



DISTRICT 84 TOASTMASTERS
SERVING CENTRAL AND NORTHERN FLORIDA
Volume 2, Issue 5 (November, 2021)

Synergy

*I am
grateful for
my*
FAMILY

— Kristin Kaljaspolik



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District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

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Synergy is a publication of Toastmasters District 84. Published once a month, the newsletter aims to inform our audience through relevant information and tools to help members and clubs to think and work creatively to achieve goals, inspire through ideas and stories that can be applied to our personal and professional lives and finally, entertain through content that is interesting and presented in a way that is fun to read.



www.toastmasters.org

**TOASTMASTERS
DISTRICT 84**
Serving Central & North Florida

Empowering
individuals
through personal
and professional
development



An Appreciation for Selfless Service

by **Debi Jo Londono, DTM, District Director**



Debi Jo Londono

In my journey through Toastmasters, I find my heart full of appreciation and gratitude every day. I am filled with such deep gratitude for my Toastmasters family, who surrounds and supports me and all members of our District. These are volunteers who continually go above and beyond the call of duty. I am constantly amazed by their heart,

initiative, and dedication to every task, meeting, and event. We ask a lot of our members and leaders, and I feel fortunate to be included in this incredible family. I hope you will join me as I express my heartfelt thanks to our D84 Toastmasters family.

Members deserve such special appreciation for the courage and dedication they demonstrate in their quest for self-improvement. Members give life and meaning to our club mission every time they come together to provide that supportive and positive learning experience in which all members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth. Many thanks to all of our Members.

Area Directors demonstrate the true meaning of servant leadership in their continuous efforts to help their clubs and members have a great experience. They work tirelessly as project managers and event planners, providing the critical communication interface between the District and their clubs. Area Directors often work full-time jobs yet still make time for this important work. Thank you, Area Directors, for your dedication.

Division Directors offer guidance, supervision, and support to our Area Directors, working to ensure that each club lives up to its mission and fulfills its responsibilities to its members. They, too, show such dedication as they lead their team to set Division goals, coordinate Division activities, and assist in training Area leaders and club officers. Thank you, Division Directors, for your hearts of service.

Chairs and Committees personify the saying "It takes a village to raise a child," but instead of "raising a child," they "raise awareness of Toastmasters" in our communities while supporting the Toastmasters family in our quest to become better leaders and better communicators.

Our Chairs and committees work diligently to bring new opportunities that allow our members to learn and grow. Building new clubs and supporting all clubs in achieving excellence is their prime directive and much appreciated service.

Thank you, Chairs and committee members, for the added value you bring to our members.

The D84 Quad Leadership Team includes the District Trio and District PRM:

1. District Director, Debi Jo Londono, DTM
2. Program Quality Director, Paula Summa, DTM
3. Club Growth Director, Vickie Goodman, DTM
4. Public Relations Manager, Maria Martinez, DTM

The three ladies I have the pleasure of working with have a passion for raising the bar in building new clubs and supporting all clubs in achieving excellence. Together, we plan to increase the Toastmasters footprint in all of our communities, allowing even more people to be a part of something bigger than themselves. The opportunity to work with these incredible ladies is something for which I am deeply grateful.

Thank you, my fellow team members, for your commitment to improving leadership skills in each other and all of our members.

I encourage you to take time to express your appreciation to the many members of our Toastmasters family who play a part in building a future where we can all grow together, develop our skills, learn to make an impact on the world and have fun doing it!

[Read the Toastmasters Promise here](#)

[Read our Mission Statement here](#) ■

Living with an Attitude of Gratitude is a Choice

by Paula Summa, DTM,
Program Quality Director



Paula Summa

"Gratitude and attitude are not challenges; they are choices."

This quote by Robert Braathe makes me realize how important and impactful the choices in our lives can be. More specifically, and for this article, it's the choices we make in our Toastmasters journey that can sometimes become challenges. Ultimately, we choose how we approach situations, how we perceive them, and whether or not we appreciate and

acknowledge them.

By starting out with a positive outlook, self-assurance and thankfulness, we are ready for the task at hand.

Are you grateful for the opportunity to serve as a club officer, Area Director, Division Director, or District leader? Do you show appreciation to those who assist you or serve beside you? Do you recognize those around you who have accomplished goals and other objectives? Do you welcome members to all meetings and thank them for being there? Show kindness to others, and be grateful for the kindness that others show to you. Gratitude is positive energy. Gratitude is a choice. Choose to be grateful!

How's your attitude? The tone in your voice or the look in your eyes can tell a lot about you. Negativity is reflected in your behavior, and you can quickly lose the respect of others. Rather than finding fault in things (or people), look for the positive. If something negative needs to be discussed, be cautious about what is said and how it is stated. Just like an effective evaluation, be kind, be gentle and be respectful.

A positive attitude radiates positive energy. Your attitude is a choice. Choose to have a positive attitude!

Choose to allow gratitude and a positive attitude to overshadow negativity. Share it with others, in all aspects of your life.

Your life, and the lives of those around you, both inside and outside of Toastmasters, will benefit from it!

Let's be THANKFUL this month of Thanksgiving, and always! ■

Club Coach & Mentor Training

With: WC "Bobby" Blackmon



First Monday of each month:
October 4th
November 1st
December 6th

8:00 PM

Each month a different focus, come and learn how to maximize club strengths, offer resources and tools to empower the club to achieve growth.

Meeting ID 847 0417 6502
Passcode 318989



Toastmasters D84

SYNERGY "THE PODCAST"



Hosted by Distinguished Toastmaster John Morrow

<https://toastmastersd84.org/the-d84-synergy-podcast/>

So You've Joined Toastmasters.
Now What?

New Member Orientation with
the Trio and Pathways Chair

1st Sunday of Each Month
7:00pm ET on Zoom
Meeting ID: 962 7944 2148
Password: NewMembers

BECOME A CLUB COACH & GET DOUBLE CREDIT!

