



RESCENDO

TOASTMASTERS PAKISTAN NEWS AND EVENTS



Rising Together



Table of Contents

03 | District Leaders' Message

Echoes of leadership | 06

07 | District Officer's Training

10 | Club Officers Trainings

13 | The Annual Convention - Pride & Passion

14 | Words of Winners

18 | Poetry, Stories & Articles

28 | Dedicated DTMs

29 | Epilogue

Message From

DTM Azam Ali

District 122P Director

Assalam-o-Alaikum, Toastmasters Family,

This year's District theme is "Spread the Fragrance" and we encourage each member to share the essence of Toastmasters through personal growth, positivity, and by promoting club activities on social media.

To spread this fragrance even further, we launched Google Forms and WhatsApp engagement groups for non-members interested in Toastmasters. These initiatives have already generated over 175 expressions of interest, which are being shared with clubs to support membership growth and outreach.

The year began with the election and appointment of District Officers, Division and Area Councils, and committee chairs. I am truly proud of our District Executive Committee — a team of passionate, capable, and committed leaders. With such a strong foundation, I am confident that we will build on last year's success and reach even greater milestones.

We are determined to once again secure a leading global position for District 122P. Our goals include reaching 75 active clubs and achieving the Smedley Distinguished District recognition. I am pleased to share that two new clubs - CCL Pharma and ACCA — have already submitted their charter documents to Toastmasters International, with several more in progress.

Both the District Executive Committee (DEC) and District Council Meetings were successfully held with vibrant participation. The District Success Plan and District Budget were approved and submitted to Toastmasters International ahead of schedule, fulfilling all formal requirements.

On the training front, the Program Quality team, in collaboration with TLI, organized training and refresher sessions for Division Directors, Area Directors, and Club Officers in Islamabad,

Karachi, Lahore, and online. Special thanks to Contour (Pvt.) Limited for sponsoring venues in Islamabad and Karachi, and to Crescent School (Girls Campus) for their support in Lahore.

It is a matter of great pride that 100% of Division and Area Directors were trained, and 43 out of 50 clubs achieved the officer training goal. Furthermore, with the new online Club Success Plan submission process, all clubs (100%) complied on time. This is a remarkable milestone in our district's journey.



Our district also earned global recognition when Srijita Raj Singh, DTM Talha bin Hamid, and TM Fahim Razzak swept the top three positions in Toastmasters International's 2025 Video Speech Contest, making District 122P shine on the world stage.

While Pakistan faced severe floods this year, affecting several community clubs, our resilience remains unshaken. The District has formally requested Toastmasters International to consider a partial waiver of dues for affected clubs, and we remain hopeful for a positive outcome.

With your continued dedication and enthusiasm, I am confident that District 122P will keep learning, growing, and inspiring — truly spreading the fragrance of Toastmasters across Pakistan and beyond.

With warm regards,

Syed Azam Ali, FCA

District Director, District 122P

Toastmasters International

Message From **DTM Ali Amjad**

Program Quality Director



It gives me immense pleasure to see a vibrant team of Toastmasters assume charge as district leaders. It includes Area Directors, Division Directors and Managers.

We have witnessed great synergy in this current team and they have recruited their respective team members. It is also quite welcoming and motivating to see active participation in club officer's trainings.

Coming from last year, we have great momentum from 9 new clubs chartered last year, most of which were corporate club. Building on the momentum from last year, when 9 new clubs were chartered, most of them corporate clubs, we now aim to retain all existing clubs by ensuring high-quality meetings and providing excellent service to our members.

In addition, we should help members achieve their goals and build on their journey of personal and professional development.

As program quality director, I am working with my team to highlight positive educational achievements and appreciate them through recognition.

Let us all continue to offer help and support to each other and thrive as a community.

We have launched the Leadership Clinic for our Area Directors. It entails exciting opportunities for learning and growth.

Our aim is to reach club number of 75 and to qualify for a full-fledged district.

Let's join hands and make this a reality.

Ali Amjad

DTM Ali Amjad

District 122P Program Quality Director

Message From

DTM Abrar Wani

Club Growth Director

As we approach the close of our first quarter, I extend my gratitude to every member and leader who is working tirelessly to strengthen our clubs and carry forward the Toastmasters mission.

This season also reminds us of the importance of membership renewals. Timely renewals not only keep our clubs strong but also ensure that every member continues to benefit from the learning, growth, and fellowship that Toastmasters offers. I kindly request each of you to renew your membership at the earliest and encourage others around you to do the same.

I am also pleased to announce the launch of a special recognition initiative to celebrate the efforts of our leaders:

An award of PKR 25,000 will be presented to the Area Director who successfully brings a new club into our district.

An award of PKR 35,000 will be presented to the Division Director who achieves the same milestone of adding a new club.

These initiatives are not just about rewards—they represent our collective commitment to growth, to building new communities of learning, and to making Toastmasters accessible to more individuals across our district.

Let us continue this journey with renewed passion. Together, we will expand our reach, strengthen our clubs, and transform more lives through the power of communication and leadership.

