

“Can Society Function Without Respect?”

Word Count: 767

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Imagine that there is a university club that meets every weekend, two hours at a time, to improve student health. Each month, members take turns bringing up a health issue prominent on campus. The group then spends the rest of the month brainstorming and applying a solution. Over time, this club slowly raises the standard of health in their entire school. Realize it or not, these students are part of a functioning society. Just like every other society, they are trying to make a change for the better. Whether better is defined as healthier lifestyles, a greener planet, a stronger economy, or better lives for its citizens, respect is necessary for a society to be functional and strive for better, because without respect, a society will tear itself apart.

The function of a society might be debatable, but what is clear enough is that all societies are trying to make a change. Some are attempting to help solve world hunger, while others are simply trying to enjoy life, but every society has a goal. Societies are also made up of many individuals. A society, consisting of a whole group's efforts, has the ability to achieve much more than what any one person could ever do. For good or bad, the underlying premise of any society is simple: to realize a cause one cannot accomplish alone.

What really is needed for a society to function? First and foremost, there needs to be a common interest. There also needs to be people who care, and those who care must respect their community and love their cause enough to want to make a difference. The students in the health club have a respect and a love for their collegiate community, and this is the reason they formed their club in the first place. Respect is the building block for a properly functioning society; respect for each other, and respect for the community.

In return, the community must also respect those who care. If the health club doesn't have the respect and cooperation of the student body, nothing will change. Even if the club's purpose and solution are perfect, it will not make a difference if not a single other student is willing to adjust. Respect must be mutual: for the givers as well as the receivers.

In contrast, a society without respect devotes its time and energy into self-destructive conflict instead of working together for the greater good. In August, 2014, Ferguson, Missouri experienced a sudden downfall. After the police shooting of an unarmed teenager, protesters took to the streets. Rioting, looting, and distrust followed in the weeks to come. The reason is nothing short of a lack of respect. Protesters did not respect the police officer's judgment. Instead, brash residents wasted their manpower and willpower by destroying the society in Ferguson.

Author William Golding wrote the book *Lord of the Flies*. Golding's novel paints a wonderful picture of society. In his book, a group of boys crash onto an island and are stranded. Over time, the boys diverge into two groups. One group manages to stay civilized, working together to find a way off of the island; the other group slowly descends into savagery. Despite the hardships of being stranded on an island, everyone in the civil society respects each other; some for their intelligence, some for their leadership, some for their dedication, and some for their uprightness. All this comes together to form a functioning society.

But there isn't just one working society on William Golding's island; there are two. The rest of the boys on the island are part of another society that is also trapped on the island. However, rescue is not the change they are seeking. Instead, the savages are looking for enjoyment, coming in the form of killing. This society, although wicked and perverted, is still built around respect and a shared goal. The members of this group respect their leader, Jack, for his strength; they respect his actions; and they love what they get in return: a feeling of power and excitement. Jack reciprocates by delivering on his promises, feeding his followers' respect for him. Respect for Jack and a desire for pleasure are what hold Jack's society together.

Lord of the Flies illustrates two very different, yet still functioning, societies. Both groups have goals, and work, with respect, to achieve them. There does need to be a cause, and there does need to be people who care, but without respect, there can be no society. As Albert Einstein once said, "Any society which does not insist upon respect ... must necessarily decay" (Einstein, 124).

Works Cited

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. Penguin Books, 1999.

Rowe, David E., and Robert Schulmann. *Einstein on Politics: His Private Thoughts and Public Stands on Nationalism, Zionism, War, Peace, and the Bomb*. Princeton U.P., 2013.