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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday

7th August 2024 at 7.00 PM
at Rotary Cochin Balbhavan

Speaker:

Mrs. Shobha Raghavan

Topic:

Waste management

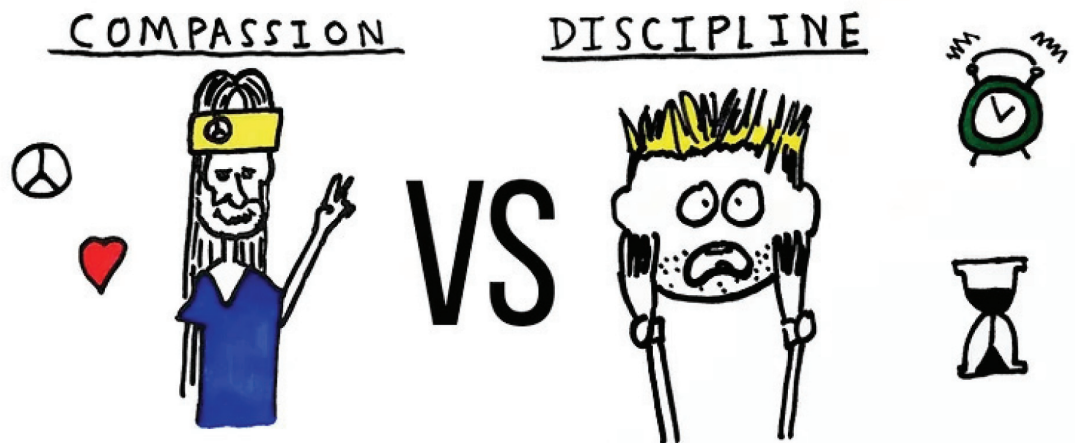


BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN

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THE COCHIN ROTARIAN

COMPASSION AND DISCIPLINE ARE NOT CONTRADICTION IN TERMS



In my 36 years of corporate life there have been many occasions where being compassionate and sticking to the values one professed, publicly and privately, clashed! But through it all, I have come to realize that these qualities need not clash. If fact, they should not.

When I was the CEO of the last organization before retiring, I had publicly declared that inside the organization, that I will not tolerate any financial or ethical wrongdoings. And that those caught indulging in such behaviour will meet with the proportionate public condemnation and punishment, irrespective of their position and status in the organization.

One day my CHRO walks into my office and announces (with a smirk) that my office-boy has been caught picking up a cellphone, left in the cafeteria by its legitimate owner, by the CCTV cameras. When confronted by the HR Team, the office-boy confessed in writing that he

had, in a moment of weakness, stolen the phone and hidden the same in my private pantry, where the office-boy would normally sit, with the intention of pirating it out at the end of his shift. The phone has been recovered from him and handed over to its legitimate owner.

The CHRO wanted to know from me if sacking the office-boy was the appropriate action, in the light of the public pronouncements that I had made about ethics and financial rectitude! He and the entire organization was putting me "on test", because this office-boy was known to be an excellent worker, always on time and leaving only after I had left the premises and very diligent in his work and nary a disciplinary issue with him in his five years with our organization. He also happened to work in the office of the CEO!!

I called him into my office and asked him if the allegation was true and he

confessed that it was and that he did not know what overcame him and in a moment of weakness, he committed the crime. I explained to him that unfortunately the entire organization was waiting to judge not just him, but more importantly, me and the seriousness with which I uphold ethical behaviour. And therefore, he had to become the sacrificial lamb, albeit guilty!

I asked him to resign and request to encash his two months leave and leave the organization that very evening! Needless to say, he fell at my feet, completely broken and pleaded to be forgiven this one time. He told me that his wife was in the family way and was to deliver in two months. That he would not be able to face her or his family or society, since the world will soon come to know. That he would rather commit suicide than go back home and inform his wife and family!

It was by far the most difficult decision that I had to stick to! The demons of compassion fought with

the angels of discipline within me!! Until I realized that there is a way out to resolve this internal battle! I told him that he need not tell his wife or family of the incident or his termination. He had two months of privilege leave that should take care of his family monthly expenses. He can leave home as usual and get back home in the evening as usual, spending the interim, wherever he wanted.

