
Golden Rule Thinking

I want to stress the importance of Golden Rule thinking in your pursuit of a successful career. The main idea is to ALWAYS aim to help others. It's a lifestyle of unselfish thinking.

Satisfy Wants

James H. Worsham, in his book, *The Art of Persuading People*, says:

My book and magazine writings have necessitated numberless interviews with successful professional men—with executives whose persuasive talents were put to daily use in the handling of thousands of employees; with “star” salesmen whose work resulted in large manufacturing plants having to strain their facilities, day and night, to fill orders; with heads of government, who had been able to persuade millions to vote for them; with foreign diplomats whose persuasive efforts had led nations away from and into war; with cunning lobbyists whose strategies of persuasion made or unmade national laws; and with thousands of others whose persuasiveness was important in their spheres of influence.

Out of all this study and observation I have found the simple secret of persuasion. I have discovered that

it is employed alike by all, whether they realize it or not. In it you have a common denominator—a simple formula to which you can turn again and again for new ideas, tactics and strategies, as you meet the manifold requirements of new situations.

The secret is so simple and obvious that I hesitate to state it, because of its very obviousness and simplicity. Yet, after all, isn't all truth simple and obvious after discovery?

The basic secret of persuasion is this:

INDIVIDUALS (OR MASSES OF PEOPLE) ARE PERSUADED THROUGH THE INFLUENCE OF THE THINGS THEY WANT. In actual operation this means: FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE WANT (not just NEED); BE IN A POSITION TO CONVINCE THEM THAT WHAT YOU OFFER WILL SATISFY THE WANT, AND PLACE YOUR PROPOSITION WITHIN THEIR REACH. [Capitals in original.]¹

Are you getting the message? What matters is not what YOU want, but what OTHERS want. It's satisfying individual's desires and expectations. If you want to become successful in persuading others, it's not some psychological method trying to trick someone into doing something they don't want to do. Yet many people think they're successful if they can somehow persuade people to do something they really don't want to do. That's being deceptive.

Focus on Customers

For sixteen years, a company was manufacturing a pump for household use. Sales of the pump stayed the same for years. They brought in an outsider to see if he could increase sales. He had one dominating question on his mind, “What do the customers of this pump want?”

Notice this outsider wasn’t focused on the company, but on the customer’s *wants*. The pump had only one moving part that was inside a casing. He discovered that customers buying household pumps wanted one that would be safe around children. This outsider discovered this pump fits the bill.

They thought about this feature of the pump and created a new slogan: “Safe to Install Where Children Play.” They showed children playing around the pump. Within a few months sales increased several hundred percent.²

What changed? The pump was the same, but the message changed. They discovered the want of their customers and then created a sale pitch to satisfy that want. Bill Gates, one of the founders of Microsoft, said, “Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.”³

Please the Customer First, Last, and Always

Gallery Furniture in Houston, Texas, has more sales per square foot than any other competitor. Jim McIngvale’s personal philosophy is, “Please the customer first, last, and always.” What do customers want? Customers want to get the products they buy as soon as possible. Gallery goes one step further. They promise to deliver furniture the same day it’s

bought. It's no wonder they're successful. I know this place well, for every day I come home from work I pass Gallery Furniture. Usually there are many cars in their lot.

I taught an American Junior Achievement course to English-speaking Czechoslovakian high school and university students in Prague University. George Testar, manager of a large department store in Minneapolis taught my class one day. Four miles from his store, Sears and Roebuck was opening a store.

Upon hearing this he became depressed. Obviously, he was going to have stiff competition, lose sales, and receive a smaller bonus. He decided to take action. He gathered his sales force together and told them they had to satisfy their customers. He instructed them if they didn't have an item, they would get it. That year they had greater sales than the year before.

He told the class this incident. A woman complained to a clerk that she couldn't find any pantyhose like the ones she saw in Rome, Italy. Testar heard what happened, so he went to the woman and said they would get the pantyhose for her.

He called his department store in Rome and told them to ship six pairs of those pantyhose by air. Within five days he had those special pantyhose on his desk. He called the customer and told her he had her pantyhose. This person was a woman of influence. He asked the class, "What do you think this woman did?" She undoubtedly told her friends about the great service of his department store. Is it any wonder his sales increased that year when they treated customers in that fashion?

