

TM ROLE REFRESHER SERIES

MAY 27, 2020 – TABLE TOPICS FOR ZOOM MEETINGS



WHAT IS TABLE TOPICS AND WHY DO WE DO IT?

- Toastmasters table topic questions have a long history and are **one of the key components of the club programs in the Toastmasters organization.**
- Table Topics are impromptu speeches. The purpose of the Table Topics section is to help members think on their feet and speak on a given subject for between one and two minutes. It also allows speaking opportunities for those who are not programmed for other roles on the Agenda.
- It's also just a lot of FUN! 😊

HOW CAN I BE A GREAT TABLE TOPICS MASTER?

- Successful Table Topics Masters do 3 things:
 - They research their audience
 - They prepare
 - They gather **great/appropriate** questions that lead to **great** impromptu speeches!

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Prepare topics. General Toastmasters rule of thumb is avoid controversial/uncomfortable such as politics and religion
- Select topics that will inspire the speakers and encourage them to give their opinions.
- Keep your comments short. Your job is to give others a chance to speak, not to give a series of mini-talks yourself.
- Get a copy of the Agenda, to help you select members who are not carrying out any speaking role.
- Find out if there is a theme of the meeting and, if so, prepare Topics in line with that theme.

DURING THE MEETING

- When introduced, briefly state the purpose of the Topics session.
- Set the stage for your Topics programme. Keep your remarks brief but enthusiastic.
- State the Topic *then* call on a member.
- Call on speakers at random. (Will share a quick tip on how to do this later!)
- Watch the time you have available. Check the printed agenda for the total time allotted to Table Topics and adjust the number of Topics to end your segment on time

TIPS AND THINGS TO REMEMBER

- We have new members and guests who may not know what table topics is, it is best to give brief remarks on why we do Table Topics so that everyone is informed
- To avoid our biases when selecting speakers, write down names and questions on slips of paper and draw from anything. Today I am using a bowl. This way we avoid choosing people that we know a bit better or whom we feel would answer a question in a particular way
- Finally and most importantly, remember table topics is typically the most fun part of the meeting where we are also challenged at the same time 😊