Yours in service and leadership,

Abrar Ahmed Wani

Abrar Ahmad Wani

Club Growth Director, District 122P





TOASTMASTERS PAKISTAN
DISTRICT 122P

ECHOES OF LEADERSHIP

TM SOFIA QADIR DIVISION D DIRECTOR	TM HUMAYUN KIANI DIVISION C DIRECTOR	DTM ASMA NAZ DIVISION B DIRECTOR	DTM Irfan FAROOQUI DIVISION A DIRECTOR	DTM ABBAR WANI CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR	DTM SYED AZAM ALI DISTRICT DIRECTOR	DTM ALI AMJAD PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR	DTM ZAID KALIYA IP DISTRICT DIRECTOR	TM IQRA ARSHAD PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER	TM ADNAN AHMAD FINANCE MANAGER	TM MESUM HAIDER ADMIN MANAGER
--	--	--	--	---	---	--	--	---	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

LEADERSHIP TEAM
2025-2026

Meet
THE TRIO
2025-26

TOASTMASTERS PAKISTAN
DISTRICT 122P

ABBAR WANI, DTM
CLUB GROWTH
DIRECTOR

SYED AZAM ALI, DTM
DISTRICT
DIRECTOR

ALI AMJAD, DTM
PROGRAM QUALITY
DIRECTOR

ECHOES OF LEADERSHIP

TOASTMASTERS PAKISTAN
DISTRICT 122P

ECHOES OF LEADERSHIP

AREA DIRECTORS
2025-2026

TM Anum Qadri Area 01 Director	TM Shahzaib Khalid Area 02 Director	TM Majid Akhtar Area 03 Director	TM Haseeb Hassan Area 04 Director
TM Sabra Tanveer Area 05 Director	TM Qandeel Zafar Area 06 Director	TM Yousaf Warsi Area 07 Director	TM Jehanzeb Amin Area 08 Director
TM Muhammad Bilal Area 09 Director	TM Kaman Ahmad Area 10 Director	TM Samreen Mukhtar Area 11 Director	TM Irfan Qureshi Area 12 Director
TM Maaz Ullah Khan Area 13 Director	TM Hussain Faiz Area 14 Director		

TOASTMASTERS PAKISTAN
DISTRICT 122P

DISTRICT MANAGERS
2025-2026
ECHOES OF LEADERSHIP

ADNAN AHMAD

MESUM HAIDER

IQRA ARSHAD

MANAGER

FINANCE ADMIN PUBLIC RELATIONS

As we turned the page to a new chapter, With a fresh wave of enthusiasm and dedication we proudly welcomed the passionate and forward-thinking leaders who will steer District 122P into a brighter, bolder future.

This team brings energy, vision, and a deep commitment to empowering every member, club, and leader across the district. With unity, purpose, and innovation at the heart of their mission, they are making every voice count and every milestone meaningful.

Here's to a year of growth, impact, and excellence. Let's support, celebrate, and rise together!

District Officers Training



District 122P proudly commenced the new Toastmasters year with a high-impact District Officers Training, conducted in the very first month — a true demonstration of proactive leadership and commitment to excellence.

The training focused on building a strong foundation for the year ahead, with sessions on leadership traits, team building, conflict resolution, purposeful leadership, and the importance of public relations at every level.

It was inspiring to see our Area and Division Directors come together to learn, collaborate, and align their goals for the success of clubs and members across the district.

A sincere appreciation to the District Trio and the dedicated training team for organizing a well-structured and insightful program that set a strong tone for the months to come.

Here's to a year of growth, teamwork, and outstanding leadership across District 122P.



DISTRICT OFFICERS TRAINING 2025-26

July 12, 2025 - Saturday | 06:00 pm PST - 09:00 pm PST

AGENDA

ROOM OPENS & NETWORKING BEGINS AT 6:00 PM | OPENING REMARKS BY HOST | TM ANZALNA SAMI

06:35 PM | **WELCOME NOTE BY TLI CHAIR**
TM Obaid Bilgarami

07:25 PM | **DIVISION DIRECTOR ROLE TRAINING**
DTM Abrar Wani

06:40 PM | **VISION FOR DISTINGUISHED AREA & DIVISION**
AREA & DIVISION DIRECTORS
1 MIN EACH

7:45 PM | **HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS**
DTM Ali Amjad

7:00 PM | **LEADING WITH PURPOSE**
DTM Syed Azam Ali

8:00 PM | **ESSENTIAL TRAITS FOR LEADERSHIP**
DTM Zaid Kaliya

07:15 PM | **AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY**
TM Humayun Kiani

08:15 PM | **BUILDING FUNCTIONAL TEAMS**
DTM Atif Irfan

07:25 PM | **AREA DIRECTOR ROLE TRAINING**
DTM Irfan Farooqui

08:30 PM | **LEVERAGE PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR SUCCESS**
TM Iqra Arshad

Online Via Zoom

Meeting ID: 886 7190 7907

Passcode: 711423

PROGRAM QUALITY DESK 2025-26 | **DISTRICT 122P**



District Officers Training



DISTRICT OFFICER TRAINING

Mark Your Calenders!

