

# CHARACTER

Respect

March 2009

Respect: "Is to feel or show esteem for, to honor, or show consideration for."  
"There is a destiny that makes us brothers, No one goes his way alone;  
All that we send into the lives of others, Comes back into our own."  
*Edwin Markham*

"Respect" conveys an idea of honor, esteem, high regard, special attention, and consideration. It is demonstrated by courtesy, helpfulness, patience, obedience (as to law), and near reverence for persons of unusual accomplishment, and for the country of one's birth and personal ancestry. Respect is also noticeable by its absence, such as making light of sacred things, lack of appreciation for the national flag, the U.S. Constitution, the national anthem, or disrespect for the elderly, for women, and motherhood. Disrespect for one's community and the public welfare is evident by those who deface public property, or scatter paper and food in the hallways and grounds of public buildings, leave a mess at campgrounds and parks, and drop trash out of moving automobiles.

Respect and disrespect are attitudes. Respect means more than simply information about a subject; it requires feeling and commitment. Years ago I read that in one of our eastern states the formal educational attainment of prisoners in the state penitentiary was higher than among the people of that state who were not in the penitentiary. The point was that knowledge unaccompanied by a value system is not true education and fails to make one a valued contributor toward a democratic society. Children will not automatically develop positive respectful attitudes toward community, law enforcement officials, city and state officials, schools and churches unless they are taught values along with facts. It is noteworthy that both the Girl Scout and the Boy Scout handbooks promote respect for people, environment, law, religion, property and the national flag.

Earliest recorded civilizations had rules for the protection and control of both public and private property.

Some might naively think that respect or the lack thereof is a completely personal matter, but the consequences go deep in society. When most citizens of a community exercise self-disciplined respect for one another and for law and property, peace and security result. However, if the majority fail in self-motivated respect for human dignity and freedom, the value system degenerates, looting becomes common, selfishness is everywhere, and legislatures could not enact and enforce enough laws, nor build enough jails to maintain a safe community. A democratic society presupposes self-control and respect for law and order by the majority of its citizens, or democracy cannot continue.

A respectful attitude or the lack of it, is visibly manifest in a person's dress. To "dress up" for an event is evidence of respect. Appropriate dress and personal grooming standards promote civil behavior. I observed a school relax its clothing and grooming standards and saw that various aspects of student life also changed, with an increase of littering, lessening of respect for property, and a decline in respect for authority. Interestingly, when respect for others, for property, and for civil government is strong, so also is *self-respect*. When respect for other things fades, so also does self-respect. Fortunately, although there is a general deterioration of good manners in much of modern society, a majority still honors those things that made America a democratic nation, but warning signs are visible.

Respect for worldwide brotherhood begins with the way we deal with people in our daily activities, on the street, in the parking lot, the post office, the grocery store, athletic contests, and in the home.

*Robert J. Matthews  
Lindon Resident  
(Reprint of March 2005 Article)*



"RESPECT IS KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT YOU HAVE A (LEGAL) RIGHT TO DO AND WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO."

*—former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart*

"No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.."

*—John Donne*

"Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy."

*—Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Wise people appreciate all people for they see the good in each."

*—Baltasar Gracian*

## Book List

### **“Badger’s Bad Mood”**

by Susan Varley

### **“Bat Boy and His Violin”**

by Gavin Curtis

### **“Mr. Key’s Song”**

by Sadyebeth and Anson Lowitz

### **“The Wartville Wizard”**

by Don Madden



## Family Activities

–Read a book on manners and then have a formal “tea” party using best party manners.

–Show respect for the environment by cleaning up litter in a park or along the street.

–Make a list of words and phrases that show respect and courtesy. *Talk about how to use them.*

–The German physicist, Wilhelm Roentgen, was born on March 27, 1845. In 1901 he was awarded the first Nobel Prize in physics for his 1895 discovery of invisible rays. He called them X rays. In his honor, X rays were called Roentgen rays for many years. *How do we show honor and respect to those who hold high office, have achieved, or have lived a long life?*

## Kid’s Corner

**Respect is being nice to others and using good manners. It means to accept others as they are without pre-judging them. We should show respect to the elderly, to small children, to people of all languages, ages, gender, colors or religions. We should show respect to those who are disabled. We should respect our teachers. And our teachers should respect teenagers (please don’t assume we are all bad!) We will follow your example and learn how to treat each other by how we are treated. Respect is a necessary part of society for us to get along.**

**Cynthia, age 14  
Oak Canyon Jr. High School**

*We, at Character Connection, would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at [www.lindoncharacterconnection.com](http://www.lindoncharacterconnection.com).*

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