

The Golden Rule

“Treat others as you want to be treated”

The Golden Rule is endorsed by all world beliefs and many great historic leaders have used it to summarize the ethics of their positive visions. For many hundreds of years, the idea behind The Golden Rule has been the cornerstone of diverse cultural populations across all sectors of the globe. These facts suggest that The Golden Rule may be the most significant human moral truth and in the service business – a new competitive milestone.

In US history, President John F. Kennedy appealed to the Golden Rule in a 1963 anti-segregation speech at the time of the first black enrollment at the University of Alabama. He asked white members of the audience to consider what it would be like to be treated as 2nd class citizens because of the color of their skin. He asked whites to imagine themselves being black and being told that they could not participate in voting, or go to the better public schools or eat at public restaurants or sit at the front of the bus. Would whites be content to be treated that way? He was sure that they wouldn't and yet he noted that this is what that particular demonstration was all about. He further said that the “heart of the question is whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.”

The Golden Rule is best interpreted as saying: “Treat others as you want to be treated.”

To apply it in general, you will have to imagine yourself in the exact place of the other person on the receiving end of the situation. If you act in a certain way toward one another and yet are unwilling to be treated that way in the same circumstances, then you violate The Golden Rule.

To apply the Golden Rule particularly for customer service, we need knowledge, empathy and imagination. We need to understand our customers' service expectations and be skilled to respond to them, we need to know how our actions and reactions may be felt by those with whom we interact on a daily basis and we need to recognize the techniques that make each situation work well. In addition, we must be able to *imagine* ourselves, vividly and accurately, in the other person's place on the receiving end of the action or reaction. With knowledge, empathy, imagination and The Golden Rule, we can be the best service providers based upon sound skills and fair thinking.

The Golden Rule is best seen as a service consistency principle. It does not replace regular service norms or business laws. It is not an infallible guide on which actions or reactions are right or wrong; it does not give all of the answers. It only prescribes consistency. For example, we will perform our work (toward the customer) in harmony with our desires (toward a reversed situation – if we were the customer). The Golden Rule tests our service coherence. If we violate The Golden Rule, then we are violating the spirit of fairness and good business that lie at the heart of being a service-oriented professional in a diverse international organization.