



Premier *Link*

"Judge Me By My Actions"

- Kiang Faang Pyng, DTM

In just a few days, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will become the Prime Minister of Malaysia. He firmly declared at the close of the UMNO general assembly, "Judge me by my actions."

We will not discuss politics, but let's decipher those words, "Judge me by my actions" in the toastmasters context. It's apt, since election of District Officers and Club Officers is in the pipeline. Winning the race is but the start of your journey of leading. How you lead and motivate your clubs, Area, Division, District, will determine how effective you are as a leader. It is especially challenging in a voluntary organisation like Toastmasters International, because Servant Leadership requires you to devote yourself to serving the needs of your organisation; to coach and develop your members in order to bring out the best in them (not you). Your focus is on the members--not you. You will soon find that you need more than 24 hours a day to do that; and you don't have it!

You will be judged—one way or other, on your leadership. Does that worry you? Don't be, but do expect challenges and disappointments. Do expect to step on some toes every some and then (*ouch!*), too. Take it from someone who has walked that path—the journey is tough, but the rewards are sweet. Read Benjamin Loui's message to have an idea of what he meant by 'reward', serving as a leader in Toastmasters.

We want to wish Dr Caren, Ron Low and Choi San all the best. I like their enthusiasm, and their readiness to serve the District, and ultimately, the members in the District. We will give them our support.

I would like to encourage our members to attend "Kuching 2009"--District 51 Annual Convention. The Convention theme is "Act to Inspire and Motivate (AIM)." I believe you will be greatly inspired, and motivated, as you experience the learning, the fun,

and the fellowship in Kuching. You will love the Speech Contests, because you will be listening from the best of the best contestants from different Divisions.

Conventions have a way to refresh and recharge your energy. Again, I can say it, because I have gained so much, from attending toastmasters conventions, and participating in the various activities.

For the final issue of *Premier Link*, I wish to invite our members to share your thoughts and ideas on what you have learned from Toastmasters this term, and how we can all take Premier Advanced to even greater heights next term. Your contribution is much appreciated.

Please send your ideas to kfpyng@gmail.com or fax them to me at 03-6201 3221.

Congratulations to our Vice President Membership,

Chew Shel Ling, and her husband, Clyde, on the birth of their son, Ayden Thein Jun Kit (born on 15 January 2009, weighing 3.07kg)



Shel wrote,,

"...having Clyde supporting and watching Ayden's birth (without fainting...KUDOS DADDY!) then holding him for the first time were priceless moments.

Then came the ups and downs: Sleepless nights, panda eyes, trying to understand his different cries, Clyde feeding him, expressed milk, seeing him laugh out loud, watching him pose in front of camera, serene face while asleep - are some highlights of this journey."

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CLUB PRESIDENT, Benjamin Louis, ACs

Everyone aspires to be a leader. A lot of people think that leaders are successful people. I agree.

Because of this, we start reading about these great leaders—the rich and the famous. We also study what leadership is all about, with the hope that we can become better leaders, and subsequently, become successful in our lives.

What many of us do not realise is that knowing is not enough. Knowledge is not power. It is the use of that knowledge that is powerful. In other words, to be a better leader, we must be a leader first. We must seek leadership roles, and leadership positions, so that we can begin to lead. We must race to the front and say “Let’s go” and point to the right direction.

This, in its simplest form, explains what leadership is all about. This is what General Patton, the greatest American army general meant when he said, “*When you are in command, command.*” it does not really matter whether we know how to lead or not, we must take the initiative to seek opportunities to lead.

Bill Gates, for example, had no inkling what leadership was all about and yet today he is leading one of the most successful companies in the world—Microsoft. The same goes with Mahatma Gandhi and, closer to home, the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong.

These individuals had no formal training in management, or leadership, yet they became household names, and the world pays homage to them as great leaders. They didn’t have any idea at what leadership was all about in the beginning. They just LED.

Many of us seem to have forgotten that Toastmasters is not only about improving our communication skill. It is also about developing our leadership skills. There are a lot of opportunities within Toastmasters for those who want to lead, but the sad thing is, many do not, or dare not, take the plunge.

As mentioned earlier, the only way to learn leadership is to be a leader. We should, therefore, seek leadership opportunities within or beyond the toastmasters circle. The learning curve may



look more like a roller coaster but at the end of the day, we will become better leaders than those who don’t try.

