

#9 p1

An Awful Test to Fail

When making a decision, I often imagine a line of dominoes. I imagine the outcomes of my choice and whether or not they would be powerful enough to cause all of the dominoes to fall. I imagine almost every possible consequence and how it would affect my life and the lives of those around me. Everything I say or do will somehow alter the world I live in. It is only fair that I do my best in not harming it. The Four-Way Test is an excellent tool that reminds me of my domino vision. In this test, a person asks oneself four questions to help determine if what they are doing is right. The four questions include: Is it *truth*? Is it *fair* to all concerned? Will it build *good will* and *better friendships*? Will it be *beneficial* to all concerned? If the answer is no to too many of these questions, it is probable that the action will negatively affect someone or something. I regard the Four-Way Test as a good, moral practice that should be implemented into my daily life, a test I should have used when battling my eating disorder.

When one has an eating disorder, life is anything but truthful; it is deceit, trickery, and lies. I was not any special case. I would lie to my mother about the amount of food I had eaten or how long I had exercised. I did not realize or particularly care at the time, but I was destroying the trustworthiness and integrity I had created for myself for years. Others doubted what I said was the truth. Had I reflected on the Four-Way Test and looked to see if what I was doing was truthful, I would have spared myself pain. It is always best to be honest, for the truth will come out at some point in time. Telling it may be challenging, but I know from my eating disorder that lying certainly did not do me any good. Being completely truthful is now something I try very hard to do.

9 p 2

The question of fairness on the Four-Way Test stands out to me the most. When something is unfair, I become angry almost instantly. Everyone and everything deserves the opportunity to receive equal treatment. Using the Four-Way Test while I had my eating disorder would have helped me to not exhibit one of the traits I hate most: unfairness. During recovery, it was best to think of my body as a separate person. Suddenly, the thought of starving it was horrible because it had taken human form. I was not being fair to my body. It worked day and night to keep me healthy, and I was bullying it. Not only was my body treated unfairly, but so were others around me. My parents and treatment team were trying so hard to help me, but I was pushing them away. They did nothing to justify my attitude towards them. The principle of fairness from the Four-Way Test, had I known it at the time, would have influenced me to become decent with my body and relationships. Today, I strive to treat my body and others fairly. It is becoming more and more evident how much happier this makes me.

Almost everybody wants to have quality friends and for everyone to generally like him or her. The Four-Way Test is a good agent to use to assess whether or not one is building better friendships and good will. It may seem that an eating disorder only affects its host, but that is wrong. My friendships were hurt as well. I pulled away and was not as close to them. I was out of school and hardly saw my friends as it was. Looking back, it is clear that my eating disorder failed this section of the test. Now, I am beginning to understand that having quality friends is far more important than having a perfect body. The Four-Way Test has helped me to learn the importance of friendship and how to test if it is helping me.

The final question of the Four-Way Test examines whether the action or decision is “beneficial to everyone involved.” Deep down, no one willingly wants to deal with anything that is harmful or makes them feel uncomfortable. However, in today’s society, many people

#9 p3

continue to do what they do not want to just because it is viewed as "cool." In my case, the only way for me to be "cool" was to be extremely skinny. I did not care if it was not beneficial to me. I also did not mind if my body and other people in my life not benefit from my eating disorder. As long as I was accepted by society, it did not matter who was hurt. In hindsight, I can see that I was not thinking clearly. My physical health and relationships were being damaged. The Four-Way Test has influenced me to now surround myself with people and treatment that make me happy. I no longer push aside the thought of gaining something from life each day.

In summation, putting my eating disorder through the Four-Way Test has taught me many lessons. I was not truthful, fair, building friendships and good will, or benefiting anything when I refused to change my ways. I am a perfectionist, so I absolutely hate failing tests. This is an awful test to fail. The Four-Way Test is helping me to be honest, equal, kind, and to put myself first sometimes. It should be used by everyone. Not everything in this world is pure bliss. Perhaps the Four-Way Test would help all people to do their part in keeping the world a happy place.