I promised him that within a fortnight I shall find him a suitable, equivalent job in some other organization, given his diligence and fundamental honesty. Being on the corporate rung that I was in, I had influential friends in other organizations and one of them obliged me. But I made sure that this organization knew the circumstances of his termination, but I also stood guarantee that his recruitment will be a rich addition to their organization and that he would not indulge in such behaviour ever again.

To cut a long story short, my organization, from the CHRO downwards, stood in amazement and awe

and I daresay fear that this CEO means what he says! The age-old stables of corruption and ethical turpitude within the organization swept itself clean quickly and remains like that to this day.

Meanwhile, my erstwhile office-boy prospered in his new organization and even found time to educate himself further and elevate himself from an office-boy to a manager in the last 15 years. Without fail every birthday of mine for the last 10 years, I get a call from him, thanking me for teaching him a huge life lesson and ensuring that he did not succumb to the frightening oppression of suicidal thought due to the compassionate hand-holding that I extended to him throughout his ordeal.

The truth is: my tryst with truth was much more excruciating than his, knowing that I had made him a scapegoat for the “greater good”. I could have meted out a lesser punishment, but I learnt that day that discipline and compassion need not be contradictions in terms!!

By Rtn. John Chiramel

2024 ROTARY SCHOLARS FOCUS ON HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Two remarkable Rotary Scholars with ties to the University of Virginia are set to embark on international studies, dedicated to addressing social disparities and exploring the critical intersection of health and the environment. Magdalene Kwarteng, a student in the School of Medicine, will study in Australia, while global public health graduate Hannah Zaveri will pursue her studies in London.

The prestigious \$40,000 one-year scholarships support students pursuing graduate studies outside of the United States in one of Rotary International’s seven focus areas: peace



Medical student Magdalene Kwarteng, left, and UVA graduate Hannah Zaveri will study overseas as Rotary Scholars. (Contributed photos)

child health; basic education and literacy; economic and community development; and environmental support.

Magdalene Kwarteng: Bridging Clinical Care and Public Health

Magdalene Kwarteng, who plans to become a physician focused on social disparities and the needs of disadvantaged communities, will use

and conflict prevention/resolution; disease prevention and treatment; water and sanitation; maternal and

plans to become a physician focused on social disparities and the needs of disadvantaged communities, will use

her Rotary Scholarship to study for a master's degree in public health at the University of Sydney's School of Public Health in Australia.

"A master's in public health will help bridge my knowledge gap between individual clinical care and the larger local or global community," Kwarteng said. "I'll be equipped to tackle mental health stigma and develop community-based interventions to promote mental wellness on a larger scale."

Kwarteng chose the University of Sydney for its commitment to improving equity and community health through local initiatives. She believes that learning about health care systems in different countries can provide valuable insights for improving the U.S. healthcare system.

Originally from Ghana, Kwarteng's family lived in Verona, Italy, before moving to Northern Virginia. Growing up in an underserved community primarily composed of immigrants in Alexandria, she witnessed firsthand the challenges and barriers to health care.

"Seeing such disparities in a seemingly wealthy county led me to medicine to help improve healthcare access and equity, both locally and globally," she said.

After earning her master's degree, Kwarteng plans to complete her final year of medical school at UVA, followed by a residency in psychiatry with a focus on child and adolescent psychiatry and/or maternal mental health. Her ultimate goal is to become a holistic psychiatrist who can be a catalyst for positive change in the mental health landscape.

Hannah Zaveri: Championing Climate and Health Policy

Hannah Zaveri, a 2023 UVA graduate with a degree in global

public health and sociology, will pursue a Master of Science degree in public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her focus will be on understanding the risks that climate change poses to vulnerable populations and advocating for essential climate and health policy changes.

Born in Kenya and having worked in Rwanda, Zaveri considers East Africa her home. She saw the importance of healthcare access while growing up in Zimbabwe, where she volunteered with Chiedza, an organization supporting children impacted by HIV/AIDS.

