



3 Reasons Why You Should Not Follow ‘The Golden Rule’

The Golden Rule is good. I am not trying to knock it. I did grow up trying to follow it. But, the Platinum Rule is even better, especially when you have a relationship with the person with whom you are interacting. It’s a completely different focus. Here are the differences:

GOLDEN RULE- Treat others as you would like to be treated.

PLATINUM RULE- Treat others as they would like to be treated.

In our organizations, we often have relationships with the people we come in contact with professionally. When you know the person that you are interacting with, you can take different approaches as to how you treat them. You can use the best manners that you have been taught and treat them how you would like to be treated. This will serve you well. Although, you could take some steps to find out more about them, what they like/do not like, what they want and how they want to be treated and then treat them how they prefer to be treated. This will serve you, and them, really well!

The Platinum Rule takes the Golden Rule one step further. It helps make the person that you are interacting with feel more comfortable and at ease with the interaction or situation. We all feel better when we know what to expect and are being treated in a manner that is familiar and comfortable for us.

In your organization, go with the Platinum Rule with:

1. **Donors:** Rather than telling your donors what you think they should know about your programs, services, etc., find out what they want to know. What caused them to donate in the first place? What is important to them? The more you treat them how they want to be treated you will help them feel connected to your organization and help encourage them to donate again.
2. **Staff/Volunteers:**
 - Staff – Treat each of your staff members individually. They will each have different skills, strengths and interests. Use your knowledge of their uniqueness to help guide them towards achieving the organization’s Mission and Vision.
 - Volunteers (Board and Others) – Just like with your staff, treat each of your volunteers individually. Make sure that you utilize your volunteers in ways that they want to be used when giving their time to your organization. Do they want to use their specific skills or would they prefer to help in a general manner such as stuffing envelopes, serving food at Thanksgiving or being a generalist on a board?
3. **Clients/Customers:** As they say in customer service, “The customer is always right”. Try to work with your client/customer to meet their needs. Find out how you can best serve them, speak



with them, meet with them, etc. This may involve rearranging your schedule, making other accommodations and even speaking differently with some people.

So, how can you apply the Platinum Rule to working with clients, customers, donors or staff? **Treat them how they would like to be treated in the following capacities:**

- How you **speak** with them. What words and tone do you use? Are you formal or informal?
- How you **interact** with them. Do you communicate with people via mail, email, text, phone or face-to-face?
- How you **physically engage** with them. Do you keep eye contact regularly? Do you touch someone's arm when you relate to them about something that was just said? Do you stand close to them or give them some personal space when talking?
- How you **listen** to them. Many people share critical information in everyday conversations. Are you listening to find out what is important to them? Do the people you interact with want 'just the facts' or do they want to process the situation?
- How you **follow-up** with them. For example, when working with clients, are you able to alter the times that you call them, visit them or have them visit you? How often do you communicate with people in your organization?

What other ways do you tailor how you connect with people so that you treat them how *they* would like to be treated? I'd love to learn more ways to do this!