

# Reducing Conflict 29 Follow the Golden Rule

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Our parents taught most of us this simple rule when we were young, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” In our culture, we call this rule the “Golden Rule,” because if we follow it well, our lives will be more fulfilling and we will experience less conflict with others.

The Golden Rule has been around since biblical times and it has served mankind well, but there are some interesting twists and turns when using this rule that I will discuss in this brief article.

## Special Case When You Should NOT Use the Golden Rule

Suppose I am a “work-a-holic” personality. I am happy and at my best when I am totally overloaded with work. It makes me feel great to be doing more than most people could endure.

If I go around and expect everyone else to have that frame of mind, people are going to be highly annoyed with me. I show little empathy for people who want a balance in their life.

## Enter The Platinum Rule

In 2016, Dave Kerpen wrote “The Platinum Rule” in his book, *The Art to People*. The rule is “Do unto others as they would like done unto them.” That rule does resolve the issue with the Golden Rule, but it carries many dangers of a different nature.

If you recognize that all people would like more of the “Good Stuff” in life, and they may not be interested in being prudent with how they get it, applying the Platinum Rule would inevitably lead to all kinds of excesses. People want more chocolate cake, even if they are overweight. People want more money, even if they have to obtain it with questionable activities. People want more gratification, even if there are societal norms that must be honored.

Trying to apply the Platinum Rule looks like a good idea until you stop and think about the ramifications involved in doing so. If you treat each person exactly how he or she wants to be treated, it is going to lead to some serious consequences that you may not have considered.

## **A Pragmatic Solution**

The conundrum here is that trying to make a single rule that is universally applicable is not going to work. There will be situations where neither the Golden Rule nor the Platinum rule will lead to optimal results. A better solution came from Lou Holtz in his famous video, "Do Right." Lou simply stated a rule to "treat people the right way."

In most cases, treating people the right way involves following the Golden Rule, so that becomes the standard. When there is an oddball situation, then you need to modify the rule to take that into account.

## **Free Video**

Here is a 3-minute video that contains more information on how to follow the Golden Rule.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G02XJ1WXmmQ>

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