

AREA 10 INTERVIEW SERIES – Lee Wilczynski, Northshore Toastmasters, Covington

*Question 1: What made you seek out Toastmasters International (TI)?*

I joined Toastmasters in 1966 when I had just entered into sales. I was looking for ways to improve myself, and I was willing to participate in activities that would allow me to think on my feet and improve my communications. I can recommend Toastmasters to anyone.

*Question 2: What are three highlights from your Toastmasters career? Please provide a brief timeline of your Toastmasters history.*

Three highlights are 1) personal growth, 2) people that I have met, and 3) contests. Toastmasters helped me become a better communicator, improved my ability to express myself, and make dynamic presentations.

In the late 1960's I worked in sales, in the late 70's, Toastmasters assisted my career in management. And in the early 90's I continued learning and found the experience improved my ability to mentor and help others.

*Question 3: What was your toughest project with Toastmasters? And why?*

Working with Jeff [Harris] to increase membership in Totally and Northshore Toastmasters. We have been at it over the last 5-6 years.

Note: Both clubs went through 'cycles' where both officers and members dropped out. We tried all types of programs including joining the Chamber of Commerce for more publicity. The most successful plan is to have enthusiastic members who are willing to invite other people to meetings in order to share the benefits of Toastmasters.

*Question 4: How have Toastmasters influenced you to write your book 'The Motivation Equation'? Please provide context for this book - when did you get the idea, when did you publish it, etc?*

Just like Toastmasters train you to make seven minutes speeches, my book consists of series of seven minutes writings. Toastmasters taught me writing skills and helped me practice transferring ideas from my head to the paper. The many ideas were assembled over the course of a lifetime, both from personal experience and other influences. I got the idea for the book 15 years ago, and it was published five years ago. I had learned about behaviors and motivators from my training and accreditation from Target Training International (TTI), with whom I have 30 years involvement. All of these factors contributed to my desire to share my thoughts with other people.

*Question 5: What is your definition of Mentoring? How is it different from Coaching?*

Coaching is directive, it is telling people what to do. Mentoring is working with people, assisting them to achieve their goals.

*Question 6: What is the optimal way to do Mentoring? How frequent? What type of environment?*

It depends on the mentor-mentee relationship and the need of the mentee. Also it depends on the size of goal, and the personality of the mentee. My longest mentor relationship lasted for 40 years.

*Question 7: How have you benefitted from Mentoring?*

I have had a number of mentors. They helped me achieve goals, and to overcome obstacles.

*Question 8: Were there recurring themes in work with your Mentees? If yes, what were they?*

It varies with the situation. I respect the opinions of my mentees.

*Question 9: Which Toastmasters competition is your favorite, and why?*

I have not participated in Table Topics or Evaluation Contests - yet. I have participated in the International Speech Contest a number of times. The Humorous Speech Contest was relatively new to me; I was surprised to do quite well, and it proves your attitude is very important in achieving goals.

*Question 10: What are the benefits from attending and participating in Toastmasters competitions?*

I enjoy the challenge of preparing for competition. Also, I am a theoretical person, and I like learning.

*Question 11: Which Toastmasters competition (as a participant) did you learn the most from, and why?*

It is difficult to pick a specific competition. Generally, it is a matter of attitude, desire, and just doing it. This realization helps you to achieve other goals.

*Question 12: Certain people reach a "plateau" (or flat) when they achieve a goal, and it can be difficult to aspire to a higher level. What have you set as your next goal after achieving the Distinguished Toastmasters title last year?*

I would like to continue speaking without compensation in the private and non-business environment. - Possibly churches, in a more Christian environment.