July 12, 2025
Saturday
06:00 pm - 09:00 pm

Online Via Zoom
ID: 886 7190 7907
Passcode: 711423
Or Scan To Join

1. Visits

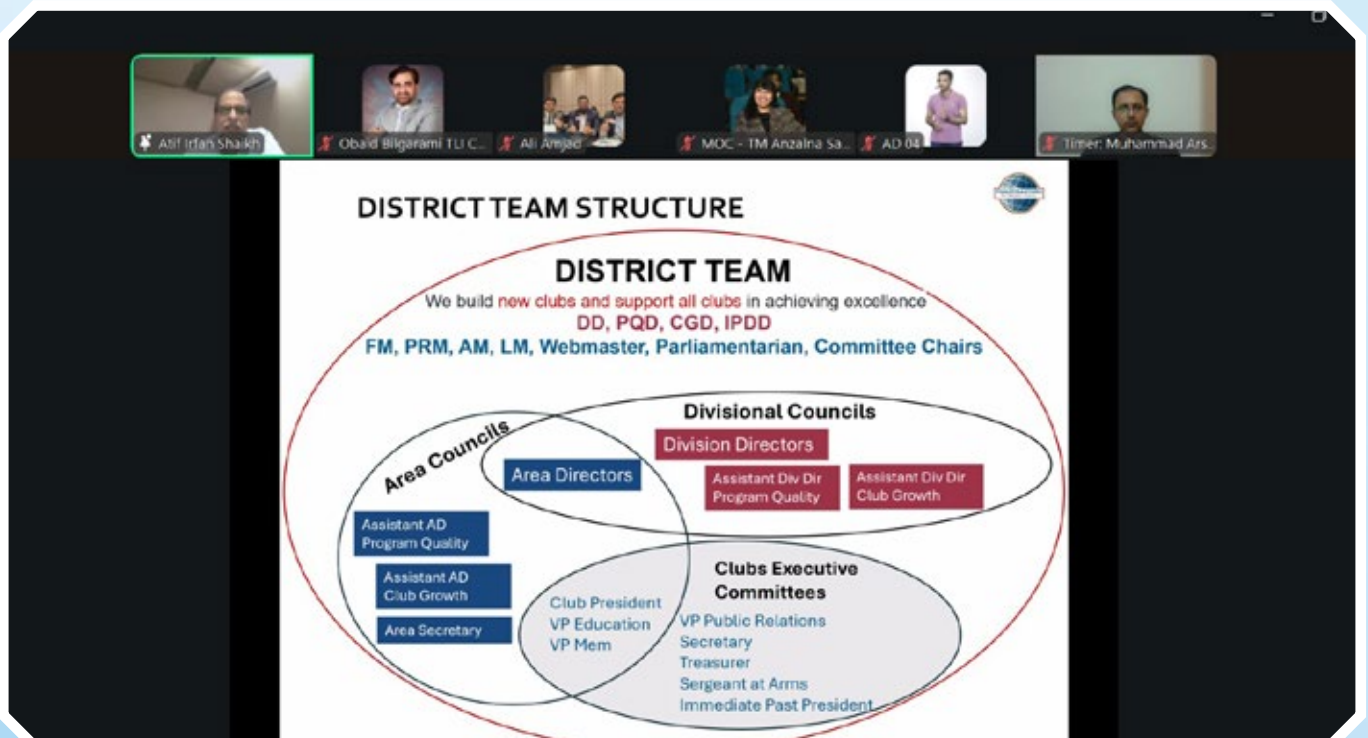
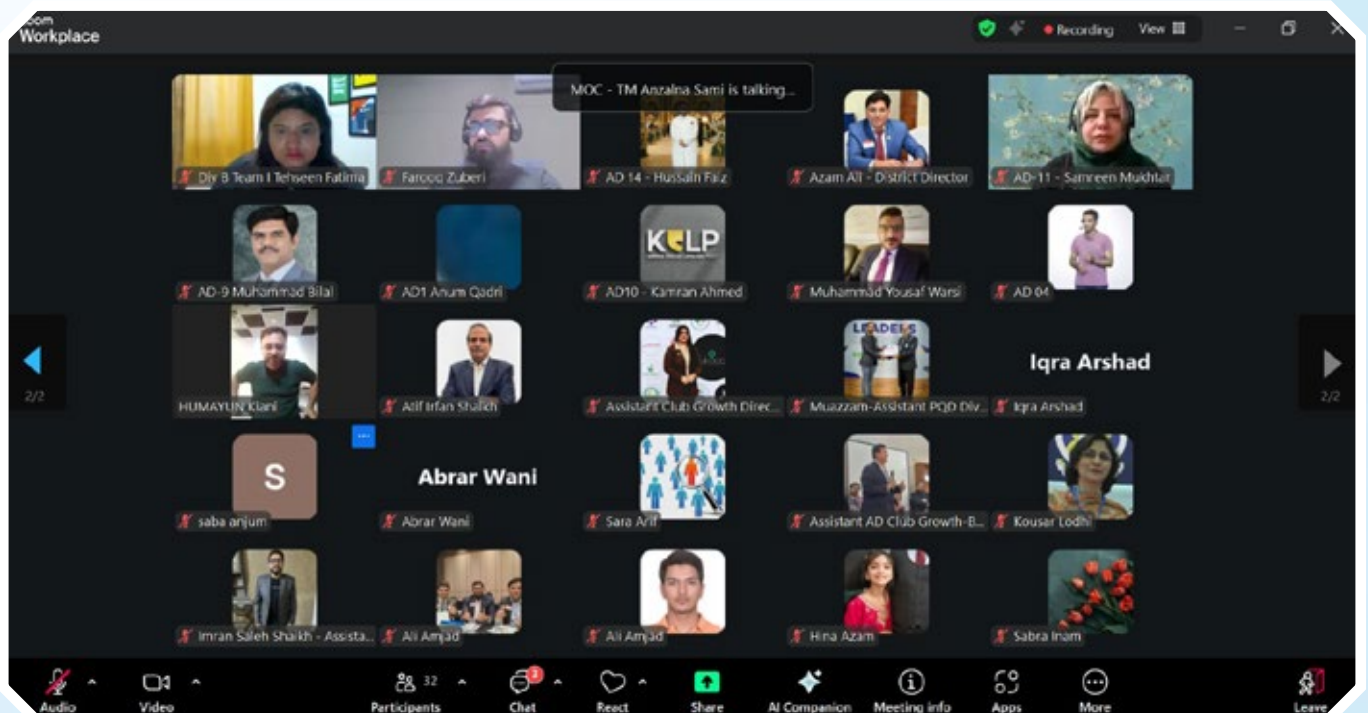
At least two scheduled visits each year

