

## **TOPIC SELECTION INSTRUCTIONS**

2018 Rotaract Ethics Forum

Saturday, April 14, 2018

### **Background**

In 1932, a successful business executive named Herb Taylor was elected CEO of a struggling company called Club Aluminum of Chicago. The company's popular brand of pots and pans was losing to the competition. After interviewing employees, dealers, investors, and vendors, Taylor was inspired by the novel idea of creating a reputation for corporate integrity at all levels. He devised a "4-Way Test of the things we think, do and say:" Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

By 1937, Club Aluminum was out of debt and went on to survive another 50 years. Rotary International adopted the 4-Way Test for its members as a touchstone to ethical practices in business. Several years later, Rotary elevated ethics as a second pillar of its mission, the other pillar being humanitarian service. A Rotarian since those early years, Taylor was elected president of Rotary International in 1954. The 4-Way Test remains an iconic Rotary standard even today.

### **The District Competition**

Each spring, District 5280 Rotaract clubs compete in a forensic competition built around the 4-Way Test. In past years, competing teams used the 4-Way Test as a touchstone for thinking about macro-economic and overarching social issues. In 2018, teams are asked to employ the 4-Way Test to analyze issues faced in school, at work, in sports or at home, as well as greater social issues within our society, our government, and throughout the world. Selected topics may even address historical events. Teams are encouraged to be creative in selecting their topics and will be judged on their ability to properly apply the 4-Way Test to their chosen topic. Teams are expected to persuade the judging panel and the audience of how the 4-Way Test can be of value when weighing the difficult choices presented in their topic. (Please note: This year there is no list of suggested topics. Consider your own experiences, social realities and world events.)

One or more of the Forum judges will be active or retired judicial officers. Judicial officers look keenly at the logic of what is being advanced and less so at the passion with which it is presented. Nevertheless, they will consider your poise, verbal skill and textual organization.

In practicing for the competition, you are encouraged to challenge the arguments of your teammates. Claiming that something is "fair to all concerned" is easy to say, but not always easy to demonstrate convincingly. If you practice defending your conclusions in front of your teammates, your presentation at the forum will be refined and tightened. If the ethical choices presented by the Test are not always binary in the context of situational ethics, explain which circumstances must be weighted, and why the answer you have chosen is the best suited to the ethical goals of the 4-Way Test.

Thank you for your participation. Good luck!!