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# The Golden Rule

## Putting Yourself in the Place of Another

There's an old folktale that shows up in the early teachings of the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist faiths. It's called "The Parable of the Long Spoons." In this parable, a man wanted to be shown Heaven and Hell. While there are many variations of this parable, here's the gist of it:

First, the man is taken to a place where a number of people are seated around a large kettle filled with delicious soup. Each person has a ladle with a handle several feet long. The aroma of the bubbling soup is mouth-watering, yet each person sitting there is bony and obviously starving.

As the man watches, he sees the people dip their ladles into the soup, but the handles are too long for them to bring the ladle to their mouths.

Instead, the ladles clash against one another and the soup spills back into the kettle or onto the ground. Regardless of how many times each person tries to get a spoonful of soup, the nourishing liquid goes everywhere but into the person's mouth.

The man is then taken to another place. Here, once again, people are seated around a large soup kettle and again each person has a ladle with a handle several feet long. Again, the aroma of the soup fills the air. But this time, the people are healthy and happy.

Curious, the man watches as people dip their ladles into the soup and then carefully steer the ladles to the mouths of the people sitting on the opposite side of

the kettle, far enough away so that the soup-filled ladles reach them easily. This way, the people all are fed until they are satisfied.

The man realizes that he has been shown both Hell and Heaven and almost everything is the same in them. The difference is in how people treat each other.

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This parable of the Long Spoons is a shining example of the Golden Rule, which is often associated with the Law of Reciprocity.

While the term “Golden Rule” first appears around 1670, the instruction itself is far more ancient. In fact, the essence of the Golden Rule can be found in civilizations going back thousands of years.

Not one of the world’s major religions has ignored it.

- Four thousand years ago in ancient Egypt an ancient papyrus said: “That which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another.”

- Around three thousand years ago in ancient India, the massive epic poem, the Mahabharata, tells of a wise minister who advises his king: “In making self-control and right conduct your chosen behavior, treat others as you treat yourself.”

- A few centuries later in China, a translation of Confucius tells of a man who asks a sage: “Is there one word that may serve as a rule of practice for all of one’s life?” And the sage answers, “Is not ‘reciprocity’ such a word?”

- Moving along to ancient Greece, we have the philosopher Thales writing in 600 BC: “Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing.” And another teacher named Isocrates urged, “Do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you.”

- In the Jewish Torah, around two thousand years ago, we have: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.”

- And the ancient Roman philosopher Seneca warned, “Expect from others what you did to them.”

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There's something important here I'd like you to notice. Listen again to these ancient examples of the Golden Rule and how they're structured:

- That which you hate, do not do to another.
- Avoid doing what you'd blame others for doing.
- Don't do to others that which angers you when they do it to you.
- That which is hateful to you, don't do to your neighbor.

These are all examples of what's called the "negative formulation" of the Golden Rule, and it's the rule's most common form up until the time of Jesus. In this form, the rule focuses on not doing "bad things" to other people.

We know that Jesus of Nazareth did not invent the Golden Rule, but he gave it a new perspective.

During his Sermon on the Mount as described in Matthew 7:12, Jesus presents the concept of the Golden Rule when he tells his followers: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law of the prophets."

And more concisely in Luke 6:31, he says: "Do to others what you would want them to do to you."

But in the next chapters of Luke, Jesus goes much farther. He explains the Great Commandment of loving god and of loving your neighbor.

And when Jesus is asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he delivers the parable of the Good Samaritan, which emphasizes the value of doing good for your neighbor, even if you need to overcome bigotry and hatred in the process.

- Jesus is not only saying to avoid doing bad things to your neighbor that you wouldn't want done to yourself.

- He's also saying you should treat your neighbor with love. He's teaching that if you love your neighbors ~ even your enemies ~ that you, in turn, will be loved.

With this instruction, Jesus has opened a whole new dimension to the Golden Rule. He has lifted it to an entirely new level. This is called the rule's "positive formulation."

Several religious scholars have noted that the teachings of Jesus are the first recorded instance of the Golden Rule's "positive formulation" ~ all based on the instruction by Jesus to love your enemies.

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A really wonderful elaboration on the importance of love in the Golden Rule's "positive formulation," appears in a book called *The Higher Powers of Mind and Spirit* by the early 20th century spiritual writer Ralph Waldo Trine.

Trine explains that it was near the end of Jesus's life when he told his followers: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another." And shortly afterward: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Trine goes on: "And going back again to his ministry, we find that this command breathes through every teaching that he gave. It breathes through that short, memorable prayer we call the Lord's Prayer. It permeates through the Sermon on the Mount. It is the very essence of his discourse."

"We call it the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

"Not that it was original with Jesus," Trine continues, "Other teachers of God had given it before to other people. But Jesus gave it a new emphasis, a new setting. He made it fundamental."