- Round 1 by November 30
- Round 2 by May 31

Use the
Club Visit Report
to assess strengths, identify challenges, and offer support

<https://ccin.toastmasters.org/media/files/department-documents/club-documents/219-serving-clubs-through-visits-a-guide-for-area-directors.pdf>

District Officers Training



The Club Officers Training

Chapter Islamabad



Empowering Leaders, Inspiring Growth

The Club Officer Training in Islamabad marked a strong start to the new Toastmasters year. The sessions equipped officers with the knowledge and confidence to lead their clubs effectively, while fostering collaboration and enthusiasm across the Division.

A heartfelt appreciation to all the trainers, organizers, and officers who participated with such energy and purpose. The passion displayed set the perfect tone for a year of excellence and achievement across District 122P.

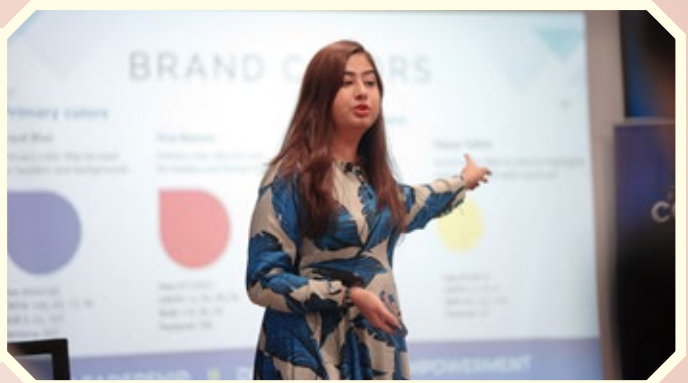


The Club Officers Training

Chapter Karachi



Karachi witnessed an impactful Club Officer Training filled with learning, laughter, and leadership. The sessions focused on enhancing officer roles, teamwork, and strategic planning — ensuring every club is set for success in the year ahead.



The Club Officers Training

Chapter Lahore



The Club Officer Training in Lahore brought together passionate Toastmasters from across the Division for a day of insight, interaction, and inspiration. With engaging sessions on leadership, communication, and club excellence, officers left empowered to lead with vision and purpose.

Gratitude to the trainers, venue partners, and participants for making this session a resounding success. The energy and dedication in Lahore truly reflected the spirit of leadership in action.



District 122P Stands Tall on the Global Stage!



Pride, passion, and performance — District 122P has done it again! Pakistan shines bright as our district is honored as a **Smedley Distinguished District**, one of only twelve districts worldwide to achieve this prestigious recognition.

Under the visionary leadership of DTM M. Zaid Kaliya, the district exceeded goals and will be celebrated at the **Toastmasters Hall of Fame** ceremony. Adding to the triumph, **Syed Azam Ali** earned the **District Program Quality Award**, while **Ali Amjad** received the **District Club Growth Award** for their outstanding contributions.

The convention was more than an awards stage:

- 💡 Exchange of powerful ideas
- 🎤 Witnessing world-class champion speakers
- 📖 Learning from the very best in communication & leadership
- 🤝 Building countless new global connections with inspiring leaders

Our leaders proudly carried the Pakistan flag on the global stage — celebrating teamwork, dedication, and the true spirit of excellence that defines District 122P. Together, we continue to make history and inspire the world.



Words of Winners

International Video Speech
Competition 2025 Champions



Interviewers:

TM Fareeda Rehman

TM Aysha Abdul Ghaffar



Interview - Srijita Raj Singh

Congratulations on delivering such a memorable speech! What message did you hope to leave with your audience?

Thank you so much; my speech came from a place of self-reflection and self-acceptance, and that was the message I wished to give to my audience- that they go back at least one bit more accepting of who they are as people and let themselves follow their heart's seeking to their heart's content.

What inspired you to choose this topic- was it drawn from personal experience or observation?

My topic was intently drawn from personal experience, and this is so far the most personal story I have narrated on stage. It is really important for us to face ourselves despite our fears, and I felt a need to share my story on that journey. And despite the intense fear I felt about sharing something like this on stage, sharing it has eased something in me, and I hope it gave others some solace or encouragement too.

How did you ensure your emotions and expressions translated effectively through video?

