

RESPECT LIFE – Dialogue with Dignity

SPEAKING WITH RESPECT

Remember Words Hurt

You might agree that some people do not behave in ways that deserve respect but speaking respectfully to all is an essential part of our call to “be salt for the earth and light for the world” or “walk in the love of the Lord.” Because I respect who I am, I am able to speak respectfully to others. Speaking respectfully does not mean giving up or giving in. Rather, it means holding one’s own integrity in high regard; and, speaking respectfully models respect to others.

HERE ARE SOME BASIC WAYS TO HELP in the art of speaking with respect.

Listen when someone is talking. When you're having a conversation, being a good listener is a basic sign of respect. If you look bored or interrupt the person, you're showing that you don't really care what he or she has to say. Practice listening more intently and waiting until the person is finished talking before you respond.



- Making eye contact is a good way to show that you respect what someone is saying. Other body language cues can help as well. Face the person to whom you're talking and try not to fidget while they speak.
- Process what the person is saying instead of just absently nodding your head.

Before you speak:

THINK

T = Is it True?

H = Is it Helpful?

I = Is it Inspiring?

N = Is it Necessary?

K = Is it Kind?

Think before you speak. When it's your turn to talk, try to formulate a respectful response. Take into account what the person was saying and voice your opinion without undermining theirs. Avoid insulting the other person by saying something rude or callous.

- Try not to be condescending. Don't over explain a concept the other person clearly already understands. For example, don't tell a varsity athlete how to hit a baseball.
- Don't be patronizing. Along similar lines, talking down to someone can make them feel disrespected. Avoid phrases like "Don't worry your little head about it," or "It's a guy thing, you wouldn't understand."
- Be mindful of circumstances you should avoid talking about. If you don't know someone very well, there are certain questions you probably shouldn't ask. For example, if you just met someone, don't ask how he got the 3-inch scar on his forehead.



Respectfully disagree. You can respect someone's view even if you



wholeheartedly disagree. The key is to disagree with what the person is saying without undermining the actual person's worthiness. For example, you might strongly disagree with someone's political beliefs, but you can still value the person as a human being, and that should come through in the way you argue.

- Never resort to insulting someone during an argument. Don't let "I don't agree with your view on that" to escalate to "You're an idiot."
- If necessary, halt the conversation before things get too out of control and you say something you'll regret. You're not going to get anywhere by disrespecting the other person; you'll just make a new enemy.

Don't stereotype other people. Don't come to a conversation with assumptions about someone else's opinions or background based on their race, gender, religion, nationality, or any other factor. Everyone is an individual with special life experiences and wisdom. Don't make the disrespectful mistake of thinking you know someone before you've taken the time to learn about him or her as a unique person.



Don't gossip. It's a common form of disrespect that people usually get away with, but gossiping is a bad habit. It puts you in the practice of seeing people as characters who are up for discussion instead of individuals with feelings that can be deeply hurt. Even the strangest, most annoying or obnoxious people should not be regularly discussed as though they exist to provide entertainment for others.

- If you have nothing good to say, it's better not to say it at all.
- Protect those under you and hide other people's faults.

Taken from *Wiki How: 3 Ways to Show Respect*

