

THE REAL MAN PROGRAM

THE OFFICIAL REAL MAN PROGRAM

A Young Man's Game Plan for
Becoming a REAL Man



When it comes right down to it...

Being a REAL man means that you:

R-espect all people,

E-specially women.

A-lways do the right thing.

L-ive a life that matters.

Stand Up and Stand Tall:
Be a REAL Man!

Written by Frank DiCocco

The REAL Man Program Outline

REAL Man Program® ~ Curriculum Overview

The REAL Man Program will emphasize the implementation and application of a unique brand of life skills, designed to equip program attendees with attitudes and skills that will assist them in their efforts to successfully adapt to and excel in real-world situations. These skills and concepts are not presented in isolation, but rather, they are linked to practical, relevant, and real-life situations that are pertinent to everyday life and living. Each lesson includes time for whole-group instruction as well as small-group, partner, or individual activities.

Students are encouraged to think carefully, reflect meaningfully, and discuss their ideas and findings regarding the content of the program, the messages presented, and their own personal reflections and approaches to learning in a socially-constructive environment. These opportunities will provide students with a chance to verbalize their thoughts and discoveries, and also offer them their chance to clarify their thinking, as well as to gain insights from the knowledge and experience others.

Internal Goals

- To read, write, and orally communicate *REAL Man Life Skills* concepts and principles.
- To implement theories into practice (*Praxis*) and employ them within realistic contexts.
- To successfully navigate the challenges of personal development, to approach life's daily obstacles and opportunities with a positive and purposeful attitude, and to resolve everyday problems and concerns by using sound decision-making skills, by placing themselves in good situations and in the company of good people, and by practicing positive habits in a conscientious and concerted manner.
- To understand the relationship between individual life and social living; to understand their connection to others and to their communities; to realize the potential they possess to make a profound and positive difference in the world; and to develop the determination and display the courage necessary to initiate meaningful change and to positively affect the lives of others.

External Goals

- To be able to act and function as respectful, respectable, and responsible members of society; to be positive figures in their homes, families, social circles, and communities.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of diversity; to realize and value the importance of tolerance, respect, and acceptance; to embrace diversity and differences; to accept and affirm people from different backgrounds and life situations.
- To recognize the importance of treating women with respect, to understand the gender issues relevant to our society today; to practice and promote the positive treatment of women at all times; to practice and promote the positive treatment of all people—always.
- To learn, develop, and demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors toward self and others: to learn and develop positive attitude skills; to make positive life choices; to practice healthy lifestyle habits; to learn and develop positive relationship skills; to learn and be able to cultivate meaningful friendships and relationships; and to serve as a positive presence in the lives of others.

Topics & Themes – Brief Overview & Schedule

Brief Overview

The topics and themes will include 20 distinct lessons, each divided into four main-points (or “4 downs,” to borrow a football analogy). The theories, concepts, and principles will come from the “REAL Man” approach, which is developed around the four tenants of Authentic Manhood. Those tenants are:

**Respect all people,
Especially women;
Always do the right thing;
Live a life that matters.**

The “REAL Man” message (also known as “the game plan”) is adapted from the book: “Playbook for Manhood: A Game Plan for Being a REAL Man.” *

The use of daily group-instruction, individual and small-group exercises, group discussion activities, handouts, and brief assignments will help students learn and synthesize the various themes, concepts, and skill-sets outlined throughout the duration of the program.

** The book is written by Frank DiCocco and published through the non-profit entity “REAL Man, Inc. LLC.” It is published by the Amazon.com publishing division, Create Space.*

Be a REAL Man; Make a REAL Difference

Day 1 – Introduction

Day 1 – Introduction

Introduction: What It Means to Be a REAL Man

Lesson Prompt

What does it mean to be a real man?

Every man goes through life trying to figure out the answer to that one important question.

What does it mean to be a real man? In other words, what does it mean to be a real man—in the eyes of my teachers, in the eyes of my coaches, in the eyes of my parents and my family, in the eyes of my friends, in the eyes of my girlfriend, and in the eyes of society?

What does it mean to be a real man?

It is a question that every young man struggles to answer, each and every day.

