**SUSHMA HARISH**

**WORD COUNT: 433**

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**I GIVE IT TO HER**

As I my fingers sensed the shining glass trophy and clasped it, my heart leaped to *her*. The trophy read “Champion. Humour speech” ICC Eves Toastmasters Club Contest 2019-2020.

Three days before the contest, it was, when I confided in *her* about my anxiety in expressing my humour on stage. “Three things Sushma, you are naturally humorous, your strength is sarcasm and word play, and you are a writer. Go for it”. She countered my anxiety and boosted my hidden confidence.

After working on my story, my script for three consecutive days, I stood in the meeting hall watching the laughter pearls for other speakers, and visualizing what a poor show I might put up. And lo, my name was announced. I headed to the stage, looked at the audience and spoke my mind. The crafted script tossed in my memory. I was simply speaking out a story to my audience in my natural best.

And there were few ticklish bones, few bangs on the tables, people ducking backward, cupping mouth, and giggling over and over. 5-7 minutes were almost over watching a roar of laughter in the entire hall. And there was this champion born inside me who for the first time believed her humour with word play clicked outside the cozy home walls too.

The time for results, my friends started gesturing me and making special eye contacts and pointing index finger meaning “you, it is you”.

“And the first-place winner today is TM Sushma Harish”. I got a warm hug from a friend before leaping on the stage. But that evening left me placid. A true leader, a confident speaker sprang up from within and mocked at my fears. My fears were tonked off that evening.

I came off stage and dialed *her* number. And informed her without wasting time.

 “I give this to you Les” I said.

She completely charged up and called me over next day to prepare further. Soon I went on with this speech and won a place in the Division Level.

This is the evidence of the prominence of “Mentor magic”. **I give this to Lesley Mathew, DTM.**

She was instrumental in talking it out explicitly when I chickened out of this contest three days prior to the club contest.

She imbibed three things in me. Self-belief go get attitude and the mentor magic rule. Not just into a humour champion she managed to attune me to the “mentoring mode” and there are now members calling me out for mentoring and guidance.

I give it to her.