

## ***The Platinum Rule***

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Some of my most rewarding experiences as a professor came in teaching ethics for business majors. Most were surprised, and some at first offended, to be studying slavery, women's rights, animal rights, world religions, international cultural differences, and the evolution of ethical considerations for future generations and the earth itself.

I learned a great deal from these students as well. They brought their experience and thoughts about different religions, ethical training, and expectations for life to the sometimes heated discussions that were often fascinating and revealing. Talking about bribery, for example, became much more nuanced and complex when students explained that it was integrated in their governments and business environment. No bribery - no permits, no job.

One of the most important discussions every class had to do with determining the best course of action when an ethical challenge appears. The Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," was explored and expanded with the insight of many perceptive students. This revision became known as the Platinum Rule, "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them." The historic version was seen as self-centric and potentially imperialistic. All too often what you want is not what they might like, want, or feel is appropriate. This is much more difficult than the Golden Rule because it requires much better communication and a better understanding of the "other."

This rule can be equally valuable for interpersonal interactions, from the family to the community. As a person with Sensory Processing Disorder I find it very unpleasant to have my feet rubbed or even touched. My wife, in contrast, loves to have her feet touched and massaged. If we tried the Golden Rule neither of us would be happy, but with the Platinum Rule we are content.

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The author of 20 books and more than 300 papers and reports David Bainbridge taught resource and business management courses for 15 years at Alliant International University.