

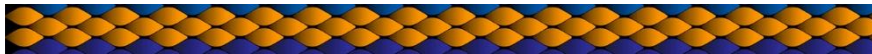


Toastmasters of Paris

January 7, 2025

WELCOME

Josep, opening the meeting in place of Vicki (President), assured us that “This is not a coup!”



CONTEST NEWS February 4th

Suzanne told us it's time to focus on the contest!

She explained that the competition begins in each club and continues up the levels until ultimately the international final produces “the best of the year.”

As contest chair, she admitted she was “gobsmacked” at the amount of work involved, but was pleased that there are already enough contestants for both the international speech and the table topics. As the contest will take place during a regular meeting, members should arrive early so we can start on time.

Maria has volunteered to be chief judge, but at least three more are needed. Please contact Suzanne *privately* if you can help (the identity of the judging team has to be secret).

Several timers, vote counters, and sergeants at arms are also required. Volunteers, please contact Suzanne.

RIPPLES

THE THEME

SILVIA, Toastmaster of the Evening, hoped that 2025 would prove a better year than 2024, which was tough for many people. It is easy to feel powerless, she said, but she urged each of us to take action, however small the act. She reminded us of Mother Teresa's words: “I alone cannot change the world, but I cast a stone across the waters to create many small ripples.”

THE TOAST

FLORENCE told us that a new year brings new beginnings, which is both exciting and daunting. We leave things behind, but we also have the chance to set new goals.

THE JOKE

SUZANNE offered us a four-minute stand up based on her experiences of moving to Paris.

“Seduced by the metric system... the ultimate turn-on,” Suzanne fell in love with Paris instantly, she told us, before joking about the urine test -she would have been deported on the spot if the slightest trace of American cheese had been found; the fact that she caught flu after starting work at the American Embassy – so much for diplomatic immunity; and her preference for heavy metal – hence taking photos at the Eiffel Tower!

WHAT ‘S OUR SECRET?

Vicki (President) has been asked to participate in a round table at the Officer Training (January 18th). The Division Director asked her how TMP has achieved a reputation for member retention.

She asked some of our longer-standing members what they thought were the secrets of our success.

- It feels like family. I enjoy the diversity and good will of our members. *Vicki*
- Staying positive & constructive in comments, openness to guests and new members, discussions during breaks, taking care of people outside club, talking to guests, helping each other navigate the rules, flexibility, the restaurant! *Vincent*
- The special people, the talent! , growth (you can actually see these folks go from strength to strength as confident speakers), the restaurant, evolution (the Club changes with the times but still maintains vintage Toastmaster traditions), making a contribution as an esteemed elder! *Martin*
- It's easy to fall down - no one laughs or judges - they simply pick you up and brush you down and show you how to get rid of the banana skin! *Siobhan*

THE WORD

MOHAMMAD chose resonance as the word for the evening. It was used by Yasmine, Alison, Silvia, and Anaelle.

INDUCTION OF ALEXANDER

Alison, standing in for Tristan, led the induction of ALEXANDER and introduced him to his mentor, JOSEP. Welcome to the club!



MEMBER NEWS

Vincent is currently unwell and is in hospital. We all wish him a speedy recovery!





YASMINE'S TABLE TOPICS - RIPPLES



<p>WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU SEND THE WORLD TO CREATE RIPPLES?</p> <p>Mohammad has spent time on social media recently. He is aware of how the world is divided on issues and concerned at the level of hatred shown. His message would therefore be to think before speaking.</p>	<p>WHEN DID SOMEONE'S ACT OF KINDNESS CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE?</p> <p>Natalie's friend invited her out to cheer her up. First she had to attend a Master's presentation: Natalie went too – and enrolled! Instead of staying seven months, she has now been in France for seven years.</p>
<p>IF YOU COULD MAKE A RIPPLE OF CHANGE IN YOUR COMMUNITY - ?</p> <p>Joesp was sad when he wished five people a happy new year and only one of them returned the greeting. A smile can change everything, even a sad occasion, he told us, and this is the ripple he would want.</p>	<p>CAN NEGATIVE RIPPLES BE TURNED INTO POSITIVE ONES?</p> <p>Florence is convinced that it is possible to make good things from bad. She said that when negative things occur, our reaction can bring about a positive result.</p>
<p>WHAT RIPPLES DO YOU HOPE TO LEAVE BEHIND YOU?</p> <p>Alison reflected that the ripples a boat leaves in its wake can have a major effect on smaller vessels behind. We all share the same ocean but not the same boats, she said, reminding us of the need to create equity and fairness in our world.</p>	<p>IF YOU COULD CREATE A RIPPLE IN TIME, WHAT EVENT WOULD YOU CHANGE?</p> <p>Jessica thought back on the mistakes she had made that she would like to undo so she could live a perfect life. However, she decided, "I wouldn't change anything, because that's what makes me me."</p>
<p>WHAT LIFE LESSONS HAVE YOU HAD FROM NATURE?</p> <p>Alexander argued that meditation teaches us who we are beneath the ego. One way to achieve this is to sit with nature, which helps us to become still and focused, and he recommended we make this part of our daily routine.</p>	<p>DESCRIBE THE MOMENT A SMALL ACTION HAD A BIG IMPACT ON OTHERS.</p> <p>Hyunjoo told us she was working for a private company but didn't feel it was for her. She discovered an opportunity, "took a chance," and is now working happily for a development corporation.</p>

SPEECH 1

AVA – A PLEASANT PROPOSAL EVALUATED BY BENOIT

Ava asked if we want to live a fuller life in 2025. In this case, she said, we should use our senses more. Using a practical pen and paper exercise, she helped us to think about which of our five senses we exercise to the fullest and suggested we reflect on ways to improve our awareness of the other four.

