



Myths on 'Why I Can't Join Toastmasters'

Many people put off professional development for various reasons. Below are just some of the typical rationales used to avoid joining Toastmasters. Do you see yourself among them? If so, we ask you to reconsider. You may be surprised to find that Toastmasters is not what you thought it was!

Myth 1: I don't need Toastmasters because I have been giving presentations for years.

Reality 1: You are probably using the same techniques you started with years ago. For experienced speakers, Toastmasters is a way to enhance or improve your presentation style. You will get honest feedback about your approach and good suggestions for alternative techniques.

Myth 2: I don't need Toastmasters because I don't give speeches.

Reality 2: What about when your boss asks for a status report on your project? What about when you talk to someone on the phone to ask a question or give information? What about when you present an idea at a staff meeting? When you begin to consider your business and personal conversations as 'presentations', your focus will shift to present conversations in a more meaningful and professional way. Toastmasters will help you develop that professional edge.

Myth 3: I'm not smart enough. I'll be embarrassed. I can't think of anything to talk about.

Reality 3: Everyone is smart enough. Everyone has something that interests them which they want to share. You won't be any more embarrassed than you are about other things you discuss among friends. What do you enjoy doing for a hobby? Have you ever met anyone famous? Describe your job. Do you have any interesting characters on the family tree? Where did you go on your last vacation? You have a lot to say!

Myth 4: I'm a non-exempt employee. I'm only part-time. I'm a student.

Reality 4: Membership in Toastmasters is generally open to all. There are some clubs which are closed because they are sponsored by a company or organization and therefore have specific eligibility criteria. The atmosphere at Toastmasters is very casual, supportive, and friendly. We like coming together for meetings and seeing each other.

Myth 5: Other Toastmasters members are already good speakers. I'd be nervous.

Reality 5: While there are good speakers in every club, everyone starts at the same place. Even the most experienced speakers are nervous. Toastmasters won't be able to eliminate that. What we can do, however, is help you discover a way to use that nervousness to your advantage. Many of the senior members continue to attend and give presentations because even though they have improved their speaking skills, there is always something new to learn from each other.

Myth 6: You have to attend every meeting every week.

Reality 6: You can attend as many meetings as you want however; there are minimum requirements needed to achieve certification and maintain good standing within a club. As a courtesy to other members and to get the full benefit from the organization, you should participate in meetings regularly either as a speaker or in one of the other rotational function roles. Just being there as an audience for the other speakers is vital to everyone's success!

Myth 7: Each speech is criticized.

Reality 7: Toastmasters is adamantly against criticism. Our keyword is 'evaluation' and we concentrate on helping each person understand what they are doing RIGHT and suggest alternatives for improvement on future presentations. This is a method to help you build your speaking toolkit. The more tools you are experienced with the more options you have in various communication situations.

Myth 8: Toastmasters is very time consuming.

Reality 8: The amount of time you give to Toastmasters depends on you and your needs. Giving presentations does require preparation, but you can use topics associated with work or home so content preparation is minimal. You can also space your presentations to meet your schedule. Other program functions such as evaluator and timer require no preparation. Table Topics and Toastmaster require some very limited preparation or none at all that is if you can think fast on your feet!

Myth 9: I want to, but I don't have the time.

Reality 9: If you want to and need to, you can find the time. All members are busy with limited time but most find the time commitment for Toastmasters as a positive way to invest in themselves. Finding time is a matter of need and commitment.

Come and see what Toastmasters is all about!