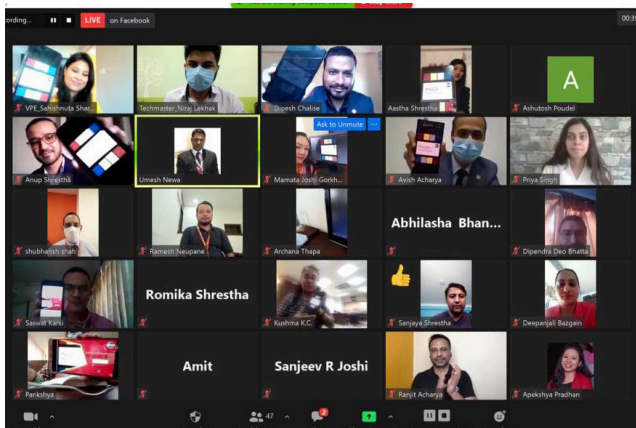
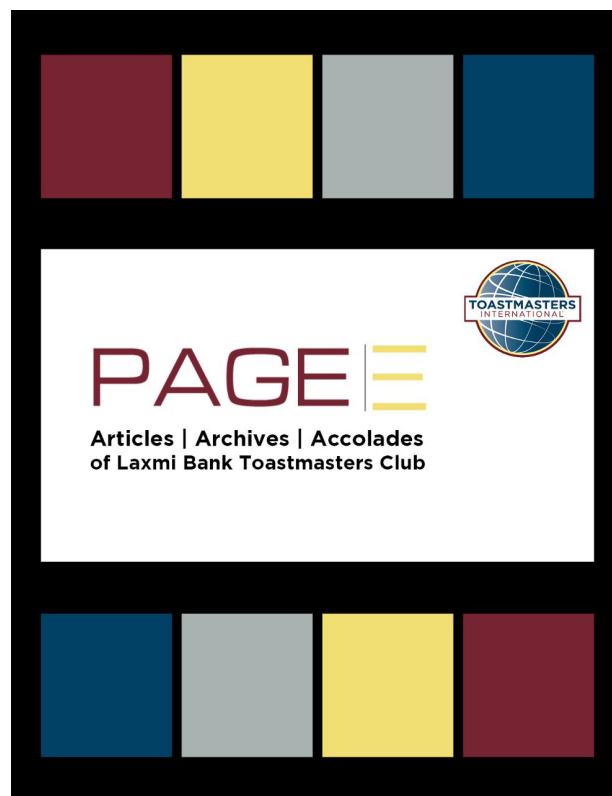
TM Sameer gave out exciting table topics, which were grabbed as soon as they were dropped. TM Shruti, on her

icebreaker, and TM Bibek on his level 2 were the featured speakers for the evening whereas TM Aastha led the evaluation session where the experienced Toastmasters TM Niladri and TM Jeevan evaluated the speakers. Winners of the meeting saw not just a tie but a triple tie in the Table Topics session which was a first for all present. Finally, the meeting was ended by TM Rabi who, in his closing remarks, reiterated his encouraging words for the members.



4. Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club Unveils Page E

October is the month of the year in which many famous inventors and scientists were born and a number of great inventions and brands were patented, trademarked or copyrighted. For Laxmi Bank Toastmasters Club, it signaled the launch of the first issue of their own newsletter PAGE E. The CEO of Laxmi Bank, Mr. Ajaya Bikram Shah, launched the Newsletter amid an online event, which was also attended by Laxmi Bank staff, in-house Toastmasters as well as other dignitaries and members of Nepal Toastmasters fraternity including Mr. Ranjit Acharya, DTM, District PQD. Page E will be published quarterly comprising of articles, reflections and experiences of members seeking to increase engagement in the club.



