**Speaker:** Cherian Thomas

**Speech Type:** ToastMasters

**Speech Preface:**

There are several comments in parentheses, feel free to move these around in that paragraph. Most of them are to “command actions or motions, but since you will be giving the speech and you know your style better, you can do with them what you wish.

**“Gotta keep Going”**

My knees are locked, I can barely breathe, the lights are brighter than the sun and pointed directly at my eyes. My forehead looks like Niagara Falls there’s so much sweat running off it. The words are at the tip of my tongue, but my lips are sealed shut tighter than Fort Knox. That, my friends is a vague description of my first time attempting to speak in front of a large group. **(At some point during this Paragraph, act all that out)**

Before I go any further I would like to thank **(Insert MC Name)** and all my fellow Toastmasters. It’s a pleasure to be able to share this stage with you in hopes to help inspire you. I promise I will be quick up here, but hopefully leave a lasting effect on you all.

Now, back to only the second most embarrassing thing that has ever happened in my public speaking career, there I was, petrified like a mummy on stage **(stand like mummy)**. Somehow I managed the strength to introduce myself… yeah that was a great idea, now everyone knows who the loser on stage is. Somehow I got through that terrifying speech without drowning the entire front row with my showering sweat. **(Look at front row)** Don’t worry… all you in the front today are safe now, I have dammed up that river. Those days are long gone.

I had failed so miserably that night… I thought I would read about it in the “New York Times” the next morning. I’m sure the headline would read, “Cherian Thomas, the not so public speaker” or “Quiet on the Western Front: Cherian Thomas version.”

Some odd months later I got another speaking gig. This one I thought for sure would be better. I would be prepared for anything… or so I thought… I had practiced the speech, I had visited the venue and I knew exactly what I was going to say. The mannerisms I was going to use. This speech had humor, it had motivation, it had similes and metaphors. This one, this is the one I would get threw without a hiccup, this one would be perfect, of this I was sure! **(Appear overly optimistic about it)**

I believe it started a little something like this, “A man reading a thesaurus saunters into a cantina…” Now, mind you folks, this is as funny as I get. I knew it was normal to feel butterflies, but what happened next truly could not have been foreseen. I was speaking at an outside venue, it had been going perfectly. I had the audience engaged, sitting at the edge of their seats waiting on my every word… then it happened **(look of horror)**. While delivering one of my witty jokes, a bird flew over and you guessed it… SPLAT! Right on my shoulder landed a pretty good amount of what I could only hope was a rain drop.

I cannot begin to tell you how humiliating it is to be wearing a brand new, freshly pressed, jet black suit and feel everyone’s eyes starring at you, well not really at you, but more what is sliding down your shoulder.

Now neither of those incidents were the first time, nor the last time my public speaking would end up to be less than par. However, I can tell you what pushed me to always keep going was the fear of failure. Some of you might be thinking, “I don’t know Cherian, that first speech sounded pretty bad.” To that I would say, “bad, now that’s and understatement.” But failure isn’t falling down, or in my case standing in front of hundreds of people speechless, failure is falling down and not getting back up.

I want to leave you all with this. No matter what you’re doing, it might feel like you can’t do it. Whether it is you’re scared, or it seems the world is out to get you, you have the ability to do whatever you set your mind to. Now I have had some bad speaking experiences in my life, but to quit because of that would have been failure. If you sent your mind to it, you can do anything. Just look where I am today.

Thanks,