Do Unto Others

Whilst I was brought up in the church and adopted many of the values taught by the church, I never retained any religious leanings. I didn't like the term I heard so often when they talked about 'Christian values' because this seemed to infer that your values were somewhat less worthy if you were not a Christian.

However, there is one very simple rule, which seemed to me to be a reasonable basis on which to live your life no matter what, if any, religious persuasion you happened to be; in biblical wording from Luke 6.31 it states, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," or in it's more well known wording, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This is part of the central ethical teaching of Jesus and is often referred to as the 'golden rule'. This is a rule that I've used throughout my life. I always try to put myself in the place of others and imagine what impact my actions will have on them. Whenever I make personal or business decisions, I always take into account the consequences and potential impact of my decisions and actions on others.

Maybe this is a simplistic way of living your life, but I feel that religions tend to blur and confuse their messages and rules. This one rule keeps things simple although as I've found to my cost, it's almost impossible to maintain absolutely.

I was taught from my early days to have compassion for others, although I believe that compassion is something you either have or you haven't; you can teach what it is, but you can't engender compassion if it is not there naturally. I tend to empathise with others in a very real way. If a friend is in trouble, I feel their pain and have to help them. If I see pain and despair anywhere, I feel I must help. I really can't stop myself from helping others. I always put myself in their place. My natural instinct is to help others rather than help myself. I would rather absorb pain myself than see someone else distressed.