

Everything in life, whether it be through actions or speech, affects not only the person saying or doing it, but countless people beyond them. There is always a right time and place to say or do something, and there will always be a specific audience that these actions or words are intended for. We need to know what is appropriate to be said or done when. This is where the "Four-Way Test" should come into our everyday lives.

The "Four-Way Test" is something I live by everyday without even realizing it. These four questions fit in with my school's four sacred values of integrity, mutual respect, commitment to mission, and positive spirit. Personally, I believe by paying attention to and asking ourselves these four questions, many things could be presented in a more beneficial and friendly way than when we just blurt out whatever is on our minds.

The first part of the "Four-Way Test" is the question "Is it TRUTH?". This question really reflects integrity and trustworthiness in a person. No matter what the truth is, it will always come out eventually and should always be considered when doing or saying something each day. Honesty is very important no matter what age you are or what the situation is. Are there sometimes when telling the truth could be hurtful or hard? Of course, but there are always subtle ways to do it and less hurtful ways as well.

Next on the "Four-Way Test" is the question "Is it FAIR to all concerned?". I am sure that everyone has heard that life is not fair. Certain things however can be presented in a way that it is not so bias for or against a certain party involved. In other words, it must be able to support one side without completely disabling the other. This part of the test links to mutual respect. Obviously demanding for things to go your own way or demanding respect without giving it never really works. Even in a situation where one is above another in authority or age,

respect is and will always be a two-way street. You give it to get it and you get it to give it. That is fair. I once read a poster that said "Fair isn't everybody getting the same thing. Fair is everybody getting what they need to succeed." This is the best definition of fair I have ever heard of. Is the topic being presented going to help everybody concerned succeed? If so, it meets the second standard of the "Four-Way Test".

The third standard of the "Four-Way Test" is "Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?". Although this does not directly connect to any of our four sacred values at Milton Hershey School, I feel that it best fits with positive spirit. By meeting this standard in everything we say and do, we build a more peaceful and positive community, society, nation, and even a more peaceful and positive world. It brings happiness to those around us even if it may be something that is difficult to bring up or if we are having a hard time being positive. This is important to the building of new relationships and a better life for those around us.

Finally, "Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?" is the fourth question in the "Four-Way Test". Is everybody going to learn something from what you are presenting through your actions and speech? It is important that all who are involved in a situation can get something out of it, even if it is not any material thing. New values, new thoughts, new knowledge, a new perspective are all things that people should be finding in your actions and words. They are not material things, but they are very important to life whether you are a freshman in high school, or the CEO of a major corporation. These are the results of behavior and words that people benefit from, these are the results that get people bigger results later and get passed in some sort of domino reaction through people.

The "Four-Way Test" is very important to the development of better relationships and even just better people. I feel that when followed, it will lead to change in the world, and change begins with one person. By one person following these standards, it creates a domino effect of change in the world around us. As I said before, I live by these questions everyday without even thinking about it because of how closely related to my school's four sacred values these standards are. I will be that one person to change the world by following these standards in my daily life through both behavior and speech.