I happen to be an expressive person as a whole, so that was an advantage. Other than that, I rehearsed the speech in front of my friends and mentor and allowed the emotions of the story to come through by seeping into it while narrating it. One also has to let the pressure ease away- the whole point of performing is to just tell the story. Wear the story. Become it.

Did you have a particular audience in mind while crafting the speech?

To me, the audience for this speech was every single person who has ever felt conflicted by what their heart wants and what is expected of them, and to be fair, that happens to be a very large group of people. And I just wanted to ease a little bit of that conflict by sharing my story with them.

What part of your speech do you think connected the most with viewers, and why?

I don't think I can answer that question- every person told me there were different bits that touched them most specifically, depending on their own stories and lives, and I think that's the beauty of performing- no two people are going to see your work the same way.

How did you refine your delivery to achieve such clarity and impact?

That, was a long journey. I will not understate it- every word needs to be assessed and revisited and revised, till it feels fitting on both the page and the



stage. I feel that once you have written a speech that resonates with you honestly and deeply, it becomes easier to have clarity and create impact while delivering it because the audience receives that honesty and depth as you are speaking. The key is to be true to yourself. All else follows.

Who or what has been your biggest influence as a speaker?

The stories I have read have been my biggest influence, for pretty much everything I do, and when it comes to speaking, my intention is to find my own style, space and element on stage.

What do you hope people will remember most about your performance?

That I spoke from the heart. *Srijita Raj Singh*

Interview - Talha Bin Hamid

Congratulations on your outstanding performance! How did you stay focused under the pressure of competition?

It is hard. I stay focused by not thinking about the contest, rather, being fixated upon delivering the best speech of my life.

Can you share one challenge you faced while preparing or recording your speech and how you handled it?

The biggest challenge was getting on the stage that was potentially global, with a deeply personal story. The structure was also unconventional, with me playing two characters and the entire speech being in third person. Ultimately, I focused on the emotions and the universality of the heat and congestion on roads to drive the message home.

What kept you motivated when things didn't go as planned or whenever you found yourself in a doubt?

I always, always doubted myself and that's why I kept practicing until the contest day.

How do you usually manage stress before a big speech — any personal rituals or habits?

In an isolated space, I scream, shout and sing at the top of my voice to free up my vocal chords and, at least temporarily, unlock a heightened vocal variety. I also jump around, even mime boxing, to relax my body for gestures and movements.

Looking back, what part of the preparation process helped you grow the most as a communicator?

Practising before a mirror and watching my videos. It was a torment, so I practiced enough for it not to be torture. I believe that played a role in getting the speech across to the judges.

Was there a particular feedback or practice session that completely changed your approach?

Yes. During a practice run, one of the audience members remarked that this speech was not a good fit for an international contest – it was too personal and too unconventional. That actually helped me to revise it and make it more relatable to a wider audience.



Talha Bin Hamid.

Interview - Fahim Razzak

Congratulations on this well-deserved victory! How does it feel to see your message touch so many hearts?

Thank you!

I'm absolutely ecstatic and deeply humbled at the same time.

What initially drew you to participate in the video speech contest?

The club usually submits the first-place winner from the Club Level Speech Contest, and that's how my speech was entered. I make it a point to participate in the contests every year, as I see them as an essential part of continuous growth and learning as a speaker.

Every journey has its defining moment – what was a turning point for you during your preparation?

For me, the turning point was when I stopped rehearsing and started really feeling the story again. It's based on my own experience travelling with a heavy suitcase, and once I let those emotions come through, everything just clicked.

How did you balance creativity and structure to make your message impactful even through a video?

I tend to focus on creativity first — shaping the ideas and emotions that make the message stand out. Once that's solid, I step back to look at the overall structure and fine-tune it so the flow feels natural and impactful.

Was there any moment you doubted yourself in the Toastmasters journey – and how did you overcome it?

I always try to be myself as much as I can while staying prepared. In contests like these, it's natural to feel nervous no matter how many times you've taken part. I remember having my usual jitters, but my main goal was just to show up, express myself, and enjoy the moment.

How did toastmasters as a community help shape your growth as a speaker?

Toastmasters has played a huge role in my growth as a speaker. The journey from being terrified to step on stage to finishing 3rd in the Video Speech Contest is proof of the encouraging and



nurturing environment it offers. The constructive evaluations after every speech have been invaluable in shaping my progress.

In the end, are there any specific words you want to say to our Toastmasters community?

Joining Toastmasters has truly been one of the best decisions I've made for my professional growth. My message to fellow members is simple — keep showing up and take on meaningful roles, whether it's speaking, evaluating, or one of the Big 4 roles. That's where the real transformation takes place.

Fahim Razzak

Members Contributions

Poetry, Articles, and Stories



F.E.A.R — The Emotion That forces Us Do All Kinds of Things

By Syed Zameer (Rawalpindi TMC)

A Day fear took the wheel

Before leaving, I checked my shoes, socks, hoodie, gloves, glasses, and finally my mask, looking like an insane person surrounded by zombies. Left the house, sat immediately in my car, drove fast to the store. When I got there, ran inside and started doing my **grocery** shopping.

No, it wasn't the apocalypse, it was the pinnacle of COVID-19.

Fear was everywhere invisible but heavy. And that's the thing about fear: it spreads faster than any virus not through the air, but through whispers, headlines, and the look in someone else's eyes.

