

FOUR SPHERES OF RESPECT

Parents, one of the enduring lessons of the 7000day balancing act of parenting is respect. We have a never-ending task of addressing issues related to the way our kids show respect. From the earliest days of life to the day they leave our homes, we must train our kids in the value of respect. Below are what I call "the four spheres of respect." Each one is a category that carries a variety of specifics.



1. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITIES

Your kids will never exist outside of some authority. God has given you the responsibility to train them under your authority so they are ready for all other authorities. Here's a good guideline question to ask: "Does my child's behavior contribute to a respectful attitude toward all authority?" For instance, the teenager who mumbles to his parents and acts like a stranger in the home is exhibiting inappropriate behavior. He or she must be a respectful member of the family, which includes speaking up when talking and participating in family activities. A three year old who throws herself in the floor to get her way is not appropriate because it is a dramatic attempt to overthrow a parent's authority. There are simple examples that we must look out for, because we always have the big picture in mind with our kids: What kind of adult are we helping to create?



2. RESPECT FOR ALL HUMAN LIFE

We are on a very slippery slope culturally because this value is unclear and not universally applied. We **must** train our kids to respect the less fortunate, the elderly, all children (including the unborn), people with special needs and those from all types of diversity. Do not tolerate racism, bullying, bigotry or judgmentalism at any level in your home. Kids need a deep respect for **all** human life. As you apply this sphere to your children, remember to include some self-evaluation and do any needed work on your own level of respect toward all human life.



3. RESPECT FOR PROPERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

We live in a physical world, and our kids need to learn how to properly care for their surroundings. Ultimately, this is a lesson in learning how to steward the gifts and resources we are given. Kids must be trained to respect their environment, from the way they keep their room to the way they treat nature around them. In our home, we often respond when our kids mistreat their stuff (even toys), because that reveals a pattern of disrespect that we don't want to see, condone or passively encourage. As long as they are on my payroll, they are part of the environment of my home, they belong to me, and they do not have permission to damage my property.



4. RESPECT FOR SELF

We must train our kids to be mindful of their potential, their value and their safety. They must learn respect for their bodies and why it matters what they put in their bodies, what they put on or don't put on their bodies and what they do or don't do with their bodies. Kids will typically adopt a self-respect based on the respect given to them by the most influential people in their lives... their parents. Parents, when it comes to sexual purity as a key issue, frankly it's not enough to encourage your kids to wait for "love" - we need to build into them a respect for God's authority over marriage and a self respect that says, "I am valuable enough to wait for sex until marriage." Children need to grow up knowing their value is great and something that should be a constant consideration in every relationship and environment they are in.

I hope these four spheres will help you train your children to become a truly respectful person and ready for anything!

Be sure to visit 7000days.org for more tools to help you make every day count.