

The golden rule, like a diamond, reflects a different beauty from different perspectives.



My perspective is logic, which is about forms of valid reasoning.

All A is B
This is A
 \therefore This is B

good form

Use to prove things and test consistency.

~~All A is B
This is B
 \therefore This is A~~

bad form

~~All parrots are birds.
This is a bird.
 \therefore This is a parrot.~~

Pyrite-1

~~If you want X
to do A to you,
then do A to X.~~



~~If you want Dr. Davis
to remove your ap-
pendix, then remove
her appendix.~~

different situations

Pyrite-2

~~If you'd want X to do A to
you if the situation were
reversed, then do A to X.~~



~~If you'd want your fellow
thief to help you rob banks
if the situation were reversed,
then help him rob banks.~~

flawed desires

Gensler's GR

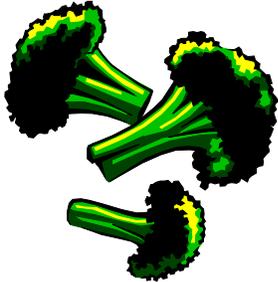
Treat others only as you consent to being treated in the same situation.

GR forbids this combination:

- I do something to another.
- I'm unwilling that this be done to me in the same situation.



GR involves imagining yourself
in the other person's place.



I'm a waiter who hates broccoli
and thus don't want it served to me.
If I follow GR, can I serve broccoli
to a customer who ordered it?

Ask
this



Am I now willing that if I
were in the same situation
then this be done to me?

GR involves a present attitude toward a hypothetical situation.



Little Will puts his finger into electrical outlets. Does GR let us discipline him?

Ask
this



Am I now willing that if I were in the same situation then this be done to me?

GR forbids an inconsistent action-desire combination. Satisfying GR-consistency doesn't guarantee that your action is right.

“I grow rich with my coal mine while paying my workers only \$1 a day.”



The owner (out of ignorance of what \$1 can buy) is willing that he be paid that much in his workers' place. It doesn't follow that his act is right.



If you're conscientious and impartial,
then you won't steal Detra's bicycle
unless you're willing that your bicycle
be stolen in the same situation:

You steal
Detra's
bicycle

→
conscientious

You believe it would
be all right for you
to steal her bicycle

↓ impartial

You're willing
that your bicycle
be stolen in the
same situation

←
conscientious

You believe it would
be all right for your
bicycle to be stolen
in the same situation

Applying the golden rule in a rational way requires knowledge, imagination, and sometimes rationalized desires.



The golden rule
is not a *compass*
but a *path*.

GR can be embedded in different frameworks:

| Religions | Justifications | Motivations |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Buddhism | self-evident | do the right thing |
| Christianity | rational procedure | rational consistency |
| Confucianism | God's will | love of God |
| Hinduism | social usefulness | concern for others |
| Islam | social convention | conformity |
| Judaism | personal feelings | I like to act this way |
| Secularism ... | self-interest ... | self-interest ... |

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<http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/goldrule.htm>