The Key to Effective Marketing

Doug Hall, author of the *Jump Start Your Business Brain* book series, in “What’s In It for Customers?” stated:

WHAT’S THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE MARKETING?

Being overt, blunt, and unquestionably specific about the benefits customers will get from your goods or services can triple your chances of success. I studied 901 new products and services over a five-year period and found that those whose marketing and advertising hyped obvious benefits had a 38% survival rate, compared with a 13% survival rate for those whose benefits were less clear. [Caps and bold in original.]⁴

In a *Readers Digest* article, “Getting Your Own Way—The Easy Way,” Morton Hunt stated: “After hundreds of studies, researchers have concluded that persuasiveness is greatly enhanced by identifiable techniques that we can all borrow—keeping in mind that persuasion is not manipulation; it’s a matter of creating the right environment for your ideas and then communicating them effectively.”

One of his points is, “Reflect the listener’s experience.” Hunt points out:

A good persuader also tends to reflect, not rebut, the other person’s objections to his argument. The skilled persuader restates the objection, allows that it has merit and only then goes on to show that his

own views are more cogent. One top-notch insurance agent agreed with a customer that life insurance wasn't a good investment. "In fact," the agent said, "it's *a terrible* investment." Having thus disarmed the customer, the agent demonstrated that insurance has different purposes from investing: it's a protection against catastrophe, a way of making up for savings or investments that one doesn't have.⁵

Good persuaders are those who are willing to honestly evaluate the other person's position. They are excellent listeners. They identify with the person they are speaking to. Ben Feldman has sold nearly a billion dollars worth of life insurance. He says his toughest sale was to the chief executive officer of a major corporation who insisted he was too busy to have a life-insurance salesman see him. Feldman took five \$100 bills and put them into an envelope and handed it to the secretary. He requested only five minutes of the officer's time.

Feldman agreed with the officer that his time was valuable. That gesture opened the door for Feldman to see the officer. He sold him over \$50 million worth of life insurance.⁶

Promoted to Management

John Miller in *Guideposts* answered this question, "What can I do to make a difference?"

I ducked into a busy restaurant for lunch. There

wasn't a single table available, so I sat at the bar. A waiter rushed by with a tray full of dirty dishes. He saw me and said, "I'll be right with you." He came back and told me, "This isn't my section, but I don't want to keep you waiting." He took my order, which included a Diet Coke. "We don't carry that, sir," he said.

I told him that a glass of water would be just fine.

Minutes later he appeared with my food, then rushed back to his section.

He showed up again with a surprise. An ice-cold bottle of Diet Coke! "Where did this come from?" I asked.

"There's a grocery store around the corner," he told me.

"But you're running around like crazy. How did you find the time to go get it?"

"I didn't, sir," he said. "I asked my manager to go!"

What terrific service! It would have been easy for him to grumble and think, *Why do I have to do everything around here?* But he hadn't.

I went back to that same restaurant two months later. I asked for my favorite server. "He doesn't wait tables anymore," I was told. "They promoted him to management." I wasn't surprised. He'd been willing to do the small things that often lead to big results.⁷

Praising People to Success

Mary Kay Ash had considerable success as a salesperson and trainer. After spending 25 years in direct selling, she became frustrated because as a national training director the person she had trained received a promotion and earned twice her salary. She resigned and decided to write a book that would help women succeed. Mary Kay said:

I envisioned a company in which any woman could become just as successful as she wanted to be. The doors would be wide open to opportunity for women who were willing to pay the price and had the courage to dream.⁸

Mary Kay decided to start her own company with \$5,000 from her savings. She considered the Golden Rule the founding principle for her company and supported the idea of: “Praising people to success.” She advocated placing faith first, family second, and career third.” She became so successful that PBS named her as one of the 24 most influential business leaders of the last 25 years, and Baylor University said she was the greatest female entrepreneur in American history.⁹

Auto Salesman—Sold Twice as Many Cars as Any Other Human Being

Joe Girard, an auto salesman, has sold twice as many cars as any other human being for 11 years in a row. In fact, he sold twice as many cars as anyone in second place! What’s the secret

of his success? Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman in their book, *In Search of Excellence*, tell this interesting story about this super salesman:

In explaining his secret of success, Joe said: “I send out over thirteen thousand cards every month.”

