

## "Obtain a 'Qualified' Consultant"

As a professional, full-time consultant your "Page 4" commentary on "The American Dream: Being a Consultant" (December 1981) was of interest to me. During 1979, when I served the Los Angeles Chapter of ASTD as Position Referral Chairperson I had a similar experience. I had several calls a week from training and development professionals wanting to become consultants. I would have welcomed reprints of your article!

One consideration you did not mention in taking a "getting only your feel wet" approach to consulting is that of the *client*. Almost all clients I deal with want a committed, knowledgeable and experienced consultant. To me commitment is a part of the "professionalism" that Malcolm Knowles mentioned many years ago.

Clients deserve to know if the consultant they are considering is going to provide the most appropriate and expert service or if he or she is only protecting a resume between jobs. Will the consultant be available to continue to help the client or will the requirements of full-time employment present a conflict of interest?

The part-time "getting only your feel wet" consultant is often an expert in his or her field, but knows little about building a professional relationship that can provide a satisfying experience for the client.

To assist business in the public and private sectors with a resource to obtain a qualified consultant, the Association of Professional Consultants was founded in 1980 and incorporated as a nonprofit association in 1981.

—Jean Barbazette  
Barbazette Training Clinic  
Seal Beach, Calif.

**Editor's Note:** For additional information, contact: Association of Professional Consultants, 567 San Nicolas Dr., Suite 106, Newport Beach, CA 92660.

## "Few Consultants Help Clients to Grow"

Your "Page Four" (December 1979) thoughts on consultants were right on the mark. The vast majority of T & D "consultants" are not consultants at all, but just part time help! They are like a manpower service for industrial schools. They do their clients about as much professional good as temporary office help. They may get the work out, but the contribution is minimal.

There are few "advisory" consultants in the profession. Drucker is one (see John J. Tarrant's book by the same name). Few help their clients to grow and develop approaches to this business that will be productive, either without the consultant being involved or that will work after the consultant leaves.

—Jack Falvey  
President  
Intermark  
Londonderry, N.H.

## "Please Don't Tamper with the Golden Rule!"

Human development professionals should resist any temptation to replace the venerable Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," with supposedly "improved" versions. It is definitely not advisable to tamper with the Golden Rule. It has stood the test of time against much competition from various social creeds, conflicting behavioral sciences, shifting management theories and faddish notions about human nature. Nothing has surpassed it, displaced it or disproven it. Yet, all too often, inferior substitutes are offered in print or on the seminar circuit.

A recent example of ill-fated tampering with the Golden Rule appeared in the article, "Training Sales Managers on Motivation," by H. Stanley Connell III, (*Training & Development Journal*, November 1981). While Mr. Connell's intentions may have been good, his revision of the Golden Rule nevertheless is an

impairment rather than an improvement of it, and a step backward.

First, a few words about some useful and proper modifications in the *wording* of the Golden Rule are in order.

Modifications which are merely linguistic or editorial, such as, "Treat others as you would have them treat you," are quite proper because the integrity of the Rule's essential meaning and intent is maintained.<sup>1</sup> Linguistic modifications which provide a special nuance of meaning or are used to fit special circumstances, such as, "Manage as you would want to be managed; supervise as you would want to be supervised," are also proper because the Rule's essential meaning and intent are retained.<sup>2</sup>

To retain the Rule's integrity, a modification must be an accurate corollary of it. The corollary, however worded, must embody this singular instruction: "*Guide your action toward others in the light of the sensitivity and insight of others and of yourself which you gain by (1) mentally picturing yourself as the recipient of a like action by others, and (2) mentally picturing the most likely effect of your action on others.*"<sup>3</sup>

Elements of a role-reversal model, an empathy-gaining model and an interaction model are clearly evident in the Golden Rule. A simple and workable method for increasing knowledge of oneself and others is distinct and apparent. The richness of its integral contents, applicability, ramification and understandability give it what philosopher R.M. MacIver calls "The Deep Beauty of the Golden Rule."<sup>4</sup>

We can now turn to Mr. Connell's modification, which does away with the traditional version, rather cavalierly, with these words:

"Successful sales managers who have learned how to get others to perform at a higher level seem to have a common attribute: They put no trust in the saying, "Do unto others as you would have them *do unto you.*" They make a critical change ascribing to: "Do unto others as they would have you *do unto them.*" In other words, treat each individual differently! Treating each person as a unique individual is fair.



