

Why you should compete in Toastmasters contests.

Don't Wake Up Too Soon

✦ Moments after winning the 1992 Olympic silver medal for figure skating, a jubilant Paul Wylie was asked by a reporter: "Have you ever even dreamed of such a moment?" He replied: "Yes, I've dreamed of it many times, but I always woke up too soon."

In those 14 simple words, Paul Wylie captured the essence of the competitive spirit. He had a dream, he endured the times the dream was interrupted, and he persisted until the dream came true.

You understand these principles or you wouldn't have joined Toastmasters. Yet, many Toastmasters fail to apply basic goal-setting strategies to speech contests, the fastest route to improvement as a speaker. Many approach speech contests with unfocused dreams – with their goals poorly defined, if at all.

Following are three commitments I believe you must make if you ever hope to see your dreams become more than just wishful thinking.

1 Promise to give your best. Each audience deserves your very best

effort, from club level all the way to International. You express contempt for the opportunity and the audience if you approach a speech contest with indifference or with a lack of preparation. This does not mean that you must be the best to compete; it means you must be willing to give it your best when you compete. Anything less is a missed opportunity.

2 Resolve to be better than you were the last time you spoke.

Abraham Lincoln said, "I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday." There is a parallel in Toastmasters' speech contests. I hope you realize that the biggest winners in any contest are not always those who carry away the biggest trophies. The biggest winners are those who show the biggest improvement.

Speech contests force you to push yourself beyond your comfort zone; to grow much faster than your club typically expects. Take advantage of this opportunity to raise your personal standards of achievement.

3 Persevere. Unless you are extraordinarily good and extraordinarily lucky, your march to the top will be met with an occasional failure. I've seen many gifted speakers spend months honing their skills, advance to higher levels of competition, and then be stopped by a better speaker, a better speech, or questionable judging.

If this happens to you, you have three options: you can be disappointed, and that's only natural. You can be discouraged, but to dwell on that is counterproductive. Or you can be inspired – inspired by the challenge to be better the next time.

Remember the lesson Paul Wylie taught us: Dream big dreams, and don't wake up too soon.

David Brooks, DTM, won the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking in 1990. He has coached and/or mentored many subsequent World Champions and finalists. Contact him at www.DavidBrooksTexas.com

Are you serious about becoming a motivational speaker?



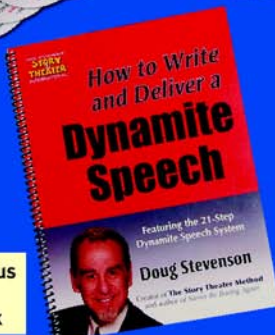
Learn how to write and deliver a dynamite keynote speech!

Doug Stevenson's 21-Step Dynamite Speech System will teach you how to:

- Use a balance of logic and creativity in designing your speech
- Motivate and persuade using the power of emotion
- Create an experience that your audience will never forget
- Choose and craft amazing stories using the Story Theater Method
- Get more laughs with 29 comedy writing and delivery tips
- Brand yourself and your message
- Use acting techniques to be more compelling and entertaining

Includes: Contracts, forms and templates to build your speaking business

10 CDs plus
80-page
workbook



ORDER TODAY: www.storytheater.net

COUPON CODE: **tmspecial**
for 20% discount