

ALWAYS LOOK BEYOND JUST SKIN-DEEP

By: KIMBERLY JOAN N. TADEO

Everyone has their own story. They incline themselves in varying beliefs and they hold multiple sets of morals and principles. The world itself is a testament of this diversity which shows just how different people can be; those from the north may not exactly conform to the rules and customs of the south, and the east people may see an entirely unique vision than those from the west. These type of differences make one distinctly human in their eyes, and in order to keep the humanity flag raised, they must also learn how to acknowledge these differences that they have from others, because that is the type of treatment everyone deserves.

When they look around them and see different types of expressions on people's faces, what do they usually think about them? When they see someone smiling, does it automatically make them a happy person? When they see someone staring into nothingness, does it give off the vibe that this person is ignorant? Every other stereotype enforced upon people just because of their in-the-moment mood may not exactly be the best way to establish recognition with people. Oftentimes they would just be masking a hard day with a smile, or maybe even cover-up a shattering emotional situation with a smug face.

Sensitivity is vital in achieving a respectful and dignified approach to people. While dignity and respect have deep meanings, they are also words that are frequently used to lecture or correct us. So, it makes sense that humans have trouble internalizing or actually comprehending their meaning.

Dignity came from the Latin word *dignitas*, meaning "to be worthy" and is defined as the right to be recognized for their inherent humanity and treated ethically. It is a given and no one has the power to take it away. It is an innate value that one has and demands to be recognized in order to attain humanity in any interpersonal relation or dealing. People may treat you in different ways as you would in any encounter, and unfortunate events cannot be helped where one party might not show signs of pleasure in the interaction. Amidst this, a person should always bear in mind that they also have dignity, and must be recognized that in order to keep things civil and harmonious.

Respect, on the other hand, came from the Latin word *respectus*, which means "to look back at." It is showing admiration for someone because of their abilities, qualities or achievements, hence, respect is earned. They are respected by others for what they have attained, experienced in life, and how they have managed themselves as they have achieved these major feats. It is regarding someone with a title and lifting them up on a pedestal where they would see them as deserving of their own time, attention, and recognition. The same goes for them, too. The difference it takes apart from dignity is that it is a two-way street. They may be able to earn respect from others once they start offering something that they have.

What happens when both dignity and respect collide in a given situation? According to Charlie Khun, the co-founder and CEO of Cultures of Dignity, if people use dignity as their anchor and ground their work in the belief that every person has value, then they can separate people's abusive actions from their essential humanity. For example, there may be a senior figure at work who belittles, bullies, or embarrasses people under them in front of others. This

person does not need to be respected based on their behavior; however, they need to be treated with dignity. It may appear to be the same thing—treating the person with respect as to treating that person with dignity, but it is an important distinction. Ultimately, respect acknowledges the behavior while dignity teaches the importance of civility and humanity.

The same concept can be applied in a peer situation. Members get rightfully frustrated when their other group mates are undermining or taking credit for work that they did not do. They would want revenge or to do the same to be recognized for their contribution. They want the right to be pissed at this person. They do not have to be friends and they do not have to respect their actions. They do not even have to like them, but they do have to treat them with dignity.

At the end of the day, they cannot avoid situations where their emotional strength will be tested, and their patience will be served to put up with a lot of things that may be influenced by the multiple differences that they have with people that surrounds them. Recognizing the distinction between dignity and respect allows them to not be driven by fear, anxiety, or hold resentment and somehow sabotage the person that acted in a troubling way. Training them to be more sensitive in their thoughts, words, and actions while never forgetting their invaluable worth must be practiced.

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