

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 2

RESPECT

In the Video Series



Produced by Elkind+Sweet Communications, Inc.
in association with Character Counts!

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INTRODUCTION

In his landmark book, “Educating for Character,” Dr. Thomas Lickona asserts that:

“Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. . . . When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it’s clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right—even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within.”

The purpose of this video series is to support educators, parents, and others who work with young people in their efforts to achieve this vision.

“**In Search of Character**” focuses on ten virtues commonly named by parents, educators, and community groups concerned with character education:

Trustworthiness	Citizenship
Respect	Honesty
Responsibility	Courage
Fairness	Diligence
Caring	Integrity

While each of these words evokes its own meaning, what counts most, like colors on a canvas, is the way they interact to paint a complete picture. “In Search of Character” is not about teaching individual virtues, it’s about helping young people **construct a vision of themselves as good people** and then live up to that vision. It’s about showing them that, in a world where poor character is so commonplace, **they can choose to be better than that.**

***In Search of Character* has important historical roots.** In 1992 the Josephson Institute of Ethics convened a diverse group of 29 educators and youth organization leaders in Aspen, Colorado, to hammer out a framework for character education that would be agreeable across political, religious, and social divisions. As part of their task, the conference participants attempted to identify a concise, yet comprehensive, list of core ethical values they could all embrace. What they came up with is now known as **the six pillars of character**. They are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

We found these six pillars to be a very useful foundation on which to build our new video series. Additionally, as we looked more closely at these pillars, we found they contained several important virtues which we felt deserved to be singled out for individual attention. And so, from the **trustworthiness** pillar we extracted *honesty*, *courage*, and *integrity*, and from the **responsibility** pillar we took *diligence*. Hence, the ten titles on the previous page.

In Search of Character was created and produced by David Elkind and Freddy Sweet, Ph.D., producers of such well known youth guidance videos as *The Power of Choice* and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. Elkind & Sweet are the authors of many journal articles on conducting classroom discussions for character education. They are members of the Character Education Partnership, the Josephson Institute of Ethics, and Educators for Social Responsibility.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

**Use in classrooms, libraries, youth groups,
or view it at home.**

This video, along with the guide and website, is designed to help teachers engage students in classroom discussion and other activities leading to deep, meaningful reflection about the kinds of people they are and want to be.

Have a great discussion!

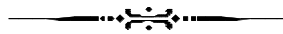
Thoughtful, reflective discussions are essential to getting the most out of these videos. You will find some very fruitful facilitation techniques, including **Socratic Method**, at our special character education website at <www.goodcharacter.com>. The questions in this discussion guide begin on page 10.

www.goodcharacter.com provides a wealth of helpful material including questions, assignments, and activities for special topics such as **sports, workplace readiness**, and others. Please utilize this very valuable resource.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles are emphasized throughout this video series:

- ◆ Your character is defined by what you do, not by what you say or believe.
- ◆ Every choice you make helps define the kind of person you are choosing to be.
- ◆ Good character requires doing the right thing even when it's costly or risky.
- ◆ You don't have to adopt the worst behavior of others as a standard for yourself. You can choose to be better than that.
- ◆ What you do matters, and one person can make a big difference.
- ◆ The payoff for having good character is that it makes you a better person and it makes the world a better place.



WHAT IS RESPECT?

In this program respect means:

- 🍏 Treating others the way you want to be treated.
- 🍏 Having consideration for others.
- 🍏 Treating people with civility, courtesy, dignity.
- 🍏 Being accepting of differences.
- 🍏 Solving problems without violence.
- 🍏 Not ridiculing, embarrassing, or hurting others.

PROGRAM CONTENT

We are looking in on the “Dr. Mike Show,” a talk radio show for teenagers. Kim calls in with a problem concerning disrespectful behavior among the members of a committee she’s chairing. This sets in motion an in-depth exploration of respectful behavior and its importance in human affairs. Through conversation with Dr. Mike and his co-host, Anika; through flashbacks to discussions Dr. Mike has had with high school students around the country; and through a documentary story about one teenager’s efforts to promote inter-racial respect; Kim figures out how to handle her problem and learns that respect is a pillar of good character.

