

“Can Society Function Without Respect?”

Word Count: 778 words.

Quinton Lacey

B.R. Miller Middle School

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The questioning of society’s complex and unspoken rules is often pondered by the greatest of minds. However, one that is not fully understood by everyone and is often broken is respect. Cultures express respect differently. Some through clothing, some through religion, others through communication. However, when people break these rules, societies can fall into discord.

Respect in society is what maintains the balance of humanity’s savagery and inhumanity. Without respect, our society would collapse into an uncivilized apocalypse. People need respect to listen to each other’s thoughts and opinions, and we need it so that we can avoid conflict and move our society forward.

The definition of society (as offered by the Merriam Webster dictionary) states: “the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community.” This defines a society as a group of people (all bringing different traits) who form a community with understood rules. This means that society technically doesn’t need respect, but any functioning and successful society, it is easy to see that respect is a necessity.

Still we must consider, what do we mean by a society “functioning”, because there are many different ways a society can function. One must first consider for what or for whom society is functioning. What goals are you trying to accomplish? What are you trying to do? There are some cases where respect either wasn’t a thought yet, or that societies abandoned it and got by. However, most societies still need it. There are some societies completely built around being primal versions of humans. Take an example from William Golding’s Lord of the Flies. This story tells of a group of boys who crash on an island and their slow descent into chaos and discord within them. They devolved through numerous disagreements between two of the boys who were considered to be leaders into two separate groups: One civilized, the other, a chaotic tribal group of savages. There, of course, is a lack of respect between the two groups, but within them they still hold respect for each other. Whether or not this contributes to their society is not explicitly described in this particular situation, but both groups seem to function decently.

A current dilemma around disrespect concerns Colin Kaepernick, former professional football player. He has been heavily disrespected for his peaceful protest against the national anthem. He didn’t disrupt anything or insult anyone or do anything loud and obnoxious. Colin even expressed himself non-verbally, and he still received large amounts of hate for it. He wanted to do this peacefully because he had respect for his fellow Americans, which shows that while he doesn’t agree with certain issues within the country, he still holds respect for Americans and their flag. His actions didn’t cause a major disruption to the games, but people still view it as betraying the country that housed him and raised him. This isn’t the case though, as he truly does it for the discrimination within our country and the **disrespect** of our fellow people. If you look at the sub-society in which he does this (the fans watching him in real life and people watching on TV) some respect his decisions which doesn’t quite change

anything, but some of them don't, which has sparked a fire for Colin, his team, his coach, and all of his fans. This goes to show how just a little action that is perceived as a lack of respect can also cause so much controversy and hatred. He has been shunned by many fans of the NFL, all because of respect of one another.

Respect is even needed in times of war. Take Task Force Dagger as an example. If you've never heard of these incredible men (or never seen the movie "12 Strong") these men needed respect right in the middle of a large war. After the horrendous 9/11 attacks, these men were the first to be sent into Afghanistan after these attacks and they had to use a device to call in airstrikes on cities. They were working with a Middle-Eastern army known as the Northern Alliance. Part of this army was lead by Abdul Rashid Dostum, who worked right alongside Task Force Dagger. Even though they all came from very different places and had different minds of both war and fighting, they had to show respect so that they could all move forward and succeed. Through both heart, courage, and respect, they came together and completed their mission.

In conclusion, respect is an absolute necessity in most societies no matter what the situation is. Whether it's in discrimination, war, or complete peace, respect holds together societies and moves them forward.