"Working with Chiedza piqued my interest in studying public health to improve healthcare in southern Africa," Zaveri said.

She appreciates Rotary International's commitment to healthcare access, which aligns with her career interests. Her master's project will investigate the disproportionate impact of climate change on malaria and other diseases, particularly in low-income communities vulnerable

to extreme weather and pollution.

During her time at UVA, Zaveri conducted research with the Ryan White HIV Clinic PositiveLinks Research Team and volunteered in various community health initiatives. Since graduating, she has worked as a college access counselor and program coordinator at Rwamagana Leaders' School in Rwanda through the Princeton in Africa fellowship program.

A Bright Future for Global Health

Both Kwarteng and Zaveri embody the spirit of Rotary's commitment to service above self. Their international studies and future careers are poised to make significant contributions to global health, addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time. We wish them all the best in their endeavors and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will undoubtedly make on the world.

Rewritten from original source <https://news.virginia.edu/content/2024-rotary-scholars-focus-health-and-medicine>

SILENT VALLEY

"This was drawn when I was pained by the plans for the Silent Valley project. I considered the people and plants destroyed to be one and the Lion tailed monkey going extinct. Did it in the spur of the moment and for a little while



I did not recognize my work. Painted on card board with Magic markers."

By Rtn. PP Joseph Malieckal

THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Driving is an intricate task that demands our full attention. However, in today's fast-paced world, distractions are everywhere, from the ever-present mobile phone to roadside billboards. These distractions significantly increase the risk of accidents, endangering not only the driver but also passengers, pedestrians, and other road users. Understanding and mitigating these distractions is crucial for everyone on the road.

Visual distractions occur when drivers take their eyes off the road. Common examples include looking at a GPS device, reading a text message, or even admiring a scenic view. A momentary lapse in visual attention can lead to missing critical events such as a pedestrian crossing or sudden braking by the vehicle ahead. Manual distractions involve taking one's hands off the wheel. Eating, drinking, adjusting the radio, or reaching for an object are typical manual distractions. Even seemingly benign actions, like turning to talk to a passenger, can significantly impair driving control. Cognitive distractions occur when a driver's mind is not focused on driving. Daydreaming, conversing on the phone (even hands-free), or being engrossed in deep thought can lead to delayed reaction times and poor decision-making.

Mobile phones are one of the most significant sources of distraction. Texting while driving is particularly hazardous as it combines visual, manual, and cognitive distractions. According to studies, texting drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash. Even hands-free phone use can be dangerous, as it diverts cognitive resources away from driving.

At a speed of 60 km/h, a vehicle covers approximately 16.66 meters per second. The average driver's reaction time ranges between 0.7 to 2 seconds, with an average of about 1 second. This means that by the time a driver begins to brake, the vehicle has already travelled 16.66 meters. In a critical situation, this distance can be the difference between a near-miss and a collision.

The consequences of distracted driving can be devastating. It is a leading cause of road accidents globally, resulting in injuries, fatalities, and substantial economic losses. In India, where traffic conditions are often



chaotic, the impact of distracted driving is even more pronounced.

Educating the public about the dangers of distracted driving is crucial. Campaigns can highlight real-life stories and statistics to drive home the message. Strict laws against mobile phone use while driving and stringent enforcement can deter drivers from engaging in distracting activities. Advances in technology can help reduce distractions. For instance, apps that disable phone functions while driving, or in-car systems that allow voice commands for essential functions, can be beneficial. Ultimately, it comes down to personal responsibility. Drivers must recognize the risks and make a conscious effort to stay focused on the road. Simple measures, like putting the phone on silent mode and out of reach, can make a significant difference.

Distractions while driving are a critical issue that demands immediate attention. By raising awareness, enforcing laws, and leveraging technology, we can create safer roads for everyone. As responsible citizens, let's pledge to practice attentive driving and spread the message within our community. Together, we can contribute to making our roads safer for all.

By Rtn. Prathik Nayar



Rtn. Dr. Puneet Dhar

07 Aug