

RESPECT INTRODUCTION

This page is for the person doing the exercise with a student and should be reviewed before doing any of the three exercises on respect.

Before you work on the exercises, be sure the young person can give you a definition of respect in his or her own words. Help them learn what respect is, since few young people experience it in their contemporary peer groups.

Here is the *12 Seeds* book version: Respect is regard for the existence, ideas and opinions of other people.

It may be helpful to study the individual words: existence, ideas and opinions. Especially existence, since we are called to respect someone simply because they are another person who needs to be respected. Respect fulfills the need for significance. Everyone needs to be recognized and validated.

Respect is no longer a given in today's society. That is obvious. Learning to take a deep breath and respond with respect, especially in stressful situations, takes practice and maturity. Help by going over these words in sentences together:

- I will be attentive to the needs of others as I interact with them.
- I want to show consideration for the other person's needs and desires.
- I will give deference (give way to an opinion other than my own) to them.
- I will look for words that will express esteem, honor or regard for those I speak to.

Treat others with courtesy, and you may often be surprised how much you can change the entire interchange by your tone of voice and your words.

You may have often heard that respect must be earned. We cannot foster a solid relationship with someone without showing them regard. Using a warm tone of voice and uplifting words is the best possible beginning to a successful, lasting relationship.

Walk through the exercises slowly and carefully. Listen attentively to the responses you get from the young people you are working with.

RESPECT

Exercise 1

When you hear the word “respect”, what comes to mind? (wait for answer(s) and discuss). It's showing someone you value them by making room for their ideas and opinions, and sincerely exploring what they think or how they are feeling to get to know them better. When you are given respect it is much easier to return it, right? Let's look at this situation and see how respect enters in.

The science class was kind of boring, and Jim sat slumped in his desk listening to the teacher's voice drone on and on. Suddenly, in his half attentive state, he heard the teacher call his name. He quickly sat up straight in his desk, and said, “Could you repeat the question, please, Mr. Stonefield?”

The science class was kind of boring, and Jim sat slumped in his desk listening to the teacher's voice drone on and on. Suddenly, in his half attentive state, he heard the teacher call his name. He slowly pushed himself up to a half sitting position, and said, “Huh ... I didn't get what you asked me.”

Which of these two responses shows the most respect, and why? Not only the words we use, but the tone of voice and our body language can make a huge difference in how we are perceived. Think about a time when you did what the first example shared, and then think of a time when you didn't show real respect. Let's talk about them.

What could be some words you could use to show you respect someone?

How could you promote respect among your peers?

In your family?

(All these questions can be used to get the young person thinking about the actual communication of respect. Get some real verbal answers here.)

Words of encouragement and praise show a person you respect them, but they must be sincere. What often influences the way we speak to one another? (Pause here and allow the student(s) to respond to this question.) Our own mood or feelings can often affect our words, attitudes and tone of voice.

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Exercise 2

Mandy was exhausted from a tough day at school, and she was hungry and feeling a little bit crabby as she walked in the front door. “Hey, Mom, I'm home. Got anything exciting for a snack? I'm starved.” Her mom looked up from the kitchen table where she was chopping the contents of a salad for supper, and Mandy noticed her eyes were red, like she had been crying. Mandy put down her backpack and went over to put her arm around her mom's shoulders. She gave her mom a hug and said, ... (What could she say to show ultimate respect for her mom?)

If Mandy was not so thoughtful, what could she have said that would not have shown respect for her mom? Of course, the real question is, what would you do in a situation like this? You need to consider how Mandy was feeling when she walked in the door. Could she shift her focus from her own needs to her mother's needs? Could you?

Who are the people we tend to treat with less respect in our circle of acquaintances? Isn't it usually those we are closest to? Those we feel we can mistreat with lesser consequences? Truly, it is part of our nature to be careless with close relationships such as family. That is why we used this story, to help us see that those we live with day after day need respect, too.

To receive respect, we need to give it. Often, if patterns of disrespect have been established, it will take time for that to turn around. It must start with you. Can you share some ways you think you might be able to change some relationships that are not respectful now but could be in the future?

(wait for responses here, if possible)

This kind of change takes time and “hanging in there” when the other person wants to continue a “dissing” kind of interchange. Don't give up easily.

RESPECT

Exercise 3

Carl took the front steps of his house slowly; it had been a rough day. Mr. Weston, his physics teacher, had corrected him in front of the whole class for a mistake in a calculation. Then, a senior had tripped him in the hall and sent him sprawling with his books flying in all directions. Talk about embarrassing!

Attempting to sooth his own grumpiness, Carl opened the front door thinking he'd drown his sorrows in a glass of milk and some of the great chocolate cake his mom made yesterday. All those plans faded as his mother's voice rang out from upstairs, "Carl, I'm so glad you showed up just now. Can you come up here and help move this dresser?"

A scowl crossed Carl's face as he called back, "..."

Choose both a respectful response and one that is not respectful. Also come up with a response from Carl's mother.