

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

by Erv Wittrock



Mr. Chairman, most honoured guests, and fellow members ...

My friends, for a moment please indulge me because I'd like to give you something amazing to think about. Are you ready? Looking back through history and time. First came the Pyramids of Egypt, followed by the Great Wall of China, and then Stonehenge. All of these examples of things that have withstood the test of time and now the Aphasia Gavel Club has joined this elite group of ageless wonders of the world. Can you believe it? Twenty years in existence and still going strong. What a remarkable

achievement! And I am so very proud to have been able to play a minor role as a mentor in the Club's history. You are the stars.

You see, my world is a caring world, a place where we all pitch in to help each other. I firmly believe that every person, where and when possible, has a moral obligation to assist their fellow human beings in times of crisis, stress, or need. Muhammad Ali had it right when he said, "Service to others is the rent we pay for a room here on earth."

With this core value deeply entrenched in my soul and combined with my burning desire to help people live a better life, I gladly accepted Steve Gahbauer's invitation to become a mentor to the Club. Since I was already volunteering here as a Group Facilitator my decision was a "no brainer." I could not think of a better way to use my Toastmasters skills, together with over 30 years of business and human resource experience.

During my time with you, I have been humbled by your humanistic qualities. All of you have provided me with many rewarding experiences and allowed me to become your friend, both of which I cherish deeply.

Unfortunately, personal life choices have made it necessary for me to leave you, at least for now. Separation from you has been difficult but I rest in peace with the critical life lessons I have learned. You have taught me, among others:

- To live life with peace and dignity
- To remain positive amid stalled progress and setbacks
- To dispel negativity
- To understand the virtue of patience
- To act courageously in the face of adversity
- To have empathy for others

I live in Cobourg now, but every Friday morning my spirit floats westward along the busy 401, exits at Leslie Street, and ends up at 73 Scarsdale Road, the home of the Aphasia Institute and the Toastmasters

Gavel Club where I can once again:

- Enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of your company
- Make you laugh

... and most of all ...

- Share my life with you

To quote Winston Churchill, “We make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give.”

So, could Winston Churchill and Muhammad Ali be wrong? The answer is no. That is why, in conjunction with a higher being, I have created the Eleventh Commandment:

THOU SHALT ALWAYS HELP THY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS IN NEED.

Happy Anniversary, Gavel Club. Here’s to another 20 wonderful years!