

REPORT

Rotary Conference for New Generations 2005

The Rotary Club of Nairobi

5th March 2005

Arya Samaj Community Centre

9.00 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

“Living Healthy Choices”

“How young people can prepare and stand up for what they believe is right despite negative influences or circumstances they may come across?”



Students taking a break from deliberating upon the day's themes

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Introduction

The purpose of the Rotary Conference for New Generations is to create a forum for dialogue between the community leaders and young people at a local level and to;

- Provide an opportunity for young people to voice their concerns, articulate their visions of the future and identify the support they need to help them achieve their goals
- Encourage community leaders to include young people in the process of examining community needs
- Install a shared responsibility for the success of the community.

Representing a broad spectrum of community leaders, Rotary Clubs are in unique position to successfully facilitate this type of dialogue.

This year, in the light of recent media attention on corruption, adolescent reproductive health issues and drug abuse, "Living Healthy Choices" was the theme adopted which, we hoped, would help young people differentiate between knowing the difference between right and wrong and acting upon this knowledge.

67 Interactors from 4 schools assembled together to deliberate on this theme. They consisted of 28 young men and 39 young women. They presented 5 short plays and on presentation depicting the problem as they saw it and suggested ways how it might be communicated to their peers through their plays.



Students from 4 schools plan their presentation

The Day's Events

- 09.00.** Registration of the participants
Participants questions to be completed in pairs
- 09.30.** Plenary session 1 - Introduction to the topics of the day
(Rtn. Lucy Gitonga)
- 10.00.** Group session 1: Theories of Non action Behaviours
(Daniele Harford)
- 11.15.** Tea break
- 11.45.** Interactive Activity: 'The River Between' (Lucy Gitonga)
- 13.00.** Lunch
- 14.00.** Interactive session 2: 'The Line' (Lucy Gitonga)
- 14.00** Group work
Groups get together to build their presentations
- 15.00** Presentations
Each group delivers their presentations to the plenary session
(video camera required)
- 15.30** Closing remarks, issuance of Interact Activity papers.

The River Between

The participants listened to a story about 5 characters and had to decide which was the 'worst' character and which was the 'least worst' character. The choices made by the participants are tabulated below.

Character	The Worst	The Least Worst
Young, compromised girl	13	14
Friend of Girl	10	17
Boatman	21	3
Waiting Lover	17	0
Lover's Friend	0	29



2 students brainstorm on the 'good' qualities of the Boatman

The Presentations

The participants arranged themselves in groups and deliberated on the following: What stops us from acting when we know we should: How can we pass on today's message to other people through art, speech, songs, skits and poems.

The resultant skits highlighted the following reasons they considered which stop us from acting; (in their own words)

1. Fear of being ignored
2. Lack of initiative
3. Seniority and juniority
4. A culture of - if it happened to me so why not to him...
5. Popularity: most people, when they get into authority, cannot be told anything.

Skit 1 – The Cheating Spouses

Often in life, the line between right and wrong is often difficult to discern. It's human nature to desire to pay back one wrong with another in order to neutralize the pain. In this skit, when the husband cheated on the wife, her reaction was to pay him back by cheating on him. In the end, the husband caught his wife cheating, and a violent confrontation took place. We learn that, when one realizes that he/she has done wrong, there is no need for him/her to be urged to do the right thing. The same applies to when one realizes that a wrong is being done, he doesn't need to be told to do something about it. Sure there might be some fear and doubt, but if that man did not come and stop the husband and wife, things would have gotten out of control. If you don't do what is right and stand up for it so much more could go wrong. Always stand up for the truth and what you believe in, you never know you might end up changing the world.

If you know you have a friend who is cheating on their spouse, you better tell them about it before it gets too serious, if you keep quiet it will get worse.



Skit 2 – The friend who was left to his own devices..

The conclusion of the skit, "as seen, I was the friend to the boy whom I let go into the life of drugs. Having told him once or twice, I gave up and this, in the long run, cost him his life. In order to avoid making the same mistake I made, do not mind trying to act even if it means you will be in the bad books of others at that time."



Skit 3 – Bullying can be stopped

The students enacted a scene where an individual did choose to intervene and was immediately supported by fellow students demonstrating 'best practice'.



Skit 4 – The Cheating Boyfriend

An example where no one intervenes to detrimental results; everyone feels bad and the young man in question loses everything.



Skit 5 – Getting too carried away?

A skit depicting a young woman challenging her peers about their behaviour and the consequences of their actions at a party and the fact that she actually prevents trouble from standing up for herself in good time. A second skit of practicing skills in assertiveness and 'getting it right'.



A piece of prose

"We admit that, though we know the difference between right and wrong, under some circumstances, we won't act due to the following;

- We often lack of confidence in ourselves
- We lack initiative - we tend to feel worried that we should end up the only person taking action.
- We are fearful - there is always the fear of being attacked, for instance, one can come across a woman being beaten up by the husband and just walk away because they fear that if they ask what is wrong the husband might attack them too.

But we have seen that this is very unlikely to happen so, at the end of the day, I would like to say that you should always face any situation and not turn away from a problem thinking that you might be in trouble because things will, most probably, only get worse."



Participants' Responses to Related Issues

A number of participants had the opportunity to react to a number of related issues during the registration period at the beginning of the day. The questions and findings are as follows:

1. Do you think you know the difference between right and wrong? Can you give an example where this might be difficult?

"The difference between right and wrong is the difference between good and bad. It is essential for a person to know the difference between right and wrong as this can help to guide you to achieve your goals in life. Those who can't differentiate between right and wrong often lead a tough life."

