



Animating the  
Golden Rule ...  
An Introduction

A Visionary Media Inc. Production

**GUIDEBOOK**

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# The Golden Rule and the Global Human Family

*"We should act toward other nations as we wish them to act toward us."*

- Millard Fillmore (1800-1874), 13th President of the United States

The Golden Rule (also known as the Ethic of Reciprocity) is arguably the most consistent, prevalent and universal ethical principle in history. It is found worldwide throughout cultures, religions, secular philosophies and indigenous traditions. Many people regard it as the most concise and general principle of ethics.

Gold itself has symbolic value and a psychological appeal that spans cultures throughout history. As a metaphor, it points to what is most pure, noble, enduring and ideal in human experience. Gold was long considered the most valuable of metals throughout the world. It is therefore no surprise that the Golden Rule contains a "gold" metaphor since, as a principle, it is prized in almost all societies.

The principle of the Golden Rule has been valued by human societies for thousands of years. Why does it deserve renewed attention today? And what special significance does the Golden Rule have for this generation of young people?

The Golden Rule is often thought of as a rule for individuals: a person must consider how he or she would wish to be treated when deciding how to treat others. However, our changing world invites us to broaden this rule to groups of people and society as a whole.

Many regions of the world, including our own country, are quickly becoming more multicultural, with people of many cultures and religions working to find ways to live together in harmony. The Golden Rule, with roots in a wide range of the world's religions and cultures, is well-suited to be the standard to which different cultures can appeal in resolving conflicts. As the world becomes more of a single interacting global community, the need for such a common standard is becoming more urgent. The Golden Rule can be the ethical cornerstone as the human family works together to build a peaceful, just and sustainable global society.

Because the Golden Rule is a point of agreement and a common denominator among so many of the world's cultures, races, and religions, it has tremendous capacity for promoting social justice, non-violence, unity, the teaching of compassion and ethics, multicultural and multifaith cooperation and more.

Today we are living in a global village. Accordingly, we are all global citizens in addition to belonging to our particular groups, races, cultures, religions and nations. Being a global citizen brings both privileges and responsibilities. The Golden Rule may be the best guide we have for bringing all the world's people to live together in peace.

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