

Global Toastmaster Icon Mohamed Ali Shukri Inspires Leadership and Communication Excellence

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Exclusive Interview at DATC 2026 Doha

BY Haroon Rashid Qureshi

During the Doha Advanced Toastmasters Conference (DATC 2026), internationally renowned speaker, coach, and corporate culture

consultant Mohamed Ali Shukri attracted strong attention for his humility, professionalism, and inspiring presence. Participants and delegates described him as approachable, consistently smiling, and highly respectful in his interactions with everyone.

His presence reflected both his global standing in communication and leadership development and his long-term commitment to empowering individuals and organizations through effective communication, cultural transformation, and performance excellence.

Profile: A Global Leader in Communication and Transformation

Mohamed Ali Shukri, MBA, CTL, AS, is an internationally award-winning speaker, corporate culture consultant, and Co-Active coach with decades of experience in leadership development and communication training.

He is widely recognized as a pioneer in the global Toastmasters movement. In 2006, he became the first Arab speaker to reach the World Championship of Public Speaking Finals in Washington, D.C., a landmark achievement that inspired speakers across the Middle East and beyond.

In August 2020, he achieved another historic milestone when he was awarded the prestigious title of “Accredited Speaker” by Toastmasters International, becoming the first and only recipient from the Middle East to receive this honor.

He holds an MBA in Transformational Leadership from St. John York University, United Kingdom, and is a Certified Transformational Leader (CTL) from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), UK.

He is the Founder and CEO of Y Access Training Solutions Company, leading programs focused on leadership development, corporate communication, organizational culture, and personal transformation.

He is also the author of the book “You Are The One And Only”, reflecting his philosophy of self-awareness, confidence-building, and personal growth.

Over the years, he has worked with multinational corporations, government institutions, and individuals across continents, helping them strengthen communication skills, leadership presence, and high-performance culture.

Interview Highlights

Finding Purpose Through Toastmasters

Speaking about his journey into Toastmasters, Shukri recalled that it began in Bahrain while working in the corporate sector.

“My boss encouraged me to join Toastmasters because it was a corporate club within Aluminium Bahrain,” he said. “I was working in safety management, where communication is essential to influence people and prevent accidents.”

Although initially a professional suggestion, he said the experience quickly became deeply personal.

“At first, it was advice from my supervisor, but later I discovered a completely new world. If something does not come from the heart, it will never work. Nobody forced me to continue. I stayed because I found my passion there.”

He added that Toastmasters helped him discover his identity and direction.

“I found myself in Toastmasters. It changed my life and helped me grow personally and professionally.”

A 22-Year Journey of Growth

Shukri has been associated with Toastmasters since 2004, marking more than two decades of continuous involvement.

“It has been around 22 years,” he said. “I did take a short break, but I returned because it is part of who I am.”

He emphasized that confidence is built through practice and encouragement.

“You speak among friends who support you. That environment makes you fearless. Gradually, it becomes easier to face real-world audiences.”

For him, the most important transformation is internal.

“It is not just about speaking skills. It helps you find your voice, your message, and your purpose.”

Global Family of Speakers

Reflecting on his international journey, Shukri said Toastmasters creates a powerful global bond.

“Every place where there are Toastmasters is special for me,” he said.

“Whether in Europe, America, or Asia, the moment you meet a member, you feel like family.”

He described the organization as a bridge across cultures and identities.

“It connects people beyond nationality, race, or language. It creates one global family.”

Impact in the Arab World

Shukri highlighted Bahrain's pioneering role in promoting Toastmasters in the Gulf region, noting that the first club in the Middle East was established in 1964 in Awali within the oil and gas sector.

He also reflected on representation at global level.

"When I reached the World Championship finals in 2006, I became the first Arab to achieve that milestone," he said. "It inspired many people in the region to believe that global success is possible regardless of language barriers."

Following his achievement, he noted increased participation of Arab speakers in Toastmasters worldwide.

Shukri offered a clear message for those considering Toastmasters.

"Do not join Toastmasters unless you truly want to change your life," he said. "If you join only for social reasons, it will not work."

He stressed that the platform is designed for transformation.

"Toastmasters was founded to prepare people for the real world. If you want confidence, leadership skills, and influence, then it is the best place."

Technology, AI, and the Future of Communication

Addressing artificial intelligence, Shukri said technology is rapidly transforming communication, but human connection remains irreplaceable.

"AI is powerful and people now use it to write and speak," he said. "But it is only a tool. It should not replace human communication."

He emphasized authenticity as a lasting value.

"There are things AI cannot do. Real emotion, real presence, and real connection will always matter."

Message to Non-Members

He encouraged people to apply learning beyond formal settings.

"Do not keep your learning inside Toastmasters," he said. "Go out into your community and use your skills in real life."

He stressed that communication should create real impact.

"Your growth should not stop at learning. It should improve your life and the lives of others around you."

A Lifelong Bond

Comparing his experience to sports enthusiasm, Shukri said meeting

Toastmasters feels like meeting lifelong friends.

“Whenever I meet a Toastmaster anywhere in the world, it feels like meeting a long-lost friend,” he said. “It has been a major part of my life since 2004. It is almost half of my lifetime.”

Reflections on Qatar Experience and Personal Regret

Mohamed Ali Shukri: In 2007, his second attempt to qualify for the World Championship Finals was from Doha. He recalls fond memories of the warm and welcoming Toastmasters family in Qatar, many of whom he still meets at conferences even after almost two decades. Since then, he says every annual conference he attends in Qatar has impressed him with its exceptional quality in both depth and breadth. Above all, he highlights the vibrant spirit of the events, noting that they feel, by international standards, far more than regional gatherings.

When asked about regrets as a Toastmaster, he responds that he does have them. He reflects that whenever his Toastmasters experience did not serve others but only himself, it felt hollow from within, no matter how polished or successful it appeared from the outside.

Conclusion

Mohamed Ali Shukri’s journey reflects the transformative power of communication, leadership, and lifelong learning. From a corporate professional in Bahrain to a globally recognized speaker and mentor, his story continues to inspire thousands across continents.

At DATC 2026 in Doha, his message remained consistent and powerful: true success lies not only in speaking well, but in connecting meaningfully with people and contributing positively to society.

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