I am then very pleased to note that three of our members, Dr. Caren Lee, Ron Low, and Eu Choi San, have decided to seek such roles in toastmasters. Both Dr. Caren and Ron Low are vying for the position of Division Governor, while Choi San is going for Area Governor position. We must applaud them for seizing the opportunity. Let’s offer them our sincere support.

Both Caren and Choi San are in the current Premier EXCO. I can vouch for their character and capability. Ron is a Past Area Governor. He has been an active toastmaster.

As President of this fine Club, I have learned many lessons that I did not learn in my many years in the corporate world; lessons that no text book, or university education, could have prepared me for. There have been headaches, disappointments....but there’s also the joy of seeing the esprit de corp growing, and each member becoming a better citizen of the world. What an experience!

Toastmasters is a voluntary organisation, and to succeed, one must be an extraordinary leader to move so many clubs and so many members, to share your vision, to motivate members to reach the same dream as yours.... For that I salute Dr. Arul, Low Yat Seow, and other District leaders, for

Finally, let me share this with you: I see a leader in every member. I urge all of you to let the leader in you step forward to rightfully claim its place in this world.

Take home this message: Seek leadership roles. Learn to lead by leading, and you will arrive ‘home’.

Your President,

Benjamin Loui, ACs

READY TO SERVE

We are most happy to learn that three of our members, Dr Caren Lee, Ron Low Chye Seng, and Eu Choi San, have announced their candidacy in the coming District Officer election.

The fact that our members are ready to face the challenges of leading clubs, Area, and Division, is a testimony that Premier Advanced Toastmasters Club has progressed well. We are no longer in our infancy stage—our members have sharpened, not only their communication skills, but their leadership skills, too.

This term, in particular, has seen many of young members metamorphosed into capable leaders, who are now ready to take on bigger tasks, and bigger responsibilities. Dr Caren and Choi San are two very good examples. Although they have not been in Toastmasters for very long, they have shown tremendous potentials as leaders.

We are also pleased to note that the more mature toastmasters, members like Ron Low, continue to show their enthusiasm, and eagerness to serve, and lead.



Dr Caren Lee, CTM, AL
for Division P Governor 2009-2010

Dr Caren joined Sunway Toastmasters Club in 2005 and was immediately roped in as Club Secretary. The following year she became Area C3 Governor. During her term of office, Area C3 became a President's Distinguished Area.

Dr Caren joined Premier Advanced Toastmaster Club as a Charter member. She was our Vice President Membership last term.

Currently, Dr Caren is our Vice President Education. Don't be fooled by her petite body frame—the lady is very capable; she is doing a fantastic job as *Premier's* VPE.

She may be considered the “*new kid on the block*”, but this new kid has been “*moving mountains*”. as can be seen from her track record.



Ron Low Chye Seng, DTM
for Division P Governor 2009-2010

Ron Low is a Charter member of both Ukay Toastmasters Club(1998) and Premier Advanced Toastmasters Club. He was Club President for Ukay Toastmasters Club in 2001, and Area C1 Governor 2003-2004.

Currently serving as Assistant Division P Governor Education & Training, Ron had also served as Assistant Division Governor Marketing for Divisions P and W; as well as two-term Division P Treasurer.

An experienced and a long serving toastmaster, Ron is friendly, and very helpful.



Eu Choi San, cc
for Area P3 Governor 2009-2010

Choi San joined MIM KL Toastmasters Club in 2002. She is a Charter member of Premier Advanced Club.

Choi San is currently our club Treasurer, a role she has played extremely well, as she is both responsible and initiative. We have witnessed how efficiently and effectively Choi San works, as our Club Treasurer, and in many of our *Premier* events.

She has certainly bloomed as a speaker, and as a leader.

I joined Toastmasters with a single mission in mind: to explore and to exploit its education programme to the fullest and then get out. I didn't think I needed to hang around the corridors of Toastmasters too long as my idea of any growth corridor involved my participation in the larger business and more sophisticated corporate arena.

I became a Toastmaster in September, 1997. It has been 11 years and I have certainly walked through many corridors of Toastmasters, considering my involvement as a member, Vice President Education, Club President Area Governor, Division Governor, District 51 Public Relations Officer (2004-2005), among others.

