



## Adapting to the New Normal

What is your new normal? Whether you like it or not, change is here and we all need to adapt to our new normal in one way or another. StoryMasters is no exception. We are embracing the new digital world together with our friends from other states and countries!

Telling a story without physical presence or audience reaction can be challenging, but we are doing it! We hosted an On Camera Presentation Skills workshop and even practiced Table Topics questions at our rehearsal meeting. Thanks to everybody's positive spirits and effort, our second virtual meeting was a bliss!



Compelling speech introductions came in a few days before the meeting. Each functionary reviewed and practiced their duties beforehand. Our Timer, **Catherine Magruder**, explored and picked the best timing method for her environment. Our Word Master, **Janine Burke**, was on a mission to annihilate our bad habits, *you know...um...like* filler words. As Toastmasters, I knew it was going to be a great meeting when every member was on top of their game. And it truly was!

In "*Tales of Two Creatures*," **Antoinette Byron** told her personal story about how her path crossed with her dog, Sparky, during the pandemic. **Mark Walsh** shared his vision of how to lead corporate staff in a speech titled "*Effective Immediately*." And who made her writing debut? **Anna Ziss-Patton**! Working on her first, marvelous short story, she read draft two of "*Bitter Brew*." **Kathy Garr** explained how positive attitudes affect us with her speech titled "*Positive Is Contagious*," and showed off her smart dog, Sammy! **Bharat Sangekar** from Australia entertained us with his humorous story, "*The Loading Zone*."

Under **Elizabeth Smith's** lead, the evaluation segment was distinguished by terrific evaluators: **Lin Van Gelder, Aprille Isham, Mallery McMurtrey, and Margaret Mitchell.** And the round robin evaluations were the cherry on top. D-e-l-i-c-i-o-u-s!

It sounds like everything went perfectly as planned, doesn't it? Do you want to hear a behind-the-scenes story? Of course you do! One speaking spot became vacant a few hours before the meeting. What should I do? I texted Bharat in Australia because I knew he had a speech ready for District 73 Humorous Speech Contest. But due to the time difference, I wouldn't hear from him until 2:30pm, which was nerve-racking because our meeting would start at 3pm (gulp!). We prepared for Plan B and even Plan C and created a few agendas accordingly. Amazingly, Bharat texted me back at 12:30pm (5:30am in Australia) and accepted the opportunity. My thought waves were so strong that they woke him up! And the rest is history.

Friends, I'm telling you, we'll have another enchanting meeting on June 14. Please join us! RSVP from [here](#) or send a note to Tina Tomiyama at [tomiya2@mac.com](mailto:tomiya2@mac.com).

## News flash — so much to tell!

Do you still have time consciousness? I don't! What time is it? What day is it? I barely remember what I did yesterday, but StoryMasters has so much to brag and praise about, so let me see how much I remember.

**April 24** With 2 CCs contributed by Antoinette Byron and myself, StoryMasters achieved President's Distinguished Club status once again, right before our 9th anniversary. Hooray! Thank you for your continuous support, everybody!

**April 26** We invited a delightful on camera presentation coach, **Jennifer Lublin** to conduct a special workshop for StoryMasters and friends. Jennifer was knowledgeable, engaging, professional, and fun! If you want to learn more about video tips, check out her weekly 30-minute [Camera Talk workshop](#) every Wednesday at 2pm until June 24.



After her session, we welcomed a guest speaker from Australia, **Bharat Sangekar**, and analyzed the visual presentation of his International contest speech with the critical eyes that we just gained from the session. His story, "*Gadagadagadagada*," spoke to my heart dearly. It was such a fun and invaluable experience!

**May 15-16** What a fine weekend it was! Our District Conference was filled with fun events; two superb keynotes by Patricia Fripp, lively and invaluable educational sessions, business meeting, Hall of Fame, speech contests, and more. Here are some bravo moments of our members:

A French teacher, **Jacki Williams-Jones** took the stage and showed her elegance and professionalism as the International Speech Contest Toastmaster. *Très bien, Jacki!*

We had not one but two Distinguished Toastmaster recipients: **Catherine Magruder** (this is her third time!!!) and myself, **Miyo Yamauchi**. I also received the Roy D. Graham Lifetime Achievement Award.



The happy news doesn't end there. Our friend, **Bharat Sangekar**, competing in District 73 on the other side of the world last weekend, won both the International and Humorous Speech contests. And how proud we StoryMasters are to think that our feedback had such a positive effect on his performance.

**Big round of applause to Bharat and StoryMasters!**

## Storytelling Stub ~ **Change Your Perspective!**

You may be thinking that you can't do too much when you tell a story on screen. If you are, it's time to change your perspective. In the digital world, there are limitless possibilities. You can create different story worlds for your audience by changing a little something.

**Background:** You may prefer light background to dark background, but you can make your story more compelling and dramatic with a dark background than with a light background — as long as you use the right lighting and angle. If you use a virtual background, choose a solid color or something that compliments your story. The wrong background can distract your audience and kill your story!

**Props:** You may need to adjust your viewpoint when it comes to props. You can magnify a tiny prop like a paper clip on screen which you cannot do live. The other day, I watched as someone used his kitchen cabinets as whiteboards. That's called creativity!

This video (<https://youtu.be/HIenrheTVPk>) contains 3 stories including mine. Each storyteller shows different delivery styles, which may give you some new ideas. Video editing can create a whole different world.

Think out of the box and enjoy the digital world!



### EDITOR'S NOTE

## **Bleh! It's okay not to be okay!**

"It's too much!" my friend said on the phone.

"What's too much?" I asked.

"I can't take it any more. I used to call my friends anytime I wanted to, but now, I need to schedule everything beforehand. Even a phone call to my friend. I don't want to respond to emails. I don't want to attend Zoom meetings. This is too much!"

She was on the verge of a breakdown. I totally understood how she felt. I don't know about you, but sometimes this digital world can be too much for me, too. I'm an introvert. I think that this new environment fits me better than most people, but still, it's overwhelming sometimes. Tiring, antsy, fidgety, restless, twitchy, jittery ... I don't know which word fits best. The virtual world is turbulent. I often disable my video and sound unless they're needed, but virtual meetings can be more tiring than in-person meetings. I feel worn out after attending multiple meetings every day.

It's okay not to be okay. If you feel too much, have a bleh time by disconnecting from the digital world or doing something unusual.

The other day was one of those days for me. I needed a bleh time. So I organized the StoryMasters Cocktail Hour. No agenda, no rule, no obligation. We had fun talking about random topics. I was like a bar owner who just enjoyed being there and listening to my customers.

Tonight, I will call my friend. Nope, I'm not going to schedule the call in advance!

—*Miyo Yamauchi*