And so Trine – along with many others writing about the Golden Rule – wanted us to be fully aware of what kind of reciprocal behavior Jesus was advocating:

"A man who is gripped at all vitally by Jesus' teachings of the personal fatherhood of God, and the personal brotherhood of man, simply can't help but make this the basic rule of his life – and moreover find joy in making it so. A man who really comprehends this fundamental teaching cannot be crafty, sneaking, dishonest, or dishonorable in his business or in any phase of his personal life. He

never seeks to his own advantage the disadvantage of another. He may be able to size up and seize conditions, but he seeks no advantage for himself to the detriment of his fellow, to the detriment of his community, or to the detriment of his extended community, the nation or the world. He is thoughtful, considerate, open and frank. And, moreover, he finds great joy in being so.”

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Now I'd like to turn from the rocky hills of Galilee to today, and to peer down into the mysterious world of subatomic physics.

Why? Because this is where the Golden Rule has its physical origins.

You see, the Golden Rule – like many teachings of Jesus – is more than good advice on how to live a good life. His teachings are instructions on how to live in accordance with God's law as reflected in the laws of the physical universe. Ask yourself:

Why is it that if we inflict pain or violence on our neighbor that we undoubtedly will fall victim to pain or violence ourselves?

And why, if we send out love, will we, in turn, be blessed with love?

It's because – in the words of both our spiritual teachers and our scientists – “like attracts like.”

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In the world of Science, quantum physics teaches us that everything is made up of atoms, which are made of particles called quanta. These quanta are described as energy vibrating at a certain frequency.

And as they vibrate, these quanta gather with – and attract – other quanta that are vibrating at the same rate.

We find that everything in the universe is energy in motion. Everything is vibrating. Even our thoughts and intentions are vibrating. And like the quanta, they attract other thoughts and intentions that are vibrating at the same rate.

So here are four universal “laws” based in science that have major implications within our spiritual beliefs and especially the Golden Rule:

1. The Law of Vibration means that everything in the entire cosmos is a vibrating mass of energy.
2. The Law of Resonance means that these vibrations create a specific resonance that is sent out into the universe, and that this resonance depicts a specific thought, emotion or action.
3. The Law of Attraction shows how specific resonances join with or gravitate toward resonances of the same frequency.
4. And the Law of Reciprocity determines precisely what is received as a result of a specific vibration or resonance. As we like to say, “What goes around, comes around.”

Think about it. If you steal from your neighbor, this vibration creates a resonance of thievery that goes out into the universe. This resonance of thievery attracts a larger resonance of thievery – the vibration of thievery throughout the universe. And your act of thievery against your neighbor is reciprocated when you experience the theft of your own belongings.

If, instead of stealing from your neighbor, you lend him a helping hand, just think of the blessing that will come back to you by means of these same laws.

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Finally, I want to bring all of this back home, here to New Era, where so much of what we know about the universal laws has come from the spiritual teachers channeled for many years here by the trance medium, Reverend Anita Rudder.

Because her main teacher, Doctor Martin, talked so much about working with vibration, there are aspects of the Golden Rule running through many of the teachings, even when he doesn’t use the specific term “Golden Rule.”

In the teachings, we learn a lot about vibration, because a main difference between our everyday world and the world of Spirit is a matter of vibration.

Referring to the principles that govern the Golden Rule, Doctor Martin said that if we love our neighbor, we are obeying the Law of Attraction in a positive way, and he added: “You are putting into the vibration what you would like to get back, and that is love and harmony.”

In other lectures, he said blessing someone is consistent with the Golden Rule.

Forgiving others also is in line with the Golden Rule. “And if people applied the Golden Rule through acts of forgiveness, they’d experience the benefit of forgiveness themselves. And who among us doesn’t want forgiveness when we realize we’ve made a mistake.”

Doctor Martin said healing certainly applies, for as you help people find healing and support during illness, you are treating them as you’d like to be treated, which may involve being healed yourself.

Doctor Martin also emphasizes that the behaviors associated with the Golden Rule are vital to another of God’s laws, the Law of Spiritual Progression. By loving your neighbor and treating your neighbor as you want to be treated, Dr. Martin taught that we are progressing and working out our karma on earth as well as in the world of spirit.

“It is definitely an impetus for spiritual behavior even though it may start out as selfish because you only want to put something good into the vibration so it’ll come back to you,” Doctor Martin said.

“Eventually, through prayer and God’s will, you can evolve spiritually toward less self-centered concerns and develop greater compassion for others,” he said.

In closing, I want to quote from Karen Armstrong, one of today’s most esteemed religious historians and authors, who recently made this simple, yet profound, statement:

“The Golden Rule is the source of all morality, because it means putting yourself in the place of another.”

In other words, use your spoon with the long handle to feed your neighbor.