

The Golden Rule Dictates Your Sex Life

by Marc H. Rudov

Haven't you always found that "The Golden Rule" dictates the dynamics in your bedroom? No, I am not alluding to the law of human reciprocity that derives from Rabbi Hillel's quote in the Talmud: *"That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor."* Despite what you might be thinking right now, this is not an article about the importance of satisfying her in bed to receive the same treatment in return—even though I live by that axiom.

You see, there is an issue at play between the sexes of far greater significance than the obvious "what's good for the goose is good for the gander." I am talking about the *other* golden rule, "The Golden Rule of the Business World": *Whoever has the gold makes the rules.* What does this have to do with relationships and the bedroom? Everything.

The foundation and dynamics of almost every relationship are established with the first e-mail or telephone chat and then solidify according to the structure of the first date. Most men and women still believe that, in the mating ritual, the man should unilaterally pursue the woman. The man calls the woman. The man arranges the date. The man picks up the woman to drive her to the date. The man pays for the date. The man initiates the goodnight kiss. The man returns the woman to her home. The man calls the next day to thank her for allowing him the privilege of spending his money on her. Then, the man calls a few days hence to determine whether this woman is available again for another opportunity to entertain her. Yes, in 2004, when women are doctors, lawyers, CEOs, mayors, and governors, the majority of romancers still play this obsolete, disempowering game.

Why is that? In a word: socialization. Men have been taught, socialized, and conditioned to believe that they are supposed to play offense. And, the chase makes them feel in control, powerful, and able to choose the best babes this planet has to offer. Women, on the other hand, are taught to play defense, imbued with control and power they can wield to decide if, when, where, and whether. This football-like ritual made sense when women could not vote, get credit, own property, or be president of Brown University or CEO of Xerox. But, it sure as hell doesn't make sense today. The beauty of a football metaphor is that it perfectly illustrates the

negative consequences of the *unilateral* pursuit. If this mating ritual is so counterproductive, then, why do people continue engaging in it?

In the past week, I spoke with two women, highly accomplished and educated women, who told me they both love and insist on men pursuing them. Their explanations were similar, representative of nonsense I've heard many times before, and in this vein: the chase makes them feel special and desirable. If they lower themselves to approaching and chasing men, they will lose all vestiges of their prized femininity. They will feel desperate and unattractive. They will no longer be the apples high in the tree, just beyond reach, where only skilled ladder-climbers can hope to get them. Instead, they will become as common as the ones at eye level or, worse, those that have fallen to the ground, easy to scoop up and place in the basket. Moreover, how will they explain to their mothers and girlfriends that they have stepped off their proverbial pedestals? One can only imagine.

Here is why unilateral pursuit is a horrible practice for both the pursuers and the pursued. Unilateral pursuit makes a man assume the role of aggressor and bounty-seeker. Consequently, the woman places herself in the role of target, prize, conquest, and acquired asset. Because the man in this scenario has to bankroll and drive the courting ritual, he, by definition, is the one with the gold. He, therefore, will and should set the rules. That's life: there's no such thing as a free lunch.

It follows, therefore, that the pursued woman, wittingly or unwittingly, is setting herself up to become the man's property, his acquired asset. Returning to our football metaphor, she is, in effect, making herself the end zone and him the running back exerting great skill and strength to score the touchdown. We've all witnessed the touchdown ego dance, right? That's how a man feels when he scores with a girl who has required him to endure many yards and impediments to reach his goal: her. Now, I ask you: Is there anything about this scenario that sets the stage for a peer relationship of mutual respect and admiration? Hardly. In fact, it has the opposite effect.

Let me illustrate this point further with a memorable example of our Golden Rule. During the primaries of the 1980 presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan was scheduled to be in a debate in Nashua, New Hampshire. His main rival was George H.W. Bush, and the other contestants were Bob Dole, Howard Baker, John Anderson, and Phil Crane. Originally, the *Nashua Telegraph* had sponsored the debate, allowing only Reagan and Bush to participate. Dole then complained to the

Federal Elections Commission (FEC) that the newspaper was illegally endorsing two candidates. The FEC agreed. So, Reagan paid for the entire debate himself, allowing all to participate. On debate night, however, only two chairs and two microphones were available at the debate table. George Bush refused to participate with the other four, sat in his chair, and wouldn't speak. The remaining four guys stood there behind Reagan, embarrassed. As Reagan began to explain the awkward situation to the crowd, an editor of the Nashua newspaper shouted to the soundman, "*Turn Mr. Reagan's microphone off.*" At this point, Reagan became enraged, grabbed the microphone before the power was cut, and shouted: "*I am paying for this microphone, Mr. Breen!*"

Ronald Reagan's bold act elicited a standing ovation from the audience and clinched the debate, primary, and nomination for him in one fell swoop. People saw him as a man of strength and principle. But, it also demonstrated a fundamental human phenomenon that women ought to remember: When a person is paying for something, he feels ownership and will fight for the rights of that ownership. So, when you make a man buy you—by forcing him to pursue, court, wine, dine, and vacation you—he will feel ownership of you and act accordingly. He may smile and pretend that nothing is wrong, assuming he will close the deal on his new possession at the night's end, while secretly resenting the whole charade. Quite simply: If you don't want to be a possession, don't act like one.

