

Do unto Others As You Would Have Them Do unto You

This golden rule is included in the teachings of several traditions, but is generally considered to have originated with Confucius. Another converse version given by Rabbi Hillel in 30 B.C. says, “Whatsoever thou wouldst that men should not do unto thee, do not do unto them.”

Consider

Of course, the actual practice of “doing unto others as you would have them do unto you” can bring up sticky questions about whether someone else would want the same things that you do. With people’s different styles and preferences, you may end up giving others what *you* would want, but not what *they* would want.

For example, imagine that you’re sitting with a friend in front of two slices of pie — a big one and a small one. You love pie and would really like to have the bigger piece, so you follow the golden rule by giving your friend the slice of pie that you would want to be given unto you. But what if your friend doesn’t really like pie? What if she is on a diet or is a diabetic? This simple example shows why just following spiritual rules dogmatically isn’t enough — you have to grasp the spirit behind the law.

Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you is not about pushing your preferences onto others, but is a stance of generosity that reflects in how charitable and fair you are in all areas of your life.

What is most important about this golden rule is to be in the spiritual frame of mind that allows you to truly do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The only way you can fully enter into this commandment is to have a tangible sense of the oneness and divine nature of everything and everyone in this world. With this awareness, you know that giving to another is inherently giving to yourself.