ToastmastersD84.org



1

Club achieves
Distinguished status by
6/30/22

2

Coach serves
min 6 mo

3

Club reaches min
20 paid members
by 6/30/22

Serve as Club Coach and get DOUBLE THE CREDIT in recognition of the incredible effort and importance of this supportive role to club success. Coach a club to achieve criteria #1 & #2 and earn credit towards your DTM. Achieve Criteria #3 and get ADDED CREDIT for serving in a District Leadership role! Get more details and get started NOW!

Club Coach Chair, Bobby Blackmon, DTM

What Are You Grateful For?

by Maria Martinez, DTM, PRM



Maria Martinez

Inspired by Melody Beattie: Gratitude reveals the wholeness of the Toastmasters' life. It can turn timid into self-reliant, insecurity into confidence, fearfulness into courage. It turns routine activities into experiences, a stranger into a mentor, people into a community, a room into a place where transformation happens and time into a wonderful journey, our own.

Among the many experiences I have been afforded as a Toastmaster, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as our District's Public Relations Manager this year. I enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to be of service to our members and to collaborate with our leaders. I'm thrilled about learning new skills and sharing those with others. I'm particularly delighted to represent a team that supports the organization from where I have gained so much by promoting and leveraging its brand.

Along with those experiences, I have the pleasure of collaborating with the Vice Presidents of Public Relations and many other content creators who come to me for assistance in creating brand-compliant materials, brainstorming new hashtags, and exploring new tools and resources. I'm excited to see their progress and growth and thrilled to see them every day "in action."

For this article which focuses on gratitude, I thought I'd share with you some of what those dynamic and inspiring leaders have to say when I asked, "As a VPPR, what are you thankful for?"



"I'm grateful for the opportunity to expose people to Toastmasters and to be creative in the way we share this work. I'm also grateful that I can share those personal stories from our clubs and members with others."
— Nicole Hamm, Toast of Jax



"I am grateful for the opportunity to share the benefits of our club with our communities, to offer others a safe place to grow their communication, confidence and leadership skills."
— DeeJae Rodriguez, Toastmasters at Twelve



"I am grateful for the many, many resources to guide and assist me in fulfilling my role. Toastmasters provides all members guidance and mentorship to succeed."
— Karen Manglardi, CEO Toastmasters



"I am grateful for the opportunity to use the talent God blessed me with - Creativity. I use this creativity when posting screenshots focused on the theme of our meeting and when creating fliers for workshops. Through this creativity, I share with others the amazing attributes of being a Toastmaster."
— Katherine Eaton, Highway Safety Toastmasters

What are you grateful for? Whether it is the ability to grow as a communicator, deliver presentations without feeling you are going to die, share the joy and gift of mentoring, or serve your fellow members as a club leader, I invite you to make gratitude your everyday attitude. That positive emotion, response, feeling, skill, and attitude of appreciation is contagious. Pass it on! ■

Mark Your Calendars

District 84 Jeopardy: December 11 at 6 pm

International President Margaret Page: January 13 at 7:30 pm

World Champion of Public Speaking, Verity Price: February 5 at 11 am

Club Corner

by Vickie Goodman, DTM, Club Growth Director

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough." (*Oprah Winfrey*)

Keep Your Club In Good Standing – Club must have a minimum of 8 members renewed to keep your club in good standing and maintain access to certain TI resources. Most of us joined a club because someone invited us to a meeting, and many of us didn't accept the invitation the first time it was offered. What's my point? When was the last time you invited someone to your club meeting or talked about your Toastmasters experience around others to pique their interest? Was your invitation declined? So what? – ask them again! Exciting and professional meetings seal the deal for guests, but you've got to get them to the meeting first – so ASK someone!

Send in Your Semiannual Officer List — If your club elects officers twice a year, arrange to hold your elections this month and notify World Headquarters of the results once they're available. Download the [Club Officer Information form](#) and submit your new officer list online via Club Central or email it to clubofficers@toastmasters.org by December 31 to receive Distinguished Club credit. Not sure how to host a club officer election? Refer to page 53 of the [Club Leadership Handbook](#).

Club Contests in Full Swing – All clubs in good standing are encouraged to conduct Evaluation, Table Topics, and International Speech contests before the final deadline of December 31. Club contest winners will advance to the Area contests, which will begin in January 2022.

Just In: Pathways Level 1 Update — Toastmasters has released its member-driven improvements to the education program's core Level 1. [Learn](#) about the changes—how they help sharpen the focus on public speaking fundamentals and let members hit the ground running toward their goals.

Area Directors: Submit Your Club Visit Reports — To qualify for the Distinguished Area Program, Area Directors must submit an [Area Director's Club Visit Report](#) for first-round visits for at least 75% of their clubs by November 30. The reports are submitted online through [District Central](#).

2001 World Champion of Public Speaking to Speak at District 84

Kids dream – like rivers flow. Why have we lost that ability to dream? Because well-meaning people trained the dream out of us.

This presentation is for anyone who has a big dream that they really want to make happen.

In 1992 Darren LaCroix bombed miserably in a comedy club in Boston, MA. As he walked off stage, the headliner that night said, "Don't quit your day job." Without a funny bone in his body and a willingness to fail, Darren pursued his childhood dream of making people laugh.

Now he's a World Champion Speaker.

How did he do it? What was his strategy?

Darren LaCroix is currently the only speaker in the world who is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), an Accredited Speaker (AS), and a World Champion of Public Speaking. Darren delivers world-class training from decades of stage time.

Darren is the author of "17 Minutes to Your Dream - How to Get the Breakthroughs You Need." After this presentation, you will walk away with:

1. How to Overcome Self-Doubt and Build Belief
2. A Simple Strategy to Gain Momentum
3. Contagious Breakthroughs
4. Starting a Movement in Your Organization

You will walk away with a simple strategy that will get you on track to that dream you've meant to pursue.

