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How to Demonstrate Respect at Work

By [Susan M. Heathfield](#), About.com

Ask anyone in your workplace what treatment they most want at work. They will likely top their list with the desire to be treated with dignity and respect. Popular songs tout the need for respect.

From Aretha Franklin: “*R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Find out what it means to me.*” “*Everybody needs a little respect. Everybody needs a little time.*”

Everybody needs a little respect. You know when you have respect. You know when you don't. But what is respect really? And, how is respect demonstrated at work?

You can demonstrate respect with simple, yet powerful actions. These ideas will help you avoid needless, insensitive, unmeant disrespect, too.

- Treat people with courtesy, politeness, and kindness.
- Encourage coworkers to express opinions and ideas.
- Listen to what others have to say before expressing your viewpoint. Never speak over, butt in, or cut off another person.
- Use people's ideas to change or improve work. Let employees know you used their idea, or, better yet, encourage the person with the idea to implement the idea.
- Never insult people, name call, disparage or put down people or their ideas.
- Do not nit-pick, constantly criticize over little things, belittle, judge, demean or patronize. A series of seemingly trivial actions, added up over time, constitutes bullying.
- Treat people the same no matter their race, religion, gender, size, age, or country of origin. Implement policies and procedures consistently so people feel that they are treated fairly and equally. Treating people differently can constitute harassment or a hostile work environment.
- Include all coworkers in meetings, discussions, training, and events. While not every person can participate in every activity, do not marginalize, exclude or leave any one person out. Provide an equal opportunity for employees to participate in committees, task forces, or continuous improvement teams. Solicit volunteers and try to involve every volunteer.
- Praise much more frequently than you criticize. Encourage praise and recognition from employee to employee as well as from the supervisor.
- The golden rule does apply at work, or, as professional speaker [Leslie Charles](#), says, “Implement the platinum rule: treat others as they wish to be treated.”

There are many other ways to demonstrate respect at work. These ten constitute a solid foundation. Implemented consistently at work, these respectful actions help ensure a respectful, considerate, professional work place.