

Initiative & Ownership

Grooming to be a good speaker is a lifelong facet that most of us work through of our life, relentlessly. Initiation and having a true mentor early would always remain a blessing. For me, the mantle was draped by my father. To this day, four decades hence, the initiation is still reminiscent and vividly etched in memory only to be relived without any nudging. An enactment by my father on stage and his advice remain an embodiment to my speaking ability. It's a true confession that merits to be stated without any inhibition and more as an acknowledgement to mentoring.

Methods to mentoring are plenty and paths shown to be a good speaker are numerous, but instill self-belief in the content first and then the speaker, very few gone through such initiation.

Going back four decades, as a nine-year-old, I recited the famous monologue of Shylock from Act 3 Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" for my primary school declamation competition.

"To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason?..... The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction"

Even before I could fathom the words and understand the meaning, more so the context to assimilate to remember and give it a declamatory adage with the right emotion, my father, true to his self, went on to narrate the works of the great playwright William Shakespeare and this play in particular. An overview of the play only gave my little mind a reason to fill into the shoes of Shylock to manifest the great's playwright essence and add value to my monologue now. What more could I have asked for with my father's deposition of this monologue was all that remained to give me the requisite impetus, isn't it?

My performance was noted stellar and to this day provides me that solace to benchmark and see it as a reason to overcome any question to my self-belief.

Years have rolled, the process to prepare oneself has remained constant but the evolution of my father's role from a true coach to an ardent mentor has been the only change.

Subsequent attempt on stage seven years hence, as I played the convict in Norman's McKinnell's one act play - "The Bishop's Candle Sticks", his presence was all that I needed to record and work on his observations. The onus and **initiative** to prepare has subtly shifted to my end and his role graduated to provide the much need course corrections to make my performance more meaningful. The true **ownership** for a performance and growth has now transcended to my hands.

Time has progressed for four decades now and my mentor and to this day remains an ardent follower of my endeavors and I look forward to that nod of acknowledgment to my performances and that smile of contentment.

Today, I move into my third year of inclusion into the Toastmasters fraternity here in Doha and there has never been a moment that I fell short to take the initiative to indulge and to take up roles and more so the ownership to my performance. Participation has stayed relevant and success, should not be too far beyond.

Honestly, life hasn't stood still here and to this day as I attempt to seek my father's opinion to my endeavors, all I revere is the content smile as his testament of acknowledgement, that the **initiative** and **ownership** has long and truly transcended

As the time for role reversal too has dawned with the generation next moves to take center stage and my turn has emerged to progress from a coach to my children to a mentor, as they attempt to break free. I look beyond the blue yonder awaiting my turn to drone a smile of contentment....

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