



Dear Toastmasters!

“Contest creates geniuses” – said one French philosopher. One cannot help agreeing that the **Speech Contest** was an outstanding event for the **Moscow Free Speakers Club!** Both quantity and quality of presentations were overwhelming. It would be doubtless a pleasure to rub up those developments.

The meeting was opened by the President of our club, **Valeria Kholodkova, CC, AL-B**, who briefly outlined the schedule of this unusual evening and from then on oversaw the execution of the whole event. After a short introduction, Valeria passed the word to the emcee of our meeting.



Did you know that emcee means a master of ceremonies? The master of speech contest ceremony **Margarta Ryndina, AC-B**, was competently hosting the meeting and kept the event moving smoothly and orderly. She explained the rules of the contest, introduced participants, judges, timers and a counter. After each presentation the audience and judges were given a minute of silence to memorize the speech and prepare for the next participant.



484th meeting, June 3rd, 2010

Quote of this issue:

"The important thing in life is not to triumph but to compete."

— *Pierre de Coubertin*

1. Have you decided to join the Toastmasters to become the speaker and leader you want to be? **Syah Akhtar Mat Ali, CC**, our first contestant, in his talk **"We are all leaders"** proved us exactly that.



Syah based his talk on the book "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" by John C. Maxwell. He decided to concentrate on three most important laws that we need to know to become a successful leader. He also illustrated how our club nourishes leadership by abiding to these laws. Law #1 is the Law of Influence. Attracting new members to the club and giving directions to those who need them are perfect examples of influence. Becoming a leader is not something can be achieved quickly and easily. It is a long process and every day practice. This is called the Law of Process. And we are exercising this law by making small steps to improvement every meeting we attend. Finally, the Law of Involvement tells us not to lose any chance to participate. Because every activity, especially unusual one, like the speech contest, gives an opportunity to hone your leadership skills.

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2. How many times do we hear “Do it properly, or don’t do it”? Most of us thought that it was a right way to approach all kinds of tasks. **Lilia Nurutdinova** in her project **“Perfectionism”** pointed



to a danger of this misconception. Have you heard that frustration is the best friend of perfectionism? The fear of not achieving high standards can destroy your efforts or, even, the mere thought of acting. Lilia gave us three simple ideas to avoid the mistakes of perfectionism. First, let yourself be natural mistakes give your deeds a personal touch. Second, do something to achieve your goals, because doing something is always better than doing nothing. And the last, but not the least: take care of the deal beforehand. Doing it at the last minute is a way to escape from perfectionism pressure, but a way to ruin things as well.

3. **Valentin Novikov**, our Vice-President Education and President Elect lives a full life. In his project **“Blue Red Sea”**, the speaker illustrated why snorkeling is one of his most enjoyable hobbies and ensured that this sport got a couple of new



admirers along the way. Exploring beautiful and not at all dangerous environments we can exercise, observe amazing underwater life and educate ourselves. In his presentation he used visual materials, demonstrated a real snorkel and as an example brought up the story of convincing his parents into avid snorkeling fans. All in all, Valentin dispelled all complaints about age, danger and expensiveness as mere excuses for not trying this exciting sport.

4. **Alexey Kudashev, CC**, our fourth speaker prepared for his presentation very well, and even did some market research. In his speech **“In defense of soy milk”**, Alexey described the



benefits of drinking soy milk over drinking cow milk. With confidence and humor, Alexey persuaded the audience to substitute one product for another. Indeed, after the contest was over, many members agreed that Alexey’s arguments made them reconsider their old beliefs. Every year one per cent of cow milk drinkers convert into soy milk drinkers. The number could be higher if the agriculture industry played honestly with the potential customers and didn’t downplay the advantages of soy milk. Cow milk consists of 3-6% fat which negatively affects our health and is not easy for digestion. Also, Alexey mentioned that a liter of soy milk is as cheap as a liter of juice and provided the information where to get soy milk at the best available price.

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5. Being a soldier at war is an honorable mission, unless it's an every day never ending war. Our next speaker – **Alexey Kravtsun** – brought up to our attention the horrific statistics of extremely high



death-rate in our country on the roads. In his speech **“On wheels or under wheels”**, Alexey noted that we lose 30 000 people every year, which is eight times higher than the number of casualties in the whole Afganistan war! Two main reasons for the accidents are speeding and drinking. If a driver approaches a pedestrian crossing at 120 km/h and an unfortunate passer-by finds oneself in front of the car, it means 100% fatality for him – no chances to survive at all, even if the driver has a good reaction and breaks instantly. Yet, if the speed is 90 km/h, the poor guy has a lot more chances to stay alive. Likewise, if a driver drinks a shot of vodka or a glass of beer before hitting the road, it increases the chances of an accident in 2 times, and the chances go up dramatically with each glass. Let's remember both on wheels, and on foot all of the warnings Alexey gave us. Speeding and drinking on wheels can easily get you under the wheels both literally and figuratively. Unlike any other war, this war can't be won or lost. It can only have either greater or smaller number of casualties.