CLUB ACHIEVEMENTS

LAXMI BANK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

*1st Runner Up in District 41 -
Pronouncers "A Curtain Raiser" – Club Executive Committee
Announcement Poster Competition, August 1, 2020.*

*(Contest was about creating a flyer with the TM Year 2020-
2021 Excomm Members with TI logo)*

*Laxmi Bank "The Voyagers Award" –
Laxmi Bank's annual award for the most outstanding body
committed to exploring new knowledge methods and
bringing creativity back.*

HIMALAYA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

*Rising star award (Gold)
D41 Awards*

*Special Recognition- External PR :
TM Asira Khanal and TM Ekta Lamichhane*

*PQD Awards: Techmaster : TM Kapil Sharma
Come September Award*

ACAN TOASTMASTERS CLUB

*Special Internal PR Award by District 41
to TM Prayas Shrestha*

*Speechcraft completion by
TM Hitesh Agrawal & TM Puspa Chandra Khanal*

BODHI TOASTMASTERS CLUB

7 DCP Goals with minimum 20 paid members

CHITWAN LANDMARK TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Smedley Award

MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

HIMALAYA

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Madhu Sudan Dahal, IP2
TM Aishwarya Sapkota, PM1
TM Subina Shrestha, PI1
TM Pratima Thapa, PM1
TM Omkar Pandey, IP2
TM Asira Khanal, IP4
TM Ayushi Gupta, SR4
TM Ashmin Sharma, DL4

PROFESSIONALS

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Sushil Gautam, IP2
TM Nirajan Kandel, SR3
TM Kriti Panth, VC2
TM Biraj Pradhan, DL3
TM Samjhana Rai, IP2
TM Raywot Shakya, IP2

ACE

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Bibek Dutta, DL2

BODHI

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Alexandra Wrigley, LD4
TM Anishka Shakya, PM2
TM Anjila Bista, TC2
TM Bishnu Prasad Paneru, DL4
TM Chandrayan Pradhan Shrestha, SR5; PM1
TM Dilip Rana Magar, EC5
TM Dinesh Basnet, PM2
TM Diptee Acharya, DL5
TM Jigyasa Bajracharya, DL2
TM Kumar Thapa, TC5
TM Mandu Bajracharya, PI2
TM Mohini Shrestha, SR1
TM Niladri S. Parial, IP4
TM Niroj Maharjan, IP4
TM Ranjeet Thapa, DL1
TM Shreya Paudel, MS2
TM Yogesh Chettri, DL1

ACAN

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Hitesh Agrawal, PM2
TM KP Upadhyay, DL2
TM Surendra Bahadur KC, IP1
TM Prayas Shrestha, VC1
TM Sunil Budhathoki, DL1

CHITWAN LANDMARK

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Dinesh Adhikari, DL1
TM Prasama Poudel, PM1
TM Praju Poudel, PM1
TM Paribartan Regmi, PM1
TM Bishal Bhattarai, MS1

LAXMI BANK

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Archana Thapa, DL 4
TM Saswat Karki, VC 2
TM Dipesh Chalise, PI 1
TM Niraj Lekhak, EC 1
TM Ashwish Maharjan, SR 1

RATO BANGALA

TOASTMASTERS CLUB

TM Archana Joshi, IP1
TM Sagarika Khadka, IP1

ON A LIGHTER NOTE

Content Credit – thelanguagenerds

21

REASONS WHY THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS SO CONFUSING.

English is such a zany language. It confuses the heck out of everyone, natives and non-natives alike. If you can speak English, then kudos. It's not easy to speak a language whose madness knows no bound. To demonstrate what a crazy language English can be, here is a compilation of how people were often confused by English.

2

**DOUGH, ROUGH, THOUGH, AND
THROUGH** DON'T RHYME.

BUT FOR SOME GOD FORSAKEN
REASON **PONY** AND **BOLOGNA** DO.

1

WHY THE HECK DOES ENGLISH
HAVE A WORD FOR:

DEFENESTRATION:

*(n.) the action of throwing someone out
of a window*

BUT NOT FOR THE "DAY AFTER
TOMORROW"?

3

WHEN YOU TRANSPORT
SOMETHING BY CAR, IT'S CALLED
A **SHIPMENT**. BUT WHEN YOU
TRANSPORT SOMETHING BY SHIP,
IT'S CALLED **CARGO**.

