



Cases to Examine: Self-respect

Read the following cases. Decide whether the main character's response to the situation expresses self-respect or a lack of self-respect and put a check mark in the appropriate space. In writing, suggest how you would change a response that shows a lack of self-respect to a self-respecting one.

Case 1: Jana

Jana signed up for the advanced-track chemistry section because she thought it would better prepare her for the premed college program she wants. When the schedule comes out, she learns she has been placed in the regular-track section. "Guess they didn't think I was smart enough," she says to herself, and resentfully goes off to the assigned section.

- Jana expresses self-respect
 lack of self-respect

Case 2: Mike

Mike is beginning his first year at a high school that draws students from all over the city. Tuition is steep, and most of the kids come from wealthy homes. A few, like Mike, can go to this school only because of scholarships offered for financially needy students. Mike is aware that he looks, talks, and acts much more like the guys from his own working-class neighborhood than like most of the guys here at the high school.

On Mike's second day at the high school, before the start of a class, he overhears one student muttering to another, while looking directly at Mike, "Once they let the dirtballs in, the whole place goes downhill." Mike's face burns, but he just tries to pretend he didn't hear.

- Mike expresses self-respect
 lack of self-respect

Case 3: Greg

Greg feels torn about his weekend commitments. He has already agreed to help out at his class's fund-raising car wash on Saturday, to be the disc jockey for the student council dance Saturday night (which will take some preparation), to go on a fifty-mile bike ride on Sunday with friends, to give his little sister a guitar lesson, and to cut the grass at home. He also has to work an 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. shift at his job at a fast-food restaurant Friday night. In addition, Greg needs to write a five-page paper and study for a major test. He's feeling stressed.

Friday after school, one of Greg's friends approaches him with a request: "I'm desperate, man. I've got to get a ride tonight out to Midvale [an hour's drive] to pick up these concert tickets for me and Heather, or the guy's gonna sell them to someone else. You are my last hope."

Greg, remembering a favor this friend did for him last week, answers, "Sure, I got nothing else to do tonight."

- Greg expresses self-respect
 lack of self-respect
