

Be the change you wish to see. Be peace.

# BECAUSE

Because one person can change the world.

*prayer to practice*

## THE GOLDEN RULE

May I be an enemy to no one  
and the friend of what abides eternally.  
May I never quarrel with those nearest me,  
and be reconciled quickly if I should.

May I never plot evil against others,  
and if anyone plot evil against me,  
may I escape unharmed  
and without the need to hurt anyone else.  
May I love, seek and attain only what is good.

May I desire happiness for all and harbor envy for none.

May I never find joy in the misfortune  
of one who has wronged me.

May I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always  
rebuke myself until I make reparation.

May I gain no victory that harms me or my opponent.

May I reconcile friends who are mad at each other.

May I, insofar as I can, give all necessary help  
to my friends and to all who are in need.

May I never fail a friend in trouble.

May I be able to soften the pain of the grief stricken  
and give them comforting words.

May I respect myself.

May I always maintain control of my emotions.

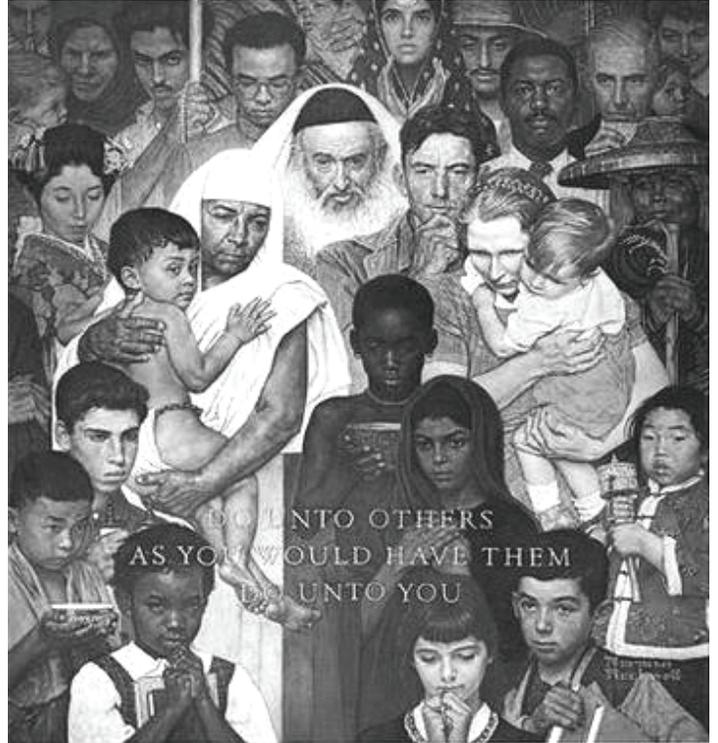
May I habituate myself to be gentle, and never  
angry with others because of circumstances.

May I never discuss the wicked or what they have done,  
but know good people and follow in their footsteps.

*Eusebius of Caesarea, 4th Century*

*“We have committed  
the golden rule to memory;  
let us now commit it to  
life.” Edwin Markham*

*Above: “The Golden Rule,” by Norman Rockwell, calls for toleration in a multicultural society through its portrayal of unity among people of many different religions, races and cultures.*



The golden rule is so simple that a child can grasp it. Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Ten words.

The golden rule is applied to small things. A golden rule for living advises: “If you open it, close it. If you turn it on, turn it off. If you unlock it, lock it up. If you break it, admit it. If you borrow it, return it. If you value it, take care of it. If you make a mess clean it up. If you move it, put it back.” Common courtesy.

But the rule works for the big things, too. In 1963, Alabama Gov. George Wallace refused to allow two African-American students to enter the University of Alabama. Soon after, President Kennedy proposed a Civil Rights Bill to Congress. He said,

*We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.*

To apply the golden rule as one person or as an entire nation, as a people or a planet, we need imagination, courage and compassion. In big things and in small, the golden rule can be a moral compass. We hope this issue of beCAUSE can help each one of us find our way in a troubled world.