[See his winning speech here](#)

**Saturday, December 18,
2:00-4:00 p.m. EST
(virtual)**

Hosted by [Find Your Funny Toastmasters](#)

[Click here to register!](#)

Meeting ID: 871 8668 2992
Passcode: 252525

Please submit any questions to:

Marjane.Taylor@FloridaDEP.gov



Darren LaCroix

Do All Fairy Tales End Happily Ever After? The Journey of a Mentor-Mentee Relationship

by Angela Ardrey-Reynolds, IP5



Angela Ardrey-Reynolds

Once upon a time, in a land far away, there lived a hidden voice. The voice was trapped inside a fearful human. And even though the voice wanted to sing her teachings and experiences to the world, the human kept her locked away. It was out of an act of love, Human told Voice.

Years passed and the human's fears grew stronger, but Human was growing weary. Voice could feel the

human's grip weakening. "What's happening to the human?" she wondered.

Then something terrifying occurred. An internal shock-wave hit the human. The voice watched as Human suddenly became aware of the fears. It was war. Human fighting fears. Fears fighting Human.

Voice became an advocate for Human, cheering and celebrating the wins, but she also knew she needed to support the human during the losses. The war raged on. The battles left scars. Voice did everything she could to secretly keep Human alive.

So then what happened? (Thanks for asking).

The human gave her fears a massive blow and allowed Voice to come out.

Voice was esteemed with excitement. She had so much to say to the world. *Where to start? How long could she play? Could anybody hear her?*

And then, Human gave the fears yet another massive blow. This time, Human acquired the work of a mentor, knowing the battle with fear was still raging and that she needed more advocates. Meanwhile Voice was still out, singing her teachings and sharing her experiences. She fell in love with her new freedoms.

Then one day, the human tucked Voice back away from the world. Her fears had become too strong. The saddened voice could not convince the human to let her out again. It appeared the human had lost the war.

But wait! Isn't it time for a hero? (Yes, thank you again for asking).

The strong mentor found her fearful human. "Why are you hiding?" she asked.

"Because I'm scared," the human admitted.

"I'm here for you," she replied. "You're not in this war alone. I know you're scared. But I also know you can do this. Stand tall. Take up your weapon. And let's go into battle *together*."

And Human lived happily ever after.

The End.

What?!!! That's it? Seriously? (Well, I do have one more part).

I am the human.

I was shy, afraid, and had suffered low self-esteem most of my life. I had forgotten what true bravery felt like. In turn, I kept my voice protected from the world.

The day I walked into Plant City Toastmasters in October 2018, I was battling against Fear.

I acquired my first-ever mentor in Toastmasters. And when I ran away in fear months later, my mentor ran after me. She knew I was scared. She assured me I was not alone anymore. Thank goodness for her, because I would have given up the war with Fear and stopped using my voice again.

Jeannie Elliott, masterful mentor, this story is dedicated to you. Because of you, I am free to use my voice in so many ways now. And I agree, the private talk we shared that returned me to Toastmasters was the best cup of coffee ever bought.

Thank you for being my mentor.

And that my fellow Toastmasters is not my happily ever after ending, but rather my happily ever after beginning.

Sincerely,

Voice ■

Strong Mind | Strong Body | Believe the Unbelievable.
Professional Coach, Speaker, Writer and Photographer.
Connect with Angela on [LinkedIn](#).

Jeannie Elliott shares the Magic of Mentoring

by Vickie Goodman, DTM, Club Growth Director

As Toastmasters, we recognize the many benefits of *having* a mentor, but what about the benefits of *being* a mentor? I asked Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) Jeannie Elliott, described as a “Mentor Extraordinaire” by the many lives she has touched in her 12 years as a Toastmaster, to provide a few insights.

Q: Why be a mentor?

A: “I have a genuine love for people,” Jeannie responded. “Mentoring allows the perfect opportunity to engage with new people, to learn about them, and make new friends. I am SO grateful for the deep diversity afforded through Toastmasters, which has allowed me to build a relationship with people from every walk of life. Nowhere have I found an organization so welcoming to everyone.

I don’t wait to be asked to mentor. It’s exciting and admirable to see someone motivated by a sincere desire to improve and a willingness to grow, to overcome fear, develop courage, and build their confidence. When I see these traits in new members, I seek them out and ask to be their mentor. I know that continued mentoring will help them progress more quickly, and I want to put the wind beneath their wings.”

Q: What “best practices” contribute to mentoring successes?

A: “Sensitivity, honesty, and follow-through are critical. If you establish what looks like a mentor relationship but don’t follow through, you are perceived as not trustworthy. To be a mentor, you must ask yourself if you are rooted and growing in your club. Do you know the language of Toastmasters well enough to help another person, and are you willing to remain seriously engaged with your mentee? You can’t just show up periodically. You have to show up to help review all aspects of their Toastmasters experience, pointing out the positive experiences and discussing lessons learned.

A mentor does not try to ‘fix people. Applauding areas of growth and improvement continually is critical to motivating your mentees to push through tasks that may be more frustrating. An evaluation addresses one specific speech. Mentoring offers an opportunity to look at the individual’s total body of work over a long-term period. A mentor must stay connected to their mentee, or you will lose them.



The most critical time to mentor is when someone stops coming to the meeting. I hunt them down because I am concerned. Why have they stopped coming? Is it a new job, an illness, or have they become frustrated? Reaching out is a powerful tool and it can be as simple as a phone call or an invitation to meet for coffee. Mentoring offers a unique opportunity to cultivate a relationship of support and trust over a period of time.”

Q: Why keep mentoring?

A: “Look around your club. Give thoughtful consideration to what you can offer by way of support or help to other members. More importantly, consider what you might learn if you simply reach out.

I am so thankful for the people who have wanted my support and have matched their desire to improve with determination and work. I enjoy the scavenger hunt needed to identify the talents and skills each mentee possesses. Then we work together to get those parts aligned so we can start filling in the gaps. Each mentee must learn and connect a series of moving parts that are correctly aligned for the very best results. There is no better reward than seeing your mentee pull all of those moving parts together.

