

# **Are Your Relationships More Valuable than Gold?**

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The price of gold has skyrocketed--over \$1550 an ounce this past week, up 30% in just the past year! Why do you think all those companies on television and radio are willing to buy your used gold? Because they expect the price to continue to rise; what they buy from you now will be worth much more very quickly.

However, platinum has been and continues to be even more valuable, over \$1875 an ounce!

So what does the price of gold have to do with building future leaders? Plenty! You've probably heard of The Golden Rule. You probably practice it: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The Golden Rule is an underlying principle in every major religion. It is part of what's considered ancient wisdom relative to building and maintaining healthy relationships. There's no doubt that if more people practiced this guidance, the world would be a very different--and better--place.

However, practicing The Golden Rule has a major disadvantage. Not everybody wants exactly what you want. In any group of individuals, you'll find a wide distribution of interests, career aspirations, and preferred ways of being treated.

Imagine this: you care so much about the people you influence that you find out what each person really wants--and you give him or her exactly that! Dr. Tony Alessandra and Dr. Michael J. O'Conner named that approach *The Platinum Rule*, which is the title of their 1996 book.

Here's the platinum rule: "Treat others the way they like to be treated." This is about the closest thing to providing outstanding service as you can get! If you're a frequent reader of my articles, you know that I'm a strong advocate of serving those under your authority.

Many leaders recognize the value in serving their customers. Many of those same leaders, however, fail to understand the value of serving their employees.

Here's my perspective on providing excellent service to your employees. Your customers are typically served not by you personally, but by individuals under your authority. If you want a great reputation for customer service, take care of those individuals who directly support your customers!

And the platinum rule applies at home, too. What do you lose by giving your husband or wife exactly what he or she desires? Perhaps you married many years ago. Every day, your spouse makes a decision to stay with you or to leave. Why not make that decision an easy one? If you treat your spouse with "platinum rule" commitment and devotion, your relationship will continue to strengthen as the years accumulate.

Ah, but how do you know what that other person wants? Believe it or not, it's as simple as asking.

The first time you ask, don't be surprised if the response is skepticism. After all, this behavior you're now exhibiting is rather rare! Also, it's very possible the other person won't be able to tell you what he or she wants. Aside from a waiter in a restaurant, how often does anyone ask you what you want?

Are you ready for an interesting paradox? It may seem that if you practice the platinum rule, you'll sacrifice and suffer as you work to satisfy the demands of others. And it may feel as if no one cares about you getting what you want.

Let's face it. We all know how to be selfish. "Looking out for number one" comes quite easily for most people. Some folks will try to take advantage of you, and you may have to establish some boundaries. But most folks will be grateful to you and will recognize your contribution to their lives.

If you are the one who characteristically seeks to understand others' needs and satisfy them, it won't be long until the people being served begin to notice. Further, you'll also quickly realize how blessed you are. As the days grow into weeks and the weeks expand to years, you'll appreciate that what you want is delivered to you routinely, in many different ways.

You'll receive much more satisfaction over your lifetime by practicing the platinum rule than if you had spent all that energy seeking to acquire things and opportunities for yourself. How does that happen? It's simply a paradox of relationships: the more you give, the more you receive in return!

Is there anything more important in your organization than healthy relationships among the members of your team? Can you name anything that is higher in priority in your family than the quality of your relationships?

"Do unto others what they would like to have done to them." If you have stories that confirm this approach, I would love to hear them. Please reach out to me and share your experiences.

And if you are doubtful, perhaps you'd be willing to set up an experiment. Contact me and let's work together to put this platinum principle to the test! I look forward to hearing from you.

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