

Student's speeches from 2009 and 2010

These are just a few of the speeches made by young people as part of the Respect for Seniors Campaign

Good morning,

My grandfather liked the 5th commandment:

"Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

In an age when people still looked for guidance in God's Word, my grandfather believed he got plenty of guidance - and good council - in this command.

Respect is not an option, it is our calling.

It is the foundation of our highest calling - to love one another and to love God.

What a blessing it is that we have the chance to love one another as Jesus loved us.

Allow me to draw an illustration. A young man yells at his teacher. When asked, why don't you show respect, he answers: Respect must be earned.

Did we earn God's love and forgiveness?

While it is true, respect CAN be earned. Respect, first and foremost, is owed.

We all owe each other respect.

In my brief for this talk, I was asked to reflect on a person (an older person) I respect.

My father comes to mind.

And as he comes to mind, I find, also, that I begin to understand that respect has a benefit.

Here's an example.

I have often thought it wise to go against the wisdom of my father. For example, my father will tell me: "go to sleep early."

I laugh to myself and think: "that's not necessary, I'll be fine!". Usually I'm very proud of the extra two or three hours I gain late at night.

But as sure as the sun will rise, in the morning my father's wisdom shines through, when I only really wake up during period one or two.

I trust my father's wisdom on more than just bed times, however. I believe age teaches experience and compassion for much deeper concerns.

My father has helped me to learn from my mistakes, has given council for important decisions, has taught me how to love my neighbour.

Above all, my father has loved me. His example is the best lesson he can ever give.

When I look for a picture of the love of our Lord, I look to my father's imperfect example.

In his humanness, he is as prone as anyone to fall short of God's love for us. Yet he strives to be obedient, to be respectful.

And so I have started to strive towards respect towards elders, in my own flawed effort.

And then, as I said, I realise that this obedience... is ... respect.

Seniors have the tools needed to be a light in our society. They are wise enough to show compassion, patience and love.

It is shared with us, I believe , in the respect that they have for us as the younger generation.

Every man has a piece of God inside him. If it were to all come together it would be almost heaven.

Respect, first and foremost, is owed.

Thankyou

Jacques Nel

Life Lessons – Jessica Li

Elders everywhere deserve our respect because once, they took care of us, taught us what we know today and without them we'd probably still be making the same mistakes as we had before.

As a young child I'd always complained about talking to my grandfather because to be quite honest, he made me feel rather immature and silly. As a proud little 10 year old I thought I knew everything especially after I'd just learnt the first fleet landed in 1788 and had *two* gold stars in my spelling book. However when I was talking to my grandfather I'd constantly find myself out of my depth. He knew so much more than I did not just in terms of history, science or mathematics but also in daily life.

Last year my grandfather was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and it was only then I truly recognised what a great influence he had been in my life and how glad I was that I **had** built this relationship with him.

He taught me to always smile and be accepting to all people because we never know how their days have been or how badly their hurting inside. He taught me to respect myself and show pride in my family and beliefs. I learnt the importance of daily exercise from him, of hydration and etiquette. It's because of my grandfather that I'm able to stand here today and tell you all this without constantly squirming and fidgeting. However, amongst all of this he was always interested to hear what I thought.

Even in his last days, when I was talking to him in the hospital I remember him calming me through my preparation for a piano exam. He reminded me that regardless of the losses or successes in life as long as I stay honest to myself I should be extremely proud.

My grandfather's strength and nobility of character, is something that can only be developed over time and has shaped the girl you see today.

Sometimes I get told by younger girls and boys that they respect or admire me because of my involvement with public speaking or academic achievements however I think if they took a little look around them – even around this hall today, I think they'd find that there are a whole generation that have done this all before us, and that they, the elders of our community would be able to give much better advice than I could hope to give. Simply because, they *have* lived longer than us – they've **seen more, thought more** and **experienced more**.

American novelist George Elliot said that "If youth is the season of hope, it is often so only in the sense that our elders are hopeful about us"

Taking a look at our society I don't blame elders for not being hopeful about us because we – who have been privileged with such an easy modernised and technologically simplified life have often taken it for granted and neglected those who got us to such a position.

This is why I believe in order for society to progress cohesively in any way, we need to re-recognise the value of our elders. Listen to, treasure and learn from their memories and engage with these amazing people. And give them a reason to hope again.

I love seniors for their wisdom and their advice. Because they've experienced so much, they know what you're going through and they put things into perspective. You can learn a lot from them.

I also love their passion for life. They know that life is short so they're not afraid to do and say what they think is important, no matter what other people might think of them.

Sometimes they can be pretty creative in the ways they put their points across. I heard a story recently about a lady, well into her 70s, who went to a bottle shop. She came to the check-out line with a single bottle of wine. The shop assistant starts to scan the bottle through.

"Wait!" says the lady "Aren't you going to check my ID?"

"Er, no, madam", said the shop assistant "I don't think it's really necessary ..."

"Well, that's no good!" the lady exclaimed "You should check all ID if you're selling alcohol."

"Well, okay", he said. "May I see your ID, please?"

She hands over an ID card that's obviously fake.

"Madam" he says "this card says you're seventeen."

"Oh, dear!" she replies. "You've caught me! I'm much too young to be buying this! It's a good thing you are checking IDs. I'd better just go now!" Then she skips out the door.

I can only hope that when I become older people will appreciate me, too.

May McMaster
