

The Four Way Test

As a fourteen-year-old Caucasian girl from a middle class family, my life has been blessedly simple and easy. I've never had to make any difficult or life changing decisions, and if I wrote this essay about choices that I've had to make, it would make for a very naïve and uninteresting one. It would also be rather offensive to those whose lives have not been as sheltered as mine. So that is not what I'm going to write about. Instead, this will be about one of my personal heroes whose choices have inspired the world; a girl named Malala Yousafzai. She's a young woman from Pakistan and wrote for the BBC about her life and the struggle for girls to get an education under Taliban rule. On October 9, 2012, she was shot in an attempt on her life for her efforts against the Taliban. She survived, and at only sixteen she has become an international symbol and activist for educational rights and overcome some great consequences for her actions. Malala has also written a book on her life called *I am Malala*. She is a truly remarkable person, and I strive to be as brave as she is. Her decision to expose her daily struggle in Pakistan to the world was daring and dangerous, and most certainly couldn't have been an easy one to make. However, the Rotary Club's Four-Way test has shown me that her decision was undoubtedly the right one.

The first part of the Four-Way test is the question, *is it truth?* Was Malala's choice to show the world what life was like in Pakistan truth? I'd say so. In doing so, she showed truth to many people. What with war going on in her backyard, and Taliban rule trying to eradicate girls' education, doing what Malala did was very dangerous and risky. But by blogging about her life, she showed the world just how awful things were for her, her family, and thousands of others. At only twelve, she was opening our eyes to how

hard it was to try to learn in a war stricken country. Truth can mean a lot of things, but to me it means honesty. Malala was honest in the fact that she held no part of her ugly world back. In being honest, she would make her cause to make education a basic right heard.

The next step of the Four –Way Test is the question, *is it fair to all concerned?* Well, the Taliban were making it so that no young girls could go to school at all. That's *not* fair. Malala's choice to write her blog was to try to make it fair. She just wanted to go to school. Speaking out might not have been necessarily fair to her, as Taliban would target her for her actions, but Malala's choice to speak out was not just to improve her own wellbeing, but to improve every girls' wellbeing. She wanted to make education available for all. In other words, she was not concerned about personal consequences, but of the overall benefits of her work. So in my opinion, yes. Her choice was fair to all concerned. She made her choice to tell the world about her life in order for education for all to become a reality in Pakistan. Even when she got shot in the head, she didn't stop fighting for equal educational rights for women. I think that's incredible and admirable.

The third part of the Four-Way Test is, *will it build good will and better friendships?* After the attempt on Malala's life, many surgeries and rehab, Malala resumed her campaign for equal education. She became the first woman to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and not to mention the youngest. She was nominated at sixteen. She met with the President of the United States, the Queen of England, and many other world leaders, and has raised awareness of the fight to get an education in many war torn and third world countries by telling her incredible story. She has given many hope. She has also spoken in front of the UN. By making her choice, Malala has definitely built good will and made friendships in the world.

The last question of the Four-Way Test is, *will it be beneficial to all involved?*

Here, the question cannot be answered one way. On one hand, Malala was shot and injured in her work. In making her choice, the dangers of speaking out had to have been a worrying and realistic threat. So in one sense, writing about her life wasn't beneficial to her. But on the other hand, Malala got the chance that she wanted to have; the chance to show the world how much education mattered, and that so many still weren't able to get an education. In making her choice to write her blog for the BBC, she got the chance to become a true activist for educational rights. Many others also benefit from her decision to write about her life. Our leaders now realize that too many people around the globe still do not have access to an education. Slowly however, that is changing and more and more girls are able to go to school. So in that sense, it was beneficial. I like to think so. Even though there was an attempt on Malala's life, it was the assassination attempt that really caught the world's attention. So even though it must've been gruelingly difficult for her for a while, in the end her choice was worth it and helped many, many people.

So by using the Rotary Club's Four-Way Test, I have come to the conclusion that Malala Yousafzai's choice to become an activist for educational rights was not only a brave one, but the right one. I can appreciate now just how difficult her decision must have been. However, I asked the questions, *is it truth, is it fair to all concerned, will it build good will and better friendships, and, will it be beneficial to all concerned,* and those questions simplified it. She is a true inspiration to me and I hope that one day I can be as brave and strong as she is. As she continues to fight for the right to learn I admire her even more.