

Relationship Rounding Helps Leaders Practice the Platinum Rule

Description

Most of us grew up hearing about the Golden Rule, which is basically about treating others how you want to be treated. The Golden Rule is an incredibly powerful spiritual law. In fact, some version of it is found in every major belief system, from Judaism to Christianity to Islam to Buddhism and more.

I love the Golden Rule and try to follow it, in spirit, in many areas of my own life. (Of course, as a flawed human being, Iâ??m not always successful.) Yet there are times when doggedly following the Golden Rule can steer us wrong as leadersâ??even if we have the purest of intentions.

Instead, we need to temper the Golden Rule with the Platinum Rule. Iâ??m actually not sure who first came up with the Platinum Rule. Iâ??ve seen it attributed to Milton Bennett and to Dave Kerpen. It seems the concept was popularized by Dr. Tony Alessandra and Dr. Michael J. Oâ??Connorâ??s book *The Platinum Rule.*

Essentially, the Platinum Rule says: â??Do unto others as THEY would want done to THEM.â?•

The Platinum Rule is a reminder that everyone has different preferences and workstyles. Here is a simple example: Letâ??s say I love to speak up in groups and spontaneously share my thoughts. If I assume everyone is like me, I might ask Maryâ??s opinion on a new idea that comes up in a meeting. But letâ??s say Mary is an introvert and needs time to process ideas before sharing. If I know that about Mary, I wonâ??t put her on the spot. Iâ??ll know she needs time to think before she gives me an answerâ??possibly in writing.

Attitudes toward work and workplace preferences have undergone a monumental shift. You have to be in tune with the things that people actually want and not make assumptions. This is essential when it comes to attracting and retaining talent.

This is why Iâ??m such a huge fan of Relationship Roundingâ?¢. This practice, in which you hold regular, one-on-one conversations with employees to see what would make their lives better and see how theyâ??re doing mentally and emotionally, gives us a chance to get to know them as individuals. It helps us find out how they like to work and discover what matters most *to them.*

Relationship Rounding gives us a chance to ask questions like:

- â??Does how and where you work fit your life? Would you benefit from a different arrangement, and, if so, what would that look like?â?•
- â??If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?â?•
- â??Do you like working on several projects concurrently?â?• (Some people are energized by this approach while others feel overwhelmed and would much rather complete one assignment before receiving a second one.)
- â??What would a â??perfectâ?? workday look like for you?â?•
- â??How do you like to be rewarded and recognized?â?•
- â??What communication method do you prefer? Phone? Text? Email?â?•

These are just sample questions (leaders can modify them any way they want and add others), but you get the idea. The point is to get focused on and intentional about how your employees *want* to be treated, rather than assuming because you like to do things a certain way, they do too.

I suggest putting a Relationship Rounding practice in place right away. The sooner you get to know employees as individuals, the better. If someone makes a request, follow up with action *if at all possible.* (Asking what they want and not providing it is worse than not asking at all.) If you canâ??t meet a request, explain why and ask, â??What else could we do that would help?â?•

A few more tips to help you practice the Platinum Rule:

Invest in a personality assessment. In my book *The Calling: Why Healthcare Is So Special*, I wrote about the benefits of having people take assessments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Management by Strengths. These tests are incredibly valuable at helping leaders understand and appreciate differences in people so they can better communicate with and motivate them. (Theyâ??re not a substitute for rounding, but more of a supplement.)

Besides providing a deeper understanding of the preferences of different â??typesâ?• of people, these tests will help you build stronger teams. When you know how each employee likes to work and whom they are most likely to collaborate with, you become more effective as an organization.

Be as flexible as possible around when and where people work. If employees tell you they prefer working from home and their job allows, let them. Even if you end up having to make it a hybrid arrangement (part home and part on-site), theyâ??ll appreciate your accommodating them. With jobs where people need to be on-site (direct care providers, for example), again, do the best you can to schedule according to their needs. You may need to get creative.

Donâ??t make assumptions about how many hours people may want to work or which shifts are more desirable. Ask. You may find that people have childcare or elder care responsibilities that require unusual arrangements. Not only can you likely help them find a solution that works for everyone, youâ??ll get the win for being understanding and empathetic.

Make sure people feel okay about asking for what they need. In other words, do everything you can to create a psychologically safe workplace. Leaders need to be approachable enough that employees are willing to come to them with requests. Iâ??ve heard of instances where people quit their job because they assumed their leader wouldnâ??t be willing to work with them when they needed some

time off or a different arrangement. When leaders are caring and accessible, people are more willing to speak up and ask for what they need. Most important, if theyâ??re struggling or in trouble, they wonâ??t be afraid to tell you.

Thereâ??s a new kind of workplace comingâ??one where employee engagement and well-being are the center of everything. The companies that recognize and act on this truth are the ones that will win the war for talent, retain employees, and thrive in the future. Making every effort to live by the Platinum Rule is a cornerstone practice that will help you move in that direction.

Date Created
March 14, 2022
Author
quint-studer