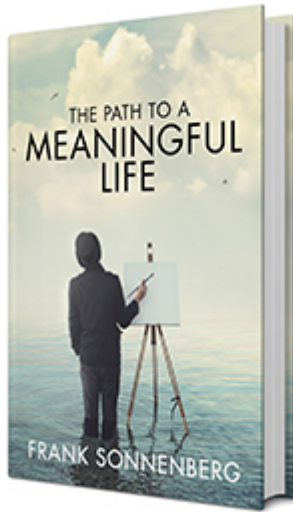


Living the Golden Rule

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Frank
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Everyone knows the Golden Rule. In fact, numerous religions espouse it, the most familiar version being, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The question is, if most people know, and agree, with the principle, why don’t more folks live by that standard? Do you abide by the Golden Rule?

When you do nothing, nothing happens.

If you truly want to live by this principle, the first place to start is to understand its *true* meaning and how to apply it effectively.

First, the Golden Rule should say, “Do unto others *as THEY want to be treated*” rather than “*how YOU want to be treated.*” Otherwise, you’re imposing *your* preferences and values unto others.

Second, be empathetic. Don’t *assume* you know what people need; you’re not a mind reader. Everyone is unique; treat people according to their *individual* needs and desires.

How to Live by the Golden Rule

There are many ways to incorporate the precepts of the Golden Rule into your daily life. Here are 30 examples:

See the good in people. Make people feel special.

Be the first to give. Give for the right reason – and that is, give for no reason at all.

Play by the rules. Don't cut in line. Wait your turn.

Listen to others. Communicate. Don't just take turns talking.

Be unbiased. Never judge someone you don't know.

Keep an open mind. Search for the truth by listening to opposing arguments and letting others challenge your views and opinions.

Give people a chance. As you climb the ladder of success, reach down and pull others along with you.

Make every collaboration win-win. Never win at the expense of a relationship.

Be selfless. Put others' needs ahead of your own.

Tell it like it is. Don't say anything behind someone's back that you wouldn't say to their face.

Stop criticizing. Constructive feedback is helpful; criticism is hurtful and damaging.

Set the bar high. Be tough but fair. Don't demand things of others that you're unwilling to do yourself.

Work hard. Pull your weight rather than weigh down the team.

Have a heart. Stand up for those who are less fortunate.

Be tolerant. Don't force your views on others. You can't expect others to abandon their values any more than you would forsake your own.

Give with an open hand. Give with no strings attached.

Be available. Be a good friend in good times and bad.

Be informed. Listen to both sides of a debate before forming your opinion.

Build trusting relationships. Earn respect rather than demanding it.

Be compassionate. Help people get back on their feet. But don't make them dependent on your good graces.

Be even-handed. Consider whether fairness would still apply if the tables were turned.

Forgive and forget. Let it go. Seeking retaliation rather than forgiveness traps you in the anger.

Share the credit. Deflect recognition rather than hoarding it.

Hold out hope. Lend an ear or a shoulder to cry on.

Accept "no" for an answer. Respect people's priorities rather than making everything about you.

Be willing to sacrifice. Raise your own hand rather than volunteering others.

Offer your unconditional love. Accept people for who they are, *not* for who you want them to be.

Earn your keep. You *don't* get what you want; you get what you deserve.

Give up control. Put your faith in people rather than micromanaging them.

Be grateful. Show your appreciation and never take anything for granted.

The Golden Rule – Make It a Reality

The only thing required to live the Golden Rule is the will and desire to shift your focus from yourself to others –

selfish to selfless. In doing so, it's not only beneficial to others, it'll benefit you in ways you'd never imagine. But a good intention is like an idea that you keep to yourself. If you don't do something with it, it's like it never existed.

The Golden Rule is not just a nicety; it's a way of life.

Make the effort today, and then again tomorrow. As Edwin Markham, the American poet, said, "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life." The fact is, success is a game of inches. When you do something well day in, and day out, the cumulative impact is huge. Before you know it, you're living the Golden Rule.

Excerpted from *The Path to a Meaningful Life* by Frank Sonnenberg.



