



MONDAY MANNA
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FOUR-WAY TEST WORTH CONSIDERING
By Robert J. Tamasy

Years ago I was a member of a local chapter of the Rotary Club, an international service organization for business and professional people. Over the years this organization has helped many people through its charitable projects. However, I had forgotten the cornerstone philosophy that guides every good Rotarian.

On a recent business trip I received a good reminder of that philosophy when a friend invited me to attend a meeting of his Rotary Club. At the opening of the meeting, members recited what's known as "The Four-Way Test" of Rotary International. This is also displayed prominently on a banner at each gathering. If you are not familiar with "The Four-Way Test," it goes like this:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build good will and better friendship?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

What if everyone, not just Rotarians, took these guidelines to heart in their interaction and communication with other people? How different might things be? Imagine if every person and every business – even your own – were to abide by the parameters of these four simple questions?

For starters, much of what our elected officials and candidates for public office say would have to be amended – and they would have a lot of apologizing to do for what they have said. If humble enough, they might even seek forgiveness. When facts are distorted and their opponents misrepresented, all for the sake of gaining political advantage, they violate all four parts of this test.

Much of what we read on social media could not be posted, because in many cases words are used as weapons to wound, not as tools for building up. TV and radio news commentators would often have to practice the adage, "silence is golden." Or else reassemble their facts in ways that are not manipulated to support their ideological biases and to delude viewers and hearers.

Marriages could be transformed, as husbands and wives chose discretion and consideration rather than emotional impulse for guiding their conversations and shaping their relationships.

And in the workplace, whether in making a sales presentation, interacting with employees, clients and colleagues, or seeking to attract new business, we would have to shape our communications to abide by those four challenging questions.

If we all actively and enthusiastically embraced Rotary International's "Four-Way Test," we might all be persuaded to apply the exhortation of Ephesians 4:29, which offers this exhortation: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Can you imagine the impact of people all around the world doing that?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Prior to reading this, had you heard of Rotary International or were you familiar with the organization's "Four-Way Test"? What is your reaction to those four questions?
2. How do you think the world – especially the business and professional world – would be different if everyone became serious and sincere about having their actions, words and thoughts guided by this "Test"?
3. Do you think it would be practical for someone to genuinely strive to live by these principles in today's marketplace? Why or why not?
4. If someone were to rate you on how consistently you conduct yourself in the workplace based on this "Four-Way Test," what do you think would be the conclusion? Explain your answer.

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions from the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:
Proverbs 11:3, 12:18-19, 13:6, Matthew 7:12; Mark 12:30-31; Philippians 2:3-4, 4:8-9