

Educational Reading 1

The Four-Way Test and the Object of Rotary

One of Rotary's best-known ethical guides is the **Four-Way Test**. Although many people assume it was written specifically for Rotary, it actually originated during the Great Depression.

In 1932, businessman Herbert J. Taylor was asked to rescue a struggling manufacturing company. Believing ethical behavior should guide every business decision, he created four simple questions for employees to ask before making decisions.

The questions were:

Is it the Truth?

Is it Fair to all concerned?

Will it build Goodwill and Better Friendships?

Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?

The company recovered successfully, and Taylor later became a Rotarian. Eventually, he shared the Four-Way Test with Rotary, which officially adopted it. Today it has been translated into more than 100 languages and is recited regularly at Rotary meetings throughout the world.

The Four-Way Test is remarkable because it applies equally well to business decisions, community service, family relationships, and personal conduct.

Alongside the Four-Way Test is the **Object of Rotary**, which describes why Rotary exists.

The Object of Rotary encourages members to:

- Develop friendships as an opportunity for service.
- Promote high ethical standards in business and professions.
- Apply the ideal of service in personal, business, and community life.
- Advance international understanding, goodwill, and peace.

Together, the Four-Way Test and the Object of Rotary remind members that service is about more than completing projects. It is also about how we conduct ourselves, treat others, and make decisions.

In today's world, where disagreements often divide communities, Rotary's emphasis on honesty, fairness, respect, and mutual benefit remains as relevant as ever.

Many Rotarians find themselves using the Four-Way Test almost automatically when making decisions at work, in community organizations, and at home. It serves as a practical compass for ethical leadership.

Rotary believes that character is demonstrated not only through major acts of service but also through everyday choices. Living by these principles strengthens trust, builds lasting friendships, and creates stronger communities.