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Additionally, his blog – FrankSonnenbergOnline – has attracted millions of readers on the Internet. It was recently named one of the “Top Self-Improvement and Personal Development Blogs” in the world, and it continues to be named among the “Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs,” the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs,” and the “Best Inspirational Blogs On the Planet.”

Move Beyond Stereotypes (Grades 6-12)



Overview:

This lesson explores the stories of real people to help students learn how to move beyond stereotypes. They'll learn how accepting others' authentic and unique selves demonstrates respect and fairness.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- how sharing our individual stories with the world helps break down unfair stereotypes.
- explore Human Library stories.
- reflect on their experiences with the Human Library story.

Materials:

- Videos from Aumen Film Co. (2017) *The Human Library Trailer*.
Youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vJgyRJ-zo>

Opening Discussion:

- “Stereotypes lose their power when the world is found to be more complex than the stereotype would suggest. When we learn that individuals do not fit the group stereotype, then it begins to fall apart.” – Ed Koch
 - Ask students what this quote means to them?
- Share some stereotypes (teens, elderly, rich, poor). Then, ask about a stereotype students have (or used to have) about a group or individual.

Instruction and Activity:

- Teach students about Human Library projects. It is a collection of real-life human stories you can “check out.” These stories aim to break stereotypes. In addition, they help people embrace fairness and togetherness through our differences.
 - Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vJgyRJ-z0>
- Ask students to explore the Human Library to learn more about others. Most importantly, suggest choosing individuals whom they may normally stereotype.
 - <https://humanlibrary.org/meet-our-human-books/>

Discussion:

- Why did you select that particular human library book?
- What did you learn about someone else today?
 - Why did learning about someone’s story impact any stereotypes you have or had?
 - How does getting to know someone else’s story make you a more connected citizen?
 - Describe how hearing someone else’s journey impacts your own story.

Reflection:

- What did you learn about yourself today?

- How did what you learn today help you move beyond stereotypes?
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Social-Emotional Learning Funded by ESSER



Social-Emotional Learning and Character Education can be funded by ESSER! An intentional focus on social-emotional learning and character skills has never been more important. Fortunately, the **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund (I and II)** provides funding for COVID-19 relief projects. This can include professional development, curricular resources, assessment, and support services for students' social-emotional needs.

Professional Development

Our professional development workshops:

- teach strategies on creating a positive school culture,
- provide best practices on how to teach, enforce, advocate, and model social-emotional skills,
- and help educators create a plan to provide sustainable SEL services.

Curricular Resources

We have a variety of curricular resources to help you intentionally and consistently focus on character and SEL skills. Additionally, you can buy many of our digital materials as a perpetual license. Your school can use ESSER money on a one-time purchase that you can utilize long after ESSER funding runs out.

Assessments

Schools use culture and climate assessments to identify parts of their culture that may need attention. When taken annually, these surveys can illustrate how your social-emotional interventions are positively impacting school culture. Importantly, since you can use ESSER funds through September 2023, schools can gather two years of valuable data.

Get Started

We're dedicated to helping educators intentionally and consistently teach these important skills. For more information on using ESSER funds for CHARACTER COUNTS!, please contact Jason Lamping at Jason.lamping@drake.edu.

More information about ESSER:

- U.S. Department of Education Makes Available \$36 Billion

in American Rescue Plan Funds to Support Students and Institutions

Support for afterschool and summer programs:

- Afterschool Alliance: COVID-19

Funding by state:

- Department of Education Announces American Rescue Plan Funds

Achieve and Avoid



Good communication requires us to respect each other. A tip for respectful conversations is to consider:

- what we want to achieve.
- what we to avoid.

Achieve and Avoid

It is easy to focus too much on what we want to achieve in our conversations. For example, “I want to convince this person that I am right” or “I want to make this person realize that they are not considering all of the facts.” But, we should be putting the same focus on what we want to avoid during the conversation. We want to avoid insulting the other person, or even worse, ruining a relationship from a conversation gone wrong.

Before a conversation, if we think about what we want to achieve, we could want to:

- express our own opinion.
- give examples of our perspective.

We want to avoid:

- insulting the other person.
- making someone else feel insignificant or disrespected.

