

The Fallacy of the Old Golden Rule By: Terry Siebert, Dale Carnegie Training

I recently had the opportunity to do a workshop with a group of small business owners and managers on motivating their people. The environment was very interactive and everyone got involved in the programmed activities in the first half of the meeting. Then at break time, a department manager in a mid-sized service company came up to me with the following comment: *"You know, it's really kind of interesting. I came here today to learn how to get my people to do things differently. Based on what we have done so far, it sounds like I have to change my own attitude first."*

Frank Sinatra (My Way) Management

As we discussed his specific situation further, his goal as a manager was to get his people to do the things he wanted them to do in the specific way that he wanted them to do them - "MY WAY." Many people in a leadership role would probably agree with this approach to directing people.

For decades consultants, academics and authors have also been moving forward the issue of, "How to motivate individuals and teams to work, produce and change together." All the early technology focused on command and control techniques (military/"MY WAY" model) and many companies are still using it. There is a newer model that evolved in the last several years and it is increasingly being used and accepted. It involves a flatter organization, control being pushed down to the people doing the jobs; while creating productive, more energized teams. These organizations continually improve their processes.

As we move forward in today's hyper-competitive and turbulent world, even more skill will be needed to take progressive and leaner teams to the next level. More than skill or technique, what is really critical is the right perspective and right attitude. So, what's needed?

The New Golden Rule

Most people have learned the Golden Rule during their youth: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." These same people who move into leadership roles, with all the best intentions, continue to practice the Golden Rule and continue to get frustrated when this idea does not get the results they want. The comment we frequently hear is: "My people are just not motivated."

The irony of the Golden Rule has everything to do with poor perspective. Rather than "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," what the "others" are really interested in is: ***"Do unto others as they would like done unto themselves."*** (Grammar could be better, yet the idea is critical).

In other words, rather than "my way," the strong suggestion is to look at things from the other person's point of view and determine the best way to present an idea. This perspective change requires listening at a fundamentally deeper level than most people are used to.

Listening To vs. Listening For

The new habit that is required to get into this frame of mind is to truly ***listen to people***. The tough habit to break is to stop listening for what we want to hear so we can respond.

The ultimate result is that we will be able to communicate in terms that are important to the other person. We should be able to say: "I understand you." Only when this step is taken can true communication start. And it is only with true communication that we can ever hope to create an atmosphere where people feel self-motivated.

Many years ago Dale Carnegie suggested that there was "only one way under high heaven to get anybody to do anything...and that is by making the other person want to do it." Until the other person, your direct reports, your team members, or even your children have the "want to do it," any sense of motivation will be forced. So if you, in your leadership role, would like to have a more self-motivated team, listen to your people and talk in terms of their interests, using the NEW GOLDEN RULE.

Terry Siebert, a Dale Carnegie Training Consultant, will be presenting two breakout sessions at the ABC of WI 2012 Winter Convention in the Dells on Thursday, February 9. See his website at <http://swwis.dalecarnegie.com>.