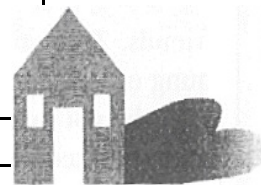


CHARACTER

Respect

March 2008



RESPECT: "To esteem the worth or excellence of a person."

"Respect commands itself and it can neither be given nor withheld when it is due."

Eldridge Cleaver

Much is made these days of the street term "disrespecting" or "dis-ing". So much so, in fact, as to be a point of contention, even the stepping stone of violence between people. It seems that "dis-ing" someone incurs so strong an offence that tempers, and even lives are often threatened. Respect then, seems to be at the core of value today. An interesting irony exists here. Frequently, the individual throwing around the 'dis' word does so at the expense of the respect they claim they deserve.

The presence of fear is all too often employed in this effort to demand respect. Respect and fear are not conjoined twins as some may think. Respect is based on worth or quality, where as fear is based on power by threat. Paradoxically, individuals deserving of respect have a power that cannot be bought. Respect is a closer relative to charity than fear. Fear denotes a need to escape while respect implies a bonding or adherence.

Webster's New World Thesaurus gives the following associate words in relation to respect; esteem, regard, value, look up to, admire, treat with consideration, appreciate, heed, notice, consider, note, recognize, defer, do honor, or be kind, or show courtesy to, spare, take into account, attend, uphold; all of which are and have always been associated with high character. Not one word given by Webster in relation to respect is dishonorable, and the word fear is not listed in any form.

The current trend towards casual, even callous consideration of responsibilities, properties or people is an alarming trend. Who is teaching our citizens this behavior? Or are we just neglecting to teach our children the basics of respect? Could it be the result of our own actions?

People lose the respect of others when they act below the line of standard decency acknowledged by the laws of societies, customs or religion. Our forefathers had such respect for individuals that they endowed us with the mandate that "all men are created equal." However, once lost, that equality becomes a standard that must be proven to be regained. What was once a given must then be earned.

Most crimes against society have at their basic core a lack of respect, in that killing, stealing, drug abuse, or abuses of any kind, are essentially at the expense of the value of another human being. Among the words on Webster's respect list, is the word "uphold". To respect laws is to uphold them, all of them. Even littering is so disrespectful an act as to devalue everyone, including the person responsible.

RESPECT IS A VOLUNTARY OFFERING OF OUR BEST QUALITIES. It breeds peace and security into societies, homes, and individuals. Respect is a feeling that must be revived in our lives and instilled into the lives of our next generation if we hope to regain or maintain our sense of safety. We could avoid teaching in our homes by fear. Let's forego dealing in our businesses or associations by threats. May we always show our high sense of regard and honor by upholding what we know to be good and true. Let us live by the creed that all men are created equal and deserving of our respect. Just as importantly, let us also be deserving of that same respect.

Becky Hunter

Lindon Resident

"When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you."
Lao-Tzu

"America has furnished to the world the character of Washington. And if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind."
Daniel Webster

"There are countless ways of achieving greatness, but any road to achieving one's maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of respect for the individual, a commitment to excellence, and a rejection of mediocrity"
Buck Rodgers

Book List

"The Rag Coat"

by Lauren Mills

"Twenty and Ten"

by Claire Hutchet Bishop

"Thank You Mr. Falker"

by Patricia Polacco

"Chester's Way"

by Kevin Henkes



Family Activities

-During family discussion times talk about ways to respect the person who is talking. Use a "talking feather." (The person who holds the feather has the turn to speak. The others listen intently and practice good eye contact with the feather holder.)

-Have a formal family dinner where good manners are emphasized. What does courtesy have to do with showing respect?

-Alexander Graham Bell, born on March 3, 1847, once told his family that he would rather be remembered as a teacher of the deaf than as the inventor of the telephone. How can we show respect and make life better for those who have different abilities?

Kid's Corner

Respect Dos and Don'ts

Dos

During class if someone is talking to you, try to get them to be quiet. Raise your hand if you want to make a comment. If you see people doing something like vandalism, tell a teacher. Walk in the halls. If there is a new kid in your school, include him. Follow your teacher's directions. Listen when announcements are made. Respect others' religious beliefs. Respect people of all skin colors.

Don'ts

Don't goof off during a lesson. Don't put others down or make fun of them. Don't run in the halls. Don't hurt someone for any reason. Don't make fun of the way other people dress. Don't spread gossip. Don't make fun of teachers.

By Braden Hallam

(Reprint from March 2004 Character Connection)

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at www.lindoncharacterconnection.com.

Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support. If you can help please send contributions to:

Lindon Character Connection
c/o Alpine Foundation
575 N 100 E

American Fork, UT 84003

(You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)

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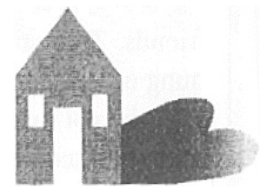
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