

## Accelerate Learning – Yours and Those You Lead

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If you are going to effectively lead others and yourself through learning steps, you need to understand the process of learning. Much of this is what I've learned from Blake McDaniel!

### **Step 1. Unconscious incompetence: ignorance is *not* bliss, you must open your eyes to see possibilities.**

You don't know what you don't know. Thus, you must **discover** the possibilities. Toastmasters helps to move to step 2:

- You join a club and stay an active member.
- You study communication and leadership manuals.
- Speech evaluator/coaches and your club mentor help you see possibilities.
- You visit other clubs, attend *area* and *division* contests.
- You attend *District* Conferences.
- You attend the annual *International* Convention: world-class education sessions, speakers, and business mtg.

### **Step 2. Conscious incompetence: your eyes are open, now learn the skills.**

You know what you don't know how to do. You want to **acquire** those skills by allowing yourself to be teachable.

Toastmasters helps to move to step 3:

- Observe how others do it, but build your own style by trying and pushing yourself.
- Listen to speech evaluator/coaches and mentors showing you how it is done.
- Test in the safe Toastmaster environment, e.g.
  - Work and serious topics before using them at work,
  - Humor with a happy and inviting audience before facing an uncertain audience, and
  - Powerpoint while the stakes are low.
- Recycle talks after incorporating feedback. (You didn't learn a bicycle the first time you tried it.)

### **Step 3. Conscious competence: you've found your voice, and some body language!**

You can do it, when you are concentrating on doing it. You now need to **master** those skills by practice and refinement, because you can't do everything you'd like to at the same time because of cognitive overload. Toastmasters helps to move to step 4:

- Speech evaluator/coaches and mentors who keep you on track
- Table Topics
- Recycled talks and redone manuals (esp. Competent Communicator and Competent Leader)
- Combination of skills, e.g. humor+serious topics, or powerpoint+humor, or humor+powerpoint+serious topics
- Contests

### **Step 4. Unconscious competence: you've made the skill part of yourself!**

Yippee. Do not sit on your laurels because of the possibility of backsliding. Toastmasters helps to move to step 5: add more skills as you continue to practice and refine these skills. Relish Table Topics and contests and mentors.

### **Step 5. Continual upkeep**

- Guide others as they discover, acquire, and master their skills.
- Honor those who helped you (thanks Blake McDaniel!) by helping others.

|                    | <b>Incompetence</b>  | <b>Competence</b>  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Unconscious</b> | <p>1. Unconscious incompetence</p> <p>You don't know what you don't know.</p> <p>ignorance is <i>not</i> bliss, you must open your eyes to see possibilities</p> | <p>4. Unconscious competence</p> <p>You do it with little or no thinking about it.</p> <p>You've made the skill a part of yourself</p> |
| <b>Conscious</b>   | <p>2. Conscious incompetence</p> <p>You know what it is, but haven't learned the skill yet.</p> <p>Your eyes are open, now learn the skills,</p>                 | <p>3. Conscious competence</p> <p>You can do it when you are focused on it.</p> <p>You've found your voice.</p>                        |