



# Keep the Legacy Alive

## Connecting with our Founder's Belief

*The following words of wisdom were published in the books of  
<The Story of Toastmasters>, <The Story of Toastmasters, Volume II>, <Personally Speaking>  
By Dr. Ralph Smedley, Founder of Toastmasters International, Inc.*

### Vision & Purpose

It was the very evident need for practical help in the art of communication which led me to organize the Toastmasters Club in the first place. People in my community needed this aid, and they were glad to accept it when it was offered in an attractive and practical manner. **The beginning was to meet a local need.** There was no vision of future growth into a great organization.

I am impressed by the fact that a simple idea, out to work in so simple a matter, has grown into such an instrument for service to so many people. It must have met a real need. I would rather be rich in friendship than in money. It is a privilege to make a contribution to the welfare of my fellow men. **C. SMEDLEY**  
FOUNDER OF TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Education is our business. It has been so from the beginning. I do not know just why or how I happened to hit upon the idea that adult **education could be handled in a social atmosphere**, entirely apart from the formal classroom and standard academic procedure; but in some way I got that notion, and I have lived to see it not only recognized, but actually used, in circles where it was frowned upon a generation ago. There was evident agreement in my mind with the thought which Shakespeare had expressed long before when he caused one of his characters to say: 'No profit grows where is no pleasure taken'.

Leadership is the capacity to look ahead, think ahead, plan ahead, and then influence other people to go ahead on the plan.

Here we are, with tremendous opportunity before us. I challenge you to get to work to bring us up to a higher level of service. Let us share with others the benefits we have gained for ourselves.

To the other values of Toastmasters training let us add this one, with emphasis - that it is the busy man's best chance to take a post graduate course in general information without inconvenience or loss of time.

We realize that the two most important factors in Toastmasters is **Mentoring and Evaluations**, there is no doubt that if these two are done well and there is a good Mentoring program, your club will be filled with spark plugs ready to fire upon request. Mentoring and evaluations create enthusiasm, and once you light that fire the only thing it needs is some kindling.

We need fewer rules on detail and better understanding of general purposes.

## Leadership & Connection

**Personal contacts between those who are prepared to lead and those who need help in leadership are essential.** Much information must be transmitted through the printed page, but the most effective method of transmission is through training sessions in which qualified leaders present information and conduct discussion. If we should ever lose this sense of fellowship, of personal friendly relationships, we might easily become just another high-grade correspondence school.

**The personal touch, in all levels of our work, is one of its distinguishing features. We are working together.**

When we have been forced to set up machinery for handling much of the work, I believe that we have been successful in the main in **keeping it on a personal basis, and maintaining the atmosphere of friendliness and fellowship which is so essential in a work like ours.**

The ability to approach an audience in [a] friendly style is partly a gift of nature, and partly a cultivated art. It is worth cultivating if you want to be as effective as possible in your speech. You can profit by the wisdom of others, and you can give them full credit.

These people can be encouraged to develop and use their own initiative and originality for their own improvement. It has been my privilege to share with all of them the results of my own experiences, and to try to stimulate them in using their resources.

Ours is the only organization I know dedicated to the individual, we work together to bring out the best in each of us and then we apply these skills to help others.

Our work is based primarily on principles of learning by doing and improving through practice and criticism, principles in which I strongly believe. Back of these, there is Herbert Spencer's definition of education. He held that education is a process of **drawing out and putting into use the talents and abilities which are present in the person** to be educated, rather than of pouring into his or her mind information from the exterior.

People more willingly follow a leader who knows where he is going.

Great is the power of the spoken word, when it is spoken in truth, by one whose life supports what he says.

Toastmasters is based on belief in the individual. Many organizations ask the individual to subordinate himself to the group. **Ours is the only organization I know that is dedicated to the individual.**

It has been my conviction that formal courses should not be offered in the Toastmasters Club, but I have been compelled to prepare certain materials which our members classify as "courses," in order to give guidance which was apparently needed. It appears to me to be desirable that the members should work out their problems, and then exchange their experiences, helping each other by pointing out better ways as well as warning against ways which have not been found successful.

## Communication and Speaking

The first result of speech training is self-discovery.

