

## Respect and the Knowledge Factor

**Category** Family Series

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If you sat in a quiet corner in a home with young children and mature parents, observing ongoing events, sooner or later you would hear expressions such as, “Be respectful,” or “That was not respectful,” or perhaps, “Why are you so disrespectful?” These expressions by a parent, to a child, assume one thing—that the child knows what it means to be respectful.

When I began my original research and study of the topic of respect several years ago, I recall the feedback I received from many people when I asked each of them to tell me the meaning of the word, respect. Specifically, I observed that respect was more of a challenge for younger individuals. In fact, the younger the person—I questioned—the less knowledge was demonstrated on the topic of respect. Many teens and young adults perceived respect simply as being nice, or polite, toward someone else.

When a child asks a parent, “Can you help me with this?” or “How did you do that?” the child is seeking knowledge. Children are naturally curious at a very young (and early) age. Studies have shown that parents are the most influential individuals in the lives of their children. This makes parents the most ideal, and the best source, of knowledge on the matter of respect.

Children do not typically ask their parents to teach them about the topic of respect, nor do they pursue lessons in respect on their own. To a young child respect is not an attractive topic. Therefore, parents have the responsibility of instilling and teaching their children the essence and the lessons of the all important topic of respect. And this requires knowledge.

As I presented in each of *The Top Ten Laws of Respect* books, there is a visible part of respect—the outward behavior and actions observed by people around you. However, the visible part is always preceded by the invisible part of respect—an attitude forged by a thought process. This thought process is rooted in some body of knowledge.

How does your child address a teacher at school? How does your teenage son or daughter respond to a law enforcement officer while out in public? How does your child respond to you as a parent when he or she is dead set on achieving an objective? These scenarios all have one thing in common—they involve a child and a person who holds a position of authority. An understanding of this basic knowledge by a child establishes a psychological foundation on which habits and proper behaviors can be taught.

How does your young child know how to appreciate honesty in his friends? How does your teenager know when to decline an invitation to engage in certain types of behavior with peers? How does your young adult son or daughter realize the importance of a healthy diet and eating habits? These three scenarios also have one thing in common—they all deal with the important topic of self-respect, a concept that you learn through knowledge.

Finally, how does your child learn how to make simple choices? How does your teenager know that personal actions come with consequences? How does your young adult son or daughter learn the vital process of critical thinking? Again, these scenarios all involve personal choices in the form of actions and deeds. These acts of personal choice also involve knowledge.

The point of these simple exercises (queries) is to draw emphasis to the importance of knowledge when it comes to the matter of respect. The [EKTIMIS Respect Model](#), available on the EKTIMIS website, is a graphical tool that illustrates the various components of respect. The model is designed, in part, to provide guidance for the various forms of knowledge necessary to help instill respect in a child and to help cultivate an attitude of respect.

**Respect and the Knowledge Factor**  
**Respectful behavior begins in the mind—driven by an attitude and rooted in knowledge.**

So, where can one find the specific pieces of knowledge necessary to foster and support respectful behavior? From teaching a child at an early age about the purpose and role of a teacher, to encouraging a child to act with honesty and helping the child to recognize such quality in himself or herself (as a good thing), there are numerous nuggets of knowledge already in the hands of many parents. Children need this knowledge and they need it at an early age while they are highly impressionable. As I discussed in *The Top Ten Laws of Respect* book series, the engine that drives respect is your value system. And so, the source of knowledge for a child comes down to the value system that you, the parents, establish in your home. A well-rooted value system will provide a wealth of knowledge that will foster and support lessons in respect; an un-rooted value system will restrict or lack the body of knowledge that supports lessons in respect. This concept is embodied in the third law of respect and is covered in each of *The Top Ten Laws of Respect* books.

## About the Author



Niyi Taiwo is the founder of EKTIMIS and the lead editor for the EKTIMIS eLibrary articles. He is the author of several books, including the EKTIMIS Top Ten Laws series. He is a continuous improvement expert with over 21 years of industry experience – operational, management and consulting. He holds an undergraduate degree from WPI and a master's degree from RPI. He is a certified Lean Expert and an ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt.