

Speech Idea for Club Presidents & Rotary Leaders

by Wm Hugh Reid, D9940, for the ROTI Institute

The ROTI Institute thanks Hugh Reid in New Zealand for sharing this inspirational speech. Club Presidents and other Rotary leaders can use this to inspire members at the start of their term or at other appropriate events to motivate Rotary involvement and enthusiasm.

My brief tonight is to deliver a worthwhile Rotary address in an inspirational manner. Now, as Rotarians you are accustomed to listening to inspirational addresses. It would be stretching the imagination however, to say that all the talks in Rotary are inspirational. In our club we have a reliable indicator of the inspirational quality of an address. The speaker has been outstandingly successful if Miles Bockett and Nelson Palmer are still awake when the speech is over.

I will take the word "**ROTARIANS**" and draw some lessons and guidelines for those who are privileged to be called Rotarians.

Rotarians should be **ROBUST** and **READY** in service.

Robust means strong, healthy, sturdy, stalwart and stout with a sound mind. Always ready to jump when asked to help. Ready to take the initiative and ask others to help. Looking for the opportunity to motivate and teach those less fortunate, that they might help themselves . . . and ready to help the helpless.

There are many Rotarian programs. We are familiar with Polio Plus, the Emergency Box Scheme, Rotary Against Malaria and other schemes like providing sleeping nets or slumber kits for children. Read your Rotary magazine to discover the myriad projects which clubs around the world carry out.

We had a neighbour in Ireland who read an Oxfam advertisement which said "Ten pounds will clothe and feed a child for one year in Bangladesh." He sent six of his children to live in Bangladesh.

Prior to the formation of Rotary, men's clubs had been exclusive and totally for self. Rotary became an instrument which successful business and professional people used to help others. Robust Rotarians have rocked the foundations of men's clubs and set an example many others have sought to follow. Be robust Rotarians, ready to help.

O**RGANIZED** and **ORDERLY**.

To organize, means get together and arrange, or put in working order. Orderly minds, orderly lives, orderly businesses, orderly meetings. No, not stiff, stilted lives and meetings. Behind the freshness and spontaneity and humour that make zestful lives and meetings there is a fundamental principle of orderliness and organization that ensures success.

T**ENACIOUS** and **TENDER**.

Tenacious - holding fast, firm, persistent. When we study the lives of successful military, business and community leaders we find that the common attribute is tenacity . . . that ability to stay with a problem or idea when others have given up. Sticking with it until the answer is found. Marry tenacity with tenderness - that ability to recognize other people's problems and empathize with them. Take time to listen and help, to have compassion for the unloved.

Never be afraid to show your love. Some day soon it will be too late. Be tough but tender.

A FFABLE.

Be easy to talk to, courteous, pleasant and responsive to the conversations and approaches of others. Be gracious. You could find a few folks with little acquaintance with that word. The old meaning of affable is chaste and virtuous, in an honest manner. In Latin - honestus, honourable, decent, respected. In the two words affable and honest, we have the recipe to make a loveable person. There is no room for bad manners or dishonesty in a Rotarian's life.

A famous astrologer met a young woman in the park. She was trundling a pram with her recently acquired offspring. The astrologer admired the baby and remarked on her unusual beauty. "What a beautiful baby; What sign was she conceived under?" The young mother blushed profusely but bravely answered "I think it said, Keep off the grass."

R EACHABLE and **R**ESPONSIVE.

Reachable means being within reach or accessible. Each Rotarian is known by his or her given name: Celia, Graeme, Barbara, Hugh. Each of us, no matter what our job or standing in the community should be approachable, ready to listen and respond, to stop and help others . . . and when we see hesitation, make the first move. Be reachable. You have two eyes, two ears and one mouth. Use them wisely.

I MAGINATIVE and **I**NVENTIVE.

Not every one has the gift and flair for creating new ideas, different ways to raise funds, create interest, or fire up enthusiasm. We can, however find inspiration from the writings and creations of others. We can tailor schemes to our own situations. Read your Rotary magazine and newsletters. Share ideas with others.

A LERT and **A**LIVE.

This means being watchful and keen . . . being wide awake. Be a sentry for your club and your community. Be ready to sound the alarm when an enemy threatens. Enemy? . . . of morality. Hold up your standards. In your community, watch out for those who would destroy. Support high standards in your club. Watch out for malicious gossip. Watch out for cliques and "us only" groups. More importantly, do not be guilty of being part of such things. Watch for jealousy, envy and greed. Above all, be alert to your own shortcomings, your own strengths and attributes.

N EIGHBOURLY.

Like or befitting a good neighbour, Kindly, Friendly, Sociable. The strength of Rotary lies in fellowship and friendship. Extend it. Take it outside your club to other clubs . . . to each person you meet as you go about your business or leisure. Befriend someone each day. If you meet someone who has no smile, give them one of yours.

S ALTY.

Shakespeare wrote, "Though we are justices and doctors and churchmen, master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us". Old fogies . . . Have we still the salt of youth in us? Are we adding seasoning and flavour to the lives of others? Surely this is our mission and then, Are we ready to let the young, fresh salts season us? Will we hand them the baton that they may do as we have done and do it better?

Rotarians, You are leaders in your community. Stop to listen carefully. Hold your heads up and be proud, for you and this great organization can, and will, change many lives for the better. Let's go for it! ●

The author, Hugh Reid is Past President of RC Wanganui, NZ and has been active in many D9940 activities, including Chairman of the D9940 Rotary Quiz program. He is an excellent, entertaining speaker full of wit and words of wisdom.