Approaching with Respect and Tolerance

It is important to remember that showing someone respect doesn't mean you are endorsing their beliefs. We don't have to agree with another person to give them respect and accept that their beliefs are valid to them.

Therefore, if we genuinely want to engage with someone who has different opinions, we need to approach them with respect and acceptance. A quick look at social media can show us that sometimes differences in opinion bring out criticism of people who think differently than we do. Criticism and judgment in those moments are precisely what we wanted to avoid. It will cause others to shut down communication and entrench them more deeply into their ideas and beliefs.

Your Next Conversation

Of course, we don't always prepare for each conversation and

think through what we want to achieve and what we want to avoid. But, if we practice being aware of what we want to achieve and avoid, we'll get better at having respectful conversations that both people feel good about.

Connection, Character, and Role Models



In our CHARACTER COUNTS! workshops, we discuss how being a positive role model is a key part of teaching good character. Think about a role model who made an impact on your life. Then, consider how that person was able to make such a positive impact on you. The answer we hear often is that the people who impact us take the time to learn about and connect with us. Connection is an important element of being a good role model and making a positive impact on others. Connection helps others trust us and believe in our integrity.

We hear amazing stories about people who make a positive impact because they connected with others and built trusting relationships. We learn about coaches who taught athletes how to overcome adversity in their lives, mentors who guided important, life-altering decisions, and teachers who inspired their students to become educators themselves.

Meaningful, sustainable connections aren't just the key to building relationships. Connecting with others also builds a positive culture, whether it be at home, work, school, or another organization. An easy first step in building connections is asking questions. Be curious and engaged about the other person. Look for commonalities and express interest in your differences.

How can you make a positive impact on others? Get started by asking yourself these three questions:

1. Who made a positive impact on your life? In addition, how did that person make a difference in your life?
2. Who could you positively impact by making a deeper connection with them?
3. How can you make a deeper connection with those individuals?

Achieving Civility Through our Mindset



“I’m not allowed to get angry?” That’s a question that is raised in nearly every civility workshop we lead. Participants want to know how to have a mindset focused on civility when they’re feeling angry or frustrated. Our answer to that question is, “Of course you’re allowed to be angry. But, choose a mindset that helps you deal with the problem with civility.” It is our ability to understand the roles of emotions and mindsets that can help us maintain civility through everyday challenges.

While our emotions influence our mindsets, you can choose different mindsets for the same emotion. For example, if I’m feeling angry that my flight got canceled, I can choose a mindset that says, “This is the worst day ever! Why does this always happen to me? Nothing ever goes right.” Or, I can have a mindset that says, “I’ll get through this. There is a solution here. I can get this fixed.” The emotion is the same in both scenarios, but the mindset changes. When we lose someone close to us, we can feel that sadness for the rest of our life, but our mindsets may change and evolve over time. We

can be devastatingly heartbroken over someone's passing (emotion) and think about how grateful we are for the memories we have (mindset) at the same time.

Choosing your mindset, no matter your emotional state is an incredibly powerful tool because our mindset impacts our response. A negative mindset makes it less likely that we will choose the best possible response.

Our response to any situation is always entirely within our control. No matter how angry or frustrated we get, we can choose any number of responses – from violence, shaming, and name-calling to asking questions, seeking connection, and working to understand the other person. It is the same emotion, but different mindsets produce different responses.

The next time you are struggling to choose the right response in an emotional moment hit pause and ask yourself three questions:

1. What emotion am I feeling right now and why am I feeling it? Acknowledge the emotion. Acknowledge the reason for that emotion. Feel what you feel.
2. What outcome do I hope to achieve in this situation? You can't fix everything, but what outcome is within your influence?
3. What mindset and response give me the best chance to achieve that outcome?

By Jeff Kluever, Director of Programs

Digital Citizenship (Grades

6-12)



My teacher is so rude. I only got suspended because she does not have a sense of humor.

4:17 PM. Aug 14, 2019 [Twitter for Adroid](#)

18k Retweets 5000 Likes



Overview:

Teaching students to think about their digital citizenship through the lens of integrity is important in this digital world. This lesson will give students an opportunity to discuss ways to engage an active conscience to model integrity as digital citizens.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- explore their digital footprint.
- discuss why it is important to protect your identity and reputation online and offline.
- utilize Rules of an Active Conscience to determine what to post on social media.

