

## Build healthy relationships with mutual respect

Written by Timothy Houston  
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In relationships, both men and women must be mutually respected, and they both must be seen as a value to the relationship. There is no big "I" and little "you." This value transcends into respect and consideration needed to support a healthy relationship. Mutual respect is the foundation for honesty, trust, and meaningful communication. In order for relationships to remain healthy, both the man and the woman must be equally respected and appreciated.

Mutual respect is defined as a proper regard for the dignity of a person or position. It is the value we see in the other person. For some, mutual respect is a new mindset. The old mindset gives little or no credit or appreciation to what the man or woman is currently doing. It is based on an old script that was shaped during childhood, and it is influenced by the belief that the man and woman have defined roles and neither should receive or expect to receive any praise for doing what it is his or her job to do. The truth is that anytime anyone shares their hand or heart, they should be valued and appreciated for it.

Mutual respect is intentional. It is based on traditional values and simple acts of appreciation like a woman saying "thank you" to a man that holds the door open for her, or responding to a simple "good morning," and a man's belief that it is still necessary to do these things. The modern day man and woman have been programmed to dislike each other. With statements

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like "there are no good men out there," or "all men are dogs," or in the case of men "women are gold-diggers" or the "woman's place is barefoot and pregnant" it is inevitable that this frame of mind will result in a lack of respect. If women that believe that all men are dogs, at some point, she will start treating men like dogs. And if men believe that a woman's place is in the home, he will not value her contribution outside of the home. When mutual respect is intentional, all of these misconceptions are pushed to the side and a joyful relationship becomes possible.

Although mutual respect is intentional, it is not universally accepted. This lack of acceptance may be caused by a shift in our culture. Men now have to deal with the fact the woman may earn more money or in some cases are the primary provider for the family. Also, although most women have dispelled the notion that the woman's place is in the home, many women still hold on to the idea that the man's place is in the workplace. When situation occur, and the man is not working, a lack of respect for the man may surface. Don't assume the other person shares your same value. Because each relationship is different, each couple should sit down and discuss what respect feels like and establish boundaries and expectations.

Mutual respect is a must. When either the man or the women in the relationship is not respected, the relationship as a whole suffers. Men and women, who are disrespected, will lose respect for the other person and the relationship. As a result, they will seek love, affection, affirmation, and respect in all the wrong places. This will result in more disrespect and a circle of disrespect will be created. This must come to an end. The intention of the above is that mutual respect is critical for the enjoyment and survival of any relationship. It is therefore, the responsibility of anyone entering into a relationship to ensure that this foundational building block of a healthy relationship is secured before continuing or allowing the relationship to advance further than it is at the moment.

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