

Toastmasters District 55 Fall Conference – Education Sessions

1. Tony Grasso, CC/CL



Title and Description

“Life after Layoff”

Many of us think that our lives are in crisis when in reality the crisis is nothing more than an inconvenience. This presentation is uplifting challenging and life changing and will give the audience insight into how the Toastmaster experience will help you hedge the downside. Adapt and make it a great adventure without being eaten the jungle of life.

Biography: Tony Grasso refuses to understand the meaning of “can’t.” From designing and building a 500,000 volt particle accelerator as a high school student in west Texas to becoming an accomplished power lifter for the University Of Notre Dame, he has always enjoyed pushing his limits and striving continually to achieve the next goal.

After retiring at the age of 38, Tony relocated to Queretaro, Mexico, and founded the first certified Auto Cad training center in Mexico. Tony has a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Notre Dame and an MBA from the University of La Verne. Displaying a lifelong passion for fitness, he has practiced several martial art styles and is currently training for a triathlon. Displaying his competitive bent, he has won numerous martial arts competitions including a 3rd place at the National Karate Federation Tournament and public speaking competitions.

Tony enjoys exercising, public speaking, and spending time with friends, his three daughters and one very precocious granddaughter.

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2. Paul Wilson, DTM



Title and Description

“Great Club Meetings — Every Week!”

Have your Club meetings been lacking in that certain "something"?

Attend this session to learn proven strategies for GREAT meetings. You'll also prepare agendas for interesting and exciting meetings that keep current members engaged and encourage visitors to return and join — week after week.

Biography: Paul Wilson is former educator and educational consultant. Now semi-retired, Paul enjoys Toastmasters meetings and activities. He's also an active participant in four different car clubs; taking scenic drives and long weekend trips.

A six-year member of West Austin II, Paul recently concluded terms as Club President and Area Governor; both of which earned President's Distinguished status. The recent term as Area Governor completed Paul's DTM requirements; a designation he now proudly carries.

Paul believes that effective Clubs engage and support their members during each and every meeting. Members who are supported and encouraged grow in their abilities and achieve personal educational and leadership goals; thus furthering Club goals.

Today, Paul shares some effective Club meeting strategies and offers guided practice to help adapt these ideas to YOUR Club culture

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3. Lana R. Castle, ACG/CL



Title and Description

“Get More Speaking Gigs by Publishing a Book!”

Nothing establishes you as an instant expert like having written and published a book. The idea may seem daunting, but it can be easier than you think! If you can write a speech, you can write -- and publish -- a book. In this session, you'll learn about the quickest and most economical ways to publish both printed books and ebooks. Then watch your speaking career soar!

Biography: Lana Castle is an editor, publishing consultant and teacher with over 28 years of experience in communications and publishing. She is also an internationally published author of books, columns and articles. She specializes in editing and producing print and electronic book-length materials. Lana has been a member of Exchange Park Toastmasters since 1998.

4. Juancho Bierlein – ACB/CL



Title and Description

"The Good Agreement: Non-Adversarial, Needs-Based Negotiation"

We will discuss negotiations styles, strategies, common pitfalls, and solutions. The approaches are based on my 25+ years of experience in negotiating contracts and how negotiations apply to many realms of life. We will begin by how to frame negotiations in a non-adversarial manner, but still to your advantage. We will then discuss how an understanding of each side's needs drive their negotiations approach and aims. Finally, concluding negotiations in a manner that meets the needs of both parties and sets the stage for continued business relations.

Biography: Senior Associate with Coley and Associates, a firm that manages contracts for companies that do business with the Federal Government. He was an Adjunct Professor at American University and spent 7 years working on Capitol Hill as a legislative analyst and assistant. As a Federal contractor, he was a lead/writer editor for contracts in support of the U.S. Departments of Energy, Health and Human Services, and Department of Justice. He has authored 3 books.

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5. Michael Joseph, DTM



Cheryl Ramirez, ACB/ALB



Title and Description:

“Looking Through the Keyhole, Going beyond your club”

Toastmasters offers a wonderland of opportunities for speaking and leading outside the local club. This presentation outlines a variety of activities that challenge and enable one to excel in communication and leadership skills far beyond what can be achieved at the club level. Participation in these programmed activities outside the local Toastmasters club prepares an individual for very advanced skills in employment related and personal projects

Biography (Michael): Michael Joseph first joined Toastmasters in 1994. He has held every club office and has served as Area Governor more than once. He also serves in District 55 appointed roles when needed including audit committee, Bookstore assistant, assistant area governor, TLI Presenter, and more. He made educational presentations to Chinese clubs when he lived in China. Michael is a DTM.

Biography (Cheryl): Cheryl Ramirez has been a Toastmaster since March 2009 and is a proud member of Beyond Basics, a club for advanced Toastmasters. Cheryl is Chairperson of District 55 Speakers Bureau giving fellow Toastmasters an area to find and fulfill the speaking, coaching and educational needs of the community.

6. Dwayne Windham, ACG/CL



Title and Description:

"Presentation Tech 101"

Does it seem like you can never get that image on the screen you want? Has PowerPoint left you powerless? Do you have a deep, dark fear of the Blue Screen of Death? Lose the fear of technology in presentations with our local support geek! In this session, we will step through – (with clear geek-to-American English translations) how to help prevent problems with presentation technology, and quick tips on last-minute troubleshooting in case things don't work as planned.

Biography: District Public Relations Officer (PRO) Dwayne Windham, ACG/CL has been part of Dell technical support for over 13 years. As a speaker, he is the current District 55 Evaluation Contest champion, a certified Dell Executive Briefing Center Presenter, and has personally used technology in Division-level International Speech competition.