

Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

November 2009

Become the Speaker and Leader You Want to Be!

By Clang M. Garcia

How do you take the terror out when delivering a speech? Last October 12, MWF hosted a session on developing effective communication and leadership skills lead by an engaging speaker, Gina Mapua, Vice President for Education of the Executive Toastmasters Club.

Being a seasoned speaker, Gina put the audience at ease the moment she began. She shared a few general tips, including don't apologize, don't invent or lie, and don't ramble. Then she gave us rich inputs on how handle stage fright, impromptu speaking, question and answer sessions, and listening.

Taking the Terror Out of Public Speaking

Stage fright is common to all speakers who are concerned about their performance. Since most of our fears are self-generated, we can overcome them through the following techniques:

Calm Breathing

Have you experienced listening to a speaker who is vibrating visibly and with a voice cracking out of fear? Take the tension out by breathing properly as it allows you to stabilize your



Left to right: Clang, Gina, Randy

emotions and collect your thoughts properly. Moreover, calm breathing improves the quality of your voice. You may also release your pent up energy by walking briskly onto the stage, or doing isometric exercises in your seat (unnoticed of course!).

Mental Rehearsal

Imagine yourself successfully delivering the speech and hear that thunderous applause. Visualization makes it all come true. Also remember that the audience is with you—they want you to succeed! (Cont. on p.3)

November MWF Meeting ■ **When:** Monday, November 16, 2009, 6:30 p.m. **Where:** Julia Cummins home, 76 Real Street, Urdaneta Village, Makati City. **What:** Sarah Novak will give a presentation titled "Demystifying Social Media: It's Not Just for 14-year-old Girls Anymore!" Come learn how to integrate Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blogs into your life without letting them TAKE OVER your life. Sarah will walk you through the basics of each platform and provide tips regarding time management and proper online etiquette. **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner. **December Meeting:** Monday, December 7, 2009.

Public speaking.
According to The Book of Lists,
it is the number one
fear of most people.
It is dreaded more
than death itself,
or even disease.



KaWoMeNaN*

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Public speaking, glossophobia, selective mutism, active listening

Impromptu, manuscript, and extemporaneous

In public speaking, there are three general types: impromptu, extemporaneous, and manuscript.

In an impromptu speech, you are basically required to think and speak on the spot, with little or no time to prepare. For example, you are an airline employee and you have to explain to a group of exhausted passengers standing in line that there is an additional flight delay.

In an extemporaneous speech, you have time to first jot down your ideas which you use to trigger what you actually say. Compared to using exact words written beforehand, this type allows you to build a better connection with your listeners.

In a manuscript speech, what you have to say is completely written out beforehand and you simply deliver the lines word for word. This type is best when every word is critical. For example, you are a bank representative and you are presenting the official position of your company regarding an unexpected decrease in interest rates for savings accounts.

* From various sources, for information purposes only. Readers are advised to exercise due diligence in getting the latest, complete and most accurate data.

Glossophobia

Glossophobia or speech anxiety is the fear of public speaking. The word comes from the Greek term *glo-ssa*, meaning tongue, and *phobos*, meaning fear or dread. One symptom of Glossophobia may be Stage Fright.

Symptoms include: (a) intense anxiety prior to, or simply at the thought of having to verbally communicate with any group; (b) avoidance of events which focus the group's attention on individuals in attendance; (c) physical distress, nausea, or feelings of panic in such circumstances. They can be classified as physical, verbal, and non-verbal.

Physical symptoms result from the Autonomic Nervous System responding to the situation with a "fight or flight" reaction. These symptoms include acute hearing, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, dilated pupils, increased perspiration, increased oxygen intake, stiffening of neck or upper back muscles, and dry mouth.

Verbal symptoms include a tense voice, a quivering voice, and repetition of "Umms" and "Ahhs" which tend to comfort anxious speakers.

Many people report stress-induced speech disorders which are only present during public speech. In fact, some glossophobics are able to dance or perform in public as long as they do not have to speak. They can actually speak as well, as long as they cannot see the audience (on radio, for example) or they feel that they are a character or stage persona rather than presenting as themselves (such as in a stage play).

Selective Mutism

This might be a totally different case altogether, but there is also such a thing as Selective Mutism: a severe childhood anxiety disorder in which a person who is normally capable of speech is unable to speak in given situations, or to specific people.

According to a 2001 study, the incidence is 7 in 1000. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), 3rd edition, specifies that the condition is *not* related to Social Phobia.

In Australia where Selective Mutism is classified as a disability, diagnosed adults who are independent from a spouse or parent qualify for entitlement welfare.

Selective Mutism in songs, sitcoms and books

In the 2001 song "She's Given Up Talking" by Paul McCartney from the album *Driving Rain*, the situation conforms almost perfectly to a clinical description of Selective Mutism in childhood. It describes a young girl who is mute at school yet normally talkative at home ("When she comes home it's a yap yap yap/ words start to flow like water from a tap").

In the television sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, the character of Rajesh Koothrappali suffers from selective mutism: he is unable to talk to women who are not family members. Drinking alcohol, however, suppresses his anxiety, enabling him to speak. Placebo effect or not, it works for him. In one episode, he spoke to the actress Summer Glau while drinking beer. Unknown to him, the beer was non-alcoholic.

In the book *The Secret Voice of Gina Zhang* by Dori Jones Yang, the title character has selective mutism complicated by bilingual issues. When she begins school in America, she finds that her throat closes up when she attempts to speak in English or her native language, Mandarin.

