

Giving & Getting Respect

When Rodney Dangerfield griped, “I don’t get no respect,” it usually generated laughs. Most of us could identify with what disrespect feels like. But respect is an important value that is no laughing matter. It's the glue that keeps society civil. Without it, things start to break down. In the rough and tumble of daily life, we see how ugly things can get when respect is absent. A lack of respect can show itself in small ways, such as someone cutting ahead of you in line or in more aggressive, more damaging ways, such as bullying.

We see the breakdown when online social forums intended to be fun turn ugly, spiteful and abusive over differences of opinion or politics. We see it, when road rage turns a minor fender bender into a frightening and dangerous event.

How do we foster more respect between us? Mahatma Gandhi advised, “Be the change you want to see.” In other words, it’s up to each and every one of us to behave respectfully to each other.

The golden rule is an age-old principle that has been found in almost every civilization and every religion across the globe. Also called the “law of reciprocity,” it is the simple concept that we should treat others the way that we’d like to be treated ourselves.

Here are a few ways to give and get respect:

- Embrace differences. Varied backgrounds keep life interesting and foster creativity.
- Don't tolerate bad behaviors, mockery or insults directed to others. Don't laugh at hurtful or crude jokes.
- Words matter. Be sensitive and thoughtful about the language you choose.



- Don't gossip. Avoid passing on rumors or cruel, unverified stories. Change the subject if someone else starts. Speak well of others.
- Be inclusive. Don't marginalize people.
- Practice the Grandmother rule: Would I be comfortable saying or showing this to my Grammy? If not, think twice!
- Don't sweat the small stuff. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Shrug off petty annoyances. Don't nurture grudges.
- Treat people fairly and equally.
- Don't let racist, sexist, or other mean-spirited comments pass unchallenged.
- Stand up for others if they are being treated unfairly or unkindly.
- Be kind, helpful, generous and positive.
- Dole out appreciation, compliments and credit to others, both at home and at work.
- Be kind. Start your day with a goal to make the world a better place, not a worse one.

Login to your EAP for more resources to help you learn how to be respectful and get along well with others, at work and at home.

Remember, if you or a family member faces a difficult or stressful situation on or off the job, you can call your EAP 24-7 for help, support and tools!