Helping someone overcome challenges to fulfill their expectations and watching them blossom with increased confidence is magic that fills my soul and never gets old.” ■

Jeannie Elliott, DTM is a member of Plant City TM Club and a Charter Member of Keynotes & More Advanced TM.

A Gratitude a Day Keeps a Poor Attitude Away: The Health Benefits of Giving Thanks

by Angela Ardrey-Reynolds, IP5

Employer: We need happier people; this includes the leaders.

Employee (me): Seriously? I have work to do. Don't bother me with your theories.

Employer: We are seeing the effects of negative attitudes amongst the staff. We must bring in a training program. We hear positive environments are performance enhancers. Evidence proclaims a link between happiness and success. We need to establish this philosophy in our workplace.

Employee (me): Stop pushing your "HAPPY" philosophies on me. I'm getting the job done, my attitude should not matter. If I'm having a bad day, don't force me to put a smile on my face.

Around and around, the struggle went. Corporate pushed for happier employees. Employees pushed back, declaring the training was an invasion of their individuality. Nevertheless, Corporate mandated that all employees become certified in HAPPINESS, requiring employees to exercise and practice gratitude, journaling, meditation, etc. This became part of everyone's job description.

I confess the HAPPINESS initiative put a bitter taste in my mouth—especially concerning gratitude. To me, gratitude was nothing more than being fake, more like pretending. And I was not happy about pretending. If I saw the glass half empty, then that's how I wanted to declare it.

Years later, I experienced a mind shift. Little did I know the practice of gratitude was going to become part of my own personal development. Why the change? I discovered the science behind gratitude and that it was not just the practice of happy thoughts and "thank you" gestures. Gratitude was actually a state of mind that rewires the brain and improves physical health. Brain + Body Benefits. A WIN-WIN!

Based on research and studies conducted by various universities and national institutes, the practice of gratitude—for as little as three weeks—leads to the following health benefits outlined in the table.

But just don't take my word for it. If you want to improve

Brain Benefits	Body Benefits
Increases dopamine	Lowers blood pressure
Keeps gray matter functioning	Reduces aches and pains
Boosts serotonin	Improves sleep
Changes molecular brain structure	Increases happiness and reduces depression
Enhances social interaction	Improves self-esteem and self-care

your well-being (physically, mentally, and spiritually), do a little research into the science of gratitude. You will also discover that gratitude is not just a silly act of seeing the world through "rose-colored glasses."

Here's my first challenge for you. Try the practice of gratitude for 21 days—start a gratitude journal, send someone a quick thank-you note or text, write a personal letter of appreciation to yourself or a loved one. Most of all, find a gratitude practice that works for you. Remember, this is *your* study.

Now here's my second challenge. Incorporate the practice of gratitude into your Toastmasters journey—express it in your feedback and evaluation, use it in your speech presentation, develop it in your mentor-mentee relationship. Not only will your life be transformed, but so will the lives you touch around you. Plus, it is a scientific fact that gratitude reciprocates. Another WIN!

One final word . . . I was wrong about gratitude for a long time, and as a result I missed out on many things by focusing on being unhappy and missing the blessings right in front of me. Don't make the same mistake. Allow yourself to be grateful, even when the glass seems half empty. Once you develop the muscle of gratitude, life will give you an outpouring of beauty to enjoy.

IT'S NOT HAPPY PEOPLE WHO ARE THANKFUL. IT'S THANKFUL PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY. ■

Strong Mind | Strong Body | Believe the Unbelievable. Professional Coach, Speaker, Writer and Photographer. Connect with Angela on [LinkedIn](#).

Develop An Attitude of Gratitude

by Julie Salgo, Retired Learning and Development Consultant



Julie Salgo

Develop an attitude of gratitude, and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation. — Brian Tracy

Let's examine three "words of the month more closely for November.

Develop — (verb) to become more mature, advanced, or elaborate; to evolve, progress, or grow.

Attitude — (noun) a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, a frame of mind, reflected in a person's behavior.

Gratitude — (noun) the quality of being thankful, grateful; ready to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

Since Thanksgiving is around the corner, November is the perfect month to flex our "attitude muscles," and put these words into practical application, building up our attitude of gratitude.

We cannot control most of the situations and circumstances around us, but we can control our responses and thus our attitude and behavior.

I knew an old scientist in California who was devastated when he lost his prestigious corporate job, though he was way over 90 at that time. Yes, he was ancient, yet his brain still worked with 100% capacity. Indeed, he was still very sharp. His gratitude for living a long and full life never left him. He enjoyed music and devoted time to his bird watching hobby with his beloved and much younger wife for a few more blessed years.

I empathize with him. I could not imagine retiring. My job was my hobby, and I still felt very productive. When the Reduction-in-Force (RIF) hit me, I had a private conversation with myself. "I am glad they made the decision for me." "I survived numerous layoffs earlier for which I have sincere gratitude." "I should give room for the next generation. I should not be selfish." I always try

to develop my own narrative.

I immediately started to investigate how I could make myself useful with the knowledge, skills, and experience I had accumulated throughout my adult life. I had quite a few ideas, including Toastmasters. I am delighted to be around ambitious volunteers who wish to develop new skills, learn and grow. The pandemic opened more opportunities to visit clubs close by and far away — what a superb side benefit!

Attitude adjustment or learning to apply positive thinking helps everyone. I know a fellow who often starts a sentence with "I hate ..." or, "I had a horrible experience with" I am comfortable enough to stop him immediately and say: "May I ask you to tell me opposite stories, like 'I appreciate / like / love' or 'I had a pleasant experience with ...,' etc.?"

You may start a gratitude list: "What can I be thankful for today?" Most likely, you will include all aspects of your life but make sure to include something Toastmasters related, like the ones below.

