

The Japanese were the first to use the Four Way Test in high schools. At a civic club meeting one member said to the president, "I have a community service project to recommend. Let us put a big box at the entrance to the railroad station. As you know, rain showers often come quickly. Let us put some umbrellas in the box and a sign above: Borrow an umbrella and please return this umbrella when you are through with it". A second man said, "Who will furnish all the umbrellas, because no one will return them?" A third man said, "We have used the Four Way Test in our schools for two years and saw a definite improvement in the moral and ethical standards of our young people. Why not put the Four Way Test on the umbrellas?"

So they did. Right on the inside of the big parchment and bamboo umbrellas, the Four Way Test was printed for the borrower to see. At the end of the test was added, "Please return this umbrella to the place where you got it". Later, the civic club sent Mr. Taylor one of the umbrellas with the comment that not a single umbrella had been lost.

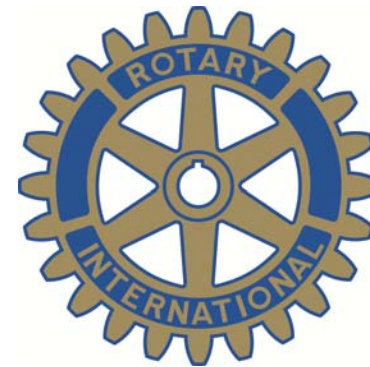
One city, Daytona Beach, Florida, used the Four Way Test in a city-wide plan. Posters were displayed. Radio, TV and newspapers boosted the idea. At the end of one year, juvenile delinquency had been reduced over 20%. The divorce rate was down, and bank earnings and business transactions increased compared to other communities. The plan included putting Four Way Test stickers on car windshields with the question, "How does your driving check with the Four Way Test?" Everybody agreed the test questions made sense except the one, "Is it the truth?". The answer, of course, was "That's to be used when a traffic officer stops you!" Injuries from accidents dropped nearly 20% during the year.

Herb Taylor insisted there is a lot of good in everybody, but too often we look only for the bad. The Four Way Test encourages the good in person who uses it. It helps people to think right and to think things through before they speak or act.

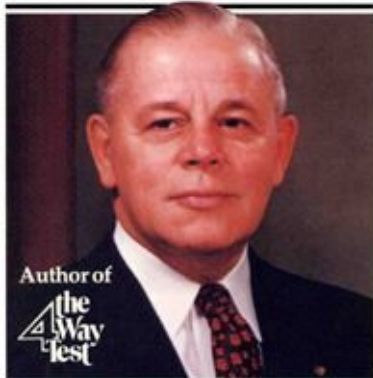
The four Way Test started in an office in the days of the Great Depression as the result of a prayer for help to preserve the jobs of 250 people. Through Rotary International, it spread around the world. It has influenced thoughts, words and actions of countless people, and through them, even government and world events.

***It is a test for all time and for all people. Try using it on the next decision you face.***

## The History of the **Rotary Four Way Test**



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The author of the Four Way Test, Herbert J. Taylor, was the 50th president of Rotary International (1954-55). The four questions which comprise this test came to him as an answer to prayer. And today the test is known and practiced worldwide.

Following his discharge from the Navy after World War I, Herb Taylor went home to Chicago, married the young woman who was waiting for him, then started his business career in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, located in District 5770. During his 4 1/2 years there, he became a Rotarian and a strong advocate of community service. Back in Chicago he moved rapidly up the ladder with Jewel Tea Company. In 1930, while executive vice president of the company, he was asked by a bank representative to spend half his working time helping another company avoid bankruptcy, and at the same time help save 250 jobs during the peak of the depression.

It was agreed that the failing company, Club Aluminum, could contract 1/2 his time. He soon discovered the company was immersed in lawsuits and \$400,000 in debt. No one else thought it was a wise move but, feeling confident that this was the plan for his life, he resigned his \$33,000 a year job, borrowed \$6,100 on his Jewel Tea stock, and wound up as President of Club Aluminum in 1932. His new salary was \$6,000 per year. Herb knew if the employees of his new company were to think right they would do right, so his first priority was to set ethical business standards. What was needed was some sort of "yardstick"; an easily remembered guide. After searching unsuccessfully through books, he did what he usually did with his problems...he leaned on his desk, rested head on hands, and prayed. After a few moments he reached for paper and pencil and wrote the 24 words which are so well known to Rotarians:

***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 first business across his desk that day was a tearsheet of some advertising where the product was billed "*the greatest cookware in the world*". Knowing this could not be proved, he gave instructions to eliminate all superlative advertising, and to use only facts. After two months, he called in his four department heads: A Catholic, A Christian Scientist, A Jew and a Presbyterian, and asked if there was anything in the Four Way test that was contrary to their religious or moral beliefs. After careful scrutiny they approved it, and agreed to use it.

All employees were then encouraged to use the Test. The test was printed on the back of all business cards. Salesmen were encouraged to say something like "of course I can't live up to it perfectly, but I'd appreciate your help. Whenever you find I am not living up to it, let me know and I'll try my best to change". Instead of persuading a dealer to take more than he needed, the salesmen would determine what the dealer could reasonably sell, then provide tips and materials to help the sales. Renewed confidence became evident in the dealers and, as this feeling was passed on to customers, sales began to climb steadily.

One day the sales manager bounded in, breathlessly announcing a possible order for 50,000 utensils...but there was a hitch. The potential customer intended to sell the products at cut rate prices. Obviously, the proposition didn't meet the Four Way Test standard, as it wouldn't be fair to the regular dealers. It was a difficult decision, but the order was rejected.

By using the Four Way Test, goodwill was built with both dealers and consumers. Employees tried to make certain they never spoke of a competitor's product unless they had something good to say. This resulted in a growth in esteem for the entire industry, and more sales for all.

The debt of \$400,000 was paid off in five years and, during the next 16 years, the company's net worth climbed to \$1,750,000, with over \$1 million in stock dividends distributed.

In 1942, after Herbert Taylor recited the Four Way Test and spoke of its origin in a speech to a Rotary club in California, a man in the audience asked if he might write it down and use it. Several others in the audience also copied it. Then, a member of the Board of Directors of Rotary International asked if the Test might be used to promote Rotary's objective of high ethical standards. Finally, during Taylor's term as R.I. President in 1954, the copyright for the Four Way Test was presented to Rotary International.