I had also taken part in and won numerous Speech Contests at various levels. I had organised and facilitated in speechcrafts, workshops and convention; spoken at many corporate organizations, as well as NGOs under the Toastmasters banner.

As I look over the corridors of Toastmasters now, I can still see myself leaning against its many pillars--for support.

And as I walk through the corridors once again, my heart is filled gratitude, for the many communication and leadership lessons I have learned and un-learned, through Toastmasters.

BEGAN MY JOURNEY OF LEARNING...

My journey of LEARNING began as soon as I made up my mind to complete my ten basic speech projects within six months. My goal was really quite impressive, back then, considering many members took more than ten years to become a CTM!. I also promised myself that every speech I presented had to be better than the previous. My plan worked well for me, as I put in my best effort in crafting, and delivering my speeches.

It was also during this period when I developed a love-hate relationship with Table-Topics Session. I loved it because I recognised the importance of being able to speak off-the-cuff in an interesting, logical and yes, intelligent manner. I hated it at the same time because it often made a nervous-wrack out of me--for fear that I might be asked to speak on a subject I knew little or nothing about. This fear slowly reduced, as I began to creatively employ the concept of "*if you can't convince them, confuse them...*"

I couldn't have asked for a better mentor. Mohamad Abdullah, DTM, who encouraged me to join Toastmasters, had been most supportive. Three weeks into Toastmasters and I was invited to speak at a Rotary meeting; three months into Toastmasters and I was given a chance to be a trainer/facilitator in a Speechcraft organised for the recovering drug addicts. These speaking opportunities pushed me to excel further as they also fuelled my passion in public speaking. I must add that it did a lot to boost my ego as well. I was 1st Runner- Up at the Club Level International Speech Contest. Masdiana, who was the Club champion, graciously made way for me to represent MII at the Area Speech Contest. The weeks that followed saw me reorganising my speech and practising my delivery before a very strict Masdiana... She would later tell everyone that she coached me well except on what to do if I forgot my lines... At the Area Contest. I started off exceptionally well and then I got distracted by the overwhelming response from the audience, and my mind went blank. Not even trying to compose my thoughts, I decided to bow out--much to a surprised audience.

I learned, the hard way, about managing nerves; about not letting the audience take control of my train of thought.

I also learned that there is a price to pay for being over-confident. No matter how prepared you are, you may still forget your lines...It pays to arrange your speech contents in a certain 'pattern' to help you remember the flow better.

THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE I REALISED I NEEDED TO UN-LEARN

That speech contest fiasco prompted me not only to learn, but to UN-LEARN. I started to seriously address my weakness and to explore areas for improvement. To take myself to the next level of excellence, I had to force myself to change my frame of reference that was fixed by my own rigid perspectives. I began to listen to my own voice and review my choice of words with intense scrutiny. I listened and took every relevant comment, every advice, seriously. It didn't mean that I thoroughly enjoyed listening to all the not-so-nice things about me and my speech, but I became more opened to ideas as well as criticism, I accepted my short-comings positively and I improved.

When I became an Area Governor, I was confronted with yet another rude awakening. I realised I had been interacting with only selected few in the Toastmasters circuit. Having seven clubs under my care, two of which were 'dead and waiting to be buried', meant I needed to reach out to the clubs and their respective members. I needed to develop people-skills and this proved to be much, much more challenging than preparing and delivery good speeches! I had to learn to be less judgemental about people; more tolerant and more patient toward them; more opened to sharing, coaching and mentoring... There was just so much I had to un-learn to learn, about leading and not merely managing, people, especially in servant-leadership such as in Toastmasters.

Mark Twain said it best when he said, "*Education consists mainly of what we have un-learned*".

That term as Area Governor had really, really been a great transformation for me. It forced me out of the comfort of my own home club and expanded my horizon. I grew - not just as a leader, but as a person.

I am still walking through the corridors of Toastmasters. I have witnessed members coming and going. Some moved out of the organisation altogether to pursue other interests in life; others, like me, have chosen to stay. Every now and then a small voice nudges me to get out of Toastmasters... but almost immediately, a BIGGER voice reminds me that Toastmasters is about **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS**, and I am certainly not through with that process.

