

# Respect Toward Old People-they are "Role Model"

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**"God couldn't be everywhere so he made grandparents"**

**T**he elderly population at that time played a very important role in our society;. Our county is known for respecting elders. "Mathro devoo bhava, pithro devo bhava", which translates as mother and father are next to god. When the true meaning of these words are lost, is there any use of praying to god for peace?



We spoke of the values and traditions that were passed on from generation to generations over the century and how these same traditions that were more receptive to the generation before us is of no significance to the generation of modern society. We convinced ourselves that we had to be the last generation to appreciate the experience and tradition of our grandparents' way of life - now that we are of age at becoming grandparents ourselves.

Elderly people have spent a lot of time in the world and have seen things that generations after them will never witness and certainly will not understand.

Elderly people taught us respect, manners, traditions, appreciation of things, and how to accept and deal with life experiences.

Although we boast of development in all fields and state that we belong to a modern society, I fail to understand how we measure development and what exactly we mean by "modern. Can we claim to be modern when we despise, disrespect and ill-treat our parents and grandparents? Are our parents and grandparents not responsible for what we are today? If they sacrificed their time, energy and money for our well being, is it right for us to abandon them in the evening of their lives? Can such a cruel act be considered "modern"? If despising, disrespecting and ill-treating our elders is part of modern culture, I regret to state that the so-called modern society is destined to be doomed.

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Let us look at in the past, I look at the period just prior to the 1970s. Elders were respected in their families. They were the pillars guiding each and every family member. The "joint family system" was prominent, particularly among the Hindu families. The entire family used to live, cook and eat and pray together. Due to the presence of the elders, discipline was the backbone of family life. Members shared their works and income too.

Each member was given due respect and honour as per his/her contribution towards the well-being of the family. There prevailed an atmosphere of cooperation, sharing, love and sacrifice in the family. It strengthened the family value system. Hence there were practically no or very few incidents of crime such as thefts, assaults, rapes, murders, etc. Everyone lived a contented and peaceful life, first and foremost because there was complete security to human life.

However, in this so-called modern society, everything has reversed. The actions of the younger generation towards the family elders are proof to this:

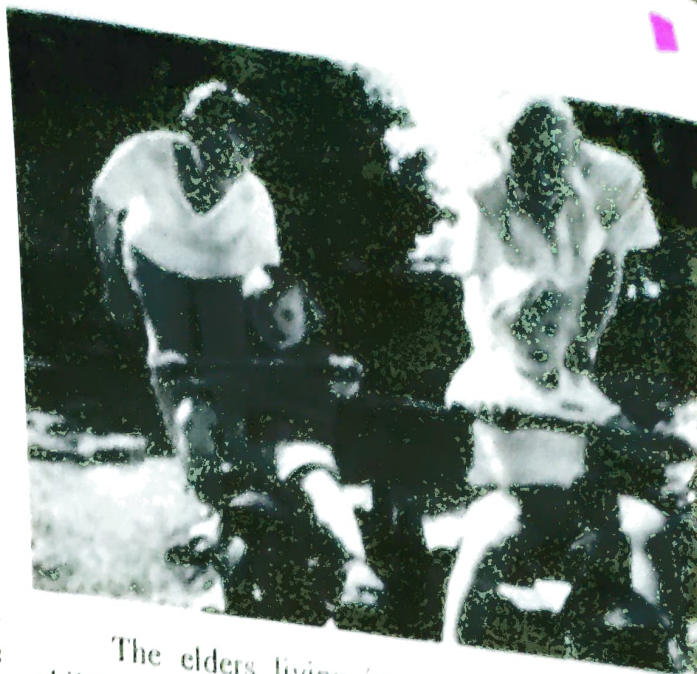
We show hate to our elders by calling them names. We do not hesitate to express this hatred towards our elders in the presence of our children. We forget to realize that insults by words are more hurtful than physical assaults.

We deny the elders of some of simple but important needs. They may feel the need of a cigarette or two during the day and a sip of a drink in the evening. We do not fulfill these simple requirements, which at times may have an adverse effect on them.

When we treat our elders disrespectfully, there is bound to be a disastrous impact on their emotions, which has many a time compelled them to even commit suicide. What a dilemma! The persons who sacrificed to brighten our lives are in their old age compelled by us to end their lives.

