

A Rotarian shared this with me in an email and I thought it was worth sharing with all of you.

*In the early 1930s [Herbert J. Taylor](#) set out to save the Club Aluminum Products distribution company from bankruptcy. He believed he was the only person in his company of 250 employees with hope.*

*His recovery plan started with changing the ethical climate of the company. He explained:*

*The first job was to set policies for the company that would reflect the high ethics and morals God would want in any business. If the people who worked for Club Aluminum were to think right, I knew they would do right. What we needed was a simple, easily remembered guide to right conduct - a sort of ethical yardstick- which all of us in the company could memorize and apply to what we thought, said and did.*

*I searched through many books for the answer to our need, but the right phrases eluded me, so I did what I often do when I have a problem I can't answer myself: I turn to the One who has all the answers. I leaned over my desk, rested my head in my hands and prayed. After a few moments, I looked up and reached for a white paper card. Then I wrote down the twenty-four words that had come to me:*

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

*I called it "The Four-Way Test of the things we think, say or do.*

*First testing it out on himself, he realized that the first question, "Is it the truth?" was barely applied in his business' day-to-day operations. After 60 days, Herbert J. Taylor decided to share those principles with the four department directors of his company (each had a different religious faith). Those four directors validated his principles, and rolled it out company-wide.*

*When studying his advertising statements, he realized how very little could be stated as "truth," so a lot of copywriting adjustments were made to realign the company's messages with a sense of genuine truth. The aggressiveness towards competition was also scrutinized and eliminated.*

*In 1932, Taylor's company was on the edge of bankruptcy. 20 years later, by applying the Four-Way Test, the company repaid its debts, generously paid its shareholders, and had a healthy financial balance.*

## ***Adoption of the test by Rotary***

*In the 1940s, when Taylor was an international director of Rotary, he offered the Four Way Test to the organization, and it was adopted by Rotary for its internal and promotional use. Never changed, the twenty four word test remains today a central part of the permanent Rotary structure throughout the world, and is held as the standard by which all behavior should be measured. The test has been promoted around the world and is used in myriad forms to encourage personal and business ethical practices. Taylor gave Rotary International the right to use the test in the 1940s and the copyright in 1954. He retained the rights to use the test for himself, his Club Aluminum Company and the Christian Workers Foundation.*

Taylor's words, "think right to do right" are the basis for long-term success in any endeavor or organization. We see many personal, political and business decisions based on short-term gain or profit that lead to eventual failure and misery. If we focused on the long-term – think eternity – we would all have better lives.