00:38 START OF RADIO SHOW:

“What’s up, we’re back, and this is the Dr. Mike Show, talk radio for the under twenty crowd. I’m Anika Noni Rose, and heeeeere’s Dr. Mike.”

Dr. Mike reads a fax from a teenage girl who is so tired of all the put-downs at her school that she started a campaign promoting respect. So many students signed on that she wants to take it national. Can Dr. Mike help? Both Dr. Mike and Anika agree that they, too, are fed up with all the disrespectful behavior in society, and they decide to dedicate the show to the subject of respect.

The first caller is Kim, who is chairing her school’s homecoming committee. They just had their first meeting, and, instead of getting anything accomplished, it was just a fiasco of insults, name calling, and racial slurs. She walked out and feels like quitting the committee. Dr. Mike says he thinks he and Anika can show her how to turn it all around and make things go smoothly. He begins by telling her about a conversation he recently had with some high school kids. . .

04:08 TEEN DISCUSSION BEGINS:

Dr. Mike relates a story of driving to a football game in bumper-to-bumper traffic when he suddenly realizes that he has to cross two lanes of traffic to pull into a parking garage. So he rolled down his window and politely asked the guy in the car next to him to let him cross. “What do you think the guy said?”

The teentalkers' replies are mixed, but most think the other driver laughed at him and refused.

Dr. Mike says the man let him in even though all the people behind him were honking at him. "Why did he do that?"

The teens give the following responses:

-Because you asked him with respect.

-He was showing you respect because you showed him respect.

-When somebody shows you respect, you give them respect in return.

-It was the way you approached him.

Dr. Mike asks: If the guy insults me, should I insult him?

-No, you'll just be there yelling and screaming, and you still won't get where you're going.

Dr. Mike asks: What if, instead of asking, we had just started inching the car over into the next lane. What would the guy have done then?

-Beeped at you, called you a name.

-He would have tried to keep you from getting in.

-If you don't show respect to him, why should he show it to you?

-When you show respect to people, it makes them want to show respect to others, and it starts a ripple effect. Someone has to take the first step.

07:40 RETURN TO THE RADIO PROGRAM

Dr. Mike asks Kim if she learned anything from the conversation. She notes that she had focused on the disagreements her group was having rather than the disrespectful way they were behaving, but she doubts she can get them to respect each other. When Dr. Mike says she doesn't have to get them to respect each other, Kim is very confused.

08:37 TEEN DISCUSSION:

Dr. Mike asks: Should we respect everyone?

-Yes. You don't have to respect everyone but you should treat people with respect.

-No, but we should have courtesy.

-To me respect is being courteous and civil.

-There are degrees, though. There's respect for your elders like teachers and parents, and on another level there is the respect for your peers. Then there's just being courteous.

-I don't think it's easy to distinguish the respect that you feel and the respect you display. There's a teacher I don't respect, but I'm not going to act disrespectful in that class.

-At a concert I asked someone to stop smoking because it was in my face. And they just kept smoking. It's rude and disrespectful.

-But overall we have an idea what treating other people nicely is. Whether it's respect, courtesy or just being civil, we know what's right and wrong.

Dr. Mike asks: How you feel when someone bumps into you without saying anything?

-I get mad and frustrated.

-I let them know they owe me an "excuse me." I bumped someone on my skateboard yesterday and stopped to say, "excuse me." I thought about what it would be like to be that person. It would have been disrespectful not to say anything.

Dr. Mike asks: Is it ever OK to disrespect people?

-If someone offends someone close to you then you're going to disrespect them in order to defend the person you're close to.

-Two wrongs don't make a right. You don't ever need to be disrespectful. That's sinking to their level. With me, I just kill them with kindness.

-Just because you don't like someone, you don't have to show them. That would bring you to their level. And then you end up feeling bad.

Dr. Mike asks: Why are we sometimes disrespectful?