Our elders, literates as well as illiterates, are a rich source of knowledge fully backed by vast experience. We could benefit from them, but unfortunately we dub them as "old fashioned" and out rightly reject their views and opinion.

By behaving in such a manner we crush our elders' emotions, feelings and sentiments and destroy their respect, honour and dignity. We murder them mentally and emotionally. What a reward for their providing us everything for our own mental and emotional growth.



The elders living in our families today were children and youth once upon a time. They grew with love, financial assistance and guidance from their parents, received the required education, started working and earning, got married, became parents, grand-parents, and should now be enjoying the twilight of their lives. They deserve to enjoy it. Regrettably there are many parents and grand-parents who are subjected to humiliation and hatred in their old age.

### **There are 8 reason why it is important care for our elders**

1. Because they are our mothers and fathers. They are our first teachers. They teach how to live, how to care, how to give, how to forgive, how to accept, and most of all they are our backbone support. Without their endless sacrifice during our early years, we wouldn't be capable of what we are today. We need to care for our elders because they deserve to be cared for. Respect and care for our elders starts with our parents, our first teachers.
2. Wisdom. Our elders have more knowledge and wisdom than any one of us. Their experience through the turbulence of storms that life has thrown them through yield great wisdom.
3. Morals, values, principles. Our elders have acquired, created or have been brought up with a set of morals, values and/or principles in their lives. Our elders would want the best for us and they would be more than willing to tell us what rules and guidelines have made them successful and hopefully, peaceful.



4. They love us. Unconditionally. No matter what you do in life, who you become, where you live, who you are with - our elders will always love us unconditionally. Sure they might be disappointed in you or be upset with you from time to time but at the end of the day you are still their kiddo. This kind of unconditional love is hard to find anywhere else in this universe. The mere presence of our elders gives us hope and strength to keep calm and carry on.
5. Sacrifice. They worked their butt off for you, that's why. Once we, as children, come into the picture our elders sacrifice much of their life to see to it that we are well and happy. They make sure to provide us with all the comforts. They sacrifice their own likes to see a smile on our faces. They look to us in times of failure or success to remind themselves what they are fighting for everyday.
6. Experience. No matter what, your elders have years on you. For this simple reason, we must appreciate them. We may or may not know of all the ups and downs they've faced in life but they've definitely gained experience that is worth respecting and learning from. Our elders may hide much pain from us because they don't want us to feel the pain, the least we can do is appreciate them for all that they've gone through-gained and lost-and learn from their insight into situations and circumstances.
7. They are nearing their end and their future is uncertain. Put yourself in the shoes of an elderly person. When you know you are becoming fragile and your body is failing you, it's difficult to cope with the uncertainty of the future mentally and physically. Our elders may have many things on their mind but they may not be able to express them. Our responsibility comes in to give them the support they need to help them live the rest of their lives peacefully. No one wants their last days to be filled with regret and disappointment. So take charge of being that love and light, be with them in their last days.
8. Because we are human beings and because it is the right thing to do. Humanity plays a crucial role in taking care of our elders. After all, we're going to be elderly people some day too. The truth is we need our elders and we cannot live without

them. There comes a day when we will be without us. I say that not to scare you but to remind you that you are not alone. That brings out the humanity within. This expression of humanity makes us realize that with respect and will we can care for our elders. When we see the love for our elders, we can see that with respect and will we can care for our elders. At least we can hope they will.

The present "modern" generation has a tendency that they will have no parents and grandparents some day. Will it not be divine justice if they have daughters and daughters-in-law that have not have treated their elders?

This trend must end. We must recognize the value of the treasure of experience our elders possess. We must try to make positive use of that vast treasure that can definitely give a proper direction to the loss of our youth. Unfortunately in today's times we realize that wealth of experience is "hidden for the ages" into realizing that we have displaced from our most valuable "role models" for our children is to some humans.

### So if you have some free time:

- Go volunteer at a old-age home
- Re-connect with your grand parents. Give them some room in your day
- Talk to your uncles and aunts. See how they are doing.
- If you have elders at home, listen to them. Talk to them. Spend some quality time with them. They would be more than happy.
- Help an elderly man or a woman on the street. Say hi to them or simply smile at them with respect.

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