In truth, it is a question that all men—of every age—constantly try to determine.

There are a lot of myths in our society about what it means to be a *real* man...

What makes you a *real* man? How do you become a real man? *When* do you become a real man?

How do you know if someone is a *real* man? How do you know if *you* are a real man?

What does it mean to be a real man?

First Down: Characteristics of a REAL Man
(What Makes a REAL Man?)

Starting Discussion

Student Exercise

Question: What are the characteristics of a *real* man? What makes a man a *real* man?

Give students two minutes to come up with a brief list of characteristics, of what they think are some of the most important qualities that make-up a *real* man.

Discussion

1. Go around the room, have students introduce themselves (their names and where they are from, and what school they attend), and then say what they think is an important quality (or 2-3 important qualities) that make a man a REAL Man.
2. Write the characteristics on the black board (or on a piece of paper to keep track of them).

Second Down: What Defines You As a REAL Man?
What *Doesn't* Define You as a REAL Man?

Lesson Prompt

What Determines What Kind of a Man You Are? What Defines You As a Man?

Deep down, we all yearn to be good men. But how exactly do we define what it means to be a good man—to be a *real* man? What determines what kind of a man you are, and what really defines you as a man?

A lot of times in our society, we get the wrong definition of what it truly means to be a real man. We get images from the media that stress the importance of money, clothes, cars, status, sex, and personal success... as if all these things are what give a man his true value as a male.

What Defines You As a Man?

Contrary to popular belief, what defines you as a man is not about how attractive you are or about how strong and muscular you are; it's not about what kind of car you drive or about how big your house is; it's not about how many material possessions you have or about how popular you are with the ladies. What defines you as a man is who you are and how you live your life.

Think about that quote for a minute...

“What defines you as a man is *who you are* and *how you live your life.*”

Third Down: Dispelling the Myths of Manhood;
The Truth about What It Means to Be a REAL Man

Lesson Prompt (Read any or all of the following, however many you deem appropriate)

The REAL Deal: Sorting Out the Facts from the Fiction

There are a lot of myths out there about what it means to be a real man. There are a lot of false ideas that culture gives us; there are a lot of lies that our society tells us... about what really makes a man. So how do we sort through what's true and what isn't? How do we figure out what's *real* and what isn't?

The following are myths that our society tells us about being a man... Let's sort through the myths, let's cut through the cultural lies, and let's sort out the facts from the fiction.

Myth #1: Having a lot of money makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not your individual wealth, but your *personal worth*. What defines you as a person is who you are on the inside. Being a real man has nothing to do with about how much money you make or have. It is about who you are, and how you live your life. Your dignity defines you as a man.

Myth #2: Being popular makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how much other people like you or worship you. What defines you as a man is how much you can look yourself in the mirror and like what you see. Your popularity does not define you as a man. Your integrity defines you as a man.

Myth #3: Being popular with the ladies makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how many women like you. It is not about how many women want to be with you, or how many women want to sleep with you. Being a real man has nothing to do with how many women you can get with. It is about what kind of a man you are; it is about how well you treat people—all people: *especially* women. Your vitality does not define you as a man. Your virtue defines you as a man.

Myth #4: Having a lot of “swag” (material possessions) makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how much style or “swag” you have. It is not about how much money you can flash, or about how much jewelry you can show off. What defines you as a man is the way you carry yourself. Being a real man has nothing to do with what kind of clothes you wear, or about how much cash you can flash. Being a real man is about having self-respect and carrying yourself with class. Your style does not define you. Your substance does. Your “swag” does not define you as a man. Your *self-respect* and *class* define you as a man.

Myth #5: Drinking alcohol or doing drugs makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how much you can drink, or how often you smoke. It’s about *taking care of your body*, and it’s about *making good decisions*—making *successful* decisions. Drinking alcohol doesn’t make you look tough. It makes you look childish. Using drugs doesn’t make you look cool. It makes you look foolish. Using alcohol, drugs, or tobacco is a bad idea. It’s dumb. It’s stupid. It will get you in trouble, and it will prevent you from becoming successful. Drugs and alcohol do not define you as a man. Your decisions define you as a man. And the better your decisions, the better type of man you will be.

