



Building connection through comfort and care

Rotary recently surveyed our members and found something that should be unsurprising but still caused many of us in Rotary leadership to sit up and pay attention: The single most important factor in member satisfaction is the club experience. How at home you feel in your club, how rewarding club meetings are, and how engaged you feel in service projects.

I have seen this firsthand across the Rotary world this year. When members feel an emotional connection to their club, they cannot imagine leaving. And that connection is often forged in “Rotary moments,” when people feel that special connection to the people around them and the impact of their service. Our Imagine Impact Tour is all about shining a light on those Rotary moments and encouraging our members to tell their stories.

But there’s something else that makes an enormous difference in building and sustaining that connection. It’s the comfort and care of our members — both Rotarians and Rotaractors. As my Rotary friend Todd Jenkins says, “People can’t see how you think, but they sure can see your actions.”

We are in the relationship business, and if we take care of each other — genuinely show concern for each other — then we will make friends for life, and we will do anything to widen that circle of friendship.

The question is: How do we live with our eyes wide open and do the things that really matter? We do this by taking time for each other, actively listening to one

another, and treating every Rotary member as equally valuable — no matter how long we have been a member or what position we hold.

People like me in Rotary leadership can offer all kinds of advice about how to make your club experience more valuable. But what’s most important is for everyone in every Rotary club to speak up and listen to one another. We should never be afraid to share with our fellow Rotary member what we expect to get out of our membership and have an open discussion about how to make that happen.

To lead a Rotary club is to invite such dialogue and to be willing to try new approaches. Good leadership is giving it away. Propping others up. Allowing others to feel the victory.

I have one last request for club leaders. We still need to do more worldwide to increase our female membership. It’s up a bit this year, but I know we can and must do better. Rotary is growing again. As I write this, we’re just a handful of members away from surpassing 1.2 million Rotarians again. So let’s redouble our efforts to bolster our clubs with great new members, then keep them for life by providing comfort and care.

JENNIFER JONES
President, Rotary International

↑ Jones gathers with Rotaract members at World Polio Day 2022 and Beyond: A Healthier Future for Mothers and Children, an event at the World Health Organization in Geneva.