Materials:

- Rules of an Active Conscience tool
- Social Media: To Post or Not To Post handout

Lesson:

Journal: (5 mins)

- Google yourself.
- Write down what you noticed about your digital footprint.

Whole Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Share what you noticed about your digital footprint.
- Why is it so important to be a good digital citizen in today's world?
- Share headlines of digital footprints impacting citizens:
 - Harvard rescinded 10 offers of enrollment for students who posted explicit and racist pictures on social media.
 - Woman tweeted a racist post about her trip to Africa when she boarded the plane. She was fired by her boss before the plane landed.
 - Students photoshopped an unflattering picture of a teacher and posted it on the Internet. The students involved were suspended, legal charges were filed, and the students faced five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.
 - A woman posted a picture of herself dressed like a Boston Marathon Bombing victim to Instagram for Halloween. She was fired because of the insensitive nature of the post.
 - Students posted a meme making light of gun violence at school and they were arrested. Students who liked the post were suspended.
- What you share on social media matters. It can impact you today and in your future plans and career. Your digital footprint exists and can be used against you when you least expect it. Something you find funny or impulsively post can get you fired, arrested, or fined.

- Discuss in small groups how the Rules of An Active Conscience can help you decide what to post on social media.

Small Group Discussion (15 mins)

- Read each Social media post on the To Post or Not To Post Handout and determine which of the Rules of Active Conscience it breaks.
- Share your findings with the teacher.

Exit Ticket:

- Generate a social media post that meets the Rules of Active Conscience.
 - Use the following site to create a fake account post: <https://zeoob.com/> if students do not have one they can use.
-

Teamwork Skills (Grades K-5)



Overview:

An important part of building your teamwork skills is to be reflective. When you have successes or failures, always make time to reflect on what you did well and what you could do better or differently as a team. Thinking about the skills you need to build as a team will help strengthen your team and give individuals opportunities to grow their own teamwork skills.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- work as a team to complete a task.
- reflect on the performance of their team.
- practice adapting and modifying a plan for success as a team.

Materials:

- Rope or yarn in a large circle tied together (large enough for all students to be able to stand and hold a piece of it)

- Bandanas or fabric
- Large open space

Lesson:

Large Group

1. Place the rope/yarn in a circle on the ground and have students find a spot around it. Have students place their blindfolds on themselves and then pick up their piece of the yarn.
2. Students will now need to work together to turn this circle into a square. They can do anything to make the square except take off their blindfolds.
3. Give the students five minutes to complete the task. When five minutes is up, ask students to drop the rope/yarn and step back to see how close they were to making a square.
4. Ask students to reflect on the activity with a “Praise and Polish” conversation. Instruct students to think about this reflection through the lens of teamwork.
5. First, talk about things they did well as a team. Guide the conversation by asking questions about their communication and collaboration. Then, ask students to reflect on what they could better or differently next time. This conversation may need assistance, as they may start talking strategy. Keep them on track by encouraging them to make a plan around how they will work as a team.
6. Put the rope/yarn back in the circle on the ground. Have the students find a space and put their blindfolds on.
7. Students will have the same instructions as the first time, but this time encourage them to think about their praise and polish as they work together.
8. Give the students five minutes to complete the task. When five minutes is up, ask students to drop the rope/yarn and step back to see how close they were to making a square.

Journal/Discussion

Encourage students to journal or discuss the following prompts:

1. Was there a difference between the first time and the second time you made the square? What were some of those differences?
 2. Think about the things your team chose as things they could do better or differently for the second time. Did those changes help you be successful?
 3. Praise and polish your team's second attempt at the square.
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Achieve Through Character

Although our society puts a lot of emphasis on talent, talent is just the minimum that we can achieve. In order to advance from talent to skill and then to achievement, we rely on our character skills like strong work ethic, leadership, perseverance, integrity, etc.

Respect Yourself (Grades 6-12)

Respecting yourself and thinking positively about your body, mind, skills, and situation is important to build happiness in your heart. This lesson will focus on ways to show respect to yourself, others, and your surroundings by being grateful for

who you are and what you have.