Always Show Respect

As we consider this tool of “Show Respect”, first we need to have a clearer understanding of respect. For me this word is like a two way mirror. On the one hand, it is verb that means to “consider worthy of high regard”. OK. Who do we know that merits respect? I imagine that your parents gave you any number of persons- first would be them, then elders, policemen, teachers, people in authority, judges, the President, etc. Maturing, you met people that you came to respect. Perhaps there was a friend who did something exceptional, a coach who help you improve, a community member who volunteered, a star in any field, and so many others who became special to you. No doubt you had many people that you did truly respect, but it also meant that there were lots of others who did not meet the standard.

The second side of the mirror is yourself. Respect is also a noun meaning “the quality or state of being esteemed”. Wanting to be treated with respect, you have to find a way to be considered worthy. You can try your best everyday of your life, and some will find in you that quality and others will not.

So far we have identified that we respect others and want others to respect us. Unfortunately neither the verb nor the noun really explain how we behave in a respectful manner. How does one consider, esteem, defer? Manners, codes of etiquette, and parental teaching have helped by providing a very formal action, but these do not reach the depth of that regard for a person.

There are further difficulties. One the first side you are comfortable with being respectful to those you chosen. Sometime a person of respect makes a mistake or many mistakes. What do you do now? Then there is the question of how do you treat all those others that you have not been able to find that worthy quality. On your side of the mirror you want to be respected by everyone. Consequently when you are not, you have a mixture of negative emotions like hurt, anger, sadness, disgusted with self, hopelessness. You may have difficulty in dealing with these emotions.

Now that we recognize that respectful behavior is not so clear, let see how the tool of “Show Respect” works. I believe that it was very insightful to choose show and not give. Give is defined as “to make a present of”. This verb clearly fits with the definition of respect where there are some that have skills, talents, and abilities above the rest. Therefore we want to give them something over and above.

 Show’s definition is “to cause or permit to be seen, exhibit, accord, declare” which is quite different from give. There is not personal acknowledgement that the person merits to you that quality needed of your respect. Rather you are telling them that they may have such a quality and you can acknowledge that.

Further this means that you treat everyone with the respect, those you give that respect, those that you acknowledge, and yourself. Still it even goes deeper than that. First we are stating that we are all equal as we are all human beings. Secondly, we each have some skills, abilities, or talents that do have that quality worthy of a higher regard. We are just not presently aware or that is not something that is important to us. Lastly, by showing respect to every person that we meet, we are encouraging them to be their very best.

Just remember the words of the wise Mary Poppins, “A spool full of sugar helps the medicine go down”. Even when someone is really not acting their best, treating them in a respectful manner can help them to get back on track. They may start by being respectful to you and then handling current situation in a respectful manner.

Finally, always show respect can forever keep you on solid ground. You will feel respect for yourself and that keeps you showing that respect to others. Eventually respect leads to respect shown by others and eventually the whole world.

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