**AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE**

By: Smitha Abraham - Doha Toastmasters Club

It is that time of the year where you sit back and reflect on all the things you are grateful for.

Gratitude is more than just saying “thank you”. The power of gratitude has the ability to shift us from focusing on the negative to appreciating what is positive in our lives.

The world may seem rather wobbly now, but we can steady ourselves by focusing on the things we are thankful for.

I know what I am thankful for -I am thankful for embarking on my Toastmasters journey.

I remember trembling when I first walked into our club meeting about a year ago. I wasn’t trembling because they looked or acted like pirates but just my poor nerves getting the better of me as it was my first Toastmaster meeting experience!

While debating and deciding if this was the path I wanted to embark on, I got the opportunity to attend a few more meetings. As you are all well aware, one of the benefits of being a guest to these meetings are, you are able to sit back and silently observe everything.

There I was, in a room filled with people from all walks of life, a room filled with diverse people. People with different experiences that have shaped them to be who they are.

What caught my attention was, as different as everyone was in that room there was an element that linked each one of them. They probably felt nervous when they were asked to speak impromptu on a table topic, or they felt vulnerable when they had to deliver their speech, but the common thread between each one of them was - they showed up, they put themselves out there for evaluation.

And this is all done as they are simply determined to be better speakers and better leaders!

Another observation I made was the selfless dedication and commitment the club members had and their willingness to spend their valuable time on another club member to mentor them and help them flourish.

That sealed the deal for me.

As John Keats once said - Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced.

One minute I was shaking in my boots to deliver my icebreaker speech and the next thing I know I am chairing a contest. The beauty of the Toastmasters club is they know the human mind is malleable and they help you push your past your boundaries and coax you to take steps further away from your levels of comfort that ultimately leads you into one direction- “GROWTH”

From the Toastmaster community I learnt - **Life is not about what you have; it is about what you have to give.**

I am grateful to be part of this community.