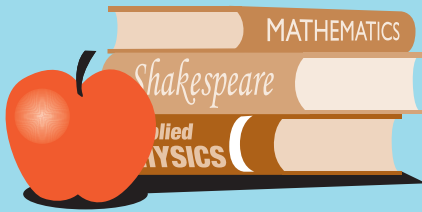


“It takes a real storm in a person’s life to make him realise how much worrying he has done over the squalls.”

Unknown.



LIFE LESSONS

THE GOLDEN RULE

Everyone is entitled to have their own beliefs, ideas, and opinions... and that includes the subject of religion.

But no matter which way you view the world, there is one universal truth that rings true: “Do unto others as you would have done to you”.

- **Buddhism:** “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”
- **Christianity:** “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”
- **Confucianism:** “Surely, it is the maxim of loving kindness: Do not to others what you would not have them do unto you.”
- **Hinduism:** “This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others that which would cause you pain if done to you.”
- **Islam:** “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.”
- **Judaism:** “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”
- **Taoism:** “Regard your neighbour’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbour’s loss as your own loss.”
- **Zoroastrianism:** “That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself.”

Source: Healthy Bites newsletter (adapted).

Border Conflict

Whether the problem is trees, fences, yapping dogs, or smelly smoke, you can remain on good terms with your neighbour if you handle any conflict with care.

Fifty years ago we didn’t live as close to our neighbours as we do now, yet today we’re far less likely to know them well. And that’s part of the problem with neighbour disputes. When conflict develops between people who don’t know each other well, it’s less likely that the dispute will be handled constructively. After all, with no relationship to lose, there isn’t as much incentive to stay harmonious.

But whether or not you are friends, it can be extremely stressful living next door to someone after you have had a dispute, particularly if the legal system was involved. So approach any conflict carefully, with the following tips.

- **Always talk to your neighbours first if you have a grievance.** They may not realise that their loud music or overhanging trees are causing you grief, and the problem may be easily resolved.

Whatever the issue, remember to attack the problem, not the person. Yelling or getting angry won’t be helpful; be pleasant and open-minded, using phrases like “How might you suggest we approach this?” Even if the response is negative, avoid getting upset in front of your neighbour, and end the conversation by leaving open the possibility of a positive solution.

- **Keep a written record.** Note the dates and times of any repetitive problem such as a barking dog or late-night noise.



This will help you discuss the issue later with your neighbour, or will be useful if legal action becomes necessary.

- **Learn about your legal rights.** Your local council should be able to help if you have a dispute involving trees, fences, or noise for instance, by informing you of any restrictions or laws relevant to that issue. Anti-pollution laws regulate domestic noise, for example, by prohibiting the use of specific noisy items during particular hours.
- **Consider mediation.** This is a less formal and cheaper option than going to court, as well as being less likely to worsen the relationship between the warring parties. It involves a neutral third party helping to sort out the problem in a calm and reasonable atmosphere. You can involve a specialist lawyer, or can opt to use a mediator via a government-funded dispute resolution service.

Main sources: Choice Money & Rights magazine; Money magazine; and Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide Central Community Legal Service.

90-Minute Cool Down

When working with people for a large part of the day, it’s natural that from time to time someone will make you angry. Rather than immediately saying something you may later regret, wait at least 90 minutes before responding, and you’ll benefit in the following ways:

- You’ll have time to gather facts and formulate your response. By taking a step back, you’ll be able to put the situation into perspective.

It takes most people at least 90 minutes to recover from major feelings of anger. Even if you’re not off the anger scale, give yourself enough time to calm down and get your emotions in check.

During those hostile times when you must immediately respond, speak only as much as is necessary, and avoid being sarcastic, judgmental, or rude.

Source: Communication Briefings newsletter.

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