



## Spotlight on Future Speakers!

A message from Cathy Jennings, Marketing Director and Administrator of the Emerging Speakers Program

I have the privilege of being part of an amazing group this year -- our Emerging Speakers Program is full of talented, passionate people who wish to take their speaking to a new level -- either by adding it to a service of their existing business or by making a complete career transition into the world of professional speaking.

I'd like to share a little about our participants, so this month, we're shining the spotlight on **Linda Reed Friedman**.

Linda Reed Friedman, DTM, ASID is a successful entrepreneur, community leader, team builder and speaker. Linda is a Distinguished Toastmaster the highest designation awarded by Toastmasters, International, and is a speech contest winner. In addition, she is a professional member of the American Society of Interior Designers and was President of the LRF Design Group, a major consulting firm and an original member of the Women's President Organization. She was awarded Rotarian of the Year in 2004, and the Presidents Award in 2005 and 2006. She is president of the State College Rotary Downtown. In addition, Linda serves as a faculty member for the Rotary Leadership Institute.

She has conducted workshops in marketing, interior design, leadership and business communication. Linda has degrees in Interior Design from Fashion Institute of Technology, NYC, and Art Education from Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey, Post Graduate studies in Theatre UC Fullerton, Business at RVCC, Raritan, New Jersey and the American Women's Economic Development, NYC.

I interviewed Linda regarding her involvement with NSA and her decision to join the Emerging Speakers Program.

**Cathy: How did you hear about NSA Pittsburgh?**

**Linda:** I was originally invited by a fellow Toastmaster who was a member of NSA. I found the events to be a great way to meet others who were doing similar things and sharing their ideas.

**Cathy: So, how long have you been attending NSA events?**

**Linda:** About 2 years. One year of "casual participation" and then when I decided on speaking as a new career, I've been attending regularly.

**Cathy: You live in State College and it takes you 3-4 hours to travel to Pittsburgh. What keeps you coming back to the NSA events?**

**Linda:** The benefits are incredible. Every single speaker gives me insights into speaking, life, communicating better and communicating differently, running my business better – the list is endless. Also, it's the passion of the speakers about what they do. But, more than the excitement about speaking, it's the atmosphere of "Group Think." At every program, there are people all around you who can provide information and insight on just about everything – they are there to answer questions and help you, just as you are there to do the same for them.

**Cathy: What made you decide to join the Emerging Speakers Program?**

**Linda:** Accountability. The group really helps me to stay focused and working on my business consistently.

**Cathy: Have you had any "aha moments" or realizations since joining the program?**

**Linda:** Of course! "Don't try to live in someone else's industry." I come from a design and facilities management background, but thought I'd try out different industries that looked a bit easier. Well, they may have looked easy from the outside, but every industry has its own challenges. What I learned is that I should leverage my experience within the industry that I was already familiar with – I'm already an expert, have contacts and share a passion with these people.

**Cathy: During our latest session, Bonnie Budzowski, Dean of the Mentor Program, provided you with a "communications makeover" for a piece of marketing – how did that help you?**

**Linda:** Bonnie reminded me to stop writing "we, we letters" and instead write "you, you letters." The focus in communication needs to be on the audience, the "you" and not on "me, we, and I" all the time. They don't care about that. Bonnie took my "we-centered" writing about myself and my company and helped me to re-direct it to show how what I do benefits those I am trying to help.

Basically, you are always selling. Whatever you are doing – whether you are speaking, leading the Boy Scouts or grocery shopping, you need to "walk your talk." You can't get lazy or overly comfortable because you think you are in a "cozy group of friends" or that it doesn't matter. You are always presenting yourself and your business in how you communicate.

**Cathy: Any last comments about NSA or the Emerging Speakers Program?**

**Linda:** Regarding the Emerging Speakers Program -- The richness of this crowd in terms of their work backgrounds, passion for what they do and their willingness to learn makes them invaluable. The contributions from each member of the group are phenomenal. Sometimes I "whine" a bit to myself when I have to make the long trip into Pittsburgh. However, after the session, I'm singing and thinking all the way home because the mental stimulation was so intense and gratifying. It's a great experience!