

## **Respect: attend to it, intend it and do more of it for big smiles**

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**Joan Dickinson, ED.D.**

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We all know how to be respectful. Even the biggest, most manipulative, meanest cad has been respectful on a few occasions. And the rest of us, non-cads, can probably identify a few times when we lashed out in hurt and anger, rather than cooled down. Maybe next time we can ask the question, “How can I say, ‘Ouch, my toes feel stepped on,’ skip the fight drama, and smile at being better understood?” And better yet, how can we all smile, Win-Win fashion?

What is respect? I recall Aretha Franklin’s lyrics, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. While she spells out the word, there is no clue as to what the poor woman in the song, who gives her man all her money, is specifically asking for. Perhaps her man feels he is respectful, what with all those kisses, and is totally clueless. Perhaps both the man and the woman need to notice, intend and expect more respect.

Looking at the word *respect* more closely, a clue is found in the first syllable, *re*. Like other words that begin with *re...* *regain*, *renew*, *relight*, *rekindle*, an action is implied. *Repeat* means doing something again. And think of *responsibility* as *response ability*.

But before we act, let’s first place our attention on it. Notice respectful interactions. Notice our feelings when we give and receive respect. Notice when how it feels to give and receive a thank you.

Then set an intention every morning, before jumping out of bed, to be respectful and expect respectfulness. This simple intention and expectation will set the daily stage for respectfulness.

Kind thoughts, followed by kind intentions, followed by kind words, spoken in a kind tone of voice, followed by kind actions are a good formula for respect. Let’s place our focus, attention, on this formula right now. Then intend it; expect it; do it.

If something is missing from the formula, we might feel we have been given saccharine, with the bad aftertaste, instead of the real thing, sugar. We all know how nice words delivered with sarcasm, teasing or patronizing, ‘I know best,’ intonations feel. Bad. And we all know how the best intentions not acted upon make us feel like broken promises, ignored, unimportant and foolish chumps.

The more we are consistent in our actions, follow-through with plans, know what we want, ask what others want, listen carefully to their responses, and incorporate their desires into our actions, the more likely a respectful result will occur. Others will trust our good intentions and our own self-esteem will be enhanced in the process. Respect grows when we feel counted, not discounted.

Think of the Golden Rule; treat others as we would like to be treated.

How does respect fit in with love? Romantic infatuation aside, the key ingredient of love is respect. And respect is essential for any relationship... parent-child, sibling, friendship, boss or co-worker.

Respectfulness will build huge smiles, inside and out. Trust and love will follow. Start with attention, set intentions and respectful actions will flow easily.