Myth #6: Having a reputation makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you is not how many possessions you can amass, or how many people you can surpass; it is how much respect and admiration you can earn, and how much you can do to help others. What defines you as a man is not what other people think about you, but what you think about yourself. What defines you as a man is not what other people say about you, but what you know in your heart is true. It is not about who other people think or say you are, but about who you know deep down that you really are. Your reputation does not define you as a man. Your character defines you as a man.

Fiction #7: Being able to Bench-Press a lot makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how much weight you can bench-press off your chest, or about how big your chest is or how cut your pec’s are. Being a real man has nothing to do with how much weight you can bench. It has nothing to do with how big and muscular you are, or about how strong and tough you look. It’s not about how tough you are in muscle, but how tough you are in spirit—it’s not the size of your chest, but the size of the heart that beats inside your chest. Being a real man is about having a tough mind and a tender heart. It is about having principles, and more importantly, *living by your principles*. It is about working hard and competing against *yourself*, and more importantly, *being helpful and compassionate toward others*. Your performance in the gym does not define you as a man. Your principles define you as a man.

Myth #8: Being a great athlete makes you a real man.

Fact: The truth is... What defines you as a man is not how many plays you can make, or how many points you can score on a court. What defines you as a man is how you play the game, and more importantly, how you play the Game of Life. What defines you as a man is not how many touchdowns you score, how many passes you complete, or how many tackles you make on Friday night. What defines you as a man is not how many times you get your name in the newspaper, how many of your clips make it onto the internet, or how pats on the back you receive in the hallways at school. What defines you as a man is the *way that you play the game*, and more importantly, *the way that you live your life*. Your touchdowns do not define you as a man. Your honor defines you as a man.

Truth, the Whole Truth, & Nothing but the Truth: *the REAL deal on what it means to be a REAL man*
What defines you as a man is *who you are* and *how you live your life*.

When it comes right down to it, being a *real* man means that you...

Respect all people, Especially women, Always do the right thing, and Live a life that matters.

Discussion

1. What do you think about these “myths?” Do you think any of them are true? Why or why not?
2. What are some other “myths” about manhood? Are they true? Why or not do you think so?
3. What are some “real” truths about manhood: what “really” makes you a man?

Writing Assignment / Personal Reflection

1. Choose 3 sets of “myths” and “facts.” Think about whether or not you agree with them, whether or not you think they are true, and whether or not you would add anything to the “facts” that follow each myth. Write down any thoughts or ideas that you may have.

Optional Discussion (Time permitting: Offer students the opportunity to share any ideas or thoughts. If time permits, you may also discuss each “myth” and “fact” as a group.)

1. Does anyone disagree with any of the “facts?”
2. Would anyone like to discuss a particular “myth” or “fact?”

Fourth Down: “The 4 Quarters of Manhood” (Introducing the Game Plan for Being a REAL Man)

Lesson Prompt

When it comes to the world of sports... In order to win in any contest, you have to learn to play a complete game. In other words: you have to play hard and play well for all four quarters.

When it comes to the world of manhood: In order to win at being a man, you have to learn to become a complete individual. In other words: you have to understand and live out all four quarters of manhood...

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means... Treating other people with respect.

If you want to be a *real* man, then you have to...

Respect all people: Being a *real* man is about treating *all* people with respect and dignity.

The golden rule is simple enough, and true enough that virtually every religion and ideology in the world deems it one of its most important values. Treat everyone the way you’d want to be treated...period. You can tell virtually all you need to know about a man by the way he treats others.

Discussion

1. What do you think about this? Do you think respect is important?
2. Do you think it’s important to treat people with respect? Why?

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means... Treating *women* with respect.

If you want to be a *real* man, then you have to...

Respect all people, ESPECIALLY WOMEN: Being a real man is all about treating women with respect—plain and simple. Be a gentleman at all times, and always be respectful. You can tell just about everything you need to know about a man by the way he treats a woman.

Discussion

1. What do you think about this? Do you think it is important to treat women with respect?
2. Do you think it's important to *all* women with respect? Why?
3. Is there ever a time when it's okay to be rude to women?
4. Is there ever a time when it's okay to hurt a woman?
5. Do you think it's "cool" to treat women with respect? Should it be?
6. Think about this for a minute: How would you want other people to treat your mother, your sister, your grandmother, or your girlfriend?

