

# Newsletter



Hong Kong Toastmasters Club

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**"Exploit, Enjoy, and Reciprocate! My Toastmasters Journey So Far" by Monica Romeo**

For those of you who know me, you know I love words: not just how they sound but what they mean and how they affect you. To me the Toastmasters journey is a bit like Life in general. It is an opportunity to exploit (*to make the best use of*) and enjoy (*to receive pleasure from*)! It is also an opportunity for reciprocity (*a mutual exchange of benefit*). These three words sum up what Toastmasters means to me.

The word *exploit* is sometimes used in a negative context, but it has such a positive meaning. It is about making the most of a situation, learning from it and making each moment count. Whether I am preparing for a Speech, for Table Topics, for a support Role or simply being an audience Member: I try to *exploit* the opportunity that is presented.

When I choose a topic I ask myself; *Is this topic going to help me meet the Speech objectives? Can I learn something from this? (What's in it for me?). And more importantly, What's in it for the audience?* If I am preparing for a role I ask myself; *Can I do this in a more creative way? What do I want to achieve or learn? And What's in it for the audience?* If I am an audience Member, I ask myself; *What can I learn from this Speaker or Evaluator? Am I actively participating in the Meeting (listening, giving written feedback and making eye contact with the Speakers, volunteering for Table Topics, or exchanging information with other Members)?*

After all, time is precious and I want to make the most of it!

*Enjoy* is also an important word for me. I want to enjoy Public Speaking! To me enjoyment is about feeling comfortable and relaxed, having fun, sharing, and contributing. There is a lot I already enjoy about Toastmasters; tossing ideas around, researching material, progressing as a Speaker, getting to know other Members, chatting before the Meeting or during the break (it should be longer!), and also over dinner. I am enjoying the opportunity to get to know an amazingly diverse, skilled and interesting group of people with different points of view and learning about the personal and political issues that are important to other Toastmasters, both expats and locals.

I am looking forward to enjoying the actual *Public Speaking* part! I know it will happen eventually, but so far despite my creative endeavours ( among other things I have tried to convince myself that the physical symptoms of anxiety that I experience before speaking; like sweaty palms, a racing heart and butterflies in my tummy; are really signs of sexual arousal!) I still do have some residual anxiety before I speak, although it is getting better. I do believe that the more "stage time" I have, the more confidence and skill I am developing.

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The other key to enjoying myself is *knowing and being comfortable with who I am*. I know I am an organised and motivational Speaker –I am not a humorous one, although I love sharing funny stories with friends. I know my challenge as a Speaker is to bring the light-hearted and funny side of myself into my Speeches. The more I know and accept my own unique strengths and weaknesses, the more effective I will be and the more I will enjoy myself!

*Reciprocity* (re see pro city) is something that I always keep at the back of my mind. To me every relationship; whether friend/friend, colleague/colleague, teacher/student, boss/employee, even parent/child; involves reciprocity. Every situation I am in is an opportunity to learn and to teach; in short, to reciprocate. It is never a one way street. As a Speaker I can learn from and contribute to the audience, as an Evaluator I can contribute to and learn from the Speaker. Feedback can be a precious gift because it may alert me to my “blind spots”; those things I may be unaware of that can impact on my speech like pronunciation/grammatical errors, personal tics/habits that may distract the audience, or words or a style that causes the audience to disconnect or lose interest. However, it is always that feedback (someone else’s opinion) should be taken with respect, but with caution. Feedback to me-both positive and negative –is often subjective and I take it with a grain of salt. The person whose feedback I value the most is mine. If I am clear about what I want to achieve and how I’ll know if I’ve been successful; then I can take responsibility for my own progress and enjoy my success.

I believe we are all actual or potential Masterpieces. At the moment I am still a work in progress. Toastmasters is contributing to what I hope will be an amazing finished product.

***President’s Column – April 2007 by Elsa Law***

***The Spirit of the Team***

We have had an exciting month in March. Our in-house Prepared Speech and Table Topic Contests had a number of our Members working hard. Perhaps, it is the spirit of never being afraid to try; that made our Contestants give their best. It ended up with Christine Lau being the Champion of the Prepared Speech Contest and Tina Wong being the Champion of the Table Topic Speech Contest. That was only the beginning. The real work began when a number of us read the written Draft of Christine’s Speech and provided feedback. After that, we sat in and listened to Christine’s rehearsal Speech. Supporting members were fierce in giving their feedback and without reservation. Poor Christine had had the daunting task to collect various thoughts and put them all together into a winning Speech.

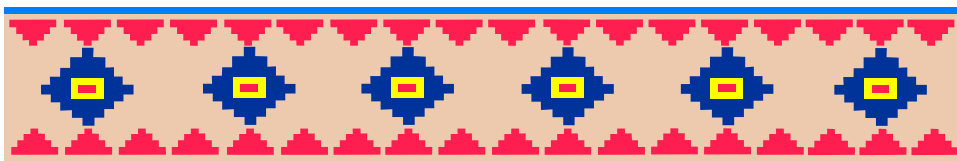
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That paid off, Christine won in the Area Contest! Her Speech was most moving, as she spoke from personal experience and from her heart; which almost had the audience crying with tears. As for Tina, she worked doubly hard by herself. Being the Champion a number of times in Table Topic Speech contests; Tina had no worries about winning, and she did! Congratulations to our two Area Speech Champions!!

