

ROTARY GOLDEN ROUND TABLE

"Let's Get Acquainted"

(Acquaintance as an Opportunity for Service)

ANNCR: The Rotary Club of (Name City), in cooperation with Radio Station _____, brings you a projection of the drama you have just heard--a discussion by local community leaders of the problem dramatized on Rotary Golden Theatre. Rotary Golden Round Table is the (Name City) Rotary Club's contribution to the world-wide observance of Rotary International's fiftieth anniversary.

VOICE: (OFF, PROJECTING) (Name City) people don't try to make friends with strangers. The old families of the community resent new-comers. Even the businessmen who should welcome community growth are backward about bringing new business into (Name City).

SECOND VOICE: (OFF, PROJECTING) Nonsense! This is the friendliest city you'll find anywhere. It's the easiest thing in the world to make friends in (Name City) --good, loyal friends!

ANNCR: There we have two widely divergent opinions about the friendliness of our community. And which is correct? The answer probably lies somewhere in between. For the next 15 minutes, we are going to discuss (Name City's) friendliness or lack of it, and the ways good friendships are formed in this community. Members of our discussion panel are:

Mr. A _____, _____ (Identification) _____;

Mr. B _____, _____ (Identification) _____;

and Mr. C _____, _____ (Identification) _____.

Gentlemen, it's a pleasure to have you with us, and I hope we remain good friends after this discussion is over. As I understand it, friendship has always been a motivating force of Rotary. Or am I wrong about that, A?

MR. A: No, you're not wrong--friendship has always been a motivating force, but not an end or objective of Rotary Clubs. Out of fellowship has come the Ideal of Service, which is, putting it much too briefly, the objective of Rotary. Back at the very beginning, I suppose fellowship might even have been the purpose of the first Rotary Club, but that changed as the club took form. As the group of men became better acquainted with each other and developed a more intimate personal understanding of each other. They were able and willing to work together toward mutually desirable objectives. Without the fellowship, Rotary's objectives could never have been reached.

ANNCR: I see. Mr. B, I've heard it said that the (Name City) Rotary Club is an "exclusive" group, and exclusive clubs are sometimes unfriendly. What do you have to say in answer to that charge?

MR. B: The first thing I want to say is that the charge is in error. Rotary limits its membership to one person from each business and professional classification so that it will not become narrow in its views and its friendships. In an organization where there are a dozen lawyers, for example, and six doctors and five grocers, it is almost inevitable that the lawyers will get into one corner of the room, the doctors in another and the grocers in still another group. Since there are no so-called "cliques" in Rotary, a member broadens his friendships. He gets to know and understand men from fields entirely different from his own. He invariably discovers that relationships outside his own immediate field are stimulating and pleasant.

ANNCR: But are these people really friends or are they simply acquaintances?

MR. B: They are definitely friends. Their friendship isn't confined only to the meetings of the Rotary Club. It carries over throughout the week and into social and community relationships.

ANNCR: Mr. C, do you think you have benefited from friendships acquired through your Rotary Club membership?

MR. C: I certainly do. For that matter, I think I've benefited from friendships formed through the church, through PTA activity, through an interest in local government. I think it's impossible to have too many friends, and that every friend a man acquires contributes to his growth and happiness.

ANNCR: But is there something special about Rotary friendships?

MR. C: I would say, rather, that there is something special in the opportunities Rotary Club membership gives a man for making friends. You see, Rotary brings us all together at least once a week for a relaxed, friendly, rather informal luncheon meeting. I've found that the more often you get to visit with most people, the better you like them. And Rotary, by virtue of the way its membership is selected, gives you an opportunity to make friends with a great variety of men. As a new member becomes more active in club activities, he begins to make friends with Rotarians from clubs in other cities, too. And of course, Rotary International has been a really great force in building international understanding. Understanding leads to friendship. The late Will Rogers said, "I never met a man I didn't like"--

MR. C: (CONT.) and he did not restrict that observation to people of any race or creed or line of business.

ANNCR: Apparently the (Name City) Rotary Club does an excellent job of forming friendships within its group. You three members, certainly, are convinced that you have made good friends in Rotary and that those friendships have been worthwhile. Could any of Rotary International's ideas for promoting friendship and ways of accomplishing those ideas be applied to the community as a whole?

MR. A: Definitely--and every Rotarian tries to apply them generally.

ANNCR: You say, every Rotarian. Perhaps you won't admit that an occasional Rotarian is an unfriendly sort of person, but--wouldn't you admit that some members of your club are friendlier than others, Mr. A?

MR. A: I suppose that's true.

ANNCR: Then what do you do to make those less friendly members more friendly? It seems to me the answer to that question might be worth considerable to the community as a whole?

MR. A: I agree. But you say, the less friendly members. We have found that nearly everyone wants to be friendly and make friends. It isn't that these people are less friendly. They are just more reticent. They are shy, and getting into activities embarrasses them.

ANNCR: Well, how do you overcome that?

