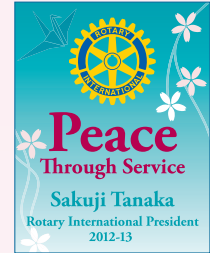


PRESIDENT'S VIEW



Dear Fellow Rotarians,

Every Rotarian is different. Every Rotarian was drawn into Rotary for different reasons, and many vividly remember their first “Rotary Moment” — the moment when they went from being members of their Rotary clubs to being committed Rotarians.

I love hearing these stories and learning about what drew each Rotarian into Rotary. For some, it was a Rotary office, a particular project, or a convention. For me, it was a speaker at an ordinary weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Yashio, about two years after I’d joined.

I am a charter member of my club, and I was invited to join by the charter president. I had never heard of Rotary, and at the time, I didn’t really know what service meant. But I was new to Yashio. I had just moved there from Tokyo, and I didn’t know many people. I thought Rotary would be a good way to make friends and to help my business, and I respected the person who invited me, so I joined.

But to be honest, for the first two years, we didn’t do much. Every week, I came to my meeting, I ate lunch, and I listened to a speaker. I paid my dues, and I gave money to The Rotary Foundation. But I wasn’t involved in any service. I didn’t know what Rotary service was supposed to be.

That all changed one week, when we had a speaker who talked about vocational service. This was a new idea to me. Until then, I had never thought much about the purpose of my life, or why I was in business. I was too busy working. I was always focused on my business, and on how to make it larger and better. I never stopped to consider any deeper purpose of my work.

Understanding the idea of vocational service completely changed my attitude towards my work, and towards my own purpose in life. I realised that the goal of a person doing business is not only to earn a living. The purpose is to be a contributing member of the community, to make the community stronger, and to help make other people’s lives better. When I understood this, and understood the concept of *Service Above Self*, it changed my life — and set me firmly on the path to a life of Rotary service. That is my Rotary Moment.

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*Sakuji Tanaka
President, Rotary International*

