

#BeyondTheDashboard

TO CELEBRATE



100 Stories

by **100** Members

in **100** Words

**An anthology of
short stories**



District 98 Annual Conference
24th - 26th May 2024

The Spectrum Knight

By Akarshak Tanwar

Back in medieval times, wars painted a tainted canvas.
Hear the story of a knight, adorning a garment of chaos.
His armour would blend with the colours, and remain unseen in the darkness.

Leading his battalions onward, onlookers would applause.
His smiles held an immaculate lustre, the ladies couldn't help but fluster.

He had a bone that was funny, and his voice, oh sweet as honey!
None could muster, the courage to win his heart.
He inspired generations to come, history knows he played his part.
He was more than light and shadow, so he became one with the rainbow.

Unspoken Farewells

By Sunita Vinod

I chased the rickshaw driver for cutting me off. Fortunately, I caught up and while exchanging insults, caught a glimpse of the passenger seated behind. A 'Weeping Angel', with tears trickling down her cheeks hidden behind shades. I wished the signal lasted a bit longer as I hoped to follow her, make her smile, and then mine in time. But I heard the rickshaw crash into a car and a bus smashing it from behind. With uncertainty, I rushed to the spot and as her final tears rolled down, she smiled at me, bidding farewell to a love that never began.



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Un-Kindle'd

By Athul P.S.

'What an awfully dull day!' Sam, a young tech employee, was grateful that he had survived another uneventful day at work. He flung his car keys and backpack to the floor and crashed head first into the couch. Inflicted by lethargy, he decided to order a pizza. In the meantime, he felt a dire need to break away from reality. He opened his Kindle and found a new book that was published just recently.

'Only if I could get lost in this book...'

Some time passed and the doorbell rang. Strangely, no one answered the door.....

Twisted Scales

By Bhaskar Nair

Miller's gut clenched at the lab report. Principal Harris, poisoned at his daughter's school. Suspicion fell on a troubled student, but unease gnawed at him. Weeks blurred, solace found in Sarah, Emily's kind science teacher, a pillar for his grieving daughter. One night, Emily, munching an apple, mentioned cyanide in seeds. A horrific image slammed into Miller. Sarah, tearful days ago about Harris, now serene. He confronted her. Tears streamed down her face as she confessed, a twisted revenge for the principal's harassment and the student's defiance.

Duty and grief clashed in Miller's eyes, the weight of his badge heavier than ever.



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Friday

By Tanay Mehta

Last year, Mark got up early, with dreary eyes. Friday was ready to go as usual, but her voice seemed different this time. The robot sounded more human today. He launched his laptop and prepared the nuclear codes. Friday was inactive. He opened his browser as if it were 2024. "God damn! ChatGPT is soo slowww". The meeting started and Friday disappeared. Mark panicked. 20 people joined and were waiting for him to start. But before he could, someone shared their screen and presented the codes. Indeed Friday is unlucky. Next Friday the world ended

This is Me

By Sudhir Kamat

I'm glad you're familiar with the song "This is Me" from The Greatest Showman. Let's go back to the year 2000, when I was in 8th grade. Despite the trend of private tuition, I spent my time playing sports with friends. After completing my SSC, I chose the Science stream and excelled in my HSC exams, leading me to a prestigious college. Transitioning to the corporate world, I worked my way up to a DGM role. Seeking to improve my skills, I joined Toastmasters and have made significant progress in my speaking abilities. Now, I have a clear vision for my future. I'm thrilled that "This is me!"



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Worst Speaker to Best Speaker

By Pankaj Singh

In June 2022 I attended the meeting at Thane Toastmasters Club as a guest. And during the table topic session I was praying to God "please don't call me on the stage" but God didn't pay attention and table topic master called me on stage & I hardly spoke for 30 seconds. I came down from the stage with a feeling of embarrassment thinking I'm a worst speaker.

Long story short, after the meeting I immediately joined the Club & after attending some meetings I gave my icebreaker speech with the guidance of mentor and won the best speaker award.

The Shadow Within

By Rishika Powany Karia

Panting for breath, she raced through the messy corridors of the abandoned palace. With the dark shadows crying loud to tell the truth, she could only focus on one thing – escaping from the palace, alive. With no time to think or act, she burst open the rusted door with a hope to escape forever. Little did she know, that the door is not the escape chamber, but the road to her fate. Running faster, she barged against a huge broken mirror, only to wake up with a loud thud, falling from the bed.



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The Saucer

By Jamie Suresh Kumar

In the corner of a bustling retail store sat a saucer, unnoticed and untouched. Its plain design failed to attract buyers, priced at a mere 39 Rupees. Disheartened but hopeful, the saucer longed for someone to see its worth beyond the price tag. Finally, a lady with a discerning eye chose it, sensing its hidden charm. The saucer, initially conflicted, felt a rush of joy as it found purpose. Gifted to a friend who habitually spilled his coffee, the saucer found true appreciation. Each time it caught a spill, it realized its true value, basking in the warmth of being cherished.

The Resistance at Poonch

By Sumeet Arya

Time: November 1947; Location: Poonch, (J&K); Situation: Dire Straits!!

Winter setting in, the besieged town of Poonch was indefensible. Pakistani marauders, who had raped, plundered, and scorched Baramulla, had beleaguered Poonch. 40,000 residents and just a dilapidated detachment of State Militia. India rushed-in whatever was available, but it was woefully short. One man, Brigadier Pritam Singh, stood like a wall. He not only organized the civilians into fighting militia, constructed an airfield for air-landed operations, but also facilitated sustenance farming. Motivated by his determined leadership, the besieged persisted with grit and resolve. By November 1948, their position untenable, the enemy retreated. Poonch was liberated.



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The Nocturnal Dash

By Mahendra Kane

It was yet another 'working' day, which stretched beyond 11 pm. I was all alone & walking time was 5 minutes to the company bus stop. I was already in panic, thinking about how to reach home if I missed the bus. The road was pitch dark except for a small streetlight, with the contour of a large snake lying lazily below it.

I realized the significance of this scene 'just in time', before putting my foot on the snake. Then I ran like I had never run in my life before.

I vowed never to work so late after that.

The Mogra Delight

By Ranjini Rao

Recently I developed a green thumb and a Mogra sapling made its way into my balcony in Mumbai. New leaves broadened my smile. One day, I was shocked to see half-eaten leaves on the plant. I desperately wanted the plant to survive. I read that positive affirmations help the plants to revive. I sprayed insecticides, shifted the pot beyond squirrel's reach and started sending positive affirmations to the plant. Weeks later, it was a magical moment to see three small Mogra buds at the tip of the plant. One of the most delightful things about gardening is the anticipation it provides.



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The Man With the Lantern

By Sundeep Gokhale

Have you ever been lost in the mountains at night?

