



# IPDD Report - Fall Business Meeting

September 20, 2025

Greetings fellow District 35 Toastmasters.

Being an Immediate Past District Director is interesting, because I no longer have any official district responsibilities - I'm back to focusing on my club and the club mission. In particular, I'm focused on rebuilding a club as the current president. In my years of District leadership, I've seen a fair number of struggling clubs.

One in particular comes to mind from several years ago. A club with 11 members folded. How? Turns out they had 11 members, but only 6 ever showed up. Only 3 showed up regularly. And of course one person - let's call him "Dave" - was pulling all the weight. Dave had the best of intentions - but long term, there's way too much for one member to do - so Dave had to lighten the load. Meeting planning was a slog. Recruiting suffered. Mentoring suffered. And the club suffered. Worse still, Dave wasn't getting any help because the other people in the club - even if they took a role - were effectively coming to a show that Dave was putting on.

Can anyone here relate? In district leadership, we've seen too many Daves. It's an easy trap for a st to fall into, and hard to get out of. So what do we do? Remember the club mission? The key is in the first word - "we."

If I could wave a magic wand and ingrain one thing in the mind of every Toastmaster in our district, it would be this - "My club is a 'we,' and the 'we' includes me."

See, "we" is important. When I join the local gym, I'm not joining a "we." I give them money and I go work out. They don't come up to me and tell me it's my turn to work behind the counter, because they're....um...a "they." But when we're out of groceries at home, I have to eat. My wife has to eat. Our dog has to eat. So it's a "we" problem. This makes "me" crucial, especially in the context of "we." If my wife does the shopping, then I don't have to worry about it. But if she's sick in bed, or stuck at work, either the dog or I need to go grocery shopping - or else "we" won't have food.

See where I'm going with this?

The best clubs I've seen have worked hard to cultivate a club culture that includes an idea of the form, "My club is a 'we,' and the 'we' includes me." Doesn't that put a different spin on the things we're constantly saying?

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- We need a Toastmaster for our next meeting.
- We need to find some new members.
- We should plan an open house.

From my own observations, people generally want to be helpful, within the bounds of their available knowledge, time and resources. We can help them with knowledge. If they know, like, and trust us, time and resources frequently make themselves more available. And of course people who start helping with little things will likely progress to not only bigger things, but a real sense of ownership. Which is really the goal, isn't it?

I'm not saying this is easy - especially if your club is stuck in a "Dave" scenario. And the specifics of how this could unfold for a particular club is highly variable. But this is what I'm working on in my club this year. As a club officer, I'm betting you'd benefit from considering it as well. You know your people. What can you do to help your club members realize that "my club is a 'we,' and the 'we' includes me"?

If you have suggestions for me, or if you'd like to chat about your club, please feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear from you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Wall, DTM  
Immediate Past District Director,  
District 35 Toastmasters