Why start with Joe? Because his magic is the magic of IBM and many of the rest of the excellent companies. It is simply service, overpowering service, especially after-sales service. Joe noted, “There’s one thing that I do that a lot of salesmen don’t, and that’s believe the sale really begins *after* the sale—not before....The customer ain’t out the door, and my son has made up a thank-you note.” Joe would intercede personally, a year later, with the service manager on behalf of his customer. Meanwhile he would keep the communications flowing:

Joe’s customers won’t forget him once they buy a car from him; he won’t let them! Every month throughout the year they get a letter from him. It arrives in a plain envelope, always a different size or color. “It doesn’t look like that junk mail which is thrown out before it is even opened,” Joe confides. And they open it up and the front of it reads, ‘I LIKE YOU.’ Inside it says ‘Happy New Year from Joe Girard.’” He sends a card in February wishing the customers a “Happy George Washington’s Birthday.” In March it’s “Happy St. Patrick’s Day.” They love the cards. Joe boasts, “You should hear the comments I get on them.”

Out of context, Joe's 13,000 cards sounds like just another sales gimmick. But like the top companies, Joe seems genuinely *to care*... Joe's sense of caring continued to shine through after the sale: "When [the customer] comes back for service, I fight for him all the way to get him the best."¹⁰

What's the secret of Joe's success? Notice he sincerely cares about his customers. It's not trickery or a sales ploy. His caring is shown not just when he sells a car, but also after selling the car. Joe said, "You've got to be like a doctor. Something's wrong with his car, so feel hurt for him."¹¹ Joe acts like a caring doctor and feels for his customers. No wonder he's so successful.

Thread of Caring

Did you notice a thread that runs through all these success stories—it's the thread of caring. It's Golden Rule thinking: always aiming to help others. In dealing with people, it's important to understand this important truth: People aren't interested in how much you know; they're interested in how much you care.

William James, noted psychologist and philosopher, stated: "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."¹² People yearn to be loved and appreciated. It's the secret to building a business, having a happy marriage, raising contented children, or having a successful career.

Choose to Learn and Help Others

You may wonder where I got all this information and quotes. Early in my life, I made the choice to learn and help others. While in college I heard the college president say something that I never forgot. It has been a guiding principle of mine for many years. I urge you to memorize it and make it one of your aims also:

Seize the moment of awakened curiosity for the acquisition of knowledge.

What does it mean? If you're in bed and an idea jumps into your mind, jump out of bed and write it down. If you wait until the morning, you'll have forgotten it. If you don't know a word, look it up. Always be ready to acquire knowledge. I always carry a pen and 3 x 5 cards so when ideas come I can write them down. I subscribe to various magazines, and when I see articles of interest, I tear them out and put them into my filing system. When I read a book I own, I mark the pages I find interesting. I've also made copies of these pages and put them into my filing system.

I started my filing system over 50 years ago. First I clipped articles and put them and my comments in 3-inch loose leaf binders. Then I began to file my articles. Today I have three filing cabinets with four drawers each filled with articles. That's where I received much of the material for this book. I wanted to write a book one day on success that would help others, and I've been saving materials on this subject for many years.

As you can see, applying Golden Rule thinking is applicable

for all areas of your life. If you want a happy and fulfilled life, make helping others one of the prime objectives for your life. Glenn Cunningham, who was thought to be a hopeless cripple, overcame great obstacles and ran the world's fastest mile. He won the prestigious Sullivan Award as the nation's top amateur athlete and was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame. When his track career was finished, he founded Cunningham Youth Ranch where for 30 years he and his wife helped over 9,000 troubled young people.¹³

Andrew Carnegie, founder of U.S. Steel, was a major catalyst in the Industrial Revolution to produce steel to make machinery and transportation possible. With the fortune he made, he founded libraries and donated to thousands of them in the U.S. and around the world. Carnegie said, "No man becomes rich unless he enriches others."¹⁴

Empathy, the ability to have a shared experience of how others think and feel, is critical for becoming successful. Those with empathy live a rich life because they aim to make others happy. It's one of the greatest paradoxes of life: If you save your life, you'll lose it; if you lose your life, you'll find it. An egocentric lifestyle leads only to misery; a life that aims to help others leads to happiness and fulfillment. But *you* must make the choice of what lifestyle you want to live.