Group of 23, trekking the Sahyadris'. Exhausted, thirsty, & lost in the night. Far away a light approached us. Suddenly he appeared, lantern in hand. He guided us to another hut a distance away and vanished as suddenly. We reached the hut, and the surprised villager there laughed, telling us that the man with the lantern died in these mountains, after himself getting lost. He now helps others here.

None of us slept that night. And the next day he

The Loss

By Deepak Kumar

The flatline over the heart monitor numbed me. I felt lifeless. Mixed emotions overwhelmed me. A part of me was relieved, as it ended her 4 year-long suffering. My kid sister, courage personified. Rather than us comforting her, she comforted me to bear her loss and kept preparing me for the eventuality of her final days. We didn't have our goodbyes, I was never good at them. Could I ever be ready to bear her loss?

In the melee, someone reminded me it was my birthday. That day on my birthday a part of me died.



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The Last Flight

By Soham Manek

It was 11:07 pm, 11th July 2018. The Boeing 777 comprising 324 people was flying over the Atlantic Ocean going towards New York. Within 15 minutes the aircraft encountered severe turbulence. The stewards calmly and commandingly shouted, "Everyone please be seated, stay calm." It was lightning, thundering, and the aircraft lost its power. It was a complete blackout. People started panicking, but to their surprise, everything went silent. Suddenly, the aircraft got its power back, with zero turbulence.

The pilot announced "We are starting our descent. The temperature in New York is 7 degrees and the time is 12:12 am, 12th July 2023.

The Incredible Milestone

By Dharmesh Joshi

"Dhairya come to me. You can do it." With my heart full of excitement and words of encouragement I stood a few steps away from my son and called him towards me. He started pulling himself up by taking support of the furniture. He gained confidence and stood on his two feet. With courage and eagerness, his sparkling eyes looked at me and he took his first tentative step towards me. "Wow, you can do this," I said. And finally, he took the first few steps independently and walked to me. This is an incredible milestone I will cherish for my lifetime.



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The Hero in Her

By Muskan Pawar

Not so long ago, Tara was found covering her bruises with makeup by her mother. Both stare at each other lost in their despairing thoughts. Her mother thought “If only I was as confident as she is in showing the outside world how loving & respectful her life is, I would’ve saved her”.

Tara thought “Say it & I’ll help you”

Tara gave a quick glance at herself in the mirror, adjusted her posture, & left the room without looking back at her mother.

Ready to conquer her inner demon because the world will forget but she won’t.

The Drug Ring

By Saral Mehrotra

Adam is well known for his articles based on crime and corruption. 1 PM, busy giving finishing touches to his book. Knock on his door. Not unusual, tip-offs usually came at odd hours. What's the incident to be covered? Man took out a pistol and pumped a bullet into Adam's heart and head. “The news is about your death,” he said. Scanned every inch of the house, collecting the book and matter related to it. “The Drug Ring” never materialized. Neither the puny peddlers nor the drug lords were ever exposed.



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The Cobra

By Vishal Joshi

Rajni married an underworld Don Rajan but fell in love with Rajesh. Soon they eloped. Rajan sent a shooter named Cobra to kill them. With Cobra in pursuit, they hid in a cave. The next day, Rajan read the death news. Cobra had disappeared too. He did not want to refund the supari. The officials had cleared the remains of a couple killed by a Cobra. The reporter was a snake lover and didn't want to give them bad press. He edited the report which was read by Rajan as - A couple hiding in a cave was killed by Cobra.

Suffering is a Choice

By Uma Srikar

Today, Lalita could sit on the chair, for the first time in the last six months. She fought infection after infection. Medicines were only adding more issues to her already weak body. Yet she was SMILING, all the time. This became the talk of the building she lived in. "What a BRAVE woman Lalitaji is? Finally, her SMILES won over those deadly bacteria." "Yes !! She deserves this. What a golden heart she has! She walked the extra mile to help me while I was pregnant." "I wonder why good people suffer so much?" "Hmmm.....She was in pain. Did she suffer?"



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Mantra of Triumph: Rohan's Resilient Journey

By Mahesh Bada

In the heart of a bustling metropolis, Rohan, a struggling entrepreneur, found solace in the Ganesh mantra. With each hurdle in his path, he whispered, "Vakratunda Mahakay," feeling his aura expand with unwavering determination. "Surya kothi Samaprabha," he affirmed, infusing his endeavors with the energy of a million suns. As challenges mounted, he declared, "Nirvighnam Kurumdev," watching obstacles dissolve in the radiance of his aura's resilience. With steadfast faith, Rohan proclaimed, "Sarvakaryeshu Sarvadhya," witnessing his ventures flourish effortlessly. Through the mantra's guiding light, Rohan's journey unfolded, a testament to the indomitable spirit of perseverance and success.

Lead and Grow by Example

By Ravinder Kaur

In May 2022 when I joined the Chalk and Dusters Toastmasters club. My curiosity to learn more made me consistent in club meetings. From Oct 2022 to Dec 2023, I was the SAA of the club. When I decided to take a break from the Excom, Chalk and Duster Club allowed me to serve the club as Club President. In 2024, Our Club became President's distinguished club due to team efforts and time invested by all our toastmasters. Toastmasters International is a platform where we make mistakes, learn from them, and lead by example.



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Changing the Narrative

By Pragma Maheshwari

The room was filled with unfamiliar people. She has heard these people are strange, arrogant, unwelcoming, and whatnot. The moment she entered that dark room on that bright afternoon, all strange eyes gazed at her. She gathered her courage to remain unaffected by the backlashes that room had for her work. However, in the end, she just had one wish to change the narratives of both sides for her and for them. She worked tirelessly day and night to understand and resolve their conflicts. She learned the first impression isn't the last impression and that narratives can be changed.

Medha's Marvelous Move

By Medha Chaturvedi

Medha, always skeptical of her brilliance, decided to join a local trivia night. Her friends encouraged her, but she doubted she'd shine. "Have fun!" they cheered. Medha sighed and joined reluctantly. Questions flew by: history, science, and pop culture. Medha, to her surprise, knew nearly all the answers but hesitated to buzz in. Finally, the last question: "What's the capital of Australia?" Everyone buzzed, shouting, "Sydney!" Medha rolled her eyes, hit her buzzer, and confidently said, "Canberra."

The room fell silent, then erupted in applause. Medha blushed, thinking, "Maybe I am as smart as they say... or everyone else is just really dumb!"



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Sick Hairdo

By Vatsal Tanna

Just another day for Bhavesh. His white hat barely protected him from the tropical summer heat. The barricade tape prohibited the entry of the regular public. Inside the secured premises, was just him and his assistant, Ruhi; examining the corpse. A road accident. "Blunt injury on the head," remarked Bhavesh, "only if he had worn a helmet. Would still have been hospitalized, no doubt about that. But alive." Ruhi, meanwhile, was ogling at the dead biker. "That's a sick hairdo, though" she whispered finally, still looking at the corpse.

