

# The Platinum Rule

As we were growing up, most, if not all, of us repeatedly heard the Golden Rule: “Treat others the way you want to be treated” or “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. The intent of the Golden Rule, to treat each other fairly and with respect, is valuable, but it is not the remedy most people think it is and is ego-centric that can be very damaging.

Following the Golden Rule means you think everyone is the same as you and wants to be treated the same way you do. However, we are all unique. Some of us feel loved when someone gives us gifts. Others feel loved when someone gives us positive affirmations and could care less about gifts. Others feel loved when someone spends quality time with them and affirmations are meaningless to them. The Golden Rule makes the assumption that other people want to be treated the way that you would like to be treated, and this is many times not the case.

Wikipedia says, “The Golden Rule is arguably the most essential basis for the modern concept of human rights, in which each individual has a right to just treatment, and a reciprocal responsibility to ensure justice for others. A key element of the Golden Rule is that a person attempting to live by this rule treats all people with consideration, not just members of his or her in-group. The Golden Rule has its roots in a wide range of world cultures, and is a standard which different cultures use to resolve conflicts.” The point is this: the Golden Rule is as damaging as it is widespread.

For example: Paul and Mary are arguing and he says he is really upset at her for making that comment on the picture on Facebook. Mary replies, “I didn’t realize it would make you angry, those types of things never upset me. It was a joke. Why are you being so sensitive?”

One could easily interpret what she was saying as, “Paul, I did exactly what I would have you do to me, and yet you are upset, so obviously there is something very wrong with you. What I did was completely justified.” Note: Almost always when someone is intensely justifying their actions, they know deep down they are wrong.

Despite being based on good intentions, the Golden Rule is fundamentally flawed. It requires us to assume what will make people happy/comfortable/not irritated, and then act upon those assumptions in an effort of goodness. Even worse, we have been reminded of the Golden Rule so many times that we believe this behavior is proper and justified, despite the fact that it fails constantly.

I think the Platinum Rule is MUCH better: “Treat others the way they want to be treated” or “Do unto others as they would have you do unto them”. The focus of the Golden Rule is “this is what I want, so I’ll give everyone the same thing” whereas the focus of the Platinum Rule is “let me first understand what they want and then I’ll give it to them.”

Sometimes people will ask me how they figure out how the other person wants to be treated. It is very simple: ask them!

The Platinum Rule gives you the opportunity to use powerful life-skills that will serve you well in all your relationships: spouse, business, family, and friends.

The Golden Rule is to treat others as you want to be treated, but the Platinum Rule understands and accommodates for the fact that people are unique and not everyone wants to be treated the same way. The Platinum Rule says that we ought to treat people how they want to be treated, irrespective of how we might desire to be treated in comparable situations.

The Platinum Rule is much more compassionate and empathetic than the Golden Rule, which has good intentions, but disregards the preferences of the receivers of the conduct and excludes the importance and relevance of the diversity among individuals. Respecting this diversity is essential to all people living peacefully together.