"Some people may find it difficult to differentiate between right and wrong in certain situations. For example, when you are choosing your friends you have to have the wisdom to choose between good and bad peers to make friends who can advise you during times of trouble. Another example is in the street children who can't tell the difference between right and wrong. Most of them do not want to go to the orphanages even though it is beneficial."

"Yes I do but to some extent the choice of making the decision is limited, for instance, parents tend to give guidelines on what should be done. If you happen to go beyond the boundaries, it becomes wrong but to you it appears right."

"At our age, that is the adolescence age between 14 to 17, we cannot decide whether we know the difference between right and wrong because there are some decisions we can say 'yes this is right or no this is wrong' but there are other decisions where we get confused and start stressing ourselves. When we come across cases like deciding what to do in future or what we expect in life - like when you want to be an accountant and you are forced to be an engineer by your parents. Other examples include:

1. Making a decision about your occupation in the future
2. Sexual desires
3. Peer pressure"

2. Do you think, in some circumstances, that it might be difficult to act about something that you know is wrong?

"When people are addicted to something, it would be hard for them to do anything about it."

"Usually when someone is pressured by his/her friends to do something, it is rare for them to stop it."

"Some people become confident after doing something wrong (like sex) most of the time – but this is just a feeling and it is not true."

"Some people also do wrong things and you can't stop them because they get annoyed - they think that you are not respected their choice or you may be afraid to also get addicted to it."

"Sometimes your heart rules your mind. Even though you think that a decision you made is wrong you may not want to admit it because your heart convinces you that it is right."

"Sometimes your inner consciousness holds you back – you may not have the confidence to fight for yourself or for the truth. You may feel that you're not worth anything and, therefore, you feel that don't have the ability to do anything."

"If you are young you think it is not right to advise someone who is older than you even though he/she is on the wrong."

"Your attitude towards people means that, for example, you have the done wrong to others and you don't end up apologizing even though you have realized your mistake – it means that you are arrogant. By the time you realize your mistake – it can be too late."

"You can also fear victimization: fear of giving evidence against a criminal you think the police might regard you as one of the criminals."

3. Can you give an instance when you have ‘turned away’ from acting when you know you should have or have ignored a situation where you should have acted

“I once saw someone stealing some money from a letter that was not his and I didn’t stop him from doing so..”

“We were coming back from a late night party and we saw an accident but didn’t stop to help the person who needed help and I still regret that when thinking about it”

“If your relative is involved in some kind of trouble you tend to protect them from the law or the public thus hindering your ability to act.”



4. Why is bribery so rife in Kenya?

1 "Bribery in Kenya is so rife due to the following;

- Unemployment
- Poverty: the wages and salaries that Kenyans get is too little to cater for their needs, therefore they resolve to other ways of making money to meet their needs.
- Ignorance in the sense that some bribe though they know it is wrong"

"Work in administration offices is slow this encourages the potential briber to briber just to speed up the rate of work."

"When the duties are high people importing goods bribe custom officials to reduce the cost."

"Instances when people turn away from acting when they know they should or have ignored a situation where they should have acted;

- See someone trying to steal from someone and they do nothing
- Know someone who shoplifts and you don't say anything
- Know that some students in your school smoke or take drugs and you don't say anything"



Students watch a play performed by their peers

5. Do you think watching a lot of sexually related activity on the TV for example, encourages an appetite for the same? Assuming there is a great demand for sex and violence on the screen, what causes do you think accounts for this?

"It is true that a lot of sexual related activity encourages an appetite, if you have been watching this on TV you will soon want more and practically.."

"There are individual differences between each person but generally the aforementioned statement is true for all teenagers..."

"Watching this on TV also increases diseases but at the same time it creates awareness"

"Watching this also affects and attracts smaller children"

"It makes people feel heartless e.g they have no feelings they don't realize anybody's pain (violence)."

Interact Club Follow Up Activity Paper

What should be our Club's guiding values?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What 3 things will our Interact Club do as a result of the 2005 Conference for New Generations?

- 1
- 2
- 3

How will we monitor or manage people who do not practice our agreed values?

The Participants

Dagoretti High School

Amos Akaka.
John Nair
Jerry Aura
Geoffrey Thou
Edwin Matura

Moi Girls' School Nairobi

Mercy Mangle
Laura Saga
Olive Mumbai
Doreen Mendes
Fillister Anjou
Miriam Null
Mary Mangy
Casey Anjou
Gladys Jeri
Cynthia Mobil
Aril Indio
Maureen Athena
Kimberly Kaman
Nina Hibachi
Pinnate Anjou
Maureen Wartime

Consolata School

Martin Maina
Arnold Koga
Benjamin Mushily
Abraham T. Telfair
Peter Mugnai
Sabina Abbes
Njenga Koga
Arnold Okul
James Nyoike
George Mwaniki
Vicky Githu
Rosa Jambalaya
Anastasia Chege
Anjou Kimono
Fatima Mosinee

Arya Vedic School

Mrs. Vyas
Mr. Ongweso
Bhavin Valand
Paresh Kerai
Chirag Khetia
Sidharth P.
Divyesh Patel
Adnan Naemaz
Fatuma Yusuf
Anjili Ashok
Harsimran Sohal
Krunal Patel
Aaditya Dave
Sandish Bahra
Jeenal Parmar
Heral Patel
Krishan Solanki
Ronak Mistry
Vivek Kumar
Binali Patel
Dimple Ketia
Dimple Patel
Hani Yusuf
Axita Pitrola
Nadiya Farook
Halima Mohammed
Dimple Valland
Akash Pitrola
Dhimir Patel.

Others

Lucy Gitonga (Rotary Club of Nairobi)
Daniele Harford (Hillcrest School)
George Owour (Hillcrest School)