

## In the Neighborhood Column

This year has been a year of cruelty, intolerance and violent behavior. We are constantly bombarded with stories of people being victims of violence because of who they are or views they hold.” Why does the world seem rampant with hostility, rudeness and intolerance ? Is it just the media looking for and feeding us a constant diet of sensationalized stories or is there more to this trend? Although the media contributes to the problem, I believe the fundamental issue is respect.

We talk about it, sing about it, extol it in athletic events and demand it for ourselves, yet respect is in short supply. As a teacher, I display the tenants of our school creed which lists respect as an important part of how we are to conduct ourselves . I try and model what this means, yet most children really have no concept of respect, or what it requires. They hear about it all of the time, but don’t see it modeled; not by their leaders, heroes, parents, pastors or friends. Respect of others is the hallmark of a civilized society. Without having an understanding of respect, our future generations face certain chaos.

How we see ourselves, how we honor others who are different than we are and have different opinions than our own, is a place to start in evaluating our understanding of respect. I like to show my students an example of respect when we study the Civil War. I have a copy of the correspondence sent back and forth between Major Anderson, Commander of Fort Sumter and General Beauregard the Confederate General ordered to fire upon and take Fort Sumter, in the first battle of the Civil War. It is amazing how these two men address each other. Despite their differences, their opposing goals, their pending fight, they address and speak to each other with amazing respect, and even kindness; excerpts as follows:

Headquarters Provisional Army, C. S. A.  
Charleston, April 11, 1861.

Maj. ROBERT ANDERSON,  
Commanding Fort Sumter, Charleston Harbor, S.C

*Sir: The government of the Confederate States has hitherto fore borne from any hostile demonstrations against Fort Sumter, in hope that the government of the United States, with a view to the amicable adjustment of all questions between the two governments, and to avert the calamities of war, would voluntarily evacuate it...*

*I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
G. T. BEAUREGARD,  
Brigadier-General Commanding.*

*Major Anderson replied as follows: Fort Sumter, S.C.,*

*April 11, 1861.*

*General: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication demanding the evacuation of this fort, and to say, in reply thereto, that it is a demand with which I regret that my sense of honor, and of my obligations to my government, prevent my compliance. Thanking you for the fair, manly and courteous terms proposed, and for the high compliment paid me,*

*I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
ROBERT ANDERSON,  
Major, First Artillery, Commanding.*

We have lost the ability to communicate and regard others in this manner. Despite being enemies, these men showed real respect to one another, starting with how they corresponded.

We need to relearn this type of respect. We need to teach our children this kind of respect for themselves and for others, perhaps starting right here in this newspaper. Letters and blogs are full of name calling and intolerance of the views of others. You can have a different opinion and still be respectful of others. I often ask my students, "how will you change the world?" This is a start, show respect, earn respect. What a concept.

Beverly Wallace is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, she longs for by-gone days when teachers, parents and presidents were respected and the only *foul* language in the media involved baseball and balls hit out -of-bounds.

