

Can Society Function Without Respect?

Words: 754

Respect is perhaps the most important component of a strong and healthy society. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the textbook definition of respect is, "A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements." However, this definition is quite complex and is difficult to grasp the meaning of. A much more simple meaning of respect is treating others the way you want to be treated. That is an intuitive meaning and portrays the definition accurately. When I went to elementary and upper elementary, respect and kindness were both included in the school songs. Now, for the grand question: can a society function without respect? The answer is a resounding no.

Respect is like trust; it is earned, not given. Think about the pool of your friends and teachers that you have had in your life. When you first encountered your greatest, most perfect friend, they probably did not just walk directly towards you and say, "You have my respect" or "You have my trust". Crucial feelings such as respect can take months or even years to obtain from someone. Respect is not only between individuals but also

between groups at large. A group can be a tiny population like your school's Junior Optimist Club, a small population like a school, a large population like a city or country, and even the entire world. All of these societies need respect to function. For example, if people do not respect each other on a committee, it can lead to ad-hominem attacks that can be completely irrelevant to the subject at hand. This leads to disorganization, with members always disrespecting each other. Consequently, the committee becomes unproductive.

Another common occurrence of disrespect is bullying in schools. The victims of bullying can later develop low self-esteem and low confidence. This can have long term effects such as victims of bullying to be more reserved and less productive in a society. In the end, society itself the price for the disrespect of the bully.

Even teachers are sometimes disrespected by their students. Ironically, those are the same students who incessantly complain about how poorly the teacher treats them. On rare occasions, it is actually the teacher's fault, but from my experience, it is normally the student's fault. The student is impolite to the teacher, but expects respect back. There is a saying that we were taught in school; treat others the way you want to be

treated. This goes with the theme of respect is earned and not given.

Students not respecting teachers can lead to more class time being wasted because a student disrespected a teacher and less education in the classroom. The same applies for when there is disrespect between multiple students in a classroom. This causes lost time with disruptions in the classroom interrupting lessons.

A large scale example of the importance of treating others the way you want to be treated is our president and the media. The president does not respect the media and the media does not respect the president. This divides the nation.

Disrespect between people in a town seems unusual and rare at first, until you look closely around you and realize that is is actually quite a common phenomenon in society. People always are intentionally and unintentionally disrespecting each other. For instance, this ranges from being a bit too harsh when someone accidentally does something to not apologizing for bumping into someone. Not only is this disrespectful, but it can also be setting a bad example for young children. When I was in 4th grade, my teacher always urged the class to be respectful and quiet in the hallways. By doing this, we would portray a positive example for all the

younger kids to follow while they were in the hallway. Particularly, if people show disrespect to each other in public while there are children around, they learn that they do not have to apologize when you do something wrong to somebody or that it is acceptable to get reactive over the most trivial mistakes. This can start a slew of disrespectful episodes which can last indefinitely until someone realizes that respecting people is a moral thing to do and that it helps society.

Respect is the lubricant of society that helps to keep it efficient and working. It is used without a second thought, without people even realizing it. Even when we all might be different, respect binds us together and is essential to forming the strong bond which we call society.

Bibliography

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