

Toastmasters of Paris

November 19, 2024



WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

Amelie, Toastmaster of the Evening, told us she was “full of beans,” having returned from an event at which 90 family members were gathered, their ages ranging from 6 months to 83. This event prompted her to choose *family* as the theme for the evening.

THE TOAST Jessica

“I want to tell you a little story,” Jessica announced before describing of Toastmasters International’s hundredth birthday celebration. She had told the organizers that she was a vegan; nevertheless, she was surprised to be sought out and presented with special vegan biscuits and pastries. She was “Touched by their intentions,” intentions that made her think about family. Family is not just a matter of where you are born, she decided. It’s which people you choose to be with, which people say, “I see you and I value you” - fellow Toastmasters!



“Home and family are where you are loved the most and act the worst.”

THE WORD – Tristan

Tristan explained that the family is where you should feel most loved and most safe. This protection, he said, is a COCOON.

The word, which can be used in both noun and verbs formats, was used by four people - Thibaut, Nessica, Benoit, and Amelie.

THE JOKE – Alex

A family sat eating their soup. “Dad, do you like bugs?” the son asked. “Disgusting!” came the reply, “and please don’t talk about that when I am trying to eat!” The boy was quiet until the meal was over. “Why do you want to know if I like bugs?” the father then asked. “Because there was one in your soup!”

Contest Call!

Suzanne’s speech (scroll down) was a passionate call for candidates for our club contest. She placed this within our Toastmasters journey. Although winners go on to the next level, she argues that people shouldn’t worry about being competitive: we should enter because, unless we step out of our comfort zone, we cannot make progress.

If you are interested, if only to ask questions, the members of the ExComm can give you more details.

“Here’s the chance to step out. Take the next step!”

Joanne's Table Topics

LAURA - WHAT STRENGTHS AND LIFE LESSONS DID YOU INHERIT FROM YOUR PARENTS?

Laura told us her mother taught her many things, the most important of these was resilience or 'grit': this means that in moments of challenge and doubt, she can believe in herself and keep pushing on. The greatest lesson she learned from her father was the notion of letting go and relinquishing control.

ALISON - WHAT TRADITIONS DOES YOUR FAMILY HAVE?

Alson told us that her father always said the same thing at Christmas. After the presents were distributed, he would put on a funny voice (which she demonstrated) and say, "We've all done very well!" At Christmas each year, she now finds herself doing the same thing!



PETER - SMILES



Peter told us that if you are walking down the street and come across someone looking sad, try smiling – they invariably smile back! "That's communication," he told us, "so always be ready to smile!"

YONGDAI - IN A WORLD OF GENE EDITING, WHAT GENES WOULD YOU CHANGE?

Although he studied economics at university and worked as a banker, Yungai is fascinated by engineering. If he could change his genetic make-up, he would like to be better at science and coding so he could change his career path to explore this.

FLORENCE - FAMILY STORIES

Her family has many stories, but Florence wanted to tell us of a special Thanksgiving when she was about nine. She spent it with her aunt and uncle in the States – where she was surprised to discover that it became completely dark at around four in the afternoon. She remembers going to the mall with its amusement rides and having a family photo taken. "It was lovely to spend time as a family," she concluded.

YANNIS - HOW DID TRYING TIMES BRING YOUR FAMILY CLOSER TOGETHER?

Yannis told us about the difficulties of getting his family physically close together. He has family members living all over the world. For example, this Christmas he won't be with them.



Speeches and Evaluations

FIRST TIMES (Icebreaker)

Thibaut asked us about the ‘first times’ we remember – first day at school, a kiss, our ice breaker? – before talking about his first trip abroad as a way to introduce himself to us.

Jessica praised a “fantastic” speech in which Thibaut introduced himself in a manner that was both relatable and intriguing. His initial questions pulled us in, and his easily followed anecdote created suspense. Next time, she advised, he should close the loop, returning to the beginning, especially as that contained the important message. Jessica told Thibaut that his “calm and soothing” voice makes us feel safe, but she suggested that greater vocal variety would add energy to the speech. To conclude, she complimented his “courage and authenticity” in this first official speech.

HOW TO BOOST YOUR TOASTMASTERS’ ADVENTURE

Suzanne called for candidates for the annual speech contest, outlining what we can expect and presenting the support roles available (judge, timer, etc.) if we do not wish to compete.

