



What DCP Points Really Mean

Recognition is an essential part of the Toastmasters program. It's the fuel that keeps the engine running toward members reaching their goals. Our version of a leaderboard is the *Distinguished Club Program*. The effort to become a *Distinguished* club is a worthy pursuit. There is nothing like the pride a club has in announcing that they are a *Distinguished* club. In the interest of keeping our eye on the prize, we must discuss, promote, and understand why reaching this level of accomplishment is vital to our clubs and members.

It can be easy to relegate the achievement of 5 or more *DCP* points as a means to an end for promoting how awesome our clubs are (it's ok, we all think this way about our clubs). Please understand – achieving *Distinguished* club status is something to be proud of. The simple fact that all of our clubs do not reach this designation is an indicator that it is a plateau that has been earned not just granted. The fear is that we may get caught up in the achievement for the sake of the achievement.

Certainly if this occurs, it is not intentional. If we don't regularly talk about what the *DCP* really represents, we are missing a fantastic opportunity to keep our clubs and members engaged in the pursuit of their personal goals. Every member in our district joined for specific reasons. Although they are often similar, they can be quite different too. Most of us remember feeling hesitant as we walked into that first meeting. A polished Icebreaker is a rare occurrence. Regardless of what our current designation may be, we are all a work in progress as speakers and leaders.

The fact that we never *arrive* as a speaker and leader is precisely why an appropriate focus on what the *DCP* truly represents is vital. When our clubs earn enough points to gain *Distinguished* club status, it means one thing and one thing only – members are earning education awards. If they are realizing new levels of achievement on an ongoing basis, they are getting actual benefit from the Toastmasters program. Isn't that what they joined for?

Let's maintain our focus on each individual member's goals. The first step is making sure we really know what they are. Secondly, we have to create and maintain a club environment that is in sync with member goals. Lastly, we must celebrate member achievement. If we target the achievement of educational awards on an individual basis, the *DCP* will take care of itself. Now isn't that something worth getting excited about?

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