Active Listening and ALOS-global

All too often, people are not listening attentively to one another when communicating. They are either distracted, thinking about other things, or preparing what they are going to say next. The latter case is particularly true in disagreements or conflict situations.

Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others. It focuses attention on the speaker while suspending judgment and one's own frame of reference.

If you want to know how good you are in active listening, the Active Listening Observation Scale (ALOS-global) might be a handy tool. This 7-item instrument has "acceptable inter- and intra-observer agreement."

The scaled score was positively related to verbal attention measured by RIAS (Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales), to patients' perception of general practitioners' (GPs) affective performance, patients' self-reported pre-visit anxiety level, and gender differences. Interestingly (but not surprisingly), female GPs received higher active listening scores.

(Become ... Cont. from page 1)
Preparation and Experience

Preparing well for your speech makes a huge difference. It is not enough to write the speech and make the visuals. Practice delivering your presentation and edit as needed to fit the time requirements. Public speaking comes with practice and experience. At Toastmasters Club, there are regular, twice monthly sessions where you are taught how to prepare and deliver a speech and receive an honest evaluation.

**Impromptu Speaking:
The Q&A Session**

How do you express an idea without preparation? Impromptu speaking does not have to be a public speaking engagement, it can be as simple as being asked about your opinions by a boss or being called to give a toast at your friend's wedding. Gina went into more detail on a specific type of impromptu speaking that many speakers are faced with: the question and answer session that follows the presentation.

Listen

Take time to listen attentively to the question. Acknowledge the need to listen and focus your eyes on the person talking. Lean forward occasionally and respond with appropriate facial expressions.

Pause

Make the effort to pause and you will look intelligent. It will appear that you are taking the time to gather your thoughts and prepare the right response (and gives you the time to actually do this!).

Repeat the Question

Rephrase the question to confirm that you understood it correctly. This also gives you a little more time to think about your answer, and also an opportunity to diffuse or deflect an attacking type of question.

Answer

Keep your answer short and remember to end properly. Summarize your points if needed, and try to have the last word. If asked for your

opinion, first state what it is, then give the reason why you feel that way, give an example, and then restate your opinion.

Gina stressed the need to maintain control of the situation; one way to do this is to only answer the questions you want to answer. If there is an overly talkative questioner who asks you three questions, you may choose to answer only one, and make it the one you prefer to answer. You are at the podium, not the questioner. Don't ask, "Did I answer your question?" That just opens up the possibility of getting sidetracked and losing control.

Listening

Gina gave several useful tips on ways to improve our listening skills. Mentally, put yourself into listening mode. Lean forward, focus on the speaker. Ignore distractions as much as possible. In your mind, put the speakers main points into an outline, or framework, so that at the end of the talk you can summarize the main points to someone who wasn't there. You will

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A Public Speaking Posture

Right: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in a public speaking posture: standing, facing front.
In December, 1909, 19 year old organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn arrived in Spokane, Washington, to join the fight for social justice. She was a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union and a woman of extraordinary speaking skills. The Spokesman-Review described her as a "frail, slender girl, pretty and graceful, with a resonant voice and a fiery eloquence that attracted huge crowds."

NCA

The National Communication Association (NCA) is the oldest scholarly speech association in the United States. It exists to assist professional communicators—both marketplace and academic. There is an annual convention held with many presentations addressing the concerns central to effective public speaking.

NFA and AFA

The National Forensics Association (NFA) and the American Forensics Association (AFA) are two other national organizations within the United States which sponsor competitive public speaking.

Events within the NFA and AFA fall in to four categories: Public Address, Limited Preparation, Interpretive Speaking, and Debate.

The Public Address events include

Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, Rhetorical Criticism, and After Dinner Speaking.

The Limited Preparation events include Impromptu Speaking and Extemporaneous Speaking.

The Interpretive events include Poetry, Prose, Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation and Duo Interpretation (in which a dramatic piece is presented by two speakers working together).

The Debate events include Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Policy Debate, and Crossfire Debate.

Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International (TI) is a nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for helping members improve their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.





Left to right: Martha, Clang, Gina

(Become ... Cont. from page 2)
remember it better if you do this. Try to avoid making hasty judgments about the speaker or topic, be patient. Tame your emotions. Since your mind works much faster than the speaker can talk, you need to control your mind from wandering off to other thoughts. When you catch yourself daydreaming, bring your focus back to the speaker and work on that outline of the main points.

Winning Speeches

After her inspirational talk, Gina showed an audiovisual presentation of the International Speaking Contest of

Toastmasters International. Two winning speeches were shown, and it was clear why they won – both were very moving and entertaining. Gina remarked that over the years, the speeches have become more like short theater sketches, with the speakers moving around the stage like actors.

For those who are interested in developing the priceless skill of effective communication, the Executive Toastmasters Club holds a meeting every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at Le Souffle Rockwell Club, 7:00 p.m. Many other clubs meet in other parts of the city.

For more details, please visit the

website of Toastmasters International at www.toastmasters.org or contact Julia Holz, Vice President for Membership, at juliaholz2002@yahoo.com.



On public speaking:
“Most people at a funeral would rather be in the coffin than delivering the eulogy.” (Jerry Seinfeld)

Manila Women’s Forum

Manila Women’s Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, talk to women of various cultures, and share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join.

The current officers are: **Amy Alexander**, Message Board. **Julia Holz**, Treasurer, Membership and Programs. **Cecilia Leung**, Programs. **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair. **Junie Navarro**, Message Board. **Lisa Stuart**, Message Board Moderator. **Beulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website. **Shari Virjee**, Programs, Message Board.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. For more information about MWF, please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com.

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www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum

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