**When you talk, you give yourself away. You reveal your true character in a picture which is truer and more realistic than anything an artist can do for you.**

Whatever your grade or position, if you know how and when to speak, and when to remain silent, your chances of real success are proportionately increased.

Training in speech had definite values in many lines of improvement. It leads to the discovery of hidden abilities, bringing these latent talents into use, and thus enriching the individual's life. It broadens the person's conception of how to live with people. It helps in the integration of personality. It brings out for use the leadership traits and abilities, and thus helps to prepare the individual to be a leader. It opens the way to more creative and constructive living for the person who takes full advantage of the opportunities offered.

The greatest speakers have usually been remarkable for the abundance of their ideas and their economy of words.

Real communication is impossible without listening.

Most of the conflicts and disagreements among men result from misunderstanding. Understanding comes through communication, and through understanding we find the way to peace.

In the course of years, it was seen that our processes had values far beyond the mere training of people to face audiences and speak their ideas. Communication was seen to have its effects in almost every phase of life.

It is always the speaker's responsibility to make his speech effective. If he does that, applaud him, commend him, vote for him, even though he violated all the rules in the book. The test of the speech is not in following the textbook, but in making the sale.

Fundamentally, I believe that the ability to communicate is a God-given talent, which ought to be used by all for the good of all. It is our privilege to help bring this talent into greater usefulness, so that it may be applied to the building of a better world, through the building of a better society made up of individuals who must act in groups. I believe that in bringing improvement in the way of "better thinking, better listening, better speaking" to individuals, we are contributing to the improvement of the society which is made up of these individuals. I like the way that Orison S. Marden phrased his conception of speech training, "The ability to talk well is to a man what cutting and polishing are to the rough diamond. The grinding does not add anything to the diamond. It merely reveals its wealth."

While most of us may have entered Toastmasters to learn to make speeches, that benefit is but the beginning of the good which may come to us and the good which we may do for mankind. A story must pay its own way by contributing a thought.

I believe that all civilized life grows out of that ability, and the uses made of it. **I believe that the improvement of a person's ability to communicate his or her ideas is a means of improving life in all its phases, and that the progress of civilization depends on this improvement.**

## Club experience

The simple fact is that we grow or learn or work better when we enjoy what we are doing, and this is essentially the secret of success in Toastmasters. Our meetings are made enjoyable by a fine, helpful fellowship, in a pleasant, social atmosphere, with activities carefully planned. I believe that it was the feeling of the fellowship, added to the definite interest of the programs, and the general participation by the members, which assured the success of this club.

**The club whose membership is shrinking has something the matter with it. The Toastmasters Club which has the right sort of program does not lose its members.**

It may be said that most of our members come into a club to achieve some definite purpose. That purpose may be to learn to speak in public, to overcome fear, to gain skill in conducting a meeting, or to be a contest winner, or it may be any one of many purposes. It is our obligation to help them to adopt the best purpose, and then to work to accomplish it. **When this immediate purpose has been achieved, the individual is likely to drop out, unless the leadership of the club has been so good that he or she has been awakened to a realization of further personal possibilities. No doubt this is the simple explanation of much of the turn-over in membership.**

The Toastmasters Club, is a voluntary association of people who desire to gain facility in the art of communication.

Knowledge inspires self-confidence, and knowledge plus confidence will overcome fear of the audience.

Learning to give a speech is important, but almost equally so is learning to listen critically, analytically, and then to give the speaker the benefit.

## Learn by doing

Toastmasters is a “do-it-yourself activity”. Don’t be afraid to use your imagination and initiative. Listen to others and evaluate their thinking, then form your own conclusions and speak for yourself.

My conception of the Toastmasters Club, and of the training which it affords, while based on certain fundamental principles of education, is quite largely the result of experiences and observations through the past 50 years, when those principles have been put into practical use.

Sometimes it pays to make yourself ridiculous, just to prove that you can.

Toastmasters is learning through doing and improving through criticism.

Imagination takes the common place and glorifies it.

We learn best in moments of enjoyment.

**Your Toastmasters club is your laboratory in which to try experiments in better communication. You can try anything once in front of this frank but sympathetic audience, and you can learn by listening to their comments.**