

Lindon

# CHARACTER

Connection



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Respect

March 2013

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**Respect: “Is to feel or show esteem for, to honor, or show consideration for.”**

## What is Respect?

Respect can mean different things to different people. But basically, respect means to show regard or consideration for someone or something. It is critical for our children to understand the importance of respect, so that they can communicate effectively with others throughout their lives. It is important to distinguish between respect and obedience. A child may obey you simply because he is afraid of you. However, when a child understands that your rules and disciplinary actions are ultimately for his own good, he will obey you because he respects you.

Equally important, self-respect means to hold proper esteem or regard for the dignity of one's character. The virtue of self-respect allows children to feel good about themselves and will help them to achieve their goals.

## How Respect is Learned

The best way to teach your child about respect is for you to show respect to yourself, your child, and others. Kids are greatly influenced throughout their day by adults – whether it be a parent, teacher, or coach. Observing respectful adult behavior helps your child learn the value of respect and how to use it to his advantage.

Marriage and Family Therapist Robert Navarra, Psy.D., encourages parents to model respectful behavior with children and with each other by avoiding labels, sarcasm, and criticism at home. "Focus on behavior and be sure to emphasize what you want the other person to do, not what you don't want. Additionally, coach children to verbalize their

feelings, and then validate those feelings, emphasizing the importance of respecting each other's perspectives and emotions," says Navarra.

As your child grows older, it is important to maintain, and demand, an environment of respect. "As your child enters the teen years, it can be extremely difficult to show respect and establish boundaries with your child when he or she is being disrespectful to you. It's important – though challenging – not to stoop to their level. It takes a lot of strength to walk away and not yell back," says psychiatric social worker Jennifer Segura.

Keep in mind that schools may teach children about respect, but it is you, the parent, that holds the most influence over your children. If you are caught bad-mouthing the opposing team during a soccer game or screaming an obscenity at the idiot who just cut you off, your child will take this as a cue that it's okay to be disrespectful to your peers.

Most important, treat your kids with respect. Truly listen to them when they have something to say. Let them know that their words and feelings are important to you. Help them learn to appreciate and take care of their things by respecting their personal property. Respect their privacy by knocking before entering their room and ask that they do the same. Remember, you are their role model and the old adage "Do as I say not as I do" simply doesn't have any merit where matters of respect are concerned.

## When Others are Disrespectful

You can't be with your child every minute of the day. But make sure he knows that it is absolutely not okay for anyone – including an adult – to treat

him in a disrespectful manner (and vice-versa). For instance, if a teacher makes an inappropriate comment or belittles your child, tell him to immediately report the incident to the principal, and to tell you as soon as he gets home from school so that you can follow up if warranted.

Bottom line, it is our job as parents to ensure that we raise our kids to become respectful adults. Society – and our children – will thank you for it!

Laura Buena

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## 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

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## 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?

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## Thoughts on Respect

*“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 is knowing the difference between what you have a (legal) right to do and what is the right thing to do.”*

Potter Stewart, Former – US Supreme Court Justice

*“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.”*

Balthazar Gracian

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