

**S**he was walking toward me in the hallway. When she got closer, we made eye contact. But as soon as I began to smile and say "good morning," she lowered her head and scurried by without acknowledging me.

The first time it happened, I gave her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe she was in such deep thought when she passed me in the hallway that she didn't notice me. But when the same scenario happened again and again, I knew something was wrong.

She wasn't just not noticing me; she was ignoring me. She seemed to make it a point to let me know that she was too good to greet me.

Unfortunately, she was my new boss. Judging by her behavior, it was obvious that she was trying to set the tone for our relationship.

She succeeded. After a few of our encounters, I was as intimidated of her as I was of the crusty nuns at my Catholic grade school in the 1970s. I didn't know what she had against me.

However, it didn't take long for my intimidation of her to turn to disdain. I had no respect for her and no interest in learning from her.

Chances are, you know or have worked for someone like my old boss. At the time, you probably asked yourself: Does this person really think that he or she will command employees' respect by treating them as inferior?

I can't believe that the people in these roles are blind to the emotional pain they're inflicting on employees when they treat them like lepers. It's a terrible and confusing feeling to be on the receiving end of someone who uses non-verbal communication to degrade you.

Perhaps, though, it's a learning experience to work under such people. We learn how *not* to manage others.

Thankfully, I've spoken with several superintendents in the past few weeks who don't manage their crews by intimidating them. They realize they would be making a huge mistake by putting themselves on a pedestal for their workers to see.

What these superintendents stressed to me is that it's vital to put your ego aside when governing others. When you do, you earn respect.

For instance, a few superintendents said

## Management By The Golden Rule

BY LARRY AYLWARD



**YOU'RE HUMAN AND BOUND TO MAKE MISTAKES WHEN MANAGING PEOPLE. BUT RECOGNIZE THOSE ERRORS AND BUILD ON THEM**

they're not afraid to get down and dirty in a golf course maintenance project — with their crew members at their sides. One superintendent bragged that he's often the most muddy member of his crew.

When a superintendent works on the course with his employees, he sends a message to them that he wants to work *with* them — not above them. His employees, recognizing that the superintendent is not caught up in being the big cheese, will respect him even more.

Just as important, the superintendents I spoke with pointed out to me that it's integral and proper to treat employees with respect. Tell them when they're doing a good job; say hello to them in the morning and goodbye in the evening; don't be afraid to laugh with them or go to lunch with them. It's OK to be friends with your employees.

Yes, you must occasionally pull rank on them. But don't ever do it *just* to do it. While you may view your action as a display of power, your employees will see it as a power play and the sign of an insecure leader.

Perhaps it's most important to monitor and criticize your management style. You're human and bound to make mistakes when managing people. But recognize those errors and build on them.

If I ever begin to treat someone as a subordinate, I want to think immediately of my former boss and remember the anguish she caused me. Then I want to feel ashamed.

But more importantly, I want to realize that it's best to manage by the golden rule — do unto others as you would have them do to you.

---

Larry Aylward, editor of *Golfdom*, can be reached at 440-891-2770 or [laylward@advanstar.com](mailto:laylward@advanstar.com).