We can apply the "words of the month" to step forward toward our highest potential during unforeseen circumstances that we cannot change. ■

What's on your gratitude list?

"I successfully shared files during ZOOM meeting today without a hitch."

"I used Outlook to submit my functionary report. It was easy, quick and fun."

"I submitted my 8th Ambassador visit form. I am still learning a lot from the clubs I visit. Each has its own character, loaded with numerous different, yet transferable ideas."

"I have read a few articles from the SYNERGY newsletter. What a handy resource, full of valuable thoughts."

"After so many ZOOM meetings, I was a bit apprehensive to attend one Toastmasters club as a guest via SKYPE, and another via WebEx, but I did it, and DEVELOPED more ways to connect with more people, and learned more 21st century tricks."

A Serendipitous Thanksgiving

by Sandy DePrimo, DTM



Sandy DePrimo

Ahhh, the smell of turkey is in the air with taste buds and stomachs more than ready to officially start Thanksgiving. The table is decorated with our best plates and silverware. The fat-bellied bird is finally placed on the table with a boatload of side dishes. For the first time in a long time, we are together around the table. The conversation begins as we break bread.

"What are you grateful for?"

One by one, we respond.

"I am grateful for my house, my family, and my job."

And then, "I am grateful for serendipity," someone says.

Serendipity. This becomes the topic of discussion for the entire meal.

"What is serendipity?" someone asks.

"Serendipity is when we accidentally find something good," another offers. "It's like finding a \$20.00 bill in a pair of pants that I haven't worn in a while. It was something I did not expect, and it made me grateful for the smile on my face and the ice cream cone I would later buy."

"Who can share a moment of serendipity that made you grateful?" someone else asks.

Silence overtakes the gathering as wheels begin to spin in everyone's minds. And then...

"Yesterday I won \$50.00 on a scratch-off ticket, I guess that is serendipity."

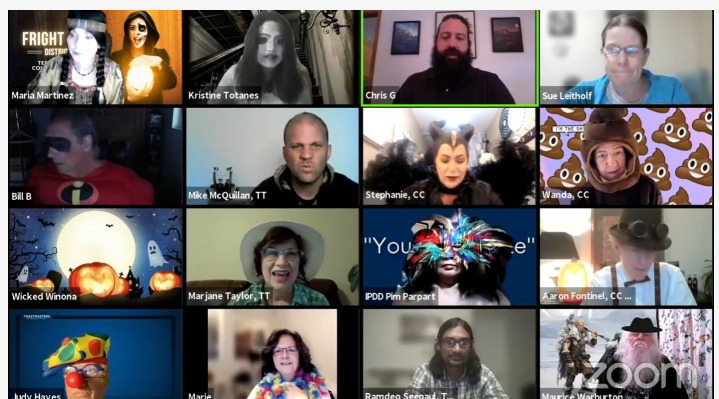
"I met my wife in a convenience store when her debit card did not work. I bought her gas and then took her to lunch. I guess I was in the right place, at the right time."

More serendipitous moments emerge throughout this memorable Thanksgiving meal.

During this season of gratitude, I wonder if we can think of any serendipitous times in our lives as Toastmasters. Maybe, for example, when you hope to place in a contest, you actually win. That could be pure serendipity. Be grateful for those priceless moments as they are signs that you are learning and growing. And perhaps they can serve as clues that you are worthy when going through rough times.

For example, I remember one year when my kids were little, and I couldn't afford to buy Christmas gifts, I was beating myself up. I told no one about my tribulation. Then, one day in December, the mail came and there was an anonymous Christmas card with \$80.00 in cash! I sat on the ground and cried. I am still more than grateful for that moment because it shed light at the end of a dark tunnel. I still don't know the sender, but I am indebted for the hope this serendipitous gift provided.

Whether it is Thanksgiving or Christmas or any day of our Toastmasters week, look for the minor signs and the silent wins; and be grateful. Give yourself grace and allow yourself to fail forward. Failing forward in Toastmasters means when you fall, fellow Toastmasters will pick you up so you can learn a lesson and continue to grow into your best self. Be kind to yourself through hard times and look for signs of serendipity this holiday season. They can happen when you least expect them. ■



Attendees at District 84 Fright Night, October 22, 2021

GIVE THANKS

Stories and Photos by Pamela Winter, DTM



Kristin Kaljaspolik

Kristin Kaljaspolik, a brand new member of Talk of the World Toastmasters in Ocala. Kristin was the very first to volunteer for this project because she is very passionate about the objects of her gratitude and couldn't wait to share her thoughts about her husband, Roland, and her

children with me and the District. After being twice divorced, Kristin had resigned herself to only being a dog mom. She's now a believer in miracles as she's found her "forever person" in her husband, Roland, and just adores creating new family traditions based on an atmosphere of love for her family. The photo she's holding is a continuation of one of her Thanksgiving/ Autumn traditions.



David Wesenberg

David Wesenberg is a long-time Toastmasters member of Minnesota and Michigan. He's currently president of Talk of the World Toastmasters. David leads a very active life with many volunteer positions in his community and church and owns his own consulting business where he is engaged full time with major companies around the country. He is grateful for the world of electronics and his computer that keeps him organized and connected throughout his busy day.



Robert Vlacancich

Robert (Rob) Vlacancich is the Vice President of Membership at Talk of the World Toastmasters and holding a photo (which I also took) of his life's treasure and wife, Leona. Rob wanted me to know that gratitude doesn't quite describe the depth of his feelings for Leona as he says she is his whole reason for being.



Evgeniya Yatsenko

Evgeniya Yatsenko and her husband Ari Welch. Evgeniya (Jenn) is a member of Talk of the World Toastmasters and a naturalized citizen, originally from Ukraine. She is a chemical engineer and is grateful for being able to live her dream life in America with the love of her life, Ari. Together they have a beautiful daughter, Katrina.

