

Reach Out



FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

Week 16: Respect

I can't help but think about the Aretha Franklin song when I hear the word respect. So, what does respect mean to you? It's a term that is thrown around a lot but is less often practiced in fullness. Respect is defined as "a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements" or "to admire someone deeply." I would argue that respect is more than just admiring someone because they're good at something. There are many pop culture icons who are good at acting or singing, but I don't particularly respect them.

Respect can not be given properly until a person respects himself or herself. This is where the admiration definition falls short. Respecting yourself doesn't mean having a big ego about what you do, it means believing that you have value or worth. Every person in the world has value, but it's sometimes difficult to see what value you contribute to the world. I know it's a cheesy example, but the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" addresses this nicely. George Bailey gets a chance to experience the world that would have existed if he hadn't been born, and he quickly finds that he has actually touched a lot of people's lives in ways he never knew. Think about your interactions with other people, and consider the ways that you have made the lives of others better through these interactions. These make you immensely valuable and worthy of self-respect.

The next step is respecting others. If it's true that every person has value, then it's true that every person is worthy of respect. That doesn't mean that you have to like everyone, but you should allow your actions and words to show people their value and worth in the world.

Challenge: Respect

Think about the ways your actions and words have affected the people around you. What are some ways you have been a positive influence on the world. Then consider the ways you treat other people. Do you show them that they are valuable through your words and actions? Make an effort to show people how valuable and loved they really are. You will be amazed at how this respect for others will come back to you tenfold.