6. Which one of you hasn't ever felt the fear of public speaking? An issue of Time magazine says that 95% of people feel some sort of anxiety while speaking! And then an absolute majority states that this feeling



damages performance. Thoroughly thinking over the statistics, **Serge Kuzin, AC-B**, exploded stereotypes by giving the speech **“Number one myth about public speaking”**. Serge carried out a survey among members of the Moscow Free Speakers Club on his own. For many the byword (and the 1st myth) *“the public speaking fear is bigger than the fear of death”* is not an empty phrase. However, Serge argued that the original research wasn't comparative and the respondents never compared the two fears, which the myth claims. Thus, at a closer look this statement proves to be just a result of bad statistics.

Still, people did indicate having anxiety about having to deliver public speaking. It is a wide spread belief that speech nervousness has a physical nature. The truth is: although the symptoms like trembling hands and racing heart are physical, their nature is mental – the fear is induced by the misinterpretation of body's signals. They are signs that the body prepares to perform at its best in the face of the unknown. Thus the “fear” of public speaking is a blessing, not a curse. Serge torn the number one myth dispelled to pieces and now every member of our club knows that instead of fighting fear, it's better to make anxiety work for him.

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7. Even if you are not familiar with the public speaking fear, there is at least one common fear, that most probably touched you already, or will worry touch you someday – personal



finances. **Natalya Radaykina** gave 5 simple steps **“How to improve your personal finances”** in her well prepared and structured speech.

If you want to be rich in the future, you can't put the action off – you have to start making little investments right now. The first one is buying a notebook, a highlighter, a calculator and a pencil. (By the way, the judges were lucky to get this indispensable set right on the contest. Who knows, may be they will manage to fix personal finances soon :)) But this investment would be in vain if not to implement the following advices.

1. Start tracking your expenditures.
2. Live below your means and respect every cent you earn.
3. Shop around as different stuff costs differently at different places.
4. Minimize. If you can live without something, move on and don't spend on it.
5. Start saving.

Make this formula your routine business and it'll become the baseline for your prosperity! A very practical advice, which everyone can relate to!

8. Have you often happened to “speak different languages” with you interlocutor? Did it seem to you that he was speaking a foreign language or that you were from different planets? Nor the



first, neither the second is true. The next contestant, **Denis Shevchuk**, opened audience's eyes to communicational misunderstanding through the speech **“Conversational styles”**. That's exactly what we do not take into account.

Among other factors influencing conversational styles, Denis picked out three the most interesting to him. The first one is pauses between phrases. Denis backed words by funny examples. In caricature style he demonstrated how pauses' duration varies from the south to the north. The second component is degree of directness. Are the words straightforward or rude and aggressive? Soft or ineffective? The difficulty is to find the boundary. But it's not only about how one talks to people, it's how they perceive it as well.

It is also important, from which positions the two are taking. This doesn't mean the physical position, but the attitude their attitude to each other: either the position of power or the position of closeness. The first one can easily be misinterpreted as aggressiveness, while the second one as unsuitable baby talk.

Denis's speech urged us to think over the differences in our conversational styles, in order to build healthy relationships.



9. The last contestant, **Dmitry Chebotarevsky**, touched upon the issue of the 21 century in his speech **“Child free”**. Statistics says, that 50% of young families in Russia prefer not to



have kids, in other words to stay child free. However, their decision concerns not only themselves. At large, no kids lead to decrease in population, economical and cultural regress and, ultimately, the end of a nation.

Being happy father now, Dmitry told about his own concerns, which he had when starting a family. Common reasons to stay child free are unwillingness to give up comfort, fear of the task of parenthood and financial instability, which might undermine the family with a kid a lot more, than a family without it. Dmitry indicated that though comfort is more compelling in the short run, in the long run the impossibility to teach a small human the wisdom of life turns out a dire price to pay. Pleading a lack of financial stability is not a reason also. On the contrary, the absence of financial freedom often stimulates harder work.

The hardships Dmitry’s family faced and overcame turned 2 young selfish men into rational and loving parents. The personal example is the best one to keep in mind when dealing with similar concerns about growing children.

Contest Results

There were 9 speeches, 9 topics and a lot of things to evaluate. Just imagine, how hard it was for the judges! What for a speech marathon we had that day!

The counting procedure wasn’t an easy one, but the winners were announced nevertheless. The **second** runner-up, to the surprise of many, was... **Serge Kuzin, AC-B!** Traditionally, he was nowhere to be found by the time the results were announced.

The **runner up** was... **Valentin Novikov!** Apparently, the judges were impressed with the snorkel and the mask, as well as Valentin’s offer to help with trying out this new way to spend vacation.



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And the **winner** of the contest, along with the title of the Best Speaker of Moscow Free Speakers Club was... **Alexey Kudashev, CC!**

One simply couldn't help marveling at his line of defense of soy milk! Some of us even had the chance to try it!



Congratulations to the winners on their achievements!

And a big THANK YOU to all the speakers for a wonderful evening!

NOTE!

If you happened to miss this event, and this newsletter is not enough for you, you can still catch up by reading the texts of the **speeches** on our website (<http://moscowfreespeakers.ru/speeches>) and also watch **videos!**



P.S. The organizers of the event and its participants founded a nice tradition of conducting speech contests at Moscow Free Speakers Club! Isn't it worth a good celebration?