Respecting Each Other

Do you find yourself having a negative attitude or irritation towards people? Even notice that individuals become provoked or upset by your behavior? It is completely normal and healthy to disagree with others, their philosophies and opinions, but it is important for our relationships that we show respect and honor each other.

The following five steps will help you strengthen respect in your relationships:

1. **Be polite.** Being considerate demonstrates that you are aware of and value people around you. Excuse yourself when your cell phone rings, avoid cutting people off mid-sentence, and make eye contact. Giving people your full attention sends the message that you are not above them and they are important, even if you don’t always agree with what they are saying.

2. **Be conscious about your non-verbal communication.** When you show interest in what others are saying (using active listening skills such as nodding, maintaining eye contact, and asking relevant questions), they feel valued. Gestures such as rolling eyes or sharing a smirk with another person can lead to feelings of humiliation and anger and may make you look arrogant, judgmental, and unprofessional. Keep your frustrations about others for a private conversation.

3. **Treat others’ knowledge and experience as valued contributions.** Many of us think we listen well to others, but are you really hearing them? Failure to consider others’ perspectives makes people feel insignificant. Genuinely listening attentively to what others say makes them feel supported and heard.

4. **Adapt communication to meet others.** Using jargon, acronyms, and technical phrases makes others feel excluded or ignorant. Pay attention to the language they use and the issues that matter to them. You are not only showing respect when you do this—you are also learning about how to offer your knowledge in ways that are more likely to resonate with a broad range of people.

5. **Contribute instead of criticizing.** Acknowledge and support the efforts of others, professionally and personally. Try to look for the unique talents and ability of every person and see their differences as something that you can accept, if not appreciate.

If you find yourself struggling to get along with others or feeling irritable, depressed or upset a lot of the time, consider contacting your free and confidential Employee Assistance Program.

Sources:
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