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means... Always Doing the Right Thing.

If you want to be a *real* man, then you have to...

Always do the right thing: Being a real man is about having principles and living by those principles. It is about having something called "consistent character," which means that you have the same principles, regardless of the circumstances. It is incredible how much good you can do, and how many difficult situations you can make it through in life if you just live by five simple words: *Always do the right thing.*

Discussion

1. What do you think about this? Do you think it is important to Do the Right Thing?
2. Is there ever a time when it's okay to not do the right thing? Or, can you always do the right thing?
3. What are some things that make it difficult to do the right thing?
4. Why should you try to do the right thing? What are the benefits: to other people... to yourself?

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means... Living a Life That Matters.

If you want to be a *real* man, then you have to...

Live a life that matters: Being a real man is about striving for excellence in every aspect of life. It is about always doing your very best to reach your full potential in this world: to make the most of your talents, opportunities, and potential to impact others in a positive way. Being a real man is about investing yourself in your own success, and more importantly, in the success of others.

Discussion

1. What do you think about this? What do you think it means to "Live a Life that Matters?"
 2. Do you think it's important to be a good person?
 3. Do you think it's important to be a good friend?
 4. Do you think it's important to be a good role model to others?
 5. How would you want other people to think of you? Do you want them to think you're a good person?
 6. Do you think it's important to be thought of as a good person?
 7. Do you think it's important to try to make a positive difference in other people's lives?
-

Conclusion: Are You For REAL?

Lesson Prompt

There are a lot of myths in our society about what it means to be a real man. Contrary to popular belief, being a man is not about how strong and muscular you are; it's not about what kind of car you drive; it's not about how much money you have, or about how many women you can use.

Life is not about money, cars, fame, physical appearance, and women. It's about who you are as a person; it's about the way you live your life; and it's about how you treat other people. When it comes right down to it...

Being a REAL man means that you:

*R-respect all people,
E-specially women.
A-lways do the right thing.
L-ive a life that matters.*

Discussion

1. Go back to the list of characteristics, and now ask the students which ones they think are the most important. Circle the 4-5 traits that students come to distinguish as most important.

Extra Point

Quote of the Day: "The great aim of our living and striving should be to become better men."
~ David Bancroft Johnson

Closing Task

* *Give each student a REAL Man[®] wristband and a copy of the "REAL Man Flyer."*
(Send them off with the challenge to: "Stand Up and Stand Tall: Be a REAL Man!")

(Post "The 4 Quarters of Manhood" Flyer on the classroom wall, prior to the next class.)

Conclusion – Alternate Version
Are You For REAL? ~ Be REAL & Keep It REAL.

Lesson Prompt

Being A REAL Man

Being a REAL man is not about your possessions, but about your *principles*.

It is not about your image, but about your *integrity*.

It is not about your circumstances, but about your *character*.

It is not about your style or your “swag,” but about your *substance* and your *class*.

Being a REAL man is not about your financial value, but about your personal *values*.

It is not about your net-worth, but about your *self-worth*.

It is not about selfishly serving yourself, but about *selflessly serving others*.

It is not about living only for your own wants, concerns, and desires,

But about living for something more important—*something greater than just yourself*.

It is not about taking whatever you can get, getting whatever you can take, or living carelessly beyond your means... but about living right, leaving a legacy, and living beyond your years.

Be REAL & Keep It REAL:

Being REAL Is A Lifestyle...

Being REAL is about the way you carry yourself.

Being REAL is about the way you treat people.

Being REAL is about what you stand for.

Being REAL is about what you do in your life.

Being REAL is about what you do for the lives of others.

Being a REAL man is about respecting all people, *especially women*,
always doing the right thing, and living a life that matters.

So, the Question Is ... Are You for REAL?

Respect all people, Especially women. Always do the right thing. Live a life that matters.
Stand up and stand tall. Be a REAL man!

Day 2 –

Respect All People

Day 2 – Respect All People

Introduction: Respect All People

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means that you... Respect All People, at all times, in all ways.