My Journey to Becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster

by Sue Leithoff, DTM



Sue Leithoff

As I reflect upon my Toastmasters journey, I realize there is much to be grateful for. Not only have I had amazing mentors and fellow club members, I have been fortunate to have been given opportunities to become not just a more improved Toastmaster but a better, much more confident person. My rise in leadership in District 84, though “meteoric” by some, has been

more like the evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibrium which is characterized by periods of calm and then periods of significant change.

My Toastmasters journey started merely to check off a yearly SMART goal for my annual job performance appraisal. I planned to stay for only about eight months, just as long as needed for the credit. But plans changed, and six years later, I am still here.

After giving my first Icebreaker from behind the lectern (well, not actually “at” the lectern but 3 feet behind it and would have been even further than that if I could have), I doubted I would ever make it long enough for the work credit. But in true Toastmasters fashion, not only was I offered to speak again (and again), I was given encouraging evaluations and was placed on the agenda to give additional speeches. In each one, my confidence grew. Then with subtle prodding, I took on various officer positions and then joined a second club.

Although I had considered becoming an Area Director (AD) a few times, I never had the confidence to put my name out there. It was only through the nomination of a mentor and now friend, that gave me the reassurance that I could do the job. During the AD interview I was asked if I was planning on being a DTM. This seemed well beyond my abilities, so I lied (sorry, Pim) and replied, “Yes, I am planning on working towards a DTM.” Again, thankfully, others saw things in me that I did not, and I can now, officially, call myself a DTM.

The leadership and confidence that I gained as an AD surprised everyone, including me. After the year was completed, I began taking on other roles and now find myself as the District Club Extension Chair and Zoom

master at many of the District’s online leadership events. I have even extended this newly found confidence to run for a seat on my Homeowner Association (HOA) board.

I am so grateful that my mentors, fellow Toastmasters, and District leadership have helped me learn a huge life lesson: Instead of waiting for opportunities to come, take them on. You may fail, but with the assistance of amazing fellow District 84 Toastmasters, you will learn many lessons and come out on the other end a more improved Toastmaster and person. ■

Toastmaster Leadership Institute (TLI)

January 8, 2022, 12:30— 4 pm

January 12, 2022, 6— 8pm (officer training & MOT only)

January 16, 2022, 12:30— 4 pm

**DISTRICT 84 PRESENTS
TOASTMASTERS**

...AND THE ANSWER IS??

JEOPARDY!

DECEMBER 11, 2021 @ 6 PM

[CLICK HERE FOR THE ZOOM LINK](#)

DTM Service Projects Help Build Stronger Communities

by Sowjanya Athmakuri Ramini,
LD5, DL5, Area 93 Director



Sowjanya Athmakuri

Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) is the highest honor bestowed upon a select few—less than one percent—who meet the rigid requirements set by Toastmasters International (TI). Among the six requirements, one of the most important ones is to complete a service project that aims at helping the community while putting

the prospective DTM's leadership and communication skills at work.

For this project, Toastmasters often choose a pressing problem within their community. They pull all the resources that can help craft a solution to the problem, which involves rigorous planning and preparation. Once they identify resources, Toastmasters set clear expectations with short-term and long-term goals and clear timelines. This process puts both their leadership and communication skills to work.

Toastmasters Magazine has featured high-impact projects like "Mentoring for Mentors," "Smiling Hearts Farm and Orphanage," and "How to Win the Job at the Job Interview" portraying their immense success. A common thread in all these projects is the passion that the prospective DTM brings to the table. All three Toastmasters wanted to help the community in their own way.

DTM Clare Crowther, "Mentoring for Mentors" project: Clare is passionate about creating materials that mentors can use to facilitate their protégés' growth and success. She worked with clubs in her area to create questionnaires to understand what is most needed to provide accurate guidance. She then developed materials to fill the gap. With resonating success, she was able to equip mentors with valuable resources.

DTM Tony Stutes, "Smiling Hearts Farm and Orphanage"

project: Tony is passionate about lending a helping hand to the communities that are in dire need of financial stability. Tony, and his wife Sandy, aimed to help a community in Africa by assisting with learning by collecting funds to provide necessary education in "agricultural school," which in turn helped them learn sustainable farming. "Teach to fish," Tony said, as he has witnessed firsthand the benefits of empowerment. Tony and Sandy tasted sweet success when the farm they helped establish produced needed financial stability for the community.

DTM Fred Haley, "How to Win the Job at the Job Interview" project: Fred is passionate about helping community members secure a job by arming them with relevant skills to ace the interview process. He created handout materials for use at local libraries to reach his audience. With persistent outreach, Fred was rewarded with great success when three of the attendees informed him that his presentation helped them secure jobs.

Although securing DTM is a steep climb with completing a service project as one huge milestone, with a clear aim and unwavering passion, one can achieve this high pinnacle of success while feeling satisfied that they contributed to a stronger community in the process. ■

District 84 January TLI - Call for Presenters & Moderators

We invite applications to present club officer training, educational or enrichment sessions as well as session moderators for the upcoming TLI in January 2022.

[Submit applications here](#)

Deadline for submission is December 1

In Memoriam: Johnny Campbell

by Marcia Buzzella, ACG, EC2,
Windermere Toastmasters
President

It is with great sadness to announce the passing of our friend and fellow Toastmaster, Johnny Campbell, DTM, AS. Johnny passed away September 29, 2021.

Johnny was instrumental in helping found the Windermere Toastmasters Club in 2015 and maintained his membership with us ever since. Due to his intense travel schedule, Johnny attended infrequently, but when he did, he did so in style, while generously sharing his stories and influence with our club.

With each interaction, Johnny encouraged new members to join Toastmasters or prodded existing members out of their penchant for procrastination. As a Distinguished Toastmaster and Accredited Speaker—a designation awarded to a select few by Toastmasters International (TI), Johnny was a powerful presenter. He practiced his craft continuously and was relentless in his pursuit of personal development. He urged us to do the same by changing our perspective and by embracing opportunities that Toastmasters provided.

