

Our lives are based on a series of actions and decisions. These choices make up our personalities and build our futures. Each day, we constantly struggle to make good decisions. Though they should always be based on their positive effects, sometimes our actions are selfish and based only on our own needs. In one circumstance a few years ago, if I had taken a moment to think about another person's feelings, I could have avoided a situation that deeply hurt my best friend. The Rotary Club developed the Four-Way Test to help us consider the needs of others. By participating in this process, we are able to examine ourselves and evaluate the situation from a different perspective.

Firstly, I should have asked myself, "Is it true?" The answer is no. I had told my friend that I had no plans for my birthday, when in reality, I had invited a few other people to my house for a party and decided to leave her out. I wanted to invite the boy that I liked, and feared that he liked her instead. My jealousy lead me to lie to my closest friend. If I had thought about its legitimacy, I probably would have discarded the idea of lying, and come up with another solution.

Secondly, I should have asked myself, "Is it fair to all concerned?" In considering my motives, I would have realized the how unfair it would be to punish my friend because of my insecurity. In recollection, I realize that I should not have invited the boy if his presence made me apprehensive. Also, if the boy liked her, I should not have punished her for his feelings. I was willing to sacrifice our friendship for a romantic relationship, which would have been wrong in every sense.

Thirdly, I should have thought, "Will it build good will and better friendships?" Even though my friend eventually forgave me, the incident took a toll on our relationship. After she found out, she avoided me for weeks, which made me feel horrible because I regretted my mistake, but could not go back and fix it. Understandably, she did not trust me for a while after the event took place. My decision did not build good will or a better friendship. If I had evaluated my actions, I would have realized this.

The last question I should have asked myself is, "Will it be beneficial to all concerned?" My decision did not benefit anyone, especially not me. I obviously hurt my friend by making that bad choice. The people who ended up coming probably did not enjoy themselves because I had not been in a very good mood. I should have had fun that day, but I remember being absolutely miserable because I did not invite my best friend.

The week following the party, she inevitably found out about what I had done. This hurt her considerably, because she had trusted me and had higher expectations. When I decided that I would lie to my friend, I did not think about its repercussions or about her feelings. If I had asked myself four simple questions, I could have recognized that my decision was wrong, and chosen a better path. By using the Four-Way test in this situation, I could have saved my friend from being hurt and saved myself plenty of regret. Now when I consider making a big decision, I use the Four-Way test to assess the circumstances so I can make the best choice for everyone concerned.