Joint Meeting with HELP University College Toastmasters Club

28 arch 2009 @Premier Advanced Toastmasters Club, Bankers Club, Kuala Lumpur.

- Benjamin Loui, ACs

Our March's meeting was a joint meeting with HELP University College Toastmasters Club.

The Club meeting took a slight twist. Instead of having our usual Guest Speaker Series, we decided to organise a friendly debate.

The topic was:
"Years of Working Experience is More Important than Paper Qualification."

It was both refreshing, and amusing, having three young, enthusiastic and idealistic young speakers from *HELP*, against three of our older, more experienced members.

I must admit I was most impressed with the three debaters from *HELP*. Observing them, as they spoke against our home team, I noticed a distinct difference between the two teams. The *HELP* team was using a clinical approach, attacking point by point; whereas our team was more flamboyant, more "wordy" in their approach.

I personally like their approach, and I think these three young men from *HELP* will go far.

Instead of them learning from us, I must humbly say that we were, in fact, learning from them. Their speaking styles were more natural.

Yim Ken Fei did a fine job as the acting SAA.

Christine Ngiam did an outstanding job as the Toastmaster of the Day. She controlled the timing of the meeting very well. Most

important of all, she wasn't long-winded. She managed time brilliantly.

The *HELP* University College Club President, John Lee, gave an interesting opening address. Most of us were very touched by what he said.

Among the many fine things he mentioned in his opening address, the one that made me feel very proud was when he mentioned that Premier is one of the leading clubs in Kuala Lumpur. This is a testimony that our club is heading the right direction.

John Lee won the best speaker for the debate; and Premier was the overall debate team winner.

The best project speaker went to the speaker who spoke from the heart: Evon Low from *HELP*, who incidentally, was voted the best "Go With The Flow" speaker. The best evaluator went to John Lee, also from *HELP*.

I think we at *Premier* REALLY need to buck up our speaking skills.

Secondly, our club really needs some younger members, otherwise we may get too caught up with our set style of speaking, that we are not keeping abreast with changing trends.

We want to thank *HELP* University College Toastmasters Club for their excellent participation. We were all very impressed with them. I am not too sure if they were impressed with us at all...

A Chinese New Year Celebration

Premier Advanced has always pride itself to be a club with a difference: While we are dead serious about planning and organising interesting club meetings, we never discount the importance of developing and nurturing friendship.

On 30 January 2009 our members brought along their friends, and loved ones, to a fun-filled "lou sang" dinner at Marco Polo Restaurant, KL.

Imagine, a bottle of Whisky could spur an informal "Table Topics" session! Then again, it was no ordinary Whisky. That bottle of **Old Pulteney**, which was finished within ten minutes, had cost more than a thousand Ringgit! It was the prize possession of our club president, Ben, but he willingly parted with it... I think!

Past District Governor, Low Yat Seow, DTM, gave his thumbs-up for the quality of all our *Premier* events; this Chinese New Year celebration included.

Something else also sparked our discussion. Many of our guests wanted to become *Premier* members, but they



are not eligible. They are either not toastmasters, or they have not completed the 10 speech projects to become a "CC", or "CTM", which is the criteria for joining a *Advanced* club.

This wasn't the first time guests had requested to join our club, and again, we had to disappoint them.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of our guests, the issue was discussed during our February EXCO meeting. It was agreed that we call for an EGM to deliberate on this proposal to revise our membership requirement. Swee Seng, our club advisor, also consulted Toastmasters International (TI) on the matter. During the EGM, some of our members objected to the motion; other raised their concerns but nevertheless, liked the idea of extending our membership to those who are not CTM/ CC. The verdict: majority of our members voted in favour of the motion. TI also advised that, under its current By-Law, a club, whether *Advanced* or not, should allow anyone to become a member.

So, with effect from 1 April 2009, *Premier* will open its door to all toastmasters, but membership approval is subject to confirmation of the EXCO.

PREMIER OPENS ITS DOOR TO ALL TOASTMASTERS

From April 2009, our club will welcome toastmasters who wish to join our club as members, even if they are not Competent Toastmasters (CTM), or Competent Communicators (CC).

Our members have voted for change. *Premier* opens its door to all toastmasters, but membership is subject to confirmation by the executive committee.

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