

## **Rotary 4-Way Test Essay**

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Did you know that the average person has around 70,000 thoughts per day? (Brain Facts) It's mind-blowing that we think that much each day. Everything you have done started as a thought. Every word you have said, every decision you have made was first a mere concept in your head. So why don't we pay more attention to them? In middle school, one of my teachers had a quote on her wall that read, "Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny." Back then it didn't mean much to me, but now I understand the truth in it. What you think, do, and say are the very foundations of our lives.

Thoughts are so important because they are the basis of everything else in our lives. One might ask, "How do we improve our thoughts? Don't they just happen?" and this person is correct. Thoughts do just happen. You can't commit yourself not to think about something, but you can control what you believe about your thoughts. When we believe a thought it becomes part of us, ingrained in our brains as truth. The problem transpires when we believe thoughts that aren't true or worse, negative. When we believe thoughts such as "I'm not good enough" or "No one cares" we commit these as inner truth, whether we recognize that or not, affecting every aspect of our lives. For instance, if someone thinks and believes that they are worthless, the rest of their thoughts will be nihilistic. Their attitude towards others will be pessimistic in what they do and say. This shows it is all the more important to watch what we believe about our thoughts. What better way to do this than implementing the 4-Way Test? Is It True? Is It Fair To All Concerned? Will It Build Goodwill and Friendships? Will It Be Beneficial To All Concerned? Asking ourselves this before believing or acting upon our thoughts can

improve our mentality. This leads to a change in our thinking and consequently our words and actions too. Is It True? If we think of anything untrue, why should we pay any attention to it? The problem arises of what true means. The truth can be defined as if it's factually true or true to your ideals. If it doesn't pass either of those categories, don't give it a second thought. It would just be a waste of time. Is It Fair To All Concerned? Being fair means to treat others as they ought to be treated. Even in our thoughts it is important to do so because if we don't treat them fairly in our minds, how can we expect to treat those people fairly with our words or actions? It's key to treat everyone justly. Even after applying only two pillars of the 4-Way Test to our thoughts, it can significantly improve what we believe about ourselves and others.

Words are almost as powerful as thoughts but with one crucial difference: Their main impact is on other people. Words have caused outrage and anger. They have also stopped it. Words have so much power, and yet we toss them around like confetti. It is imperative that we watch our tongue because if we don't... If we don't we are risking hurting other people every time we open our mouths. After applying the first two principles of the 4-Way Test, we are left with the questions Will It Build Goodwill And Better Friendships? And Will It Be Beneficial To All Concerned? "Are my words building others up?" is a particularly important question to ask yourself before speaking since what purpose does putting others down accomplish? There is no fair, or truthful reason to do so. In fact, putting others down breaks all of the pillars of the 4-Way Test! We should invariably be encouraging others with our words, or not speaking at all. That brings up the last pillar of the 4-Way Test, Will It Be Beneficial To All Concerned? It is no use putting your words or thoughts through each of the 4 pillars, if it only benefits some people. If your words are true to you, but not to someone else, are your words honestly true? There is something to be said about constructive criticism but most of the time picking our words carefully, so they are not detrimental to others, is the best choice. Striving to follow these principles in our lives can make a better future for ourselves and others.

There is still something to be said about our actions. What we do is similarly important, our actions are heavily impacted by our thoughts, but actions are what last. Our actions can foster hope and trust in those around us, or cause those same people to never forget the things we may have done. People can remember your actions for lifetimes, so choose them wisely.

Now you can see the depth that your thoughts, words, and actions have. Just imagine if even half of those 70,000 thoughts we have per day, we used the 4-Way test on! Rome was not built in a day, but over the course of thousands. Our thoughts in the same way will not completely change in days, weeks, or even years. By using the 4-Way Test we can slowly improve upon our lives by changing our mentality. Who knows? Maybe something you do today will be your destiny tomorrow.

#### References

Cleveland Clinic Editors. "Brain Facts." Healthy Brains by Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, 11 May 2020, [healthybrains.org/brain-facts/](https://healthybrains.org/brain-facts/)