

# Being a Mr G.

by J.A. Gamache

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Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking (World's Semi-finals or Region VI)

All aboard!

It's a bright sunny day and you are taking a train. You are wearing a pair of sandals you proudly made yourself. As you board the train one of your sandals slips off and falls beside the track. (J.A. loses one sandal that falls down the platform.) You try to retrieve it. Too late. The train starts to pull away. What would you have done? I would have cursed my bad luck, mad at losing a sandal.

Contest chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, I once read the biography of a man I like to call Mr. G who once lived the same situation. When Mr. G realized he could not get his sandal back, he quickly pulled off his other sandal and tossed it on the tracks. (J.A. tosses his second sandal down the platform.) When asked why he did that, Mr. G replied: "The poor man who finds my first sandal will be very grateful to find the second one."

Don't you feel like going, "Awww. How sweeeeet!"

The first time I read this story, I was touched by such generosity. No wonder Mr. G, Mr. Gandhi, became a great leader. Gandhi dared to care. It would be easy to say, "Big deal it's just a pair of sandals." Yeah? Next time you go to work, just try it. March into the office with no shoes. (J.A. raises one bare foot to show the audience.)

Someone says, "Hey where's your shoes?" "I gave them away to a homeless person on the street." Will they say, "Awww. How sweeeeet"? No! They'll look at you as if you're nuts. Sometimes there's a risk when you care. When you dare to care you are like Mr. G.

I once tried being a mister G. I was entertaining as a Disc Jockey for a group in which everyone was hearing impaired. Playing music for hearing impaired people. It didn't work! Even with VERY LOUD music, no matter how I tried to get them moving. They stood still... just chatting... (J.A. signs some words to illustrate a conversation) so to speak.

I had to reach them in their world. A crazy idea came from my heart and if it failed, I would look stupid in front of a hundred people. I asked someone to teach me a few words in sign language. I jumped on a loud speaker... actually I climbed... and yelled. (J.A. waves his arms in the air.) Well, that's how you yell in sign language!

Someone waved back. Then another and another. It worked! A hundred smiles waaaaved back. I pumped up the volume so they could feel the vibrations (J.A. mimes turning a volume button and stomps on the platform with the sole of his right foot to mark the rhythm.) and I signed, "Dance with me!" (J.A. makes the sign.) And we danced... (J.A. dancing with his arms in the air makes a full turn on himself.) At last, we understood each other. Not a word was spoken... Yet, we were not silent anymore. Our joy roared louder than a thousand voices. Words erupted from my heart. I couldn't hold them anymore. I yelled... (J.A. stops stomping.) They all yelled back, "We love you too"

I know, "Awww How sweeeeet" When you listen to your heart, you dare to care.

A Mr. G listened to my heart 12 years ago when I started in Toastmasters. It was my second speech and boy was I nervous! My heart was pounding! Up in front of the group. Shaking.

I said a few words then my brain started melting like ice

cream in a heat wave. Sweat rolled down my face, across my belly, pooled in my shoes. Confused, I mumbled: "I am sorry. I did not prepare my speech properly. Please accept my apologies." I slouched back to my seat. Ashamed. Determined to leave this group of... "TM" doesn't stand for Toastmasters. It stands for Terrible Masochists!

Then I felt a warm hand on my shoulder. I turned. A smiling Mrs. G whispered, "Congratulations for your courage. Most people wouldn't dare try what you just did." Then a Mister G on my other side grabbed my hand. "Good speech. Next one will be better." In that moment, I realized I was a poor man... who just found two sandals at a train station.

Thank you. Yes... you... (J.A. looks directly to some people.) you... you... all of you! On behalf of all those, like me, who were touched by your generosity, thank you. You see, you are like Mister G when you drop a sandal. A sandal of hope... when you reach out; A sandal of joy... when you listen to your heart; A sandal of courage... when you dare to care.

On the train of life, the world needs more Misters and Misses G's like you. (J.A. blows in a train whistle.) All aboard!

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## About J.A. Gamache

A bachelor in business administration, J.A. Gamache is a bilingual (French and English) professional speaker from Montreal, Canada.

In 2003, He was the president of the Montreal's Chapter of the Canadian Association of Public Speakers (CAPS).

A proud Toastmasters' member since 1993, J.A. Gamache is the only Quebecer to ever win a podium (3rd place in the 2001) at Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking and was a finalist in that same contest in 2005 and 2007. Over 35 000 contestants participate in this prestigious event every year.

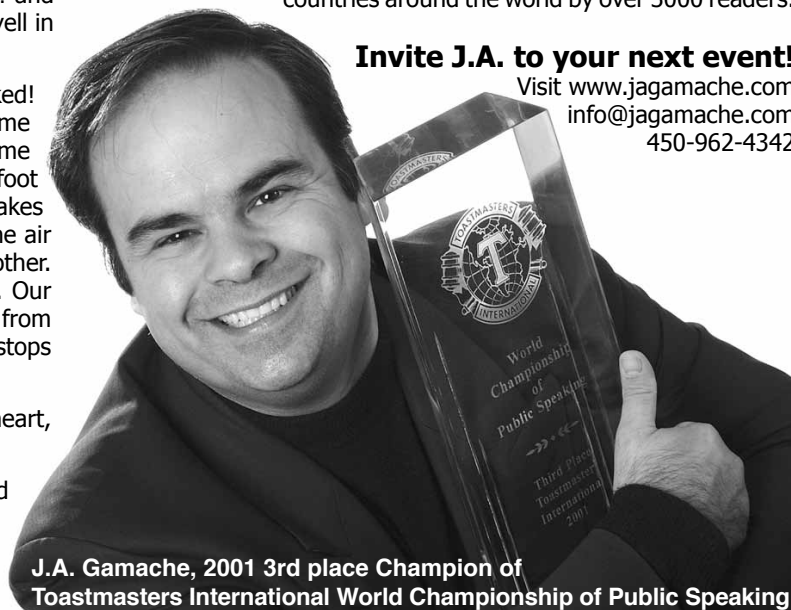
His free newsletter "Public Speaking with J.A." is read in more than 50 countries around the world by over 3000 readers.

## Invite J.A. to your next event!

Visit [www.jagamache.com](http://www.jagamache.com)

[info@jagamache.com](mailto:info@jagamache.com)

450-962-4342



J.A. Gamache, 2001 3rd place Champion of  
Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking