

1:1 Golden Rule Conversation

Overview:

This is a self-directed, one-hour structured conversation between two people about what The Golden Rule means to them, how they have succeeded and fallen short of living by The Golden Rule in the past, and steps they might take to live by The Golden Rule in the future. It may be conducted over an online platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, FaceTime or Skype, via phone, or in person.

Before the Conversation:

1. Versions of The Golden Rule date back to Confucius and Aristotle, and can be found in all major religious traditions and numerous philosophies. Choose a variation of The Golden Rule that resonates with you [from this list](#).

If you do not have time to look at [the list](#), here are a few popular variations:

- “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.” Christianity: Matthew 7:12
- “Treat others the way they want to be treated.” Popularized by Tony Alessandra, this variation is also known as The Platinum Rule.
- “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” Buddhism: Udanavarga 5:18

2. Listen to this mandatory, 2 ½-minute [audio introduction](#) from Bill Doherty, 1:1 Conversations architect, about the conversation process. Note, however, that it's OK if people are not paired across differences for the 1:1 Golden Rule conversation.

3. Read this entire conversation guide in advance, and be able to display it in front of you during the conversation.

CONVERSATION (1 hour)

Part 1: Opening (8 minutes)

After taking time to make sure the online settings are working, or after both people are settled in for the in-person conversation, one of the participants reads the goals and then the other reads the ground rules.

Goals

- ✓ Bringing The Golden Rule front and center in the minds of you and your partner.
- ✓ More insight into what The Golden Rule means to you and how you have succeeded in living by The Golden Rule in the past, as well as identifying areas in your life where it's been difficult to practice.
- ✓ Coming up with steps you might take to practice The Golden Rule in these difficult areas from now on.

Ground Rules

1. Let us speak on the basis of our experience, and listen to each other for understanding with curiosity and respect. We're here to explain our views and listen to the views of the other person, not to give advice or convince the other person to change in some way.
2. We're going to stick to the process for each stage of the conversation.
Example: if the matter at hand is to discuss personal experiences of how we've successfully lived by The Golden Rule, that's all we do then, even if it means resisting the urge to tell your partner they are wrong or misguided about something.
3. We give each other permission to remind each other gently if we veer off from the process, as in "Right now, I think we're supposed to be doing..."

Are we both on board with these goals and ground rules, and ready to go?

Part 2: Getting to Know Each Other (8 minutes)

Question 1: Why did we each decide to participate in this conversation?

Each person takes 1 minute.

Afterwards, back and forth conversation, 2 minutes (here and elsewhere, feel free to use less time. Set a timer if you wish):

Did you see anything in common in why you are participating?

Suggestion: alternate who begins asking each question from here on.

Question 2: Share something about ourselves

Share something about yourself such as where you live, family, pets, plus a happy memory from when you were younger about an object that was "gold" or "golden."

(Up to 2 minutes each)

Part 3: Discussion of The Golden Rule *(40 minutes)*

Question 3: Tell your partner the version of The Golden Rule you chose Before the Conversation, and explain why it resonates with you.

What does living by The Golden Rule mean to you?

(Up to 2 minutes each)

Discuss an example of how you have succeeded in behaving according to The Golden Rule in the past. This would be an instance, large or small, when you did your best to live out the Golden Rule, knowing that we often fall short. It's OK to brag here. Provide some details, such as what internal or external obstacles you faced in applying the Golden Rule to the situation.

(Each goes in turn for up to 3 minutes. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth conversation (3 minutes total):

What did you learn about how you and the other person view The Golden Rule and successfully behaved according to The Golden Rule in the past? Do you see anything in common?

Question 4: In what areas of your life, or with what kinds of people, do you find it hardest to live by the Golden Rule? (Go deep on this one. Here are

some examples: certain relatives, co-workers, neighbors; people whose beliefs or values differ from yours; people of different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious or geographic backgrounds.)

(Each goes in turn for up to 4 minutes. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth for 4 minutes on this question:

What did you learn about yourself and about the other person regarding challenges in living by The Golden Rule, and do you see anything in common?

Question 5: How might you try to practice The Golden Rule in the areas of your life or with the kinds of people you have identified as difficult for you?

(2 minutes for each person. No cross talk.)

Afterwards, back and forth for 2 minutes on these questions:

What did you find helpful or inspiring about efforts your partner may undertake to live by The Golden Rule in the future?

Some partners find it useful to check in with each other at a later date to see how they're doing with efforts to live by the Golden Rule. Decide if you want to do this.

Question 6: Think about people who differ from you on a public policy or social issue that you feel strongly about, or people who support a political leader you strongly oppose. Now ask yourself how you would apply the Golden Rule to how you relate to these people.

(Up to 3 minutes for each person. No cross talk,)

Afterwards, back and forth for 3 minutes on your responses.

CHECK OUT

(4 minutes)

Question 7: What are we each taking with us from this conversation about The Golden Rule? *2 minutes for each person.*