

Dear friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center,

Last month I was trained over a three-day period on an assessment tool called PsychoGeometrics.

PsychoGeometrics is a communication system and behavioral science framework developed by Dr. Susan Dellinger in 1978. It uses five geometric shapes to identify personality traits and communication styles, helping individuals understand how they relate to others in both professional and personal settings.

The training involves the *Shapes Assessment*, a 15-minute online test that identifies your primary and secondary shapes, revealing your natural strengths and communication challenges; *Shape Flexing*, the skill of intentionally adapting your behavior to another person's shape style to improve communication and reduce conflict; and *Strategic Shaping*, a methodology for choosing the right "shape order" of communication—what to say and how to say it—to be more effective in leadership, or coaching.

I became familiar with Psychogeometrics through my Army experience, and I already know it will have a positive influence in my congregational work as well as my personal life.

While a big part of the training was technical, I learned a wonderful insight, which I would like to share with you. It involves the difference between *the Golden Rule* and what the developers of Psychogeometrics call the Platinum Rule.

All of you are familiar with the Golden Rule: treat others the way you wish to be treated. We could agree that if the entire world embraced the Golden Rule, we would all be in a better place.

So, what is the Platinum Rule?

The *Platinum Rule* brings a minor, but very meaningful twist to the Golden Rule. It states: *treat others the way they wish to be treated*.

You see, people are different, want different things, have different styles of communication, and get excited, and upset, by different things.

I, for example, enjoy cigars and playing golf. Now, it would be a big mistake if, for our wedding anniversary, I were to give Silvia a box of cigars and a round of golf at a fancy course, just because this is how I wish to be treated. In order to treat Silvia the way she likes to be treated, for example, I need to learn what she likes, what she enjoys, what she prefers (believe me, I am working on it).

You like to hug and kiss people? That's wonderful. Just remember that not everyone is a hugger or a kisser, so before you show your affection to others, it might be a

good idea to apply the Platinum Rule. You enjoy loud music? That is great! Just know that not everyone does.

These are just a couple of examples, and hopefully you get the idea.

If you live your life by the Golden Rule, you are better off than 73.8% of humanity (I just invented that statistic). Now you may want to challenge yourself by incorporating the *Platinum Rule* to your life. Of course, it will take some effort and adjustment, and the obvious realization that, while everyone likes to be treated with love, respect, kindness, and consideration – love, respect, kindness, and consideration may look different to different people.

Being mindful of what is important and meaningful to the person next to you will make you into a better person, and the community of which you are part, a better one.

Rabbi Kogan