Shadowed Secrets

By Meenakshi Ranganathan

Naina sat nervously at Le' Café, waiting for her blind date. The door creaked open, and a man with a warm smile entered, matching the description perfectly. "Hi, I'm Nick," he said, sitting down. They chatted easily, his stories vibrant and full of life. Hours passed like minutes. Naina mentioned him to her friend Claire, the next day. Claire's face paled. "Nick? He died ten years ago in the same Le' Café."

Naina's blood ran cold. She returned to the café, finding the chair he had sat in empty, except for a single, fresh rose.



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Scenes at the Railway Station

By Pranav Nambiar

I hate to see you go away
Again, packing up, loading everything within the train
We hold hands, Farewell, for the time being, you say
But how long will we keep parting ways this way?
How long will this distance remain between us?
Not too far yet so far away, How long will escapades like this suffice
When careers cut down on personal time,
I fear often, that this is the last time we meet
From lovers, become strangers who rarely greet
When life demands that we choose: Corporate growth, or us?
With these thoughts, I say goodbye again

Rima

By Ganesh Indradeo

Rima, holding her in-laws, both crying like babies. Almost 20-30 people, gossiping about what she would do now! Everyone left. Finally, she was alone in the kitchen. She poured water, her head bowed, she started crying, she drank, sobbing like a child, then composed herself, heading to the room where Avi awaited, still awake. "When Avi asked, 'Where is Dad?' Mom, I want the goodnight kiss," Rima couldn't stop herself from crying. She hugged him tightly. "Dad's with you. Give him a flying kiss. He will catch it."



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Prey Like a Tiger

By Manjit Sandhu

3.00 pm last gypsy to exit the Dhikala campus; we drive on the narrow dusty Sambhar road. The cool breeze of the Himalayan foothills soothed our burnt skin. We stop dead in our tracks as the spotted deer alarm call echoes in the dense deciduous forest. We hear a faint rustle as the big cat crouches. Gleefully we squint to spot the majestic tiger. With no warning at all, a deer flies from the bushes, crossing the road in a single leap, followed by the hunting tiger. Defeated the tiger emerges, and the deer escapes. Failed hunt, marvelous attempt, valorous escape.

Noise

By S.E. Moh

In the beginning, there was a crowd, a crowd that was so very loud. The boy was afraid, as he quivered but when he looked around, he realized there was nothing to dread. Though life can be strange, and with its loud noises, one does not always have to cower, because not all noises are bad noises. In time he adjusted and walked proudly and strongly. The crowd he once feared, he found comfort in, like family. In the end, he opened his mind, and he felt much better, facing his fear, he found that there was nothing to fear there.



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The Greatest Story Ever Told - Humanity

By Taha Merchant

Once upon a time, in the cosmic dance of creation amidst trillions of fiery stars, emerged Tara - a radiant star woven by the Universe. As Tara lived out her life, she scattered fragments of her celestial essence across the cosmos. From these shimmering remnants, Esha and Surya were born, embodiments of Earth and the Sun. Esha, nurturing and fertile, cradled life within her bosom. Surya, the radiant father, bestowed warmth and light upon his offspring. And thus, from the cosmic union of Esha and Surya, humanity arose — a testament to the boundless wonders of the Universe.

Lost and Found

By Binny AD

Packing her daughter's bag, she couldn't believe this would also be an outcome of divorce. For the 1st time in 10 years, her daughter would not be staying with her, but going to her dad instead. Saying bye to her daughter was not easy. Her whole life she had either lived for her parents, her husband, her in-laws or her child. Today Her House was an empty nest. No one to live for. Her teary eyes fell on the remote control, she took it in her hands and smiled, confused she didn't even know what she liked anymore.



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Let Go

By Pankaj Pradhan

It wasn't dawn yet. When the watchman moved away from the gate, she sneaked in quietly and left her soundly sleeping bundle in the front of the lawn, right opposite the main door. "Jaa Beta Jaa, Jee Le Apni Zindagi", she coldly thought to herself. There is no future for you with me. The magnificent mansion was getting decked up for a major celebration that evening. She looked at the décor and wondered how the amount spent on just the grand canopy design would be enough to feed a family for a few years.

Another Mother's Day Party.

A Call of Hope

By Joane Joseph

Feeling down and lonely, she lay on a hard bed in a stifling room. Sweat trickled down her back, but she couldn't move, paralyzed by despair. Months had passed since she'd spoken to anyone; her only companions were a lizard and a spider. Suddenly, at half past midnight, her phone rang. "How are you? I miss you. Let's meet at our favorite coffee shop. I have so much to share." Tears streamed down her face as she realized someone remembered her. She dropped the phone, finally finding the strength to move. A week later, she laughed with a friend at the coffee shop, hope restored.



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Where Were You For 7 years

By Kusuma Rao

“Where could it be? My exquisite necklace? “, amma called out to my sister who had cleaned the cupboard & had kept it. Both searched. No Luck! Amma said, “Let’s calm down & search after a couple of days”. We all helped but had no success. My sister started weeping. She hunted every nook & corner of the cupboard. No, it was either lost or stolen. For 7 years it went missing. One day, while cleaning the locker vigorously, a whack & a box stuck to the side fell with a thud. There it was smiling – The Mysterious Missing Necklace.

The Girl in White

By Vishal Joshi

Driving through a forest, Jignesh and Ramya were unable to switch on the radio. They noticed a broken car and a girl in white asking for a lift. They agreed. On the availability of the signal, the radio chirped. Ramya heard the bulletin in the local language about a killer asking for a lift. Jignesh did not understand it. In the mirror, Ramya's eyes met with the girl's. The next day, the police pulled a car out of a gorge. Two people had died and the third was missing. The deceased - a boy Jignesh and a girl in white. The serial killer had escaped.



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The Fool's Heart

By Shalini Rathod

Years ago, a boy loved a girl who didn't reciprocate. One day, she broke up with him, declaring, "I don't ever want to see you again." Time passed, and she realized the value of his love. Filled with regret, she sought him out, tearfully asking for another chance. She promised never to break his heart again. The boy laughed bitterly, replying, "Only a fool would take back someone who hurt them so much." The girl's eyes filled with tears as she turned to leave. Suddenly, he grabbed her hand, pulled her close, and whispered, "And I am one of those fools."

The Comeback

By Saral Mehrotra

His eyes swelled up with tears, tears which just won't stop flowing. He had failed to get promoted to class 8. Reason Mathematics. Father: "Take this chance to perform better." Battered and bruised by his inner turmoil, he found sympathy in his family and stood up again. Grades A now instead of C. The same Jack who was a brat passed tenth in the first division. Became the lead assembly speaker in the eleventh and most disciplined boy of the school in plus two. If you Fail do not give up, try and try again till you succeed.