Understanding the Six Basic Emotions

I've always been an emotional person. Well, let's say I used to be highly charged, easily provoked, quick to frustration, aggressive at work and at home. It led

to a lot of problems, professionally and personally.

Psychologists officially recognize six basic emotions:

- Happiness
- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Surprise
- Disgust

Today, I want to focus the negative one: fear.

False Evidence Appearing Real

Some people define f.e.a.r as **False Evidence Appearing Real**. And if you look at fear from a different perspective, that definition is often

spot-on.

We have learnt to manipulate using fear in marketplaces, politics, relationships.

- A boss threatening a negative review.
- Roadside radar signs warning of fines.
- Billboards with mangled cars urging seatbelt use.
- Politicians warning of disastrous policies from their rivals.
- Parents, spouses, and even NGOs leveraging fear to push for action.

Fear is like a salesman who knocks on your door uninvited — persistent, persuasive, and often selling you something you don't really

need.

The Double-Edged Sword of Fear

The truth is, fear isn't always bad. Our ancestors survived predators because fear kept them alive. But today, most fears are man-made — born from greed, power, and ambition.

From Avoidance to Action

Fear kept me away from public speaking for years. Then I joined

Toastmasters. And I'm loving it. Yes, I still mess up. Sometimes I can't connect two sentences smoothly. Sometimes I walk off stage feeling embarrassed. But each time, I've chipped away at that fear.

Fear is like a shadow it seems enormous when the light is behind you, but if you turn to face it, it shrinks to a fraction of its size.

Fear Is Learned And Can Be Unlearned

It is learned and anything learned can be unlearned.

The best way to deal with it? Challenge it with reason. Find safe ways to confront it, step by step, until it no longer controls you.

Life without unnecessary fear is the life you deserve.

Fear is Learnt and can be unlearnt

kids are fearless because they haven't yet been corrupted by fear, as

adults we can reclaim that fearlessness by challenging our fears with intellect and action. As George Addair said

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear"

Practical Ways to Unlearn Fear

Here are 3 actionable steps you can start today:

1. **Micro-Exposure** — Face your fear in small, safe doses. Afraid of speaking? Record yourself for 2 minutes daily.
2. **Environment Matters** — Surround yourself with spaces and people that encourage progress, not ridicule.
3. **Track Progress** — Keep a log of every step you take against your fear. Seeing progress makes courage addictive.

Living Fearlessly

Fear will never fully disappear — but it doesn't have to control your decisions. Life without unnecessary fear is the life you deserve.

Your Turn

Look at your own life today. Which fear will you challenge first?

Twin Fates

Oh you two
Budded from the same stem
Yet one is withered and the other in bloom
The light one got, you didn't get enough,
The love you held, the other couldn't feel,
The life one lived, the other couldn't live,
Yet born and grown together,

The dark and deadly, bright and yellow,
Standing together,
Smiling together;
One is dying,
The Other is thriving,
Looking at fates, so Completely different

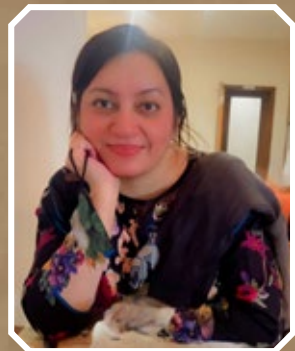
Aware of what is next
Waiting together;
Waiting to live,
Waiting to die,
Born together,
Grown together

Tagdees Hira



Pain that Remains

Time never stops,
People never wait,
Ocean never rests,
Air does not hesitate,
Day doesn't stay,
Night never lights,
Future never speaks,
Present never stays,
And,
Life does not last,
Yet,
Pain stays,
Pain doesn't leave,
It remains with you,
For ever, and ever
Pain,
That time may heal,
But never erase.



Tagdes Hira



HOW DID YOU FIND US?

By Nausheen Yasir
(ICAP TMC Islamabad)



During my vacation in the United States, I was eager to experience Toastmasters in an international setting. After finding a nearby club online, I contacted them and soon received a warm invitation to attend their meeting. The idea of joining a session abroad thrilled me.

The meeting was scheduled early in the morning, at 7 o'clock. Wanting to make a strong impression as both a guest and a representative of my country, I carefully chose my best dress and nice heels. Before I left, my husband offered me his phone in case of emergencies. With confidence, I smiled and said, "I have my phone and there's internet everywhere."

Full of excitement, I booked an Uber. But to my disappointment, the driver dropped me at the wrong building. Determined not to give up, I asked an officer for directions and soon realized the actual venue was farther away. Despite the discomfort of walking in heels, I pressed on, fueled by my enthusiasm.

Eventually, I arrived at the location mentioned in the email. To my surprise, the sign read Classic Chevrolet a car showroom. "A Toastmasters meeting in a showroom?" I wondered. The main door was locked, but I spotted someone inside and waved for help. Unfortunately, he didn't notice me. I circled the building, but the GPS still confirmed I was in the right place. Under the scorching sun, I sat outside for almost an hour, debating with myself:

"Should I just go back home and give up? Or should I keep trying?" my husband's phone I can call the office for assistance.

The thought of returning felt like an embarrassment, and I wasn't ready for that.

Just then, I saw two women approaching. I asked about the Toastmasters meeting. To my relief, one replied, "Yes, it's inside this building. Come with us there's another door at the back."

