

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Acceptance As A Person Means A Lot To Seniors

Who hasn't been told to "respect your elders" at some time in their life? This statement gets thrown around in our youth-focused culture, but shamefully, it is not always put into practice.

Often, respect is confused with value that is based on an assessment of an individual's worth to another person. And human beings, no matter what their age, do like to be valued highly by others. However, true respect of an individual comes from being "accepted" for who they are and is based on what is best for that individual.

When seniors are truly respected, they are typically admired for their experience, wisdom, knowledge, loyalty, resilience and grace. Frailty, wrinkles or disabilities are accepted without judgment while the elders are sincerely recognized for the effort they have put into family, career, and a lifetime of struggles and achievements.



Choosing to serve tea or coffee first to a senior in the group shows precedence and demonstrates a (noticeable) form of respect.

DEMONSTRATING RESPECT THROUGH...

Since it is an intangible, how would you show respect? The few studies that have been done on respecting the elderly have identified between seven and twelve categories for demonstrating respect to seniors. They include:

- ◆ **Care & Service** - The key is to do so while helping individuals maintain their dignity. In some cases, this may mean allowing seniors to do what they can for themselves.
- ◆ **Consulting** - Seeking advice.
- ◆ **Acquiescence** - Listening to and valuing what seniors have to say.
- ◆ **Precedent** - Serving elders first.
- ◆ **Salutatory** - Greeting elders, especially by using good manners and social graces. (You should address a senior by Mr. or Mrs. until they let you know differently.)
- ◆ **Linguistic** - Using proper language at an appropriate speed and volume.

- ◆ **Presentational** - Using proper manners in the presence of elders.
- ◆ **Public** - Honoring elders in the public eye.
- ◆ **Victual** - Serving food and drinks that elders choose and prefer. For seniors with physical limitations or swallowing issues, this may also include making adjustments to ease the process of eating.
- ◆ **Spatial** - Providing comfort such as seating, room temperature, etc.
- ◆ **Gift** - Offering appropriate gifts and honest compliments.
- ◆ **Celebrative** - Celebrating birthdays and remembering important events of one's life.

The three most important categories were found to be linguistic, salutary and presentational. So you can simply demonstrate your respect of the elderly by communicating effectively and kindly.

(Sources: NIH.gov, Character-In-Action.com)



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