Siobhan enjoyed Suzanne’s fine blend of material (personal experience, persuasion, and expository facts about the contest), all infused with humor, as well as her excellent vocal variety and body language. She suggested two structural changes – firstly, explaining the contest chair and chief judge together with the other roles and secondly avoiding saying something that sounds like a climactic ending before the speech is over.

DENTAL FLOSS

Martin presented a humorous narrative about a man on a dinner date when all he really wants to do is floss!

Alex applauded Martin for his confidence, presence, and “an incredibly well-structured speech.” He noted that humor was often created through ridicule, enjoying the innuendo (flossing “one handed” and the offer to “show how it’s done”!). The introduction of potential disaster (a condom flipping onto the table) was enjoyable, as was the imagery used to describe it (a mini Martian flying saucer). If there was one weak point, and Alex said that it was hard to find any, it was that Martin spoke through the audience’s laughter at the beginning until getting into his stride. It was, Alex concluded, “A great speech!”

LEADING FOR RESULTS

Suzanne examined her leadership styles – everything except bureaucratic, she suggested! She noted that style is simply how to ‘get the job done’ and this depends on the culture of the organization.

Benoit enjoyed the cynicism of Suzanne’s opening remark that the leadership style speech can be boring, He congratulated her - on giving two speeches, on her vocal variety and her voice modulation, on her use of two-handed gestures, and her ability to change pace. Moving forward, he suggested she might try experimenting with lowering her voice to increase her range.

Guests

VENUS introduced herself as DTM from Thailand. She has been a Toastmaster for the last eight years and is here working for the network. She enjoyed the spirit of the evening, not dissimilar to that of her own club. She encouraged the guests to consider joining us: “It’s the right time for you to be a part of this club!”

MAYUMI was joining us for the fifth time. She has been an active Toastmaster since 2004. She says the visits have been “really great” and she would like to join the club,

NATHALIE, a teacher in Paris, wants to improve her communication skills in an anglophone club. She was impressed that almost everyone has a role and said she was looking forward to her next visit.

HYUNJOO was visiting for a second time. The first time was good but “overwhelming” - this second experience was “more comfortable”! She says that life can be a bit routine so Toastmasters makes an interesting change.

YONGDAE, who has been in Paris for a little over a year, “expected a lot” but found “it was much better”!

ARTHUR, who is only in Paris every second week, would like to improve speaking and leadership skills. He enjoyed the “great topics and good food” - and is aiming at the table topics ribbon next time!

ANTSANIAINA, who heard about Toastmasters from friends, thought the meeting was interesting and enjoyed hearing opinions on a variety of topics.

LORA, a business student from Croatia, described the club members as wanting to learn from each other, a place of community, friendship, and leadership. She wants to come back.

HELEB, who said the meeting was interesting, has been in Paris for four years and hopes to find English-speaking friendship.

MICHELLE is on an internship for a year. She says she is not a fluent English speaker but found the TMPers very supportive.

PIERRE was on a first visit. He noticed we have “lots of rules” and said that he has questions. Alex, acting President in Vicki’s absence, welcomed his interest.

Ava’s General Evaluation

Ava noted that, although we started late, we caught up. She noted the number of people taking on roles for the first time (Tristan, Joanne, Ava, Florence, and Yannis), as well as all the work that had gone on “behind the scenes” to make the evening work. Martin and Suzanne had both stepped up at the last minute, she told us.

Joanne had called up a good variety of speakers for the table topics, but it might be helpful to have provided some tips about how to approach these speeches, she suggested.

Ava also drew attention to seating: members should ensure that they spread themselves around the room so guests have support.

Award Winners

“You are never really playing an opponent.
You are playing yourself, your own highest standards,
and when you reach your limits, that is real joy.”

Arthur Ashe



ICE BREAKER - THIBAUT



TABLE TOPICS - LORA AND ALISON



SPEECH - SUZANNE



EVALUATION - JESSICA

Final Words

Alex, standing in as President in Vicki's absence, closed the meeting. Importantly, he announced the next training day, open to all District 59 Division A toastmasters – all TMPers.

It is important that as many officers as possible attend, as this gains points for the club. However, if you are interested in serving as officer in the future, you should find this particularly interesting. And if you simply want to "Make your club more successful," you are equally urged to attend.

The training takes place this coming Saturday (November 30) and is an on-line (Zoom) meeting from 9h to 14h.



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 30
CLUB OFFICER TRAINING
9:00 - 14:00 (Paris Time)



Make your club **MORE** successful
District 59 Division A will show you how!

SIGN UP NOW



ZOOM MEETING
ID Meeting : 854 1934 5706