Following them, I walked inside the building and explored room after room until I finally saw a group of people gathered together. I peeked in, still unsure it is the right place. For a moment, doubt crept in: You're late, it will be embarrassing to enter now. But another inner voice encouraged me to step forward. A man sitting in the front row noticed me and warmly gestured me inside. Relieved, I took a seat beside him, and soon he handed me a copy of

the meeting agenda. At last, I was in the right place.

Despite being late, the joy of finally making it filled me with pride. When the meeting concluded, the club president warmly acknowledged me and said,

"We have a wonderful guest with us today. Would you please introduce yourself and share your thoughts on how you found us?"

His words echoed in my mind How did you find us? Instantly, the whole morning replayed in my head. I shared my thoughts with a feeling of accomplishment. I had not only attended my first international Toastmasters meeting, but I had also met people from diverse cultures, all united by a shared passion for growth and learning.

That day left me with three valuable lessons:

- 1. Always explore every option before giving up.
- 2. In life, two voices speak to you one that holds you back, the second one that pushes you forward. Always follow the one that moves you ahead.
- 3. And sometimes, it's wise to listen to your husband because they just might be right.



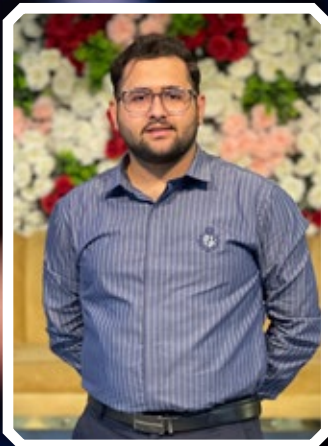


MY FIRST PLAYGROUND OF SPEAKING

What if your biggest dream was simply to say your own name without fear?

Every time I close my eyes, a 6-year-old boy appears in my mind. He is living his fullest life in the heart of Lahore — running, laughing, dreaming. But every time he opens his mouth to speak, something invisible pulls him back.

Despite all the love and help his family could offer, all he often received from the world were laughs and stares that cut deep into his heart. His parents remained his only light of hope in the darkness.



Finally came the diagnosis: **stammering** — or stuttering. A word his family had never even heard before. That once confident, energetic child slowly sank into uncontrollable blocks, pressure, failure, frustration, and low self-esteem.

For him, this condition felt like an incurable disease — no medicine, no cure, only endless struggle. After missing countless opportunities, he began to accept it as his destiny. He pictured himself years later, still struggling to form a simple sentence that even a 4-year-old could say with ease.

But destiny has a way of surprising us when we refuse to give up.

When I look in the mirror today, I see that same 6-year-old boy smiling back at me with pride and

disbelief. With all his emotions, he whispers:

“You did it. You’re doing it. You’re living my dream. I’m so proud of you.”

That boy is me.

I eventually learned to speak in my twenties, not because of a miracle cure, but because I found the right guidance — the McGuire Programme and Toastmasters.

Stuttering is more than repetition of words. It feels like running a marathon with countless hurdles: blocked breath, tightness, the endless fight to get a single word out. And the hardest truth? There is no medical cure. People suffer for a lifetime unless they find the right people, the right tools, and the right path.

For me, the turning point was the McGuire Programme, an organisation founded and run by people who themselves stuttered. They taught me how to breathe, how to speak, and most importantly, how to fight fear. For the first time in my life, I heard myself speak without blocks — and an ocean of emotions and relief poured out.

But knowledge is not enough; it needs practice. And that’s when I found Toastmasters.

There are two kinds of people who walk into a Toastmasters meeting. One looks around

and says, “*This is it. This is what I’ve been searching for.*” The other shrugs, “*It’s just public speaking.*” The second type misses the magic behind the stage.

For me, Toastmasters became my first real playground. While others play cricket or football, my sport is speaking. Every speech, every evaluation, every table topic is a match that teaches me resilience, teamwork, and joy. Each time I stand on stage, I imagine that 6-year-old boy cheering, running, and dancing in joy. He is my biggest fan.

Toastmasters is more than just speeches. Its core values — Integrity, Respect, Service, and Excellence — taught me that nothing in life can be achieved alone. Behind every success is support, encouragement, and patience.

I am deeply grateful to my family and friends, who never let me lose hope, and to my mentors within Toastmasters — DTM Saif Ali Sheikh, TM Anzalna Sami — who gave me opportunities and space to thrive.

Whenever I look back, one thought comes to my mind: If I can stand here today, why not everyone

else?

After years of struggle, I have learned one truth: **you are responsible for your growth and your future.** Opportunities will not always knock — you must work hard and grab them with full force.

Never wait for perfection in yourself or for the perfect time. Both are illusions. Start where you are, with what you have. The setbacks and challenges will shape you into who you are meant to be.

Stay humble. Stay honest with yourself. Because in the end, it’s always you vs. you. There is no other person standing between you and your dreams.

It’s just you.

Submission by:

TM Zain Bin Shahid

VPPR

Lahore Toastmasters Club

THE TRIALS OF POWER

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." – Abraham Lincoln.

Do you remember in school when one of the students was selected as the class monitor, prefect, or head girl/boy? In college, they might be called the class representative (CR). People typically react to them in one of two ways, depending on the person's behavior. One group wants to befriend them, work for them, and form a close connection - they will do almost anything to please them. Meanwhile, the other group rejects them, denounces them, and finds every possible way to bring them down from their positions - they become rebels.