Benoit commended

Ava's achievement of her objective, "To present a proposal of a solution or improvement to be adopted by the audience," and commented on her ability to communicate her message.

The very strong opening, especially in using a question.

The exercise with clear and well enunciated guidance and instructions. This was more challenging because it was a Zoom speech, but Ava's success demonstrated leadership.

Positive energy and the ability to inspire.

Mastery of Zoom – including the sense of eye contact and use of gestures despite the limitations.

Very strong conclusion giving food for thought.

Benoit recommended

Using on-screen notes rather than having them on the table, so we don't lose eye contact.

Exploring the possibility of moving away from the computer – using a wireless headset if possible.





SPEECH 2

ANAELLE – ENOUGH

EVALUATED BY JOSEP

With the objective of preparing to speak professionally and speaking for 18-22 minutes, Anaelle had time to develop her topic fully. She confessed that for many years she had felt she wasn't "enough", and that it had taken therapy for her to realize that she had internalized other people's expectations. Now she feels "freed to live my life, one that is truly mine." A major part of the speech was Anaelle's suggestion of ten recommendations to help us live happier and more fulfilled lives (listed below).

Josep commended

Anaelle's ability to hold the audience's attention for such a long time.

The "strongly worded" content – e.g., Be yourself.

Structure – opening and closing with quotations, first from her mother and later from Demi Moore's Golden Globe speech.

Good connections between each part of the speech.

Engaging audience involvement – e.g., accusing us of 'nerdiness'!

Josep recommended

Considering making the speech a little more dynamic by taking a poll at the end rather than asking if we had made New Year's Resolutions, or perhaps making a visual presentation, which would have helped us remember the concepts.

ANAELLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS –

- 1. EMBRACE YOUR ODDITIES AND QUIRKS.**
- 2. TAKE ALL THE SPACE YOU NEED TO GROW AND BE YOURSELF.**
- 3. DON'T WAIT FOR ANYTHING – LIVE YOUR LIFE NOW!**
- 4. DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS.**
- 5. ENJOY GETTING OLDER. REMEMBER THAT EACH DAY IS A PRIVILEGE.**
- 6. MOVE FOR YOUR MIND. EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOU.**
- 7. FIND JOY EVERY DAY, EVEN IN SMALL THINGS.**
- 8. FIND PROJECTS, WHETHER SERIOUS OR SILLY, AND IF THEY GO WRONG, TRY AGAIN.**
- 9. LEAVE PEOPLE BEHIND IF NECESSARY.**
- 10. AND FORGET ALL OF THIS IF YOU HAVE OTHER IDEAS! – LIVE AS YOU WANT TO.**



GRAMMARIAN'S REPORT


JESSICA chose to focus on the positive, citing “impactful, strong, creative” use of language. including –




“Exciting and daunting”
Florence



Mentorship is
“open for
business!”
Alison



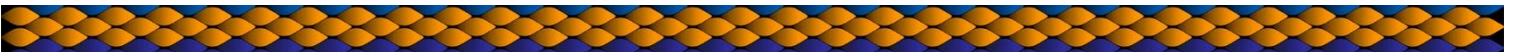
Suzanne’s
“many very
beautiful words,
expressions,
and
exaggerations”



“Start from a blank
slate”
Ava



“Changed
the
trajectory of
my life”
Natalie



GENERAL EVALUATION

SIOBHAN expressed relief that a vote was not needed for the evaluations: both so good, she wouldn't have known which one to pick! She had enjoyed the two speeches, which were both really on the same important topic – living to the full.

She then mentioned some of the evening's highlights –

- Silvia's skillful management of the agenda after several people dropped out because of illness.
- Time management, so we should finish in good time.
- Yasmine's table topics – a good number of interesting, albeit not always easy, topics.
- The many guests once again, and the way they were mixed around the room.

Finally, she urged people to make the most of the time for drinks and socializing as well as any time at the end of the evening. This is a great club for socializing and making friends!



GUEST EVALUATIONS



Fabiolah, last seen years ago(!), enjoyed the evening and promised to come back.



Ismael said the meeting had been “a great experience.”



Anita was “terrified” and “challenged” but will be “happy to come back!”



Chris was signed up by his wife this time, but now he says, “You’ll see more of me!”



Nathalie expects to come back for a fourth visit - and tackle a table topic.



Dora told us of her TM experience in Canada and gave us some ideas we might use.



Arthur, who comes when he's in Paris, was frustrated: he didn't get a table topic!



Pierre enjoyed this visit more than his first, finding the topics more interesting.



AND FINALLY...

Benoit – in evaluation mode

Alison – ‘star’ of table topics

Hyunjoo and Jessica - enjoying good food and good speeches



Next meeting: February 4