

# WHAT YOU REAP IS WHAT YOU SOW

## *Human Respect*



### **SECTION I: WHAT IS HUMAN RESPECT?**

By “human respect,” we mean regarding, honoring and accepting the common human essence of all people. This respect is unconditional, beyond categories of race, culture, religion, political belief, national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical or mental disability. It means we see and acknowledge the dignity and worth of ourselves and all other people, and we work to never pull each other down with oppressive attitudes or actions.

### **HUMAN RESPECT IS DEEP WITHIN US**

Human respect comes naturally! As babies, we are all born with a great capacity for love and respect.

*“It is the natural impulse and pattern of humankind to be compassionate to ourselves and others. When we act otherwise, it is only because we have somehow been subject to forces and pressures destructive to our natural tendencies.”*

Theodore Isaac Rubin, M.D.

Compassion and Self-Hate: An Alternative to Despair

Spiritual and religious traditions across the world call on us to value and practice respect. Mother Teresa stated, “God loves the world through us.” In some of the major Eastern traditions within Buddhism, Hinduism, and Yoga, people greet each other by bowing and/or placing hands together against the heart, and affirming “Namaste: I



salute the divinity in you which salutes the divinity within me." Across the world it is seen that deep within we all have goodness and are worthy of respect.

## **RESPECT FOR OURSELVES**

*Let's love ourselves then we can't fail  
To make a better situation  
Tomorrow, our seeds will grow  
All we need is dedication*

Lauryn Hill

Respect starts with accepting ourselves. It's really hard to see the goodness in others if we've somehow learned to feel less than good about ourselves. Many of us carry wounds from our past, when people near to us (sometimes with the best of intentions, sometimes not) mistreated us with their words or actions.

According to Tom Heuerman, Ph.D., here is what can happen:

*Treated with disrespect, we lose our sense of dignity for ourselves and others.  
Disconnected from our spirit, we are inauthentic. When we give up our  
authenticity we give up our personal power. When we give up our personal  
power, we become impotent. Abuse arises from impotence. . .*

If not careful, unhealed wounds with which we disavow parts of ourselves, can ultimately lead to our harming others. So our challenge is to unlearn the negative messages and to reconnect with our inherent goodness, to reconnect with our hearts.

*I dare you to move  
I dare you to lift yourself up off the floor . . .  
The tension is here  
Between who you are and who you could be  
Between how it is and how it should be.*

Switchfoot

## **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

*Listen to me now  
I need to let you know  
You don't have to go it alone*

U2



Respecting others means treating them with the acceptance and regard to which we all are entitled. It includes the willingness to listen and to notice how we treat others, allowing both ourselves and others a voice. It means understanding that everyone, including ourselves, makes mistakes, and each of us is responsible for doing what we can to correct and/or prevent these mistakes.

## **RESPECT FOR HUMANITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

*The circle of hatred continues unless we react  
We gotta take the power back  
Rage Against the Machine*

*Along with respecting the individuals in our lives, another key part of human respect is developing and practicing respect for all humankind. One goal that college has for all of us is to prepare us as "responsible citizens open to other cultures, able to appreciate the value of freedom, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means. . . .  
. . . .it is necessary to promote systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance – major roots of violence and exclusion."*

UNESCO (1995)

## **WHAT RESPECT DOES NOT MEAN**

Respect as it relates to social justice does not mean seeking vengeance or giving in to hatred, even if we have been mistreated by others.

*"I don't have a minute to hate. I'll pursue justice for the rest of my life. "*

Mamie Till Mobley, 1955, at the funeral of her fourteen-year-old son Emmett, after his murder by American terrorists.

This also does not mean that we see everyone as the same as we are:

*One life  
With each other  
Sisters  
Brothers  
One life  
But we're not the same  
We get to carry each other  
Carry each other*

U2



And finally, when you are called on to promote human respect, it doesn't mean that you must agree with what another person is thinking, saying, or doing.

Cornel West, in *Democracy Matters*, writes,

*"We must respect the scars and wounds of each one of us – even if we are sometimes wrong (or right!)."*

And, once again from the UNESCO document quoted above, It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behavior and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others.

So, human respect - for ourselves, others, and humankind - is a crucial value to practice and promote. As we get closer and closer to practicing respect in many parts of our lives, we find that we get to experience, coming back to us from others, attitudes and actions that we have put out into the world.

As *Rage Against the Machine* expresses it,

*"What You Reap is What You Sow."*

**Ric Chollar, L.C.S.W.**

*Asst. Director for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Students*

## **SECTION II: CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES**

*"Choice has always been a privilege of those who could afford to pay for it."*

Ellen Frankfort

The freedom of choice, and the power within it, will be a reoccurring theme surrounding your college experience. As a college student, you will make several choices, and exercise your power, when you vote for the first time, schedule your classes, manage your money, pick your roommate, or even select whom to date. Balancing that freedom of choice requires accountability to consequence, good or bad. The word consequence, in this context, should not be thought of negatively, but simply implies that for every decision there is an outcome. In understanding your transition to college, it is essential



to examine the act of choice, its accountability to consequence, and the power that is exercised as a result.

*"You must be the change you want to see in the world."*

Mahatma Gandhi

As you begin your college journey, know that respect and community are fundamental values that need to be considered. This is important to know when examining the act of choice, its accountability to consequence, and the power that is exercised as a result.

### **On the college campus:**

- Respect can be defined as the understanding, appreciation, and celebration for the individual and their perspective. Furthermore, there is accountability to creating opportunities for learning, dialogue, and acceptance.
- Community is used most often to illustrate the expectation of shared accountability to our overall success. It is often used to describe what sets the college culture apart from many others (e.g., "we are a community of scholars or a community of learners"). It values cooperation, facilitates the learning process, and reflects the spirit of those within it.

*"A community is a group of people, who have come together, and they work and they live to try and improve the standard of living and quality of life - and I don't mean money."*

William Baldwin

As contributing members to the campus community, you are now expected to exhibit a commitment to the following, as you are examining the act of choice, its accountability to consequence, and the power that is exercised as a result.

- Honor Codes are used to promote a strong sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness. An Honor Code empowers the individual to live responsibly. They traditionally prohibit lying, stealing, and academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty can be defined as cheating, and/or plagiarism. Academic integrity values authenticity in your contribution to the academic process. Consider this, what would be the value of your degree if you cheated your way through school? If your college was known, across the country, as a school that graduated cheaters, what would be the value of your degree upon graduation? Academic integrity protects the reputation of the institution and the value of your degree upon graduation.



- Judicial Codes and other Campus Policies (e.g., Drug and Alcohol and/or Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Statement) are also incorporated into the campus culture to convey the value for personal integrity and to ensure the right of every individual to be treated with respect and dignity. Please know that it is a primary goal of college to develop students into productive and contributing members of society. Therefore, if you are found in violation of state or federal laws, in regard to alcohol and drugs, you can be punishable by both the local and/or federal government as well as the college. This is very important to consider when making choices, understanding the accountability to consequences, and the power that you exercise as a result.

*"Destiny is not a matter of chance; but a matter of choice.  
It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved."*

William Jennings Bryant

Your success in college is dependent on your ability to make healthy choices, being prepared for the consequences, and recognizing the power you exercise as a result. So, as you move forward, continue to ask yourself, How do I want my choices to be interpreted? and, Am I exercising the power, within my choice, in meaningful ways? You have the power to effect change in your choices; use it wisely.

**Chayla Haynes, M.A.**

*Director of Orientation and Family Program and Services*

## REFERENCES

UNESCO is United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization  
<http://www.selfhelpmagazine.com/articles/wf/abuse.html>