# THE GOLDEN RULE

by Paul Loeb

**T**wo thousand years ago Rabbi Hillel explained, "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary." We've still not lived up to Hillel's words. We've still not created a world in which everyone has access to food, housing, and medical care; in which no one beats, shoots, evicts, tortures, or otherwise degrades their fellow human beings; and in which individuals can express what they believe without fear. Most of these values were enshrined just after World War II in the United Nations International Bill of Human Rights, signed by all the major nations on earth. But it will take more formal pronouncements and more than individual acts of decency and civility to make them global realities.

Virginia Ramirez, a San Antonio Latina woman who went from having an eighth grade education to testifying before the U.S. Congress and Senate, sees human dignity embodied in how we treat our children. "I'd like to see a world," she says, "where every child has the same opportunity. I see children suffer from hunger, sickness, cold, and lack of education. Or they're abused, humiliated, or whatever. That's the hardest thing to take, to see children suffer. To me, there would be justice if every child in the world got treated well. I don't know if that's ever going to happen. Maybe it won't. But for me that would be perfect justice."

Our current myths suggest that change happens when individuals act on their own, in isolation, for mysterious reasons. The real history teaches lessons of common action, of perseverance, of working together for change. It's a tragedy that most Americans think Rosa Parks started her activism that famous day on the Montgomery Alabama bus, and have not even a notion that it began a dozen years before Parks became active in a local NAACP chapter.

Imagine if we taught how ordinary citizens have changed the world, again and again, even against entrenched resistance. Young women and men just coming of age would learn the stories of citizen efforts like the

abolitionist, women's suffrage, populist, union, civil rights and environmental movements: how ordinary people have learned to act despite the flaws, hesitations, and failings; learned to persevere, even under the most difficult of circumstances; learned to keep on until they prevailed.

*Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless.*

**W**hatever world we create, we should assume that we'll be living with imperfect societies, imperfect human beings, and imperfect solutions, for as far into the future as we can imagine. But this does not justify retreat from the admittedly difficult challenges of working for a more humane world. Whatever our approaches to change, and whatever political ambiguities we face, we can't let the apparent limits of any historical period prevent us from articulating the very perspectives that might continue to open up new possibilities in the future.

Compassion asks us to enter places of pain, write theologians Henri Nouwen, Donald McNeill, and Douglas Morrison, "to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless." Requiring "full immersion in the condition of being human," it's an ethic essential to reclaiming our souls.

**W**hatever our particular future visions, we renew our souls in the company of other human beings. "Hatred tries to cure disunion by annihilating those who are not united with us," wrote Thomas Merton. "It seeks peace by the elimination of everybody else but ourselves. But love, by its acceptance of the pain of reunion, begins to heal all wounds... Consequently, we can only be happy in this world in so far as we are free to rejoice in the good of another: specifically in so far as we are free to rejoice in the good which is God's."

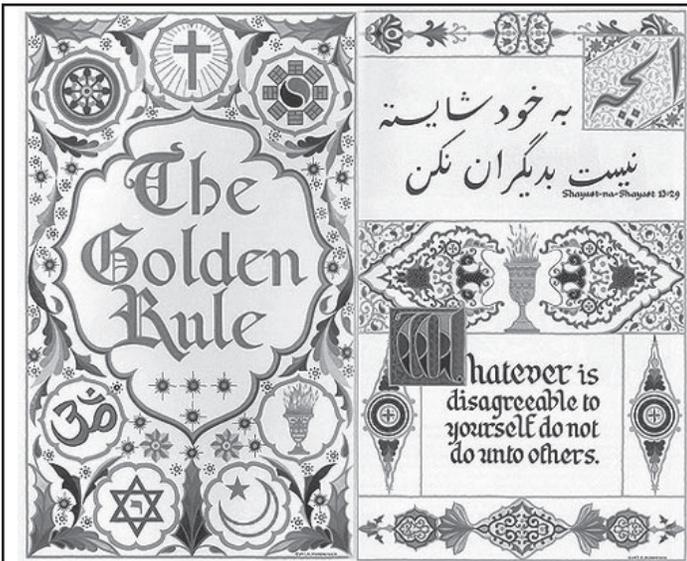
*Paul Loeb is the author of Soul of a Citizen Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time <[www.soulofacitizen.com](http://www.soulofacitizen.com)>.*

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Since 1995, the all-volunteer and interfaith peaceCENTER continues to be a significant community catalyst for peace in San Antonio, Texas. Compassion and Justice are our strong guiding lights. Contemplative Practices, Experiential Education, and Nonviolent Actions are our working expressions throughout the community at large. The peaceCENTER is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