When the pandemic started in 2020, Johnny stayed after one of our meetings to chat in the parking lot with club officers. He encouraged us to look carefully for the possibilities in the change that was sure to come. His thoughts and suggestions were so captivating that no one noticed the ravenous mosquitos turning us into midnight snacks. To hear some of Johnny's thoughts, you can tune into TI's [podcast](#) where Johnny was interviewed earlier this summer

about "Transitioning Through These Times of Change." (30-minute listen)

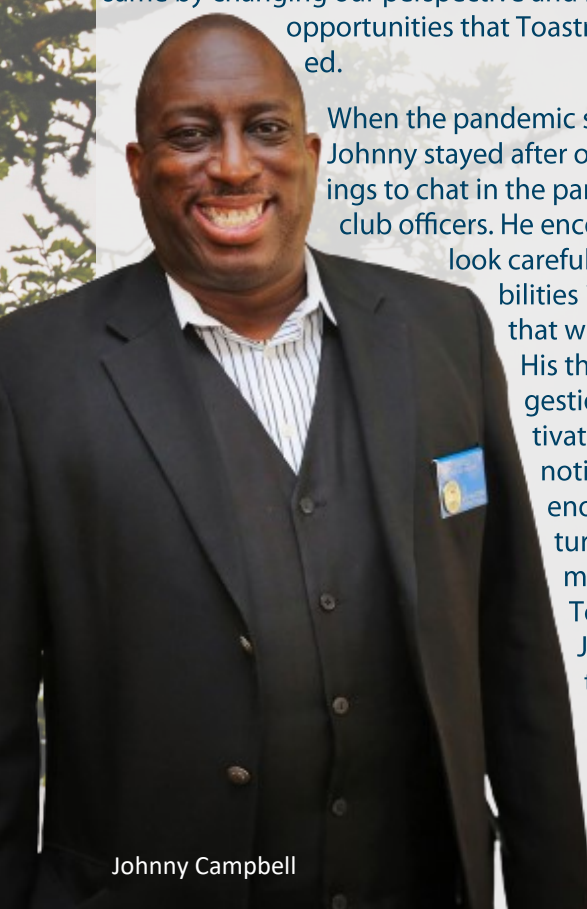
Over the last 20 years, Johnny spent a lot of time on the road sharing his words of wisdom at corporate events and conferences. His span of influence is truly remarkable. The results achieved by audiences acting on his advice prompted him to adopt the name *The Transition Man*. With only a few words, Johnny could make a mountain of difference. Thankfully we can still hear The Transition Man's sage counsel in countless speaking and educational [videos](#) posted online and the six books he authored about improving performance and adapting to change.

We at Windermere Toastmasters know that Johnny's voice will remain strong among the angels. That's just who and how he is. The Transition Man's larger-than-life presence and brilliant smile will be missed. However, his call to action, "embrace change and win," will live on in our hearts.

Rest in peace Johnny. ■

*"Life is what you create
it to be."*

— Johnny Campbell

A portrait of Johnny Campbell, a Black man with a warm smile, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored striped shirt. He is standing in front of a background of green trees.

Johnny Campbell

Turning Life's Lemons into Sweet Lemonade

by Marjane Taylor, DTM



Marjane Taylor

We've all heard the sayings: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," and "Every cloud has a silver lining." If you've been in Toastmasters long enough, you've probably heard, "Your mess is your message!"

What does that mean? It may mean that what you desire in life isn't measuring up to the results you're getting. On the other

hand, for most of us, even our worst days are better than someone else's best days. I may not want to cook what's in my refrigerator, but I have a refrigerator at least. That's something to be thankful for. I may grumble about having turkey – AGAIN – but some people would be very happy to have anything to fill their bellies.

If life gives us lemons, then COVID-19 is indeed the sourest lemon I've ever tasted. It's not something most would wish on their worst enemies. (Okay, maybe some of you would, but I doubt you'd want to admit it.) What is the silver lining? For me, it has been a reflection of what is important in life. Friends, family, life itself! And YOU. My Toastmasters friends kept me sane those first few months when all we had were online meetings and fear. (They may later drive me crazy, but so far, I think I'm good. You may disagree.)

If your silver lining always seems to have a cloud behind it, your lemonade is still sour, or you can't seem to find a message in your mess, here's something I'd like you to do. Take some time and write down a few things you can be grateful for, or try writing a thank you note.

If Jimmy Fallon can do it, so can you.

"Thank you, Toastmasters Pathways, for reminding me that I am not a computer genius."

"Thank you, club members, for waiting until the last minute to sign up for roles so that I can challenge myself by seeing how prepared I can seem when taking on five roles at the same time."

"Thank you, Toastmasters, for giving me countless opportunities to hear about leadership styles and give Ice Breaker speeches."

I don't know about you, but I'm tired of lemonade, cloudy days, and messes. Instead, maybe I'll make a lemon pie and bask in a little sunshine. I could go for those! I may be stuck with the messes, so I'll be on the lookout for the messages to go with them.

If you don't like the results you're getting out of life, try changing the way you're going about it. Maybe there really is something to "taking a walk on the sunny side of life." Add some humor to your life. You may just find that everything you do seems better! Even those sour lemons may end up tasting delicious. Or do what I'm going to do. When life hands me lemons, I'm giving them back and demanding CHOCOLATE. I deserve it, and so do you! ■

NEW

The Improved Pathways Level 1

The revised Level 1 has four projects—with five speeches—which include a mix of familiar fundamentals and new skill-building practices. The time-honored "Ice Breaker" project has been substantially updated with new content. The "Evaluation and Feedback" project remains a two-speech project and is joined by "Writing a Speech With Purpose" and "Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language." Before completing Level 1, members will also need to serve as a speech evaluator.

Monthly Sessions

Learn how PATHWAYS is the companion on your Toastmasters journey!