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Suresh Kaka

By Ramanand Bhat

Office boy Suresh Kaka was known to all. With his wrinkled smile and diligent strides, he embodied the spirit of service. Whether fetching coffee or offering words of encouragement, he was the heartbeat of the office. One day, important papers vanished like whispers in the wind. The CEO's accusatory finger pointed at Suresh Kaka. "Resign by EOD," he demanded. As the clock ticked, the CEO marched in, expecting an empty desk. Instead, he found a formidable crowd of employees, standing united with Suresh Kaka. It was clear that true power lies not in titles, but in the kindness extended to others.

The Whispering Tome

By Medha Chaturvedi

Vanessa, an enigmatic bibliophile, frequented the antiquarian bookshop at twilight, drawn by whispers of ancient tomes. Among the shelves, she discovered a peculiar volume bound in worn leather, emitting a faint glow. Intrigued, she traced its gilded lettering, "The Secrets of Lost Worlds and Universe." Vanessa hesitated, sensing a hidden power within its pages. Night fell as she delved into its mysteries, each word weaving a spell of forgotten knowledge. With each chapter, Vanessa's world blurred between reality and fiction, until she vanished into the depths of the bookshop, leaving behind only whispers of her insatiable quest for forbidden truths.



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Starlight Guidance

By Priscilla Chetty

In a forgotten forest, where whispers of ancient magic danced among the trees, there lived a solitary owl named Lumina. With eyes like gleaming stars, she guarded the forest's secrets, her wisdom sought by creatures far and wide. One moonlit night, a lost traveler stumbled upon her perch, seeking guidance through the enchanted maze. With a gentle hoot, Lumina spread her wings, leading the wanderer through the labyrinth of shadows and illusions. As dawn broke, the traveler emerged, transformed by the mystical journey, forever indebted to the luminous guardian of the forest's secrets.

The Skilful Driver

By Ranjini Rao

Decades ago, on a Sunday night, we were at the Tiruppur station to send off my uncle and aunt to Chennai. The train arrived and my uncle kept the luggage in his seat and joined us on the platform. Suddenly the train started moving, and my uncle hopped in leaving behind my aunt. Our driver asked us to get into the car and drove the car like a bat out of hell. Silence filled the car and after 57 km ride, the car came to a screeching halt at Erode Junction. The skillful driver ensured my aunt boarded the train.



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The Settlement

By Ganesh Indradeo

Whenever Mama gave something to Mom, Dad recorded it in his diary. One day, Abhi asked his dad, “Why do you write down everything?” and Dad explained, “I have to settle it someday.” Abhi questioned, “What if you die before paying?” Dad replied with a smile, “Then you have to settle.” In 2022, Dad died, and Abhi had to settle all of this. Abhi started avoiding it, thinking it was a small amount and he could pay it later. In May 2023, Mama died, and the settlement remained incomplete. Abhi forgot to ask that day, what if both of you had died?

Resurfaced

By Atul P.S.

It was another sweltering, hot day in Athens. Alexios took a motor yacht into the sea, for he fancied a swim. A few miles off the coast, he jumped in and swam around for a while. Six feet under, he felt a strong pull, much like a vortex and he could only but succumb. On the other side, he was shell-shocked witnessing something he knew existed only in legends. 'The Lost City of Atlantis?'. He took in deep breaths. 'And I can breathe?'. Unsure of his predicament, he thought to himself.... 'Is there a way out or am I....?'



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A Mother's Scent

By Joane Joseph

It's been 24 years since she left me, and I can't remember her smile, did she have dimples? Her eyes, were they beautiful? Her voice, was it sweet? How did she hug? I've forgotten what it's like to be hugged. Time erases every memory, dulls both pain and pleasure, heals every wound, but also erases the traces of healing. I was scared, with time I had forgotten my mother.

Then one day, in the market, I smelled orange blossoms. A memory flashed: my mother holding my hand, asking me to smell the blossoms, promising my favorite dessert garnished with their petals. Tears swelled. I realized she was still within me. And even if I forget everything about her, the orange blossoms will bring her back to me.

Nature's ways

By Sakshi Shrivastava

I rushed to the balcony, hearing the loud chirps of birds. These weren't the sweet chirps. I was stunned to see a predator bird destroying the little SunBird's Nest in the hanging birdhouse of my balcony. All the other birds in the vicinity were actually alerting their community of the attack. Although my presence itself scared the predator away. But I couldn't save the little SunBird's cozy home. It upset me, but Nature is amazing. In just a week's time , a pair of SunBirds built their nest in the same hanging Birdhouse. Are you also wondering whether it was the same experienced pair or a novice , ignorant one.



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Protection

By Pankaj Pradhan

The last local train for Goregaon. All the ladies in the compartment got off at Andheri, and Diya was now alone inside. As the train trundled out of the station, she froze. A visibly intoxicated man had entered the coach and he now sat opposite her. She feared the worst. Suddenly, the man stood up and moved closer. But the next moment, two loud claps rang out. Both simultaneously realized that there was a 'third' person in the coach too. His eyes met theirs, and he stepped back. On the Rail TV screen, a Raksha Bandhan advt. played on.

Power of Letting Go

By Naushad Rajani

I had slogged the entire year, followed up diligently on the leads and closed good number of deals. I had received accolades as I was nominated as Best Associate for consecutive quarters. I was basking in the glory and imagining myself in coveted VP position. Finally, I received the much-awaited annual appraisal email. I moved the mouse with bated breath. I read the first couple of lines & my heart sank as I saw no words of promotion. I then reflected with sense of dejection. I realised the true success is exceling without expecting rewards and letting go many times.



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Only a Part of Life

By Vishesh Valecha

Rakesh had been rejected by the girl who had been his crush for a long time and that caused not just heartbreak but also humiliation because the rejection wasn't a polite one.

A week later, sitting in the food court eating his meal he overheard a conversation about a breakup at the next table. "Love is part of life, not the heart of life", someone remarked.

That was true, he thought. There are so many things in life to care about- education, career, health, friends. Failure in romance is not failure in life

Mentoring

By Sudhir Kamat

When you hear the word mentoring, what comes to mind? Yes, mentoring means to advise or train a person. My first mentor was my mom and the second was "Time". To be a mentor, it's said that you have to spend 80% of your time listening, 10% asking questions, and 10% offering advice. I supported a colleague to overcome his lack of confidence and secure a job as a manager in an MNC bank. The takeaway is that we need to support one another in life, as one may be strong in one field and another in another. That is where Toastmasters Club facilitates coming together and helping one another.



