

If I Would Have Known About the Four-Way Test

Jacob Angel
7th Grade
La Colina Jr High
Santa Barbara
Rotary District 5240

The first time I heard about the four-way test was when my mom mentioned an essay contest about it, I never heard about it and I asked more questions about it to understand what it was. I learned that the Rotary Club uses this process in their personal and professional relationships.

“Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair for all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all considered?”

I am in 7th grade and this is my first year of junior high and I have seen and heard about a lot of conflict between students. Conflict can be big or small and it can also be physical and non-physical, no matter the conflict. The Four-Way Test can be applied or used to bring resolution or a better outcome result.

The story I would like to talk to you about is a team project that me and five other classmates were assigned in our Social Studies class. We were given the chance to pick our group mates with hope that it would be easier to work together, but didn't realize that we all had different opinions of how our project should be completed. Because of our very different opinions this caused minor conflict throughout our planning of our project. This is a conflict where I think the Four-Way Test would have helped stop conflict in my group. The first question of the Four-Way Test is, “Is it the truth?” Everyone had their own opinions of the true way on how to portray the Aztecs in our presentation. There was a lot of back and forth because everyone wanted to do something different. Instead of arguing about all our ideas we had we should have reviewed our books and research notes to find the truth. We could have focused on how to truthfully present the background story of the Aztecs.

With there being six classmates in our group there were some who did more work than others. Some members in the group did more research and more planning and gave more ideas than others which caused more conflict within the group, this is where we could have applied the second part of the Four-Way Test. The second part is, "Is it fair to all concerned?" It wasn't fair that some classmates were not doing enough and some were doing more than their share of the project. Someone should have spoken up and we could have split up the work evenly or we could have assigned more research to those who didn't contribute as much to the project. When working in a group it is important that everyone has their fair share of work.

The third part of the Four-Way Test is the question "Will it build goodwill and better friendships?" I had to look up the word "goodwill" and the definition to it is, "to be helpful or having cooperative feelings or attitude." Teamwork comes to mind when thinking about goodwill and better friendships. Helping each other when we get stuck or have questions shows goodwill. An example of this is when one of my classmates was having a hard time completing his part of the project. Another classmate showed goodwill and was a good friend by taking his own time to help him finish his part. I believe that this also helped them build a better friendship and made our teamwork stronger. Sometimes you have to help others even if it gets in the way of your goals, this is what it means to be a good friend.

The final part of the Four-Way Test is the question, "Will it be beneficial to all that is concerned?" Everyone through this project wanted to benefit by getting a good grade and making their parents and teacher proud. As a group we had to figure out what each of our goals were for our project and keep it top of mind to make sure in the end we all got what we wanted. Everyone is happier when they reach their goals.

In Conclusion, if we had applied the four steps of the Four-Way Test at the beginning of our Social studies project we would have had less conflict in our group. Less conflict would mean less time wasted and more quality time on the project. By applying this process it would have made working together as a team better by being truthful, fair, building goodwill and better friendships and we all would have benefited. This is just one situation in Jr. High where there was conflict but I believe if I just use the Four-Way Test in the future I can help lessen conflict.