In my recent article, "Five Myths About Women," the first stupid myth I shattered, one we've all grown up with, is that women do not like or need sex as much as men do. This, of course, is nonsense. But, for the naïve believers, this myth powerfully drives a lot of male and female behavior and is, therefore, a key factor in unilateral pursuit. Namely, it makes men think they have to crawl through broken glass to have sex with women, and it allows women to manipulate men into spending money and jumping through ridiculous hoops to get the sex. So, after the two finally have sex, which he has paid for, do you think the guy is really going to adore and respect her? I wish you could hear me laughing. Based on conversations with my buddies at the gym, on the golf course, on the tennis courts, and in front of the TV watching football games: No!

When is it a relationship? Many women have told me that they believe a relationship begins when *they* say it begins. How magnanimous! These, of course, are not women I date. What typically happens in a "dance" based on unilateral pursuit is that, at some juncture, the woman decides she wants it officially to

become a relationship. Then, and only then, will she open her piggy bank for the lucky man. Sorry, girls. That's too late. The die is already cast, the dynamic already established. You are the taker, the passive party, the entertained one. You are the old-fashioned girl, not the modern woman. And, not only doesn't he respect you as a peer, he's not feeling too good about himself, either.

Finally, I want to address the final nail in the coffin resulting from unilateral pursuit: predictable and avoidable incompatibility. In addition to the dysfunctional owner/possession dynamic of unilateral pursuit, we find another factor that guarantees relationship distress and failure. It's so clear that many are blind to it. The woman who demands that a man pursue her ultimately winds up with the guy who makes the greatest effort, not the one who is compatible with her. Many pursuit-oriented women have admitted to me that they frequently date guys they don't really like because the guys wear them down with persistence. Duh! Wake up, girls, you asked for it. And, let's not exclude the extreme case where the ultrawealthy guy unabashedly flashes his cash, cars, homes, and Learjet to outright buy the girl, and she willingly enters the gates of the "golden prison." You see, whatever system you use will work. If it is unfair and unbalanced, both of you will lose. But, if it is fair and balanced, both of you will win. This is not rocket science; it is common sense.

Conclusion & Solutions

I think it safe to say that, if you engage in a game of unilateral pursuit, you do so at your own peril, frustration, and failure. This tired, anachronistic game is equally bad for men and women. It is irrelevant to modern times. It is demeaning to both parties and establishes an antagonistic, unbalanced power structure. If you are smart, you will discard any attempts to initiate or participate in this dysfunctional game of unilateral pursuit. Remember: "The Golden Rule of Business" rules supreme.

At the end of the day, the only equitable solution is *mutual* pursuit. Men and women should pursue each other equally, mutually, and simultaneously. Neither party should stand on ceremony.

Ladies, stop basing your ego and femininity on being the pursued party. Recognize that, to get what you want in life, you must go after it, not sit there hoping it will come to you. Pick up the damned phone to call him—to arrange a date, to chat before a date, to follow up after a date. And, by all means, *pay* for the

date. Do *not* allow him to forbid you to pay; he is *not* your father or your boss. If he can't handle that, find another guy who can. Don't cave. This does not mean you should become a freight train. Sweetness and thoughtfulness still reign, but be firm. Finally, do *not* use the tired argument that you don't make as much money as he does. Take him where your budget permits. If you can afford to go clubbing with your girlfriends, you can afford to take him on a date. If you can afford to take your kids to the movies, you can take him on a date. And, regardless of how much money he makes, he *will* appreciate your treat. *Everyone* likes to be treated.

Guys, stop chasing women like hunted dogs! It's emasculating to you, insulting to them, and it establishes a power imbalance that brings you both nothing but headaches. Are you not worthy of pursuit? If she won't pursue you, too, disregard her. Why should you do all the heavy lifting? Moreover, if you can't handle a modern woman who is ready, willing, and able to treat and have a peer relationship with you, get your head fixed and your balls realigned. Manhood is not about protecting, providing for, and rescuing.

In summary, if men and women want to have successful, healthy relationships in which they can trust, respect, and count on each other as peers, they must begin them with *mutual* pursuit. You go after her, *and* she comes after you. Both of you contribute the gold, and both of you are entitled to make the rules. This peer-based "mutual-pursuit dynamic" favors neither party and is a solid base from which to grow.

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