Being a REAL man means treating *all* people with *respect* and *dignity*. It means understanding that everyone is worthy of respect, and that all people deserve to be treated respectfully. Treating people with respect simply means: treat other people the way you want to be treated. Most people want to be treated as well as they can be, so then we should do our best to try to treat other people as well as we can treat them, too. A REAL man shows respect to all people, at all times, in all ways... without exception.

First Down: The Nature & Importance of Respect

Lesson Prompt

What is “respect?” How do you treat people with respect?

Why is it important to treat people with respect?

Respect is all about treating people right. Respect is about being good to other people, being kind to other people, and being fair with people. Respect means treating people right—regardless of who they are, what they say, or how they act.

There is another way to define what respect is all about.

Respect is about treating others the way you would want to be treated, at all times and in all situations.

All people deserve to be treated with respect. Everyone—you, me, your friends, your parents, your teachers and coaches, your teammates, people you know, even people you don't know. Each and every person is unique and special in some way. That means you, too. Since everyone is so special, everyone should be treated with respect. And everyone should treat others with respect, too.

Questions & Discussion

1. What else is “Respect?” How else can we define what “respect” means?
2. What are some ways that we can “show respect” to other people?
3. Do you think respect is important? Do you think it's important to treat other people with respect?
4. Why should you treat other people with respect? Why should other people treat *you* with respect?
5. Do you think we should try to treat *everyone* with respect? Is there anyone that *doesn't* deserve to be treated with respect? (Hint: ALL people deserve to be treated with respect, at all times—including you.)

Quick Questions

Is a school better when its students and teachers show mutual respect to each other?

Is a team better when its players and coaches all show mutual respect for one another?

Is a neighborhood better when its members show mutual respect to each other?

Is a society better when its people show mutual respect for one another?

~ If “Yes” is the answer to each of these questions, then shouldn't we all do more to show respect to one another and to treat each other with respect?

Second Down: The Rules of Respect:
The Golden Rule & Other Rules

Lesson Prompt

Being a REAL Man means treating other people with respect. But how do you do that? How do you know what you can do to show respect to people? Believe it or not, there are rules for treating people with respect. Every country has laws, and every culture has customs. Many of the world's countries and religions have a special set of rules just for respect.

(Give each student a copy of the double-sided handout entitled: "The Golden Rules & Other Rules," or if you are using the "Playbook for Manhood"... have students turn to the appropriate page in the book.)

(Read some of the versions of the Golden Rule. Then, read the "Other Rules" of respect.)

Group Activity & Discussion

Have students work as a group to come up with their own "Rules of Respect" list for their classroom. Write down all the suggestions the group agrees upon, about rules for treating each other with respect. Then, hang the list up (type a formal list up, or use the ready-made print-out entitled: "The Rules of Respect") in a central part of the classroom. (Remind the students every day that the "Rules of Respect are in effect.")

To get the group started, here are some suggestions you can make for Respect Rules:

- Treat people the way you want to be treated.
- Be nice. Be kind. Be fair.
- No name-calling. No teasing.
- No pushing or shoving. No bullying.
- Raise your hand when you want to speak.
- Be quiet when other people are speaking (show them respect when it's their turn to talk)

Personal Reflection Questions – Using the "Rules" to Think About How You Treat People

Think about the following situations, and then think about the Golden Rule and each of the "Other Rules," and decide how you would react and treat the other person.

1. The driver in the car in front of you, who cuts you off at the traffic light
2. A person who calls your house or cell phone late at night, by accident (wrong number)
3. Your brother/sister who is annoying you while you're trying to do your homework
4. A *really* annoying person, who keeps asking you the same question: over and over
5. Your teacher or coach, who is upset with you for not paying attention

If you followed the Golden Rule, Silver Rule, Bronze Rule, or Titanium Rule...

Then chances are that you probably would treat each of these people with respect... even if you didn't want to, or even if it was really hard too.

