



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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## Social Media and the Golden Rule

Have you been on social media lately? There is so much good information that you can get from social media such as reading about the news, learning about your friend's vacation, or connecting with friends and family that live either long distances away or just around the corner.

At the Sheriff's Office we have used social media as a tool to notify the public about press releases, road closures, weather warnings, and requests for help with solving criminal activity or information about locating wanted individuals. It is an easy way for us to connect with our community that relies on social media to stay up to date on current events.

Many times we utilize Facebook to post positive stories such as congratulating new hires or current employees who have recently been promoted. We also highlight the work of our deputies such as our K9 Teams or our Recreation Patrol. It is a great tool to tell the story of the Sheriff's Office. Over the last 4 years we have grown from 1500 likes to over 17,000 likes.

Unfortunately, social media also has what I call "keyboard warriors". These are individuals who feel the need to harass, intimidate, or belittle others through the comments they make while hiding behind their keyboard. They are comments that would likely never be made in person, but they feel comfortable making them due to limited social repercussions.

On the Sheriff's Office Facebook page, keyboard warriors often take shots at us because they disagree with something we did or the methods that we take in a particular incident. Usually they make statements even though they have limited or no knowledge on the actual facts or they heard something from someone that is usually just not true. Fortunately, we have big shoulders and know that the vast majority of our community see these keyboard warriors for what they are. Many times, supporters decide to come to our aid with comments that set the record straight which we certainly appreciate.

What is more troublesome is when keyboard warriors go after other citizens, especially impressionable teens and young adults. Some have a really hard time coping with negative comments, rejection, or hateful speech. What is worse is that some make threatening comments. These are quite often investigated by law enforcement and some rise to the level of harassment, disorderly conduct, or other violations of law.

Unfortunately our society has grown to accept this kind of behavior. We see it across our country relating to politics, sports athletes, celebrities, and businesses. It is disappointing that we have gotten to this point. Perhaps it is time to reflect back on the golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

In writing my column this month, I thought perhaps we could do a couple of things as a community to drive positive change. First, I encourage the good natured citizens of Dodge County to take a stand against keyboard warriors. The next time you see a keyboard warrior cut someone else down, stand up to them in a positive manner and let them know that it isn't acceptable behavior. The more of us that stand up to it, the less acceptable it will become.

Next, join me in making a positive post on a friend's social media page. Positive attitudes are contagious and together we can make a difference by using the “Pay it Forward” mentality and a “Service above Self” attitude. Let's make Dodge County shine on social media and show the world that in one more way, the people of Dodge County make it an awesome place to live, work and visit.