The story did not end there. What was most touching and showing how united we are in supporting Christine and Tina was at one of the meetings where we made use of the free time available, as we were finishing 15 minutes earlier than usual. We had both Champions rehearsing their Speeches. It was indeed a superb opportunity for most of our Members to give their comments and views on how our Champions' Speeches could be further improved. The energy and support created at this particular meeting was tremendous. Now, our Champions are quietly working on their own techniques to prepare themselves for the Division Contests to be held on 21st April 2007. Do we want our champions to win? Sure, but I certainly do not wish our Champions to feel any pressure from us. I merely wish to say that I have full confidence that our Champions will do their best. Whatever the result may be, our Champions will always be Champions in my heart! I will leave the judging to all the contest judges. In the meantime, I wish our Tina and Christine the very best!!!

Just yesterday, I had an opportunity to speak with our VPE Cherry; who is quietly working for us in ensuring that our Speech slots, along with all the other roles at our Meetings are filled in. Cherry called late in the evening, almost in a panic. She said "I have only 2 Speakers confirmed for the next Meeting. Most of the Members whom I have contacted or left a message for have not come back to me. I've spent several hours calling various Members, but am getting nowhere!" The frustration and disappointment she felt were evident in her voice. As shared by Cherry, this is not the first time that she spent her time getting nowhere; it happens most of the time when preparing for each Meetings. Members who reap the benefit of Cherry and others' work probably do not realize that their contribution, no matter how small a part it may seem, does have great impact in the overall scheme of things. A quick call or a quick e-mail response to Cherry and the other VPEs will save most of the frustration and disappointment felt by Cherry and will, most certainly, help her to feel she is doing a worthy job. On top of that, we often have Members promising to make a Speech but letting our VPEs down at the last minute by telling them that they could not take up their Role. Not that this isn't allowed (after all, emergencies happen); but it would enable other Members a chance to make his/her Speech if sufficient notice is given to our VPEs. Let's work together to improve our communication with our VPEs. May I urge our Members to co-operate more fully, and make HKTMC a Club that wins for all!!!



## Members' News!!

### Member's News

1. **IMPORTANT: Moving of Meeting Venue:** From **March, 2007** onward, we have moved back to the Japanese Club at their new venue at Palibury Plaza, 18F & 19F, 68 Yee Woo Street, Causeway Bay. (Causeway bay MTR Exit F, about 4 minutes walk along Jardine's Crescent) The new location is right next to the Regal Hotel.

## New Members' Corner!!

### Joey Lo

Joey's birthday is on December 11, the same day that Ivana Trump divorced Donald Trump. She is single, until she learns Martial Arts. She is the MD, Maniac Director, at a new commercial Finance Company. Her interest is to keep torturing herself until she feels numb; so she'll have the courage to do anything she wants without fearing failure. Her reason to join HKTM is to learn how to make delicious French toast. When she found out that it's not a culinary class, she decided to learn how to give a scrumptious Toast in French. But she has to learn French first! Her objective in her Toastmaster journey is to torment fellow Members with her excruciating Presentation skills so they have no choice but to help her improve; to alleviate their pain. She expects that HKTM is a friendly Club that won't kick her out just because of the immense emotional pain she inflicts upon its Members. Joey is really a funny person!!



## Past Events!

1. It's always our intention to praise the best Speakers at our Regular Meetings. **Let's give a round of applause to our best Speakers at the following meetings!!**

Meeting Date	Best Prepared Speech Speaker	Best Evaluator	Best Table Topics Speaker
March 19, 2007	Teresa SM Lee	Christine Lau & Lap Wong	Tina Wong
April 2, 2007	Resham Premchand	Asta Lee	Christine Lau
April 16, 2007	Monica Romeo	Arthur Ting	Christine Lau & James Chue

2. **At the Area H2 International Speech and Table Topic Contest on March 31, 2007; our Christine Lau and Tina Wong won the Championships for International Speech and Table Topic contests, respectively. They will be representing our Club in the Division K & H contest.**



**Many Congratulations  
to our Christine Lau  
and Tina Wong!!**

**Let's give them a BIG  
round of applause!!**



## Past Events! Continued...

3. We are delighted and proud to announce that our Christine Lau and Tina Wong have won at the Division H International Speech and Table Topic Contests on April 21, 2007. Christine came second in the International Speech Contest and Tina is the Champion of the Table Topic Contest. Our heartfelt congratulations to them both!!!

Tina will go on to District Contest during the Convention in May. Please come and support our Tina!



## Upcoming Events!

### 1. **Toastmasters International District 80 Hong Kong Annual Convention - May 18-20, 2007**

*It is rare that an Annual Convention is held in Hong Kong, so grab hold of this chance to meet and share with outstanding Speakers, and to attend various activities.*

*Fee: Special price for Group tickets (please contact our Teresa Lee on 9707-71298 or email her: [tsmlee@netvigator.com](mailto:tsmlee@netvigator.com))*

### 2. **Dinner Meeting – June 25, 2007**

*Time: 6:30 - 10:30 p.m.*

*Venue-Police officers' Club, No.28 Hung Hing Rd., Causeway Bay, Hong Kong  
Fee and other details - to be announced.*

### 3. **TI District Semi-Annual Convention – November 16-18, 2007**

*Fee: S\$298.18 (buy 10 get the 11th free)*

*For more details: please visit <http://www.district80convention.org/> or contact Patricia Lum: [plum@pacificn.net.sg](mailto:plum@pacificn.net.sg) or Edward Ma: [edwardma@singnet.sg](mailto:edwardma@singnet.sg)*

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