Third Down: Diversity, Tolerance, & Acceptance:
Embrace Diversity, Practice Tolerance, & Promote Acceptance

Lesson Prompt

Diversity & Differences: Everyone Is Different, and No Two People Are Exactly Alike

You won't always be *just like* everyone you meet in life... and everyone you meet won't always be just like you. In fact, they usually won't be just like you. The fact is, most people will be different from you in some way. If you think about it, there are more than 6 billion people who live in the world. If the saying is true that "no two people are exactly alike" ... then there are a lot of "differences" in the world.

But that is a good thing. In fact, it is a *great* thing. It makes life interesting. It adds more types of people, more types of ideas, more types of opinions, and more types of beliefs into the equation. It gives us different kinds of music, different kinds of movies, different games of books, and different kinds of games to play. All these things help make life more interesting, more exciting, and more fun. Diversity isn't just *something*: it's a *good* thing. Better yet... it's a *great* thing.

Questions

1. Would life be boring if everyone was the exact same? If everyone looked the same, talked the same, acted the same? Wouldn't life be like a bunch of robots walking around?
2. Would sports be boring if everyone on the team played the same position? Would it make it hard to play the game? If everyone on the team was a quarterback, wouldn't it be hard to get a game going?
3. Why is diversity a good thing? Does it make people more interesting? Does it make life more interesting? Why or why not?

Prompt

We live in a diverse world made up of many different cultures, languages, races, and backgrounds. That kind of variety can make all our lives a lot more fun and interesting, but only if we get along with each other. In order to get along with each other, we have to treat each other with respect. What are some ways that we can try to better understand each other, so that we can better treat each other?

Question

1. Why is diversity important? What can you do to learn more about different types of diversity?
What can you do to learn more about different kinds of people, different types of places, or different types of things—like other countries, other religions, or other kinds of music?

Prompt

Be Tolerant and Accepting of Others

Tolerance has been defined as: "Learning to accept others as valuable individuals, regardless of their traits or beliefs." In other words... Tolerance means putting aside individual differences and embracing collective similarities.

Being tolerant means always being respectful—whether you *want* to be or not. It means being kind to other people, even if they are different from you in some way: *especially* if they are different from you.

Being accepting of people, means simply being courteous to other people, regardless of who they are or what their situation is. Whether you want to be respectful or not, is irrelevant. Being accepting means treating people well, at all times. To put it in another way: it means *being polite and treating people right*.

Teamwork: The Most Important Lesson In Sports

The world of sports teaches a number of valuable life lessons. The first and most valuable lesson that sports teaches... is the importance of treating other people with respect: players must respect other players; players must respect coaches; coaches must respect players, and coaches must respect coaches.

Come Together and Work Together

One of the first things that every member of a team must learn, is that everyone must come together and work together, in order for the team—and everyone on it—to be successful. Everyone on the team has to understand the importance of viewing their teammates with dignity—of accepting them and valuing them for who they are and for what they are capable of contributing.; and they also have to learn to treat their teammates with respect at all times, and in all ways. Teammates have to learn to tolerate one another, accept one another, and value one another in order to work together with one another.

Come Together, Work Together, Achieve Together

You have to learn to coexist before you can learn to come together; you have to learn to come together before you can work together, and you have to learn to work together before you can ever hope to accomplish anything special together. And you can do none of these things unless you first learn to treat each other with respect. In order for a team to be successful, every one of its members must learn to accept, respect, and value one another. No team can ever be successful without first having respect as a basic foundation. No group can ever be great unless its members have mutual respect for one another and treat each other respectfully.

Teamwork Means Tolerant and Accepting; It Means Putting Differences Aside & Being Respectful
As members of a team, you have to realize that you do not have to like each other, but that you do have to treat one another with respect. You do not have to be best friends with one another, but you do have to be civil toward each another. You must be respectful toward each other; you must be civil to one another; you must come together and learn to work together in order to achieve success together.

The Human Team: All In The Same Huddle

In sports, it doesn't matter where you come from, what you look like, what you believe in, or what color your skin is. All that matters is that you are part of the team. You and your teammates are all part of the same team. In the game of life, all *people* are part of the same team, too. Even though we may look different than each other, or act differently than one another—even if we come from different places, or have different beliefs in life... all of us are part of the same team. We are all part of something called: *The Human Team*.

