

PARENTING ON CUE

with **Queenie Tan**



Audio Transcript: Parenting on Cue Podcast with Queenie Tan Episode 131

POC 131 : Artificial respect and how we can avoid teaching it accidentally

Hi. Queenie Tan here, and welcome to another episode of the Parenting on Cue Podcast. Now for today I have a very interesting topic because I'm gonna explain exactly how we often accidentally teach artificial respect to our children. Now you're probably wondering what on earth is artificial respect. "Respect is respect." Well not really.

Artificial respect is sort of like a pretend, kind of eye surface respect. Let me explain this. I'm not saying it's bad but I think that a lot of us do it without even thinking about it, especially those of us in the Asian culture. But more than not, when I talk about how we accidentally do things wrong in the Asian culture, the Western culture isn't very far behind. So let's just look at this topic and see how we can deconstruct it.

So I get a lot of questions from parents about what to do with their children when they are disrespectful, when they're rude, when they are not behaving in a way that's polite, when they speak out of turn, when they burp really loudly. In another culture, it may not be seen as disrespectful.

But here's the thing though, I think a lot of cultures expect children to be compliant. And when they're non-compliant, that's disrespectful. And they want their children to behave in a certain way so that adults will think that they're compliant. And this is really tricky because it doesn't matter if the child is miserable. It doesn't matter if the child is violated. So long as they show respect to the elders, they are good. A lot of times we see this, at meetings, at family reunions, at events, we tell our children to hug this person, to greet that uncle or talk to their grandma, or be nice to relatives who may be emotionally threatening them, or making them feel unsafe. And we tell them that all this doesn't matter so long as they're respectful to their elders. That, to me is artificial respect. Prima-facie, it is a facade.

Let me explain why. If you really want children to show respect, like true respect. If you really want them to respect someone or something, they will first have to learn self-respect. You cannot respect someone without learning to respect yourself. And I think that when children learn self-respect, it is only a matter of time before they realize that people around them are like them, with feelings, and emotions, and likes, and dreams, and wants. And they will give them a very basic level of respect. It will happen.

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But if we skip the basic step of teaching children self-respect, and just go into the facade kind of respect, that you need to be seen to be respectful, regardless of how you feel about somebody, you need to be nice to them, it's actually kind of hypocritical and really conflicting to a child. It sends them a lot of mixed messages.

So here's what I would suggest. I would suggest that we teach children, help children develop self respect. And the best way for them to learn it is for them to see us respecting ourself. Now this is really hard to do because a lot of us are raised to not respect ourselves because our parents didn't respect us. Our parents expected us to have artificial respect. We're really good at making our parents feel good, at pretending to be compliant in front of them, and then behind them, we do whatever we want.

And so a lot of us don't really have a lot of self respect. We don't. We don't take care of ourselves. We put ourselves last in the family. We don't look into our physical, emotional needs, our health, we don't. A lot of us even self-medicate because we're so anxious, and so stressed out, we self-medicate, we self-harm by putting sugary foods into our bodies that it doesn't need. We do all sorts of things to self-harm. That is not self respect. And when we do that, our children are gonna see us disrespecting our bodies. And it's gonna be all that they see and all that they learn. And this would be a foundation for them when they grow up.

So yes, the fast easy way to teach them respect would be to do artificial respect. But if you really want your children to grow up to take care of themselves, and to have positive self-image, and to fight for what they think is right or what they believe to be right, then we really need to help them develop self-respect. And that is gonna start with us.

So I don't have... there's no shortcut to this. We have to fix ourselves so that our children can see what it needs to look like. And there's no switch to flip this around. We just have to work at it. Get help if we need to. And hopefully, throughout this journey of growing, of parenting, that we would be able to become, better improved human beings, not just parents. And that our children can see us wanting to improve ourselves. And that will be their desire as well.

So I know it's a big concept. It's always easier to say that it's the child's fault, let's fix them, but ultimately, it will come back at us. It's always us who needs the fixing first, unfortunately. And once we have sorted ourselves out, children will figure it out as well.

So thank you so much for listening. I hope that this episode has given you something to think about. And remember, till next week, happy and confident parents have happy and confident children.

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