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Love's Eternal Dance

By Rishika Powany Karia

With a perfect moonlight date, they danced their heart out, lost in each other. His hand found hers, fingers intertwining like a perfect melody. With every step, they waltzed through memories of laughter and shared dreams. With deep silence all around, she whispered words of love, her voice a gentle symphony in his ears. He held her closer, getting lost in the rhythm of her heartbeat against his chest. That moment, the world faded away, leaving only their love burning bright. And as dawn painted the sky in hues of gold, they knew their hearts had found their forever home.

Good Bye

By Binny AD

Getting late for his flight, he rushed to say goodbye to his ailing bedridden nani. He went by her bedside and kissed her forehead. She opened her eyes. Her frail hands moved in the air to caress him. He led her hand to give her the strength to trace his face. Eyes locked, gentle smile, tears held back. A blessing flowed from nani to her grandson. None of them wanted to let go. Time was frozen. Trying to steal this one moment, before getting on with life, or death. This goodbye would be forever they both knew.



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Disobedience of Orders

By Sumeet Arya

Date & Time: 01 February 3:00 PM; Location: An Army Post in Jungles (Assam)

The phone was ringing, as I returned to office. "Sir, a heavy beam has fallen of Havildar Mandal. He's unconscious and having seizures." Decide! Quickly!! Evacuate to Military Hospital, five hours away, or to a Medical College, three hours journey, but in different direction and against orders. As the Commanding Officer, I chose the latter. The General's call (I was dreading) came the next day. "You have Disobeyed Orders on the subject; but my Medical advisor tells me that your decision has saved the soldier's life. Well done!"

Crossed Signals

By Sunita Vinod

Amidst bustling traffic, our eyes locked across the road. Every time she looked for an opportunity to cross, she met my gaze. Waltzing back and forth looking for an opportunity to cross her tentative glances turned into smiles, hinting at a connection. Soon her smile broadened and she quickened her step towards me and so did I. My filmy mode turned on, I opened my arms as she came running... then ran past me into the arms of the man behind. I simply fixed my hair, pretended to tuck my shirt back in and crossed over to the other side.



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Community

By S E Moh

Sarah is my name, and princess is what it means but I certainly don't feel like one. Princesses need to be saved; in the stories I've seen at least. One thing that I learned very quickly in life, is that no one is coming to save you, your life is yours and only you can save yourself. That too was erroneous of me to believe. Life is much more complex than that. People need people, and though our life is our responsibility, we can still help each other. I am no princess, but I am a part of my community.

Chaotic Silence

By Madhuri Vadari

Just in a moment, the world turned quiet! The chaos came to a halt. I could not hear my heart beat too.

"Is this my end? Or has the world ended instead?" I wondered.

I pinched myself. I felt alive!! Yet I couldn't bear the silence. I wanted yearned for the chaos I was used to. It felt like the silence of dead. But was I the only survivor of the apocalypse? I, fervently, turned on my phone to check. And then it hit me hard, it wasn't the rest of the world, but my airpods that went dead.



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Hope

By Muskan Pawar

They say - only a mother's love can be selfless but Maya was selflessly in love without being a mother.

Their love was the talk of the town. An adulthood love that lasted as long as it could but left lifetime worth of peaceful memories.

As years passed, Maya went through many baseless conversations that lead to nothing. Why? Maya thought, one drunken night but heard silence in reply. Maya's 36 & single, waiting to experience love as pure & peaceful as she did with him.

4 years later, she's paying school fees of her adopted daughter Ms. Tara Sharma, named after him.

Happy Child

By Jyoti Bhat

One day in my yoga class, my teacher asked us to do Happy child Pose. Must be easier I thought.. but I just couldn't do it.. Can you imagine. The pose a child makes to express it's utmost happiness, an adult is not able to perform.

Then it struck me.. Life is like that.. As we grow older, we not only become rigid but also forget to smile, laugh, enjoy... I have decided to try my best to get those things back in my life, what about you? My dear friends, keep the child in you alive and most importantly be HAPPY..



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Guided by Magic

By Priscilla Chetty

In the twilight shadows, a sleek black cat with luminous green eyes sauntered up to me. “You seem lost”, it purred, its voice oddly human. I blinked in disbelief, “I am”, I admitted. “But how are you talking?”, The cat flicked its tail nonchalantly. “Magic”, it declared, as if it were the simplest explanations in the world. “Follow me”, it said, leading me through winding alleys and hidden paths until we arrived at my destination. With a final wink, the cat vanished into the light, leaving me to wonder if it had all been a dream.

The Treasure

By Lokesh V.

Adam, the passionate wildlife photographer ventures into dangerous forests for his profession. Adam recollects his astrologer’s prediction “you will discover great fortune on the day when you encounter a live tiger”. On one fine day, Adam gets lost in a forest while taking photography and hears the ominous roaring of wild animals. He suddenly sees a yellow striped tiger lurking behind the trees. He runs for his life and falls upon a pit leading him into an underground vault containing valuable artifacts. He unravels that the vault is the secret hideout of an ancient king.



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Echoes of his Promise

By Shalini Rathod

Mom heard a scream from Ryan's room. Entering, she found her son trembling, eyes wide with terror. He clung to her, tears streaming, whispering about the boy ghost—his doppelganger—under his bed. Since watching a scary movie, Ryan had been plagued by nightmares. She agreed to let Ryan sleep in her room for two weeks. Ryan's relieved grin seemed almost sinister. "Are you sure, Mom?" he asked, and she nodded, reassuring him. They left, door shutting with a final click. In Ryan's room, the bathroom door creaked open. Ryan stepped out, eyes wide with fear. He peered under the bed—empty. The boy ghost's promise echoed: "I will not leave alone."

Echoes of Courage

By Swarna Kalyan

Seven years ago, my daughter's challenge thrust me into the spotlight. Encouraged—or perhaps nagged—by me, she faced a stage presentation. In defiance, she challenged, "Show you can do it first, then I'll listen." Thus began my quest to prove myself. Toastmasters became my refuge. Public speaking wasn't a walk in the park; it demanded practice, encouragement, and perseverance. But I stumbled forward. Surprisingly, my actions spoke louder than words. My children watched as I stepped out of my comfort zone, teaching them resilience. I transformed. Addressed audiences, became a leader. Now, as June approaches, I'll sign off as District Director—a role I never imagined. Thank you, daughter; you led me to discover a whole new world..



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Dreamscape

By Soham Bhatia

He stepped onto the spotlight.

A strange pause. His mystical gaze looked through the vast audience. As his eyes swept across the auditorium, anticipation grew. Taking a deep breath, he poured out his speech.

He talked. He swayed. He grew on the audience, stirring deep emotions. The crowd erupted in thunderous applause.

As he stepped down from the wooden stage, the scene faded to the reality of him standing in Class A-405 of Toastmasters.

The TMOD asked, "How do you give such a great speech?". With a ruminative nod, he incanted -- "Brave imagination. Improvisation. Manifestation."