Treating everyone the same is unfair."

In advocating the change in the Golden Rule from "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" to "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them," Mr. Connell is advocating a revision which *literally* turns the Golden Rule into a prescription for allowing employees to control their managers and supervisors. This end result is patently absurd. Even organizations which try to have as much employee participation in decision making as possible could not accept a prescription with such predictably absurd consequences.

To stay in compliance with Mr. Connell's "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them" rule, what should a supervisor do unto employees with high absenteeism records? *Excuse them, of course*, because this is what errant employees would have the supervisor do unto them!

The reasoning Mr. Connell employs to justify his new version of the Golden Rule is as follows, together with my comments:

1. "Treating everyone the same is unfair."

*Comment:* Not always, but acceptable for present purposes.

2. The traditional Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," requires that you treat all employees in the same way. Therefore, the traditional Golden Rule is unfair.

*Comment:* The traditional Golden Rule does not require that all employees be treated the same. It does provide a method for becoming sensitive to others. This sensitivity to others leads to the recognition of their individual differences.

3. "Treating each person as a unique individual is fair."

*Comment:* Not always, but acceptable for present purposes.

4. The new version of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them," requires that each individual be treated differently.

*Comment:* This version does not lead to treating individuals according to their differences any better than

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does the traditional Golden Rule. Furthermore, this new version is less versatile, less encompassing and leads to some absurd results, as discussed earlier.

In conclusion, let me say that Mr. Connell's cause is a good one. It is important to take individual differences into account when trying to motivate employees. I believe his case is not against the traditional Golden Rule as such, but possibly against misuse of it.

Mr. Connell's version can offer some remedial guidance for some authoritarian managers/supervisors who are insensitive to the individualities of their employees. To show that, at least in part, I do agree with Mr. Connell, let me end with this quotation:

"Some supervisors and managers believe in the Golden Rule, but tamper with it. They want to write the Rule their way: "Do unto others as you think is best for them."

Most people don't want to be treated the way *you* think is best for them. People want to be treated in the way *they* think is best for them. If our intentions toward others are to be truly good, we must keep them free from our own ego and status needs.

We can't really put ourselves in the place of others (as the Golden Rule requires us to do) if our ego and status needs influences our perception of them. Looking at employees through the biased vision of our own eyes will give us an unrealistic image of them and of their needs."<sup>5</sup>

#### References

1. L.J. Gordon, *Golden Rule Supervision*, L.J. Gordon Associates, Urbana, Ill., 1976, p. 5.
2. L.J. Gordon, *Ibid*, p. 8.
3. L.J. Gordon, "The Social-Behavioral Science Rendition of the Golden Rule," in *Golden Rule Leadership Seminar Manual*, L.J. Gordon Associates, Urbana, Ill., 1978.
4. R.M. MacIver, "The Deep Beauty of the Golden Rule," in *Moral Principles of Action*, Ruth Nanda Anshen, ed., Harper & Row, New York, 1972, pp. 202-208.
5. L.J. Gordon, *Golden Rule Supervision*, pp. 14-15.

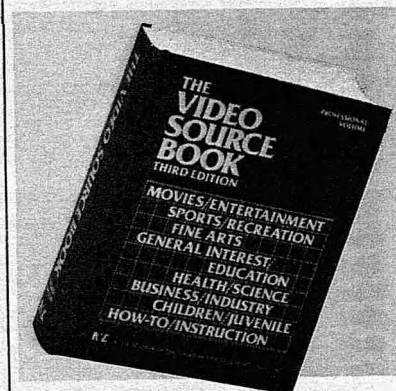
—L.J. Gordon  
Creative Training Guides, Inc.  
Urbana, Ill.

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