

# How to Respect Yourself and Others

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

What exactly is respect? It's the sense of worth or personal value that you attach to someone. Respect is an overall evaluation you give someone based on many factors – what that person is doing with their life, how they treat you and others, whether they are honest or not and if they seem to consistently do good things, large or small, for other people. In short, respect is a positive view that you form of how someone is living their life. On the other hand, self-respect is your view of how you're living your life.

In this two-part series, we will explore three areas of respect – self-respect, respect for others and other people's respect for you. All three of these areas of respect are very important.

## **It Starts with Self-Respect**

Respecting yourself means giving and defining your own worth and value as a human being. Think about this: if you do not respect yourself, it will be more difficult for you to respect anyone else. So it all begins with self-respect.

## **But how do I go about respecting myself?**

Outlined below is a list of ideals that are fundamental to self-respect. Once you begin to genuinely adopt and develop these, you'll be on your way to developing a healthy level of self-respect. However, as we talked about the *true you* in a previous article, certain ideals have the greatest impact on your level of self-respect and you'll have to determine how that quality will be deployed within your life.

- ***Being an Honest Person***...You must be honest with yourself and with others.
- ***Valuing Academics and Other Forms of Education***...A vital key to self-respect is knowledge.
- ***Understanding the Impact of Proper Nutrition/Exercise***...In order to be your best, you must feel your best.
- ***Understanding Financial Responsibility***...Financial responsibility is a cornerstone to independence.
- ***Learning to Listen***...Part of learning self-respect involves respecting the beliefs of others.
- ***Understanding the Value of Good Manners/Proper Conduct***...Knowing and exercising good manners and proper conduct will make you feel good about yourself, and, in return, others will respect you for your good manners and proper conduct.
- ***Learning to Accept Personal Responsibility for Your Own Conduct***...Part of being a respected person involves taking responsibility for your own actions.
- ***Learning When and How to Apologize***...Accepting responsibility involves formally apologizing for wrongdoing and striving to make amends.
- ***Learning to Understand Which of Your Friends are Good Influences and Which Ones are Bad Influences***...We must learn to emulate those who are good influences and ignore those who are bad influences.
- ***Having Important Goals and Plans for Reaching Them***...Each goal you set and attain, you will gain strength to challenge yourself a little more; the more goals you attain, the more your self-respect will grow.

You should address each of these ideals within your own life in order to carry a well-rounded respect for yourself. If you haven't done so already, start working on each and every one of them

## **Showing Respect for Others**

Just like with yourself, when you demonstrate respect for others, you give value to their being and ideals. In addition, you'll make someone feel good by granting them respect. One of the best ways to show respect for someone is to truly listen to another's point of view. Obviously,

we'll not always agree with one another on every topic (and you should never adopt a point of view with which you do not agree), but we should allow each other to have and express our own views – regardless of whether we agree with them or not.

*"To be one, to be united is a great thing. But to respect the right to be different is maybe even greater."*  
Bono

You should be kind and polite to everyone – no question about that. Respect is one of mankind's most noble sentiments. The highest levels of respect are always earned – never given. This is true of self-respect as well as respect for others.

*"Respect for ourselves guides our morals; respect for others guides our manners."*  
Laurence Stone

## How to Gain the Respect of Others

As a young person, it can be frustrating when you're expected to *give* respect and yet you don't always *receive* that same respect in return. That type of frustration is very understandable. But, there are several reasons why this is so often the case.

For example, we tend to respect those who've accomplished significant or important things in their lives; such as good grades, participation in community activities, doing something special at church or in an interest group and playing sports well. These – along with dozens of other potential accomplishments – can put more points in your respect bucket. Obviously, the older you become, the more opportunities you're going to have to accomplish such things. These are small but important steps toward reaching some of the major goals you may have for your life. So, *relax*, start working on these accomplishments now, and your time will come.

To help, there are actions you can start taking to gain respect from others:

- **Show Respect for Those Around You...** Respect is a two-way street. In order to gain respect, you have to be a giver of respect as well. As we discussed, there is a basic level of respect that we should show for everyone, regardless of the circumstances. Make sure that you hand out respect as you go around your school or your community.
- **Show that You Can Make Good Choices...** Take the initiative to handle your schoolwork, chores around your house and job responsibilities seriously. Do the responsible thing without having to be told or reminded to do so every time. Your attitude and behavior are two important factors in whether other people will respect you or not.
- **Speak Up for What is Right...** For the most part, by the time we're in our early teens we know right from wrong on many levels. To gain respect, not only should you always do what's right – irrespective of the consequences – but you should speak up for what is right.
- **Show that You Believe Your Life is Important...** Act with the utmost respect toward yourself. Your study habits, what you do with your spare time, what outside interests you have and many similar factors reveal what you think about yourself. As people observe your attitude and behavior, these observations will go a long way toward you gaining their respect...respect that you hopefully deserve.

### Respect Creates Harmony

If we would all attain the appropriate level of self-respect, have and show respect for all others, and live so others will respect us, the world would be a harmonious place to live. There would be no hatred, no violence and no wars. Indeed, we would live in a world of peace.

Respect is a very powerful ingredient in how people – even total strangers – treat each other. If we could spread enough of it around, acts of respect could, in fact, change the world.

But obviously, human beings have inhabited this planet for many, many years and we have not gotten there yet. However, let's not give up hope. If each of us did our own respectful part, this peaceful condition could become a reality.

Maybe it could even begin with you. Why not try to start your own respect revolution by showing you respect yourself, and you respect others. What if, beginning with you, people started to make a pledge to respect each other as human beings first, and then to respect other people's genuine beliefs, views and opinions? What if you got out in front and lead us all on this important road of respect.

Are you willing to give it a try?

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