-We build self respect on disrespecting others.

-Sometimes it's from selfishness.

-I always try to put myself in the other person's shoes to see where they are coming from.

-I try to overlook differences and find similarities. If you can do that you can work a lot out.

16:45 BACK TO THE RADIO STATION:

Kim sees Dr. Mike's point—she has to get the members of her committee to treat each other with respect even if they don't actually respect each other. But how can she go about it? Dr. Mike tells her to call a meeting, lay down the rules of respect, and make them stick. Kim feels powerless to do that because she's just one person against a whole committee. Dr. Mike admonishes her that “just one person” can make a very big difference, and to prove it he tells her the following story . . .

17:38 DOCUMENTARY: BRIAN HARRIS

We see an inspiring documentary about a bi-racial teenager who created an international pen pal service to connect people of different races.

24:40 BACK TO THE RADIO STATION:

Dr. Mike asks Kim if she's up to the challenge. She says if Brian Harris can bring together thousands of people across the continent, she can probably do so with ten from her school. She'll call a meeting and lay out the rules. She'll start with the golden rule, and include being civil, stop-ping the put-downs, listening to each other and being more tolerant of differences. They say good bye. Anika comments that respect is the thread that holds our social fabric together and makes it possible to resolve differences peaceably. Dr. Mike agrees, adding that in a world filled with incivility, intolerance, insults, and ridicule, these teens are powerful proof that we can be better than that.

Anika delivers a public service announcement about the benefits of respectful behavior.

END AT 27:00

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before the video.

1. Suppose you were driving in a traffic jam and you suddenly realized you have to cut across two lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic to turn right at the next corner. What's the first thing you would do? Why?

Questions to ask after the video.

2. What would you have done if someone tried to cut in front of you in traffic without asking your permission? Why? Has seeing this video changed your mind?

3. In the video Dr. Mike received a FAX from a teenager who is tired of all the put-downs at her school. Do you have the same problems at your school? What do you think can be done about it?

4. How do you feel when someone judges you without knowing you or giving you a chance? How do you feel when someone you disagree with calls you a name? How do you feel when someone bumps into you in the hall and doesn't apologize?

5. Agree or disagree: Courtesy and politeness are a lot of nonsense.

6. In the video one teen said that if someone shows you respect, you should show respect in return. Do you agree? How do you feel if you treat someone with respect and that person responds with rudeness? If someone insults you, should you insult that person in return?

7. One girl in the video makes the point that you don't have to respect everyone, you simply have to treat people with respect. What's the difference? Do you agree with her point of view? Explain.

8. Agree or disagree: When people stay out of a bully's way, they are showing respect.

9. Mike's advice to Kim is to establish some rules and make them stick. What are your rules for respectful behavior?

10. How did the story of Brian Harris and his pen-pal service make you feel? What did you learn from it?
11. Do you think Brian's pen-pal service is making our world a better place to live in? In what way?
12. What can you do to make this a more respectful world?
13. Does respect play a role in harmonious race relations? Explain.
14. Do you think that people in our society are respectful enough of each other? Why?
15. Do you consider yourself to be a respectful person? Why, or why not? In what ways do you show respect to others?
16. How is respect related to fairness? To caring? To the Golden Rule? To violence?
17. What does respect have to do with the quality of your character?
18. What are the benefits of people treating each other with respect?
19. Did the video present any ideas you disagree with?

*For additional questions, or to share your own ideas with others, or for questions relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, visit www.goodcharacter.com*

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. How does government "of, by, and for the people" depend on respect? Write an essay connecting the concepts of democracy and respect. Consider the following points. How is listening to different points of view a sign of respect and a cornerstone of democracy? What is it about the concept of democracy that relies upon mutual respect among people? How is the very concept of democracy related to respect for the individual?
2. Watch a sitcom on television, and then write about how the actions of the characters demonstrated either respectful or disrespectful behavior.
3. Bullies are often trying to make people "respect" them. Is this really respect, or is it fear? What is the difference? How is bullying and violent behavior an act of disrespect?
4. Write about a time when you were disrespectful to someone. Why did it happen? Was it the right thing to do? What were the consequences? How did it make the other person feel? What did you learn from the experience?
5. Describe three things you could do to be a more respectful person. How would that affect your relationships with others? How does it benefit you to be a respectful person?
6. In the video one teen talks about a ripple effect: If one person treats another with respect, the respect begins to spread out from there. Write an editorial for your school newspaper encouraging students to start the "respect ripple effect." Describe what it could accomplish in your school setting.

