

One definition of respect is: to have due regard for the feelings, wishes or rights of others. Looking at things reported on the news recently it seems to be sadly lacking in our world at present. We have seen stories of: physical attacks on the elderly or the vulnerable; an increase in knife attacks in London; 'sex-for-rent' adverts exploiting young female students; people trafficking sometimes for sex, always for profit; our politicians verbally attacking and undermining each other over Brexit; the Novichok attack where an innocent woman died; the outburst on the tennis court by someone who has long been held up as a role model; not to mention the comments of some football managers towards one another. Where is the care, concern and consideration for the feelings of others in all of that? And as for some of the comments from the current President of the United States ... we won't even go there.

Is it something that is getting worse, or are we just becoming more aware of it? Whichever it is, it is something that I think we should be concerned about for our society and community. Respect for others needs to be re-established and built up again. There is a very small book, a letter, in the New Testament part of the Bible which says, "... [be] ready to do whatever is good, to slander no-one, to be peaceable and considerate, to show true humility towards all men." Whatever your thoughts about the Bible, or wherever you stand regarding your belief (or otherwise) in God, these simple words are what it means to have respect for another person.

Respect is about having consideration for the ideas and life of another human being. It is about being thoughtful and attentive to their needs rather than always thinking about our own. It is about being courteous and polite, even when - or especially when - we might disagree. It is simply about being kind to another human being; it is about feeling for someone else rather than focussing on ourselves all the time.

It is no good, though, pointing the finger at others that we see on the News and that we perceive to be disrespecting society or other people, without first looking at our own personal behaviour and attitudes. We live in a world where there is so much variety, but rather than celebrating that we are so often quick to focus on the differences between ourselves and others and to see those differences negatively. What we all have in common though is that we are all human beings, living this physical life once. That life would be so much better if we each showed more respect - care, concern, and consideration - for others. Respect begins within each of us.

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