

Respect (vs. rudeness)

Treating others with honor and dignity

November 2018

The Golden Rule

By Jill Welte Tomey

I was raised with the Golden Rule. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Sounds Respectful, doesn’t it? Did you know there is a Silver Rule? It’s basically the negative version of the Golden Rule. It states, “Don’t do unto others what you don’t want done unto you.” The Silver Rule just identifies what not to do. It does not require good actions but only the omission of bad actions. Clearly, the Golden Rule is the Gold Standard for behavior.

Several years ago, I was asked to be a speaker at a Respect Day in a local school district. I decided to use the Golden Rule as the basis for my talk and a related activity. I knew there were many variations of the rule in most of the Wisdom traditions so I was looking for the other versions when I came across the Platinum Rule. It states, “Treat others as they wish to be treated.” It stopped me in my tracks! There’s something better than the Golden Rule? How could that be and how is it that I had never heard it before?

When I was growing up, everyone in my grade school looked like me and acted like me. We were all suburban, white, and middle class. We all had similar family situations and we all went to the same church. Teaching the Golden Rule in that homogenous school environment worked. When I look across the office today at my co-workers, the same cannot be said. We are different races, cultures, religions, socio-economic strata and political parties. The Platinum Rule could definitely get some traction in this environment.

No matter what Rule you want to follow, Respect boils down to being sensitive to those we interact with and responding with honor and kindness. It means we cannot judge people and actions by our personal standards of conduct. It requires that we learn about the world from each other’s perspective.

This month, let your Respect make positive statements about your regard for those around you.

To Practice Respect, I will:

- Have consideration for those around me.
- Treat others as I would want to be treated.
- Be careful not to use offensive language.
- Honor my elders and authorities.
- Not keep others waiting.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
~The Golden Rule

"Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use."
~Emily Post