



SELF-RESPECT

1 December 2015

Usually I do something typical for December in this newsletter, like gratitude or reflecting on the year. This one will be a bit different. However this is an important topic.

When I am doing work with clients on "the self", which happens a lot, I often ask them to do the following exercise. And you can do it as well as you read this.

I want you to think of someone you respect a lot. It could be someone you don't know, but know of, like a famous person, or business person, or philanthropist, or it could be someone you do know who you are fairly close to. The names people often give me are Oprah, my mother, my grandmother, my spouse's mother, a teacher, and a few other famous names get mentioned. Then I ask my clients (and you), "How would you treat someone who you respect a great deal?" "What would you say to them?" "How would you behave around them?" Get a piece of paper and start writing down some things, as my clients would.

Often I give prompts: "How would you greet them?" "What would you say if they were having a really bad day?" "If they told you they had recently been ill, what would you say and do?" "Would you be punctual?" "If they were feeling tired what would you do?" "If, while you were talking to them, someone came up to them and started speaking nastily to them or badmouthing them to their face, what would you do?" "If they were engaged in a really important task that would move them forward in their careers, what would you say?" "If they were about to embark on a new journey, what would you say to them?"

After my clients have written down quite a few things, they read back to me what they have written down. The following are some examples that I have heard (exactly as fed back to me).

- "I would try and consider their feelings"
- "Try and be considerate"
- "Be patient with them"
- "Always be punctual"
- "Encourage them"

- "Ask how they are doing and is there anything I can do for them"
- "Offer assistance and support"
- "Empathise with them"
- "Hear them out; listen to them"
- "Lighten the mood and try and make them smile"
- "Stop them from believing negative things others say about them"
- "Stop them from believing negative things they say about themselves"
- "Divert their attention to something fun"
- "If someone spoke to them horribly would say "stop this now" "
- "Would stand up for the person"
- "If the person was hurt would ask them if they are okay"

Then I ask them, *"Do you do this for yourself?"*



Now they usually don't. Which is the point of the exercise. One person did say to me that respect was something you showed to others, and she didn't think about it as applicable to her. But you do need to show respect to yourself. You teach other people how to treat you. If you treat yourself with disrespect you are showing other people that you don't value yourself and they don't have to either. And every time you do not treat yourself well, you are sending a message to your mind that you are not worthy of respect, and your self-esteem drops a little.

There is nothing good about treating yourself badly. You encourage others to treat you badly and your self-worth – your own estimate of yourself – shrinks. And as you think less of yourself so you become less of a happy, successful and contributing person. And really, you (and this world) want you to be the best you can be.

Here is something for you to practice over the holiday season (and forever more).

Have a great December