[www.sanantoniopace.center](http://www.sanantoniopace.center)



You shall love your neighbor as yourself.  
*Leviticus 19.18*

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.”  
*Matthew 22.36-40*

Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.  
*Islam. Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 13*

One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.  
*African Traditional Religions. Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria)*

Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou doest not. This is my command unto thee, do thou observe it.  
*Bahá'í: Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic 29*

One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire.  
*Hinduism. Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva 113.8*

Tsekung asked, “Is there one word that can serve as a principle of conduct for life?” Confucius replied, “It is the word shu—reciprocity: Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.”  
*Confucianism. Analects 15.23*

Be not estranged from another for, in every heart, pervades the Lord.  
*Sikhism*

A certain heathen came to Shammai and said to him, “Make me a proselyte, on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.” Thereupon he repulsed him with the rod which was in his hand. When he went to Hillel, he said to him, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah; all the rest of it is commentary; go and learn.”  
*Judaism. Talmud, Shabbat 31a*

# The Good Samaritan

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn in Jericho and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Gospel of Luke, chapter 10 verses 25-37  
 New International Version



“SO WHATEVER YOU WISH THAT MEN WOULD DO TO YOU, DO SO TO THEM.” (MATTHEW 7:12)

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# Hands-on Activities

## Golden Rule Cryptogram

A cryptogram puzzle hides a phrase that is written in code. Each number stands for a letter of the alphabet. Crack the code and you will reveal a variation of the Golden Rule from the 4th Century B.C.E. The answer is at the bottom of the page. Use the alphabet grid to help you solve the puzzle.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

10 9 3 9 21 10 9 13 3 21 9 9 21 25 2 7 18 26 25 24 21

24 3 20 2 7 18 8 9 13 11 15 10 9 3 2 21 9 8 9 13

16 8 9 21 25 2 7 18

11 18 9 5 7 24 21 2 18

## Cut & Paste

Make your own Golden Rule collage! You will need a stack of old magazines, scissors, glue and a piece of posterboard. Look for pictures of people practicing the Golden Rule. Cut or tear the pictures (jagged edges look nice.) As you collect pictures, think about how the Golden Rule is being practiced and how you can practice it in your own life. Glue the pictures onto the board. You can cut out letters that make up the words "The Golden Rule" and add them to your collage too.

Hang the collage in a prominent place to remind you of ways to practice the Golden Rule.

## Meditation & Reflection

If we want to treat others as we would like to be treated it helps to remind ourselves of how we like to be treated ourselves. Each morning for at least a week sit in a quiet place for 5 - 10 minutes. Meditate on how you need to be treated. *Do I need to be understood? Do I need to be listened to? Do I need to be treated gently? Do I need to be encouraged? Do I need to be included? Do I need to be forgiven? Do I need to be . . . ?* After your meditation, record your insights in a journal. For the rest of the day, try to treat people as *you* would like to be treated. At the end of the day record your impressions in your journal.

## PLAYING BY THE RULES

The **Golden Rule** says that we should "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." When we aren't practicing the Golden Rule we may be following a different rule. Some have even been given names:

**Iron Rule:** Do unto others before they do it to you

**Brass Rule:** Do good to others so that they will do good to you

**Silver Rule:** Do unto others as they do it to you

**Rule of Gold:** Whoever has the gold makes the rules

**Stone(Age)Rule:** Do unto others in any way that seems to serve your interests

Think about these six rules and how they differ. Better yet, discuss them with a friend or a group of friends. Think of an example that fits each rule.

Read some of the articles in your daily newspaper. If you have a group of people, you can divide the paper so that each person reads a section. Try to determine which of these rules the people or organizations mentioned in the articles are following. How would they have behaved if they were following the Golden Rule? How might the outcome have been different? If you can't fit the behavior into a rule maybe we need a new rule - make one up!



*"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.



*"What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellowman; this is the whole Law. The rest is but commentary."*  
Rabbi Hillel

**Answer to the Cryptogram** . education permanent institution of higher liberal arts a pupil of Socrates who opened the first Isocrates (436-338 BCE) was a Greek, done to you by others." - /socrates "Do not do unto others what angers you if