The great thing about being on a team, is that every member of the team is important. As someone who is on a team, you are entitled to be treated with respect and with dignity. You deserve to be treated with respect, simply because you are part of the team. In life, the same holds true: you deserve to be treated with respect and with dignity, simply because you are a member of the team—the “human team.”

Questions

Read each of the following statements.

Then, write whether you agree or disagree, and what you think about each.

1. All people are equal and deserve equal treatment: We are all of equal value, whether we like it or not, and therefore, we are all deserving of equal respect.
2. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Everyone, everywhere deserves your respect.
3. Everyone is important, and everyone matters: Everyone you meet is important. Everybody matters. Everybody is *somebody*.

Prompt

Here is a great quote that really emphasizes the nature of coming together as a team:

“The game has no prejudices, and neither do I.” ~ Jim Calhoun (Connecticut Men’s Basketball Coach)

Regardless of personal preferences and individual differences, everyone is a member of the same team... the *Human Team*. Although some people may have different roles than others—and some roles may be bigger or smaller than others—it is important to understand that everyone is an equal member of the group—everyone is an important member of “the team.” Therefore, it is important to remember that everyone matters. Everyone counts. Everyone is important.

Embracing diversity, being tolerant of other’s differences, and being accepting of other people’s qualities is an important part of life in this world. After all... There are more than 6 billion people in this world, and no two people are exactly alike. Therefore...

You won’t always agree with everyone in life... and everyone won’t always agree with you.

You won’t always like everyone in life... and everyone won’t always like you either.

But then again, you don’t always have to *like* other people; but you do have to *respect* other people.

Questions

1. Do you think respect needs to be earned, or do you think it should be given automatically?
2. Should people automatically be treated with respect? Why or why not?

Wrap Up

You don’t have to like everyone you meet; you don’t have to agree with everyone’s opinions or decisions; you don’t have to share in everyone’s beliefs, and you don’t have to be best friends with everyone you meet. But, you do have to treat everyone with respect. You do have to be polite. You do have to be kind.

* You don’t have to agree with others, you just have to be respectful to them.

* You don’t have to agree with people’s beliefs, you just have to be respectful *of* them.

* You don’t have to agree with someone’s opinions, you just have to be respectful of that person’s right to have their own opinion. Embracing diversity, being tolerant, and being accepting simply means one thing: It means being polite and treating people right.

Additional / Optional Writing Assignment

(Give each student a copy of the poem “Put Differences Aside - It Makes No Difference To Me.”

Or, simply read it out-loud to them. Then ask them to reflect upon and answer the following questions:)

Questions

1. What do you think about the poem?
 2. When are individual differences not as important as other things in life?
 3. What sort of things are more important than whether or not people are different from you?
 4. When would you be willing to put aside differences: When the “game is on the line?” When something else really important is on the line? How about when your *life* is on the line? How about when *someone else’s* life is on the line?
-

Fourth Down: What Really Matters (When Your Life Is On the Line)

Lesson Prompt

Tolerance means realizing that differences exist, but that other things matter more importantly. It means acknowledging other people's differences, and then choosing to put those differences aside... Because ultimately, those differences do not matter as much as the things we all share in common. Going beyond tolerance means something even more: it means being willing to put aside every difference, in order to focus on something of greater importance. In sports, this can mean winning the game, or championship. In life, this could mean something even more significant: it could mean *life* itself.

Story: Life Is Color-Blind: The Heroic Story of Joe Girardi
(Read the following story, or give out the corresponding handout to students:)

New York Yankees manager, Joe Girardi was driving in his car on his way home, shortly after winning the 2009 World Series. While driving across New York City's famous George Washington Bridge, Girardi saw a car crash into the barrier on the other side of the road.

Knowing that someone could have been seriously injured, and that their life might be in serious danger as well, Girardi flung open his door and sprinted across five lanes of traffic, where he then proceeded to pull a middle-age, female driver from out of her badly-damaged car to safety. The nearby police officers came to the victim's aid as well. An ambulance unit was called to the scene, for what eventually turned out to be mere precautionary reasons.

