

Listen up!



From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.

We demonstrate the virtue of respect for others by being courteous and civil and treating everyone in a manner that acknowledges and honors basic human dignity.

An important but often neglected aspect of respect is listening to what others say. Respectful listening is more than hearing. It requires us to consider what's being said. That's hard when we've heard it before, aren't interested, or don't think much of the person talking. It's even worse when we act like we're listening but are just waiting for our turn to speak.

The fact is, most of us don't listen well, certainly not all the time, and especially with those closest to us. Kids are especially adept at tuning out their parents, but parents are equally skilled at ignoring or dismissing as foolish or irrelevant what kids have to say.

The disrespect of not listening is most apparent when others

ignore or patronize us (rolling their eyes in a show of impatience or contempt or faking interest with a vacant stare or wandering eyes).

We all want to know that what we say and think matters. But if we want others to care about what we say, we need to care about what they say. Like all the important virtues, we teach respect best by demonstrating it. So listen up! It'll make people feel better, and you may learn something.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.

Learn more about character education.