For additional assignments, or to share your own ideas with others, or for assignments relating to special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc., visit www.goodcharacter.com

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Conduct a survey in your school or community, asking questions like these. Do you think people are respectful enough? What are some disrespectful acts that really annoy you? What are some respectful acts that you especially appreciate? Compile the results into a report.
2. Brainstorm ways to make your school environment more respectful. Create a list of recommendations and place them in your school newspaper or on a poster.
3. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group develop a list of do's and don'ts for being a respectful person. (*See our definition on page 5.*) Have them make oral reports to the class addressing the following questions: What happens when people live in accordance with these guidelines. What happens when they don't. In what ways does respectful and disrespectful behavior affect our community and society?
4. Bring in articles from newspapers and magazines describing situations in which respect or disrespect are issues. Talk about who is acting respectfully, and who is acting disrespectfully in these situations. Using the articles as evidence, tell the class about the consequences of disrespectful and respectful behaviors.
5. Role play some typical situations in which disrespectful behavior leads to hostility and maybe even violence. Then, change one of the disrespectful actions into one of respect and see how the outcome changes.

*For additional activities, or to share your own ideas with others, or for activities relating to **special topics such as sports, workplace readiness, etc.**, please visit www.goodcharacter.com*

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A Cyber Supplement for
“In Search of Character”

Please visit this website to find:

- * **Facilitation techniques** for conducting meaningful, productive classroom discussions, including **Socratic Method**.
- * **Additional discussion questions, writing assignments, and learning activities** contributed by teachers and youth group leaders who are using “In Search of Character.”
- * **Opportunities for your students** to become involved in activities and issues relating to the topics in these videos.
- * **Links** to key character education organizations and resources.
- * **Articles** and other writings on educating for character.
- * Special discussion guide supplements for use with **sports programs, workplace readiness programs**, and other areas of special interest.

This website is updated frequently, and you are invited to check it often. We welcome your requests for specific items to include, and we will appreciate any contributions you make by sharing your own ideas or experiences as a character educator.

ABOUT DR. MIKE. . .

Michael Thomson, Ph.D., is a youth counselor, teacher-trainer, lecturer, and author unlike any you have ever seen. Whether doing a school as-seemly, parent evening, or staff in-service, “Dr. Mike” leaves the audience with a lasting and powerful message. His audience-interactive techniques are entertaining, fun, and most of all educational. Through his naturally warm, humorous approach to important issues, Dr. Mike reveals the consequences of good choices and poor choices, and provides people with tools to take control of their lives.

Dr. Mike received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University. He has been a high school hockey coach, a Supervisor in the Dept. of Psychology and Psychiatry at The Mayo Clinic, and Director of health care centers in Minnesota, Ohio, and Sweden. He is Head Clinician with the Ohio High School Athletic Association, and consultant to The Ohio State University athletic department. He is a Certified Reality Therapist and a certified trainer for Character Counts!™.

Dr. Mike is the author of several books for teen-agers, parents, and teachers. He lives in Ohio, with his wife, Carol, and their teenage son and daughter.

Dr. Mike is available for school assemblies, in-service trainings, and speaking engagements. He may be reached at 1-800-359-5437, or by visiting his website at www.drmikethomson.com

This video series was produced in association with
CHARACTER COUNTS!sm

The CHARACTER COUNTS! coalition is a consortium of the nation's largest and most influential educational and youth-serving organizations united in one overriding mission: strengthening the character of America's youth.



CHARACTER COUNTS!
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