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CLUB TOGETHER JENNIFER COX SIGNS UP FOR...

Public speaking

'Introducing myself to a crowd of people, I'd literally have panic attacks,' admits Nazia. 'I'd see my boss, so calm and relaxed and think: "What's wrong with me?"'

Toastmasters International is a not-for-profit organisation that helps people master the art of public speaking. Ratan Lele – president of the Holborn branch – says ultimately, it's about personal development: 'We all come because of our terror of public speaking, but you soon realise it's a lack of self-confidence.'

Toastmasters has a structured programme, progressing through a series of ten speeches, which tackles the key elements, not just of speech making but good communication in general: getting your message across; positive body language, etc. Ratan breaks the tense mood by cheerfully announcing tonight's impromptu topic. It's DIY – and I'm on second.

Now, I am rubbish at many things but I LOVE public speaking. But showing off my speaking skills to a room full of people chronically unconfident of their own is about as appropriate as asking Jodie Marsh for relationship advice. Determined to reign it in, I walk to the front of the



room and... pull out all the stops, throwing my arms around and doing funny accents. I return to my seat to generous applause and watch the following speeches closely. Michelle is the major competition and gives a brilliantly funny speech about cute guys with power tools. The room will vote on the best speaker during the break. Does Michelle have the home advantage? Deeply ashamed of my competitiveness, I leave before the winner can be announced...

There are Toastmaster clubs around London – see www.toastmasters.org
The Holborn club meets each Tuesday at the Rugby Tavern, 19 Great James Street WC1.
www.holbornspeakers.org.uk
Tube: Holborn
E-mail Metro about your club at london@ukmetro.co.uk

LONDON FOR FREE VERSUS

Three arts groups have come together in this collaborative exhibition that fuses art, music and popular culture. PYMC, a photographic agency specialising in youth culture and music, presents a collection of archive images. It's Pop It's Art offers a more musical take, with a range of screenprints using popular lyrics from songs such as Come Together by Primal Scream. Finally, the platform for art community Daydream Network displays large-scale artworks by its contributors.

Until Sep 2, PYMC Gallery, 41 Clerkenwell Road EC1, Mon to Fri 11am to 7pm.
Tel: 020 7251 8338. www.pymcart.com Tube: Farringdon

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