

# COUNTDOWN TO THE crown

In 43 days, the first night of preliminary competition begins - and in 45 days, you will be performing your talent for the first time in front of the judges! I know you are all working hard to prepare, so this week on

*Countdown to the Crown*, we thought we'd ask for advice from those who have been in your shoes - former Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teens and Miss America's Outstanding Teens to give you their best tips for a perfect performance!

- Charlee Bisch, Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen 2014



## Top 10 Tips for a Flawless Talent Performance



**1** Perform your talent in front of a variety of audiences. I was always more nervous performing in front of small audiences than large groups, so I performed on stages (like at my high school) and in front of just a few friends and family at my mom's office. The change in scenery made sure I truly knew my choreography and the alteration in my audience type helped me get past my nerves. **{Taylor Fitch, MAOT 2009}**



**2** Choose a talent that shows your personality. Perform with passion and have fun. If you can do this, the energy in the room will be mutual. **{McKensie Garber, MMOT 2011}**



**3** Muscle memory! Before MAOT, I was practicing my routine 7 days a week. When I got to the big stage, my adrenaline and nerves spiked to an all-time high, but I knew I was ready and my body would take the lead. **{Sydnee Stottlemyre, MMOT 2008}**



**4** Practice in as many uncomfortable environments as possible. Practice sick, injured, tired, cold, hot, sad, happy, anxious. There is no feeling more settling than knowing when it is your time to go on that stage, regardless of what you are feeling, you have prepared for it all! **{Maria DeSantis, MAOT 2007}**



**5** Choose something that expresses who you are and showcases your talent best - and you are comfortable with. The last thing you want to worry about is hitting a note or landing a jump while under the pressure of competing. Practice a lot and trust yourself! **{Lauren McCreight, MMOT 2009}**



**6** Mentally visualize every part of your performance - and be very specific. How do you want it to look or sound? How do you want it to feel? Detailed visualization is such a powerful tool. **{Caitlin Brunell, MAOT 2008}**



**7** Fall in love with what you're doing! It's easy to get caught up in technicalities, but remember why you picked your talent and enjoy the opportunity you have to use your God-given gifts to bless others. **{Jeanette Morelan, MAOT 2010}**



**8** Find a coach or a teacher who understands your vision and can help you take it to the next level. During my years competing, I worked with Bill Wolfe and he always found a way to take my many artistic desires, break them down, and create something unique that expressed my style as a performer. **{Shelby Steingraeber, MMOT 2012}**



**9** Perform every chance you get. You will gain valuable performance experience and you never know when and where you will be asked to perform your talent while you are MMOT. **{Melanie Collier, MMOT 2006}**



**10** Take videos of yourself performing and study it - the technique, choreography, staging, expression, wardrobe - it is all part of the overall impression you leave on the judges. **{Tess Mandoli, MMOT 2013}**



## FEATURED FORMER



### Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen 2009 *Lauren McCreight*

**LOCAL TITLE:** Miss Gateway St. Louis' Outstanding Teen

**TALENT:** Vocal - "The Girl in 14G"

**PLATFORM:** Curesearch: Finding the Cure for Childhood Cancer

**YEARS COMPETED:** 1

**SPECIAL AWARDS:** Miss America's Outstanding Teen Scholastic Excellence Award & Academic Achievement Award

**WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW?** I graduated with my Bachelor's in Finance and Management at Evangel University this past May and went on to pursue my MBA at Missouri State University. I am excited to graduate with my MBA this May! I recently accepted a job with The Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa, and will be in their Leadership Development Program.

**WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE MISS AMERICA?** Miss America 2008, Kirsten Haglund. I remember watching her win nine months before I even competed in my first pageant! I love her gentle spirit and boldness. I was also privileged to meet her at Miss America 2010. She walked past me and I reached out and told her I was a big fan. She stopped and turned around, asked me about myself and took a picture with me. She embodies what this program is all about!

**WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE AS MMOT?** My favorite event was when I visited Camp Quality, which is a camp for kids with cancer. While there, I was able to see the kids having a blast riding horses, swimming and playing games. I was able to address them collectively and speak with them individually. Those kids are absolutely amazing. It made such an impact on me. I am so thankful for opportunities such as this that were given to me through the program and title.

**IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO THIS YEAR'S CONTESTANTS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** I hope by now someone has told you to *be yourself*, because that is incredibly important. But I want to encourage everyone to *believe in yourself*. When someone has confidence, it shows throughout the whole competition. This does not mean to be prideful, but it does mean to take pride in what you've accomplished this year and the hard work you have put in. Believe you will do a great job holding the title and convey that to the judges throughout the competition. You can do it!

#### SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen would like to thank **Outlaw Car Club of Missouri** for providing cars for the Miss Missouri Parade!

#### QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is your opinion on Bruce Jenner's controversial interview sharing his personal story as a transgender? What impact do you think this will have on the LBGQTQ community?

#### WORDS TO LIVE BY

"Being a titleholder at any level is such an honor, but it is also a job and should be viewed as such. Always remember that the title is not about you. When you enter a room representing this organization, do not enter with the mindset of "here I am." Enter instead with the mindset of "here you are." The crown is a symbol that allows you to reach places and people that you may not have otherwise been able to reach. Do not lose sight of what it is truly about, which is service. We are here to serve and to be a voice for those who do not have one."

- Caitlin Brunell, Miss America's Outstanding Teen 2008

Questions or suggestions for an upcoming article?  
Email your submissions to [MissMissouriOT@gmail.com](mailto:MissMissouriOT@gmail.com).