Zoom ID: 853 1202 4512
Passcode: 448672

17th of every month* at 7pm ET

*except January 2022

November focus:

Assisting new members

December focus:

Working through the levels as a member

January focus:

Base Camp Managers

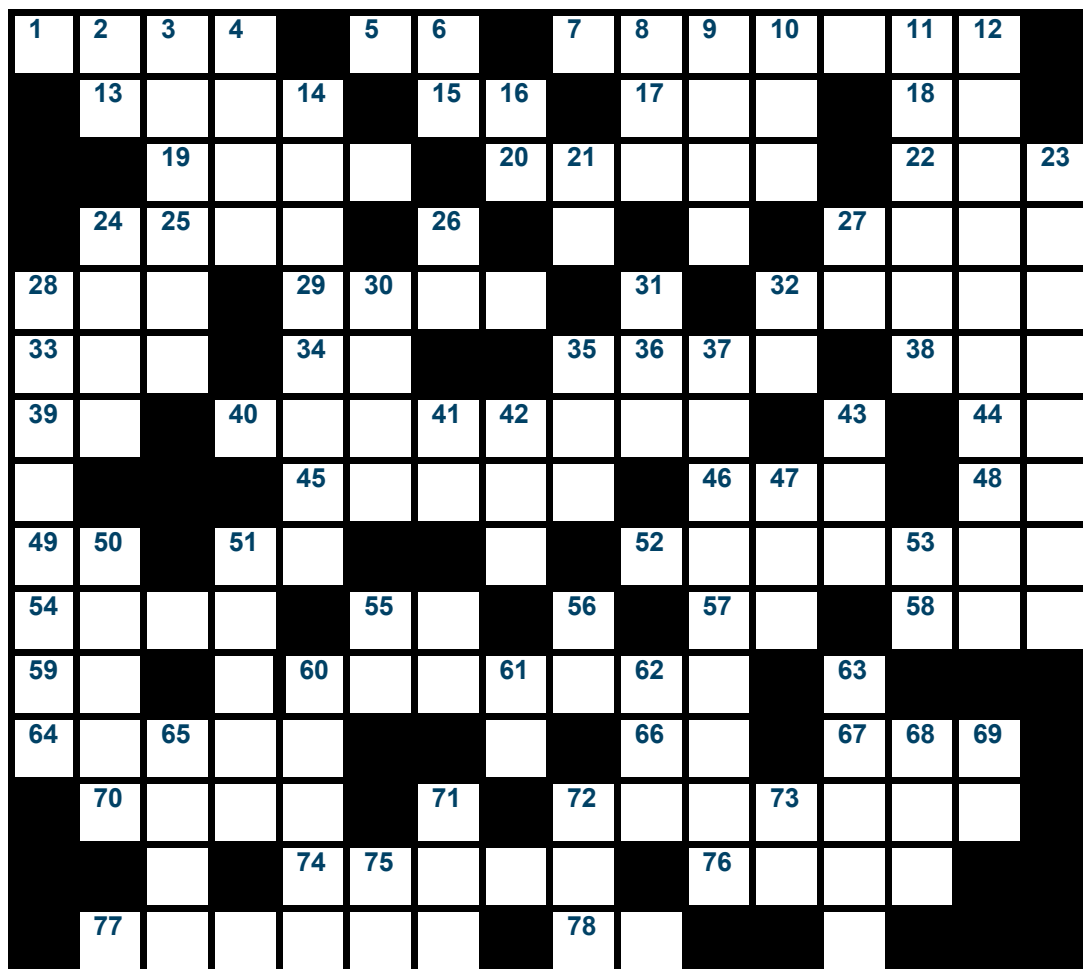
TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS
— learning experience —

Toastmasters Vocabulary

by Julie Salgo, Cruciverbalist

Across

1. Used to express pain
5. Toastmasters International
7. One of TI's Core Values
13. Eligible member
15. Pennsylvania
17. The highest
18. Previous spouse
19. District Leadership
20. Topics
22. A playing card
24. Helps
27. We pay membership
28. Professional
29. We have.....limits
32. Membership is not for a child but an ..
33. Ringer Equivalent Number (abbreviated)
34. Rhode Island
36. Offer
38. Toastmasters Leadership Institute
39. Each (abbreviated)
40. D84 has 9 s
44. Them (abbreviated)
45. D84 has 168 active ...
46. Opposite of bottom
48. Symbol of Sodium
49. Suffix
51. That thing
52. One of TI's Core Values
54. A word for people, places, things
55. Preposition
57. A private soldier in the U.S. Army
58. Engineering Society after "I"
59. Double T
60. A word in our District Mission
64. The 11 Paths have 5 ... s
66. Toastmasters International acronym
67. Receding
70. The bottom of a shoe
72. A way of achieving Toastmaster results
74. A person who helps clubs
76. Toastmasters starts in July
77. A person who helps individuals



Down

2. Opposite of down
3. Domestic animal
4. Employed without "e"
6. Internet Protocol
8. ETB
9. During meeting you can have a ..
10. Vice President of Education
11. CEAUUT
12. One of TI's Core Values
14. 84 is our ...
16. Preposition
21. We count the use of s
23. Judge the value
24. D84 has 41 ...s
25. An atom or molecule
26. We count the use ofs
27. Double D
28. You stand up and ...
30. IIVL
31. Management by Objectives
32. You may put it in a conference brochure
35. Not hers
37. One of TI's Core Values
41. International Unit
42. Small Business Administration
43. An application
47. OSI
50. Brief records
51. Computer chip maker company
53. Electrical Engineer
55. Toast Master
56. Enlisted Women
60. We choose officers
61. Links alternatives
62. The seventh letter of the Greek alphabet
63. Recognition without "d"
65. Poll
68. This year we want to raise it
69. Preposition
71. A level considered to be average
72. Doctor of Philosophy
73. Not she
75. Double O



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