The Order

By Anju Bhandari

One day after meeting we planned for a dinner and after reaching the restaurant all were so immersed in the discussion that no one wanted to choose the options to order the food. Waiter came twice but we said will order in few minutes. But after few minutes waiter came with a dosa , then with rice, then with Manchurian and we were looking at each other - either waiter has fed up with us and ordered himself or whatever is best seller there has been brought. Later we realized one person has ordered and kept mum for suspense.



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Under the Oak's Embrace

By Dheeraj Singh

As the sun dipped behind the horizon, Sarah sat by the window, her heart heavy with longing. Every evening, she watched the old oak tree outside, its branches swaying gently in the breeze. It reminded her of a promise made under its shade long ago. But time had passed, and he never returned. With a sigh, she rose, determined to let go of the past. As she stepped outside, a figure emerged from the shadows, his eyes filled with regret. "I'm sorry," he whispered. And in that moment, beneath the familiar tree, forgiveness blossomed like flowers after rain.

Dark Night

By Vaibhav Jadhav

"Pick up your school bag and let's move out of this house", ordered a father to his 6-year-old boy. Without any questions, he followed his parents in the Dark Night onto lonely streets that were deep asleep, yet he could hear the silent cries on those streets. Food, clothing and shelter are man's basic needs. That night, they had none. Streetlights became his study lamp. The staircase became his study table. Dreams were envisioned. Then a day arises when he holds a Master's Degree, a pair of keys to a new house and a photographic memory of that *Dark Night*.



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Dance with a Peacock, Be a Peacock

By Suhas Gundale

In a forest village, a girl and her mom encountered a dancing peacock. Inspired, the girl mimicked its steps. Understanding her, the peacock offered to teach her dance, with condition: repeat each lesson. Over time, its visits dwindled, but the girl persisted, winning competitions from local to national levels. **The moral:** the peacock symbolizes a mentor guiding passion and skill development. His sporadic visit teaches perseverance, leading to success. This story urges us to emulate the peacock's confidence and persistence in pursuing aspirations without waiting our daily life. Join Toastmaster, because **Leaders are made here**. Best Wishes, be a **Peacock**.

Cosmic Standoff

By Yash Papriwal

In a cosmic experiment, aliens, Isoderatheons, gives dreams to humans which inspire us to create new inventions. The Dream Enders, a gang, aim to halt this. An Isoderatheon travels to Earth to stop them using a compass-like device. Engaging the gang, they battle across shifting portals throughout Earth. However, the device breaks beyond repair, trapping him. If he doesn't make a new device within 40 Earth days, he risks TIME SLIPPING causing 500 years in his world to pass. Meaning he would loose everybody he ever loved!



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The Teacher

By Sangeethasruthi S

Manjula was a teenager, with no self-worth. She tried and didn't get selected for the School choir, just allowed to stand in the last row. From there she started volunteering to read the "News" in the assembly. One morning a teacher Dr Singh, assigned her the Republic Day speech. She wasn't confident. Dr. Singh smiled at her, "Child I have more experience than you have age, trust me". He taught her both speechcraft and courage. Republic Day went by, and so did her lack of self-worth. Manjula's curiosity about speaking became an interest and then a hobby. Dr Singh is no more, but Manjula still speaks on stage. Every word is an ode to her Mentor.

Blossoms of Resilience

By Roma Tripathi

In the middle of the rubble of a war-torn city, a single daisy pushed through concrete's grasp. Its fragile petals unfurled, defying rural confines with silent determination. Yet, for Lily, the flower whispered a tale of resilience. She, too, felt trapped by life's constraints, losing her loved ones, yearning to break free. Inspired by daisy, she embraced her own strength, pushing through adversity's cracks. With each obstacle conquered, her spirit bloomed, vibrant as the daisy in the pavement. In the heart of ruins and despair, amidst struggles and strife, a silent revolution unfurled—one soul, one flower, proving beauty thrives where least expected.



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Blessing or Curse

By Tata Subramanian

One day I was talking to my maid about yesterday how strong the wind blew and finally, it rained heavily. I said “Didi, how good is it for the rain and wind god to bless us in this sweltering heat, isn’t it a moment of joy” The maid replied, “Oh bhaiya it may be for you but yesterday when the strong wind and rain came it blew away my thatched house, and our entire house was filled with water”

I wondered can a blessing for one be a curse for another?

Believe it or Not

By Kusuma Rao

“Please give me that golden Hair piece!”. A voice kept pleading into my Grandfather’s ears. He dismissed it off as a prank. Ever since he had gone with his wife for the temple Mela, this voice haunted him day & night. He looked at his wife’s exquisite jewellery piece & thought, how could he hand it over to the Bootha (temple spirit)?

Finally, he agreed that one day during the annual mela the female Boothas could wear this jewellery. This 100 year old tradition continues to date in our ancestral House in South Kanara. Gold attracts - Women or female Boothas.



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Arjun and Abhijit

By Ramanand Bhat

Arjun and Abhijit, best of friends, met after decades. Arjun stepped out of his lavish Lamborghini and rushed to hug Abhijit. They were reuniting after a decade of college. They were at a charity event organized for orphan children. Arjun proudly tore them a cheque of ₹10 Lac while Abhijit wrote one for ₹10K. Arjun smirked, said "That's it?!" Abhijit chuckled in humility. As the night ended and they parted ways an SMS on Abhijit's phone read "Your account has been credited with ₹20,000. Your Updated Balance is ₹24,200".

Abhijit's Fate Laughed at Arjun's Destiny.

Adversity Builds Character

By Naushad Rajani

It was smooth sailing life with lucrative business. I had envious and marquee corporate customers and huge staff strength, to boast. I thought I had reached the pinnacle of success. Over the period of time arrogance crept in & I considered myself invincible.

But circumstances changed, competition got better of me, new business paradigm was emerging with dawn of internet and customers started abandoning. I could feel my ship was slowly sinking. My loyal employees dumped me and moved on. Slowly I realized importance of being humble to learn from everyone and nimble to change course when in adversity.



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Action versus Result

By Vishesh Valecha

Ajay was frustrated with corporate presentation work on his laptop in the hall. The TV was on and his granny was watching the Mahabharata.

"You have the right to action, not to results" Lord Krishna counselled Arjuna. Ajay had heard this philosophy.

But because of the clear explanation, he grasped its true meaning for the first time. It was about the extent of one's rights. For example, a student had the right to study, not the right to good marks.

Realizing the result was beyond his control, Ajay resolved to do his best for the presentation.

A Girl who Believed

By Grishma Dand

Samaira looked around and saw everyone was happy around her. They all were delighted for her success when she completed her post-graduation at the age of 40. The accomplishment she achieved after compromising, feeling guilty and many other obstructions. No one around was complaining, judging, or was jealous. But this was just a dream, The world which just could be imagined in unreal world. But that day onwards she made sure to be happy in success of others. To be joyous and learn from everyone around her. The journey of everyone is different and difficult if seen through different lenses.



