

“Rotary!...What’s In It For Me?”

by Douglas W. Vincent for the ROTI Institute

A significant event took place in May 1987, which dramatically changed the future of Rotary International. It was the controversial acceptance of women into Rotary membership. To a large extent, this was responsible for allowing many new and talented female members, like Norma Gamble of Oakville, Ontario, to join the ranks of Rotary.

With a 25-year career in professional speaking and her enthusiastic commitment to helping others, Norma is evidence and living proof of the success and positive influence this change has had on Rotary. Her overwhelming support to Rotary Foundation and D7080 has been felt around the world.

WII-FM - are you tuned in to this FM station? ...or are you one of those tired Rotarians coasting along, just wondering "What's In It For Me?" Or are you a prospective member trying to determine WIIFM. Norma Gamble is turned on and tuned in. She recently "broadcast" her personal philosophy on Rotary life through the airwaves at a RC of Woodstock-Oxford meeting. Here's her answer to WIIFM.

"You get old when you trade your dreams for regrets . . . and you get old, not when your skin wrinkles, but when your soul wrinkles," said Norma. "We don't get old when our eyesight goes, just when our vision goes. Rotary keeps our souls alive and gives us a vision of what is possible."

Like many Rotarians, giving something back to the community is one reason for her involvement, but an additional factor is her suggestion that "Rotarians have one team and one goal." Norma says "no one person cares about taking the credit (for a successful service project). Rotary takes credit."

Rotary also gives members an opportunity to meet other community leaders and be part of a

respected group, "doing extraordinary things." In addition to local community service, "Rotary impacts the lives of thousands of people in third world countries with their world community service," she said. This is very rewarding and forces members to stretch themselves during the process.

Norma explained how the Rotary wheel can give our life balance with its spokes representing various aspects of satisfaction such as: community and international service, social, companionship, camaraderie of breaking bread together, and family involvement. "It feels good to be in the (Rotary) winner's circle with other successful people," she said.

Recalling how she grew up, learning values similar to Rotary's, she cautioned that members

should "never forget we're on earth to serve others." Her belief is that one should strive to be "other-centered" and not

"self-centered" during a life-long learning process. "Rotary can give this," she said.

Through involvement in Rotary projects and experiences one can learn many lessons and leadership skills. Communication, teamwork, innovation, delegating and counting on others are all part of the package. "Rotary is an expression of concern, one for another. It represents power with people, not power over people," said Norma.

"If you feed your body you are set for the day. If you feed your mind, you are set for life. Rotary makes me feel good about myself."

" . . . and if you're looking for Self-Actualization from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Rotary gives it to you on a silver platter," she concluded. ●

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Norma Gamble, RC Oakville D7080, has worked with District training and was a GSE Team Leader to the Czech Republic & Austria. She is 1998/99 D7080 GSE Chairman and can be reached at: normag@idirect.com