MR. A: When we find that a new member is shy or reticent, we assign him first to some rather minor duties in the club. We don't try to force him into the spotlight. Then, gradually, we give him more and more important jobs. By this time, he has seen that everyone else in the club is active, and he isn't quite so bashful. Eventually, we try to give this reticent member an assignment on one of the club programs. After that, his bashfulness is usually a thing of the past and he is no longer what you called a "less friendly member."

ANNCR: Then you believe that people we regard, rightly or wrongly, as unfriendly people should be given community jobs to make them more friendly?

MR. B: I know that they should. I'll have to disguise this case history slightly, but I recall a man who was almost a personal enemy of (Name City) youngsters. He complained to the police about the noise boys and girls made when they went past his house on the way to and from school. He complained about their

MR. B: (CONT.) walking on his grass. Oh, he had a new complaint nearly every day. He kept his whole neighborhood uncomfortable. Well, a wise Boy Scout leader went to this man and asked him if, as an expert in his particular field, he would examine the Boy Scouts for merit badges in that field. The fellow accepted the job and was amazed to find how much the Boy Scouts had to learn to get a merit badge. He became interested in Scout work and today is a real champion of (Name City) youth. He becomes furious when anyone else makes the identical complaints that he once made.

ANNCR: Are there any other Rotary Club ideas for promoting friendship that the community as a whole could apply?

MR. C: Yes. I think most of us are guilty of seeing our closest friends often and less personal friends seldom. Our club varies the seating arrangement at our weekly luncheon meetings so that a man sits next to different people at nearly every meeting. We once had a contest with a prize for the first member to complete a cycle of sitting next to every other member during the year. I think if every person in (Name City) would make a point of visiting with a variety of casual acquaintances, those acquaintances would soon become friends.

ANNCR: That sounds like an excellent idea. Any other suggestions?

MR. A: I think we might easily compare a new resident in the community with a new member in Rotary. Whenever we get a new member in the (Name City) Rotary Club, we all go far out of our way to make him feel at home. We have news about him in our club bulletin. We do everything we can to show him how glad we are that he is with us. We make it clear to him that he's among friends. And we should certainly make a new resident of the community feel that this is a friendly city. We can do it easily by showing him a little special attention.

MR. B: And we can show newcomers to (Name City) that we appreciate them being here by encouraging their participation in community activities. Most people are a bit backward about contributing their talents, and the community may be the loser by not encouraging new residents to active participation in civic affairs.

ANNCR: Mr. B, all three of you have mentioned the word "fellowship". Just what form does fellowship usually take in Rotary Clubs?

MR. B: (Name AnnCR.), there's no specific answer to that question. For one thing, there's always music at our weekly meetings. We have found that good

MR. B: (CONT.) singing and good fellowship usually go hand in hand. Group singing has a natural tendency to break down reserve, and it gives every member of the group the feeling that he is taking an active part in the program. We have found that our programs contribute a great deal to fellowship. It isn't at all unusual to see informal little round tables in some member's home the evening following a particularly interesting program. Groups of the members get together to discuss what they've heard. We have a social program, too. I think every Rotarian looks forward to the Ladies' Night programs. We also have picnics and outings whenever the membership wants them. We have had intercity meetings with members of the _____ Rotary Club, and we have had Rotary sports tournaments. All of these things add to the fellowship of our group. But I think that there would still be a great deal of fellowship without any special activities. Get any group of men together once a week, give them an opportunity to get acquainted, and they will soon be good friends.

MR. A: (Name AnnCR.), we don't want to give the impression that Rotarians confine their friendship to Rotary Club membership. On the contrary. It's the easiest thing in the world for a man to build his own little world, in both his business and his personal life. Habit keeps him confined to that narrow world. But once he gets the habit of making friends, once he tries to get acquainted with other people in other lines of work, he can't help but become a friendly person wherever he goes, in every phase of his life.

MR. C: I don't think I've ever known an unfriendly Rotarian, or one who confined his friendship to the club. And Rotarians do not try to "use" their friendships for business gain. They lean over backward in that respect. You see, a friendship cultivated for mercenary reasons cannot be a healthy one.

ANNCR: You know something? I tried to annoy you gentlemen at the outset of this discussion with what I thought were some irritating questions. I thought that if I could get you mad, we would have a more interesting discussion. But you didn't get angry, and you answered my questions, and--well, I feel that I'm among friends. I don't know how Rotary does it, but I think it must teach its members the art of friendship. And from what you have told us, there is no great secret to the fellowship of Rotary International. The ways in which you form friendships within your organization may be applied by anyone, anywhere. Now, it's about time to wind up this session of Rotary Golden Round Table. Next week, there will be another one, based

ANNCR: (CONT.) on the problem discussed in the Rotary Golden Theatre drama. It will be a subject of direct concern to all of us here in (Name City). Our panel next week will consist of: (NAMES AND IDENTIFICATIONS OF LOCAL PANEL MEMBERS)--all well qualified to discuss the subject. Be sure to be with us next week at this same time for another program presented by the (Name City) Rotary Club and Radio Station _____ as a public service--in your interest.