***Showing Respect Even When It’s Hard***

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| **Objective:** Evaluate and respond to situations in which it might be challenging to show respect to someone else. |

Read the following interview from a college student named Emma about her experiences with her professors.

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| I have absolutely felt disrespected by a college professor before. Most of my instructors have been excellent at teaching and make me feel welcomed and that my thoughts are important. But my Biology 201 professor was absolutely brutal. He would often make comments about the students in the front row being intellectually superior to students in the rows behind. I always sat in the third row because I didn’t feel worthy of sitting in the front row. One day, he asked a question I felt confident answering, so I raised my hand. He said, “Wow, finally someone who isn’t one of my smartest!” before he called on me. Obviously, that didn’t feel great. Another time, when a majority of students didn’t raise their hands for a question, he said, “This is why they call this a weeder class – because all of you will be weeded out of majoring in a science,” and he pointed at all of us.  I always felt like I needed to still be respectful to him, despite his lack of concern or regard for me. He controlled my grade, and I needed to pass and get credit for the class for my major. My parents also always taught me that the respect you give someone else reflects your character, not theirs. |

1. What about the story above strikes you? Do you think the Biology 201 professor was disrespectful to Emma and her classmates? How did Emma support herself in still showing respect for her professor?

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1. Why do you think some people are disrespectful to others? Respect is a commonly-cited cultural and community norm, but some people still knowingly disrespect others. What do you think might be happening when such disrespect happens?

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1. Consider Emma’s guidance, “My parents also always taught me that the respect you give someone else reflects your character, not theirs.”
2. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Explain.

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1. Think of a time when you or someone you know felt disrespected. Did your reaction reflect your character in a positive way? If so, how? If not, how might you go back and approach the situation differently?

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