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The Magic Within

By Akshay Singh

In a old attic, Akshay found an old pencil said to hold magic dust. Each night, he wrote his fears and doubts, feeling the pencil's power transform his words. The dust sparkled, shedding the weight of his past. As days passed, Akshay noticed a change. His spirit soared, unburdened by shame. With newfound strength, he felt a clear purpose. He no longer feared the future; he embraced it. One evening, he realized the pencil was just an instrument. The true magic was within him, unlocked by shedding his past and embracing growth. He rose, ready to fulfill his dreams.

Duffer of the Decade

By Sankalp Singh

One day, a boy named Sankalp received the "Duffer of the Decade" award and thanked his ex-girlfriend Tia, who had left him due to his lack of intelligence. Determined to improve, Sankalp sought out Braindev, the God of Wisdom. Braindev instructed him to immerse his head in a wisdom-blessed river. Hesitant, Sankalp tested the water with his feet, causing his legs to grow to 100 feet, making him the tallest man on earth. Braindev cursed him to be known as the "Duffer of the Decade," but also revealed that joining a Toastmasters club would eventually make him intelligent.



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The last Smile

By Monodip Das

On a cloudy winter morning, a man looked out of the window. The only thing he saw, a garden. A smile spread across his face as he spotted Disha, his daughter, in the middle of the garden playing and enjoying the weather. It started drizzling. Disha started dancing joyfully. The man tried to wave to his daughter, but his elbow was stuck and his smile turned upside down. Reality came crashing down as the drizzle turned into a storm. Disha's murdered corpse captivated his mind. On a cloudy winter morning, a man looked out of the window from hospital bed.

Count your Blessings

By Madhuri Vadari

In a world of plenty, young Deepa took her blessings for granted, often wasting food without a second thought. One fateful day, while idly gazing out the train window, she witnessed a poignant scene. A small girl, barefoot and hungry, scavenged morsels of food from the tracks, her eyes reflecting a hunger Deepa had never known. Deepa's heart shattered, all things she had taken for granted laid bare before her. That day, she vowed to cherish every bite, every gift she had been bestowed by life. Through the eyes of the hungry child, Deepa learned the profound lesson of gratitude.



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Unforgettable Vistas

By Libby Abraham

Libby boarded the Vistadome train, eager for the panoramic views promised by its glass ceilings and wide windows. As the train snaked through verdant valleys and past towering peaks, each turn revealed breathtaking new vistas. The plush seats and impeccable service felt like pure luxury. Yet, as she reached for her phone to capture a particularly stunning scene, she realized there were no charging points. Devices around her died slowly, unable to capture the endless beauty. Still, the vivid landscapes and unforgettable sights etched themselves into her memory, making the journey's splendor undeniable despite the small inconvenience.

The Phoenix has Risen

By Pritpal Kaur

She got married at the age of 22 to the supposed love of her life and life was full of hope and dreams. However, life had other plans, life happened and dreams were shattered. The confident carefree girl turned into a self-doubting woman. The ringside view seemed all right but up close the reality was completely different. She was waiting for a ray of hope, a sign that all will be well, a divine intervention. An ardent Harry Potter fan, she read and reread the books and got a sudden inspiration. She got a Phoenix tattoo, a sign that she was reborn and lo and behold hopes soared courage reinstated and self-respect resurfaced. Her transformation had begun. The phoenix had risen. All was well.



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Power of Mark

By Akshay Singh

In the town of Punctuationville, young Mark always felt out of place. Curved and uncertain, he envied the exclamations and periods who seemed so confident and clear. One day, he wandered into the Great Library, filled with ancient texts. There, a wise old book whispered, "Mark, your shape holds power. You invite curiosity, spark exploration, and drive discovery. Embracing his form, Mark asked questions that led to new ideas and solutions. The townsfolk began to see his value, understanding that without questions, growth was impossible. Mark stood tall, proud of his place, knowing that every story begins with a question.

Toastmasters to the Rescue

By Pritpal Kaur

A career break often reduces the chances of a successful career, but joining Toastmasters made all the difference for me. During my hiatus, I joined Toastmasters, which boosted my confidence. When I returned to the job market, I faced self-doubt and the inevitable question about my career gap. I spoke about my Toastmasters experience during my first interview, which helped me ace it as if it were a table topic. As a result, I secured a higher role with a better package. Toastmasters transformed my career from a compromise to a conquest, becoming my ultimate secret weapon.



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My BauAA

By Sakshi Shrivastava

My cute Grandmother, always sweet, always teaching and preaching and always loving. She used crutches to walk for 18 years until her heavenly progression when I was pursuing my Master's. She loved Train journeys but never sat in a wheelchair, always walked up to the train from the parking and boarded unsupported. A proud student of her High School Pass Certificate, because she was the only Girl in a Boy's School in Nainital. Fluent in 4 languages – both speech and writing – Hindi, English, Sanskrit and Urdu. She read the most contemporary Political, Theological, and Literary books. The most active woman in the Kitchen and during Family gatherings. The strongest woman of my Life- my "BauAA"

The Keychain

By Hardik Shah

As I looked back one more time, I saw a car with a partly broken headlight about to ram into me. It stopped just inches away. She got off with her broken leg, limping towards me to handover the other half of the keychain. It wasn't just a goodbye.

Today, the rusted keychain is the only memory I have of her; I already had the first half with me.



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Zero to Hero

By Vrindavani Mulik

Shivaji, a 15-year-old boy, boarded a train with his friends to Mumbai but landed in Chennai, with just Rs 35. He faced language barriers and no job. Using sign language, he enrolled in night school while working by day. Struggling, he bought apples, sold them at a profit, and began trading fruits and vegetables. Realizing the risks of perishables, he moved to Mumbai and worked as a labourer. Observing construction, he learned the trade, studied at night, and earned his first contract. His hard work led to major projects, culminating in a Rs 100 crore company. Shivajirao Dattatray Bhoskar, my father, built his empire through resilience and learning.

Let's go Pomodoro

By Hiren Heliya

From tossing and catching multiple tasks, we have mastered the art of jugglery! How long have we managed not to respond to WhatsApp notifications? We are vulnerable to being carried away by even the slightest distractions, which tends to disrupt our natural flow of work. Want to avoid it?

Let's try the Pomodoro Technique: pledge to focus on one task for at least 25 minutes, take a break of usually 5 minutes, and repeat the sequence. It works wonderfully as it gives a sense of accomplishment upon completing the task, plus a sense of joy from taking a timely break.