4

SYNONYMS ARE WEIRD. IF YOU INVITE SOMEONE TO YOUR COTTAGE IN THE FOREST IT SOUNDS NICE AND COZY. BUT IF I INVITE SOMEONE TO MY CABIN IN THE WOODS THEN YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.

5

MY FRIEND'S FIRST LANGUAGE ISN'T ENGLISH AND HE ASKED ABOUT HOW TO SAY **CUT** IN THE PAST. I SAID **CUT** AND HE LET OUT A WAIL OF ANGUISH AND FELL TO THE GROUND.

6

WHY DO PEOPLE THINK BISEXUAL IS CONFUSING? IT IS NOT.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS CONFUSING? IT'S **BIANNUAL**. DOES IT MEAN EVERY TWO YEARS OR TWICE A YEAR? NO ONE KNOWS.

7

ENGLISH IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE WHERE YOU DRIVE IN PARKWAYS AND PARK IN DRIVEWAYS.

IT'S ALSO THE ONLY LANGUAGE WHERE YOU RECITE IN A PLAY AND PLAY IN A RECITAL.

8

ENGLISH USES THE LETTER **I** FOR ONE LIKE ROMAN NUMERALS.

9

READ AND **LEAD** RHYME. AND **READ** AND **LEAD** RHYME.

BUT **READ** AND **LEAD** DON'T RHYME. AND NEITHER DO **READ** AND **LEAD**.

10

PRONOUNCING WORDS
THAT END IN **OUGH**:

COUGH, BOUGH,
ROUGH, DOUGH,
THROUGH, THOUGH, ...

11

JAIL AND **PRISON** ARE SYNONYMS.
BUT **JAILER** AND **PRISONER**
ARE ANTONYMS.

12

THE WORD **QUEUE** IS JUST
A **Q** FOLLOWED BY YOUR
SILENT LETTERS.

13

IS THE **S** OR **C** IN **SCENT** SILENT?

14

THE PAST TENSE OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WOULD
BE **WOULDIWAS SHOOKSPEARED.**

15

TELLING SOMEONE "**YOU ARE SHIT**" AND
"**YOU AIN'T SHIT**" ARE BOTH INSULTS.

BUT "**YOU'RE NOT SHIT**" IS A REASSURANCE.

AND "**YOU'RE NOT THE SHIT**" IS AN INSULT.

AND "**YOU ARE THE SHIT**" IS A COMPLIMENT.

16

WHY DO **FAT CHANCE** AND **SLIM CHANCE** MEAN THE SAME THING?

17

WHY DO NOSES RUN
BUT FEET SMELL?

SHOULDN'T THEY ACTUALLY DO
THE OPPOSITE?

18

HOW TO USE **AND** FIVE TIMES IN A ROW
GRAMMATICALLY:

A MAN OWNED A STORE CALLED THIS AND THAT
AND HIRED SOMEONE TO MAKE A SIGN FOR IT.
WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, THE OWNER, UPON
INSPECTION, DISCOVERED THAT THE SPACES
WERE WRONG. SO HE SAID :

"THE SPACE BETWEEN THIS AND AND AND AND
AND THAT IS DIFFERENT. PLEASE FIX IT."

19

YOUR FINGERS HAVE
FINGERTIPS BUT YOUR TOES
DON'T HAVE TOETIPS.

**YET, YOU CAN TIPTOE BUT
NOT TIPFINGER.**

20

WHY IS A **W** CALLED
DOUBLE-U WHEN IT IS
CLEARLY A **DOUBLE-V**?

21

CONTRACTIONS FUNCTION
ALMOST IDENTICALLY TO THE
FULL TWO-WORD PHRASE. BUT
THEY ARE ONLY APPROPRIATE IN
SOME PLACES IN A SENTENCE.

**IT'S ONE OF THE WEIRD QUIRKS
OF THIS LANGUAGE WE'VE.**



Happy New Year!

New Year, A New Start, and Miles to Go
Wish You a Successful and Glorious New Year 2021

