

WORKS

BY NICOLE WILLIAMS

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Respect: How to Get It At Work

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Your boss constantly talks down to you, your co-workers are dismissive of your ideas, and sometimes you feel like your intern thinks that you work for her, instead of the other way around. Where's all that R-E-S-P-E-C-T? According to Courtney Macavinta, author of *RESPECT: A Girl's Guide to Getting Respect and Dealing When Your Line Is Crossed*, and the popular advice blog [RespectRX](#), it all starts with you. "If you don't think you're worth respect, you won't get any," she says. Look at what you do outside of the office: Are you good at trusting your gut? Do you surround yourself with people who not only push you to do better, but never make you feel bad about your decisions or opinions? If the answer is yes, you're already on your way to a healthy dose of self-respect. Follow these tips to make sure your colleagues start showing you some, too.

Ask for help when you need it. If your boss hands you a huge project and you have absolutely no idea what she's talking about, don't pretend like you do, advises Macavinta. "We see it as a weakness, but getting help is a respect basic," she says. "Say with confidence, 'I've never done this before. What are your expectations?'" Your boss will appreciate you asking for clarification upfront, rather than giving her something she doesn't want and has to completely rework.

Create boundaries. Creating boundaries is a hugely important skill. However, women especially get a bad rap for doing so. Some might think you're defensive or cold. "Boundaries aren't about saying no, they're about what you're able to do and how," says Macavinta. No, you can't come in on Saturday and miss your grandmother's 90th birthday party. But yes, you will come in two hours early on Monday to finish your presentation. If you don't learn this skill now when you're single and childless, it