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The Walk

By Mukta Nadkar

Can you walk that far?" "Oh yes," I assured my neighbor. I had always wanted to walk to Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati in Pune. The distance from my home was almost 7 km. Not much. With a spring in my step, a song in my heart and a prayer on my lips, I walked. Before long, I was lost, lost among the thousands who had come to worship. I stood silent, mesmerized. I could feel Ganesha's strength, wisdom, and compassion. I knew I could keep walking. As long as I knew where to go.

366 Days- One day to Celebrate

By Brillian S.K.

On June 30, 2016, at Rude Lounge, Mumbai, I raised a toast with fellow leaders. Pride and achievement filled the air. Our collective commitment propelled us to be recognized as World No. 9.

Reflecting on starting the year on July 1, 2015, our journey was marked by challenges, constraints, and chaos. Focus, commitment, and enthusiasm to achieve excellence kept us going. Our motto, '2gether we are 100%', helped us turn challenges into our crucible. This achievement stands as a testament to our perseverance and innovative spirit, proving that true excellence is born from dedication and resilience.



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Don't Ever Give Up

By Hiren Heliya

Falling from the bicycle and bearing the pain of fresh wounds, Little Mary wondered, who would come to help me? With no one in sight and the freezing cold choking her voice, she remembered just one message from her mother: don't ever give up! Despite the challenging circumstances, she didn't give up. She tried again and again, balancing on both pedals. As she covered a good distance, this gave confidence in herself. She held her head high with pride, as if she could seek her mother's blessing from the sky, thus adding this bright chapter to her lonely memory lanes.

A Dress and a Day

By Anonymous

Shruti found her discount coupon and rushed to the store, excited about the perfect dress she'd seen. At the register, the cashier frowned. "This coupon expired yesterday." Shruti's heart sank. She pleaded, but the policy was strict. Disheartened, she left empty-handed.

The next day, an unexpected email arrived: "Exclusive one-day extension for valued customers." Shruti rushed back, her heart racing. The dress still hung there, waiting for her. This time, the cashier smiled. "Just in time!" Shruti beamed, finally holding her dream dress, grateful for the unexpected second chance.



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Crossroads of Caution

By Anonymous

Tom approached the intersection as the light turned yellow. The road was empty, and he hesitated, torn between speeding up or slowing down. His foot hovered over the gas pedal, his mind racing. "If I speed up, I'll make it," he thought. But what if he didn't? The light turned red just as he crossed, and he breathed a sigh of relief. Glancing in the rearview mirror, he saw no cars or flashing lights. He smiled, deciding that next time, he'd play it safe and stop. The brief dilemma reminded him that caution often trumps haste on the road.

Fragrant Memories Found

By Anonymous

Shweta frantically searched her room, upending drawers and scattering clothes. Her grandmother's perfume, a cherished keepsake, was missing. The delicate bottle, adorned with a faded ribbon, held memories of warm hugs and bedtime stories. As tears welled up, she caught a faint whiff of the familiar scent. Following it, she discovered the bottle nestled in the folds of her favorite sweater. Relief washed over her as she gently cradled the perfume, vowing to keep it safe. The lost treasure, now found, reminded her of the enduring presence of loved ones, even in the smallest things.



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Across the Aisle

By Libby Abraham

The rhythmic rumble of the Mumbai-Goa train mirrored Armaan's nervous heartbeat. Across the aisle, a girl with eyes the colour of the Konkani monsoon sea stole his attention. Stolen glances, shy Smiles - a silent conversation bloomed. He fumbled with his earphones, she pretended to be engrossed in a book. Just as he gathered the courage, an announcement boomed – "Panvel station"

Disappointment clouded her eyes as she gathered her things. A final, lingering look, and then, they were strangers again, the train carrying away their unspoken tale.

Thank You Vidya

By Dhvani Shah

A Gujarati girl, who typically gets cold feet when alone on stage, was unexpectedly offered the opportunity to perform a regional dance from Madhya Pradesh. Despite knowing nothing about it, she accepted the challenge. The assurance that Vidya herself would guide her through the steps if she forgot gave her the confidence to step onto the stage. As the unfamiliar song was played, the crowd fell silent. But there stood Vidya, cheering the loudest. It was the first time she performed with unwavering confidence. I hope I help someone overcome their fear just the way you helped me through it.



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Insight

By Anonymous

You sense a change within when you notice the subtlest sensations.
A glance can stir envy, while a thought brings clarity.
Beauty instills peace, while a smile sparks another.
Pain nurtures compassion, and fear heightens awareness.
Breath invites calm, and breathless moments bring insight.
Ultimately, perceptions shift, and understanding evolves.
Revealing it's neither good nor bad.
It is what it simply is.
It is Awareness. It is Reality
It is Vipassana

Declutter

By Arvind Nair

The box lay under the bed, untouched for over three decades. Our only child had flown the nest. As parents, we had not bothered to check what was in it. It is hers, we will let her know when she visits us next. One morning we hauled the box from under the bed. It contained story books and toys our little one had played with. At that moment my thoughts went to the little boy I would meet on my morning walk. He would tug a shoe box imagining it to be a vehicle, following his mother as she went about her job. The joy on his face as I gave him the box with the toys was priceless.



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A Drive of Reflection

By Somnath

While driving back from Satara to Mumbai, the Pune-Mumbai expressway offered smooth sailing and quality conversations with my father. However, as we entered the city, we encountered chaotic traffic, long waits at signals, frequent speed-breakers, aggressive drivers, pedestrians ignoring traffic, and street dogs suddenly appearing. I lost my cool and got irritated, which was evident to my father, who listened quietly. After a few tense moments, I calmed down. My father then asked, "Somnath, do you think you have control over your mind?" I replied, "Of course, Papa." He pointed to a street dog and said, "That dog controls your mind, not you."

Your Boat

By Sangeethasruthi S

Subhash entered the boat-making contest, with a beautiful design, good materials, and a practical plan. Midway he decided to take a break to look at the work of others. He copied the color scheme of one contestant, and the design of the other, arranged the mast like the third, and made the sail look like the fourth. His boat looked jarringly incongruous and it drowned too. He had taken the best from everyone.... Then why?

Because the parts did not fit together. His original boat would have had a better chance, plus would have been a joy for him to make.



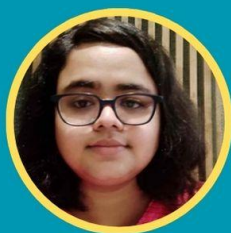
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Editors Note

We read through the 100th Year Celebration of Toastmasters International, literally, by reading 100 emotions in the 100 stories of 100 Toastmasters. In spite of being so short, each one conveys so much in so less. Some stories are so imaginative, some clearly emotional, some connected me to my own experiences. We are so glad to be a part of such a Memorable Anthology. Our gratitude to all our Authors, Co-Editors and entire team of D98 Anthology. Looking forward to a continued Reading Treat every year ahead.



Joane Joseph



Sakshi Shrivastava, DTM



District 98 Annual Conference
24th - 26th May 2024