Had it not been for Girardi's timely actions, the woman behind the wheel of that ill-fated automobile might have required more than just "precautionary" measures. She very well could have been seriously injured—or perhaps even worse. Maybe her car would have exploded, or perhaps another car or cars may accidentally have slammed into hers.

Joe Girardi was a real-life hero. But what is even more impressive than what he did, was the fact that he did it *without even knowing* the person he was saving. In fact, Girardi didn't know a single thing about the person he was risking his life to save. And yet, it didn't matter—not at all.

Joe Girardi did not stop to think about whether he should help the person in that car or not; he didn't stop to consider whom he was potentially going to help, before deciding to risk his life for another. He didn't even think about whether or not he would receive anything in return for his heroic efforts.

All that Joe Girardi cared about... was helping someone else who needed help. Girardi didn't know that person. He didn't know anything about that person. All Joe Girardi knew was that someone's life was in danger, and that he was in a position to help save it.

As it turns out, the victim of the car accident didn't know Joe Girardi either. She was a middle-aged woman, who wasn't even a baseball fan at all. For all she knew, the person saving her life was an average, everyday, non-famous person. But even if he was, it wouldn't have mattered. All that mattered to that woman, was that Girardi was there to help. And to Girardi, it wouldn't have mattered who that woman was... she could have been the biggest Boston Red Sox fan in the world... but at that moment in time, when her life was on the line, Girardi was willing to put aside any and every difference, in order to focus on something of far-greater importance: life itself.

Joe Girardi didn't risk his life to help save another's, because it was the popular thing to do, or because he was going to become (even more) famous, or because he was going to get some kind of reward for it. No: Joe Girardi risked his life to help save another's for one, simple reason: because it was the right thing to do.

To Joe Girardi, it didn't matter who was driving that other car—all he knew was that a member of his human family was in trouble, and that he was the one person who could help. To the victim he saved, it didn't matter who Girardi was—whether he was a Yankee or not. All she knew was that he was there to save her life. (He was there to be her "guardian angel.") The rest was irrelevant.

Question to Consider: If your life was on the line: would you really care who your Guardian Angel was?

Questions

1. Imagine you were the person in need of help. Imagine your life was in danger, and you need to be saved. Now, imagine that the only person who was there and could save you, was completely different from you, in every way. (Maybe they were a different race, or from a different place; maybe they were a woman, or maybe they were a die-hard fan of another sports team.) Would it matter to you whether that person was different? Or, would all you care about be that they help to save your life? In a matter of life and death, what *would* and what *wouldn't* matter?
2. Imagine you were in Joe Girardi's position—imagine that you were the person in a position to rescue someone. That person was in danger, and they needed you to save their life. Imagine they were different from you—or imagine you didn't even know who they were, or anything about them. Would it matter to you? Would it make a difference if they were different or not? Or, would you try to do everything you could to save that person's life? Would you care that they were a stranger, or would you simply try to help that person?
3. If you were the person in need of help, or if you were the person in position to help... Would it really matter whether the other person was different than your or not?
4. If it wouldn't make a difference to you if the other person was different, then should it ever make a difference? If it wouldn't matter to you *then*, then should it *ever* really matter? Why or why not?

Conclusion: Diversity & Respect

Lesson Prompt

Life Is Color-Blind ... Shouldn't We Be Too?

Life does not care about race, creed, color, or ethnicity... neither does Death, for that matter. Life doesn't care about material wealth or social status; nor does it care about orientation or political views. Life does not care about any of these things, and neither should we. Life, itself, has no prejudices... and neither should we. To put it another way: *Life is color-blind... Shouldn't we be too?*

~ The sooner we realize that WE ARE ALL PEOPLE, the better off we will all be.

We should always strive to treat one another with respect. By being tolerant, civil, and respectful to all people at all times, we make the world a better and more pleasant place. By treating others the way that we, ourselves, would want to be treated, we will make this wonderful world of ours a much more peaceful and enjoyable place in which to live.

Extra Point

Quote of the Day: "The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect...

Rarely do members of one family grow up under the same roof."

~ Richard Bach

Attached Handouts & Profiles

* *Story Profile: Joe Girardi (Life Is Color-blind... Shouldn't We Be, Too?)*
The Golden Rule & Other Rules