Not always but it is often the latter reaction of people you will find in situations where someone

has been given authority over others. Why is that so? What do people dislike about those with power? Is there something inherently wrong with them? The answer is no. It's not the person that's the issue; it is how they treat others once they achieve power, and how they choose to use - or misuse - that power.

Power is the ability to control or influence people, it is the ability to make others do what you want from them. Power can come from multiple sources, such as holding a higher position, having access to resources, possessing wealth, skills, an influential network, physical strength, a strong ideology/belief, or being part of a majority (having something in abundance).

Power should not only be associated with high-level authority or control over large groups of people. We all experience power in different forms at various stages in life. For example, being the head girl/boy at school, the CR at college, the team lead at work, a boss in a corporation, or

the head of the family, etc.

The problem is not power itself, the real issue is deluding oneself into believing that this power is permanent, the real problem is thinking that you are not replaceable, the problem is misusing the power to harm others, the problem is forgetting the sentiments of those around you.

Whatever stage of life we are in or whatever purpose we are fulfilling lately, we all need power - or would we rather live powerless lives? Power is neither bad or wrong nor something associated solely with villainous characters. In order to influence people, achieve positive outcomes, and bring about meaningful change, we need to have power. It's up to us whether we view it as a test, attempt to get at least the passing marks and remain conscious and thoughtful at each step, or become another Fir'aun - who believed that his power is eternal, only to ultimately fail the test disastrously.

Submission by:

Alveena Jaffar (CA Nextgen Toastmasters)

The Empty Window: A Story About Neighbours and Kindness



In a quiet lane of a busy city, there lived a boy named Sami. Every morning, Sami would wave at the windows across the street as he left for school. One window always caught his eye—it belonged to Mr. Haroon, an old artist who painted the sky in colors no one had ever imagined.

Mr. Haroon didn't talk much, but he always smiled and waved back. His window was filled with paintings—birds, stars, and dreams. Sami loved imagining the stories behind them.

One day, Sami noticed something strange. Mr. Haroon's window was closed. No paintings. No smile. No wave.

Days turned into weeks. The window stayed empty.

Sami asked his parents, "Where is Mr. Haroon?"

His mother paused. "I don't know, beta. We never really spoke to him."

Sami felt a twist in his heart. "But he was our neighbor."

Later that week, the police came. They said Mr. Haroon had passed away... months ago. No one had noticed. No one had checked.

Sami couldn't believe it. "How could someone disappear and no one know?"

That night, Sami made a promise. He would never let a neighbor feel invisible again.

He started small:

- He helped Auntie Noor carry her groceries.

- He read stories to Uncle Jamal, who couldn't see well.
- He made cards for the quiet lady in the yellow house.

Soon, the whole lane changed. People smiled more. Doors stayed open. Windows lit up with laughter.

And every year, on Mr. Haroon's birthday, Sami painted a picture and placed it in his window. A bird, a star, a dream—just like Mr. Haroon used to.

- What Children Can Learn from Sami's Story
- Neighbours are not strangers: They are part of our lives, even if we don't talk every day.
- Kindness is a right: Everyone deserves to be seen, heard, and cared for.
- Check in, reach out: A simple hello can mean the world to someone who feels alone.
- Art and memory matter: Mr. Haroon's paintings lived on because someone remembered.

Submission by:

Afshan Chaudhry (Crescent Toastmasters Club)

Dedicated DTMs



DTM Sofia Qadir Khan

"Becoming a Distinguished Toastmaster is an emotional milestone — a blend of pride, gratitude, and deep fulfillment. This journey was not just about earning titles but about continuous growth, resilience, and self-discovery. I feel immense joy looking back at every speech delivered, every role taken, and every challenge turned into an opportunity to learn. Achieving DTM was possible because of the unwavering support of my mentors, fellow Toastmasters, and my clubs that inspired me to keep going. It taught me the value of leadership through service and communication with purpose. This honor reminds me that true success lies in helping others find their voice while refining your own. I'm grateful, humbled, and motivated to continue this journey of growth and contribution."

DTM Irfan Farooqui

"Earning my second DTM is a proud milestone — but more than a title, it's a reminder of the people, passion, and perseverance behind it. I raise this toast to my mentors, my peers, and every speech that made me better. Together, we grow, lead, and inspire. Cheers!"



DTM Adnan Hameed Khokhar

"Achieving the Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) recognition marks a defining chapter in my personal and professional journey. It reflects years of dedication to honing my communication and leadership skills and to serving others with purpose. Through every speech, project, and leadership role, I discovered that true leadership lies in empowering others, while effective communication builds bridges of understanding.

This journey has strengthened my confidence, resilience, and belief in continuous growth. It reminded me that progress happens when we challenge ourselves and step beyond comfort zones. The DTM milestone is not an endpoint, but a renewed commitment to inspire, mentor, and make a meaningful difference through leadership that uplifts others."



epilogue

Our next issue will be
out in February 2026.

Please submit your
contribution [here](https://forms.gle/oY4CextsA3HTYkuK9).

Or use the URL

[https://forms.gle/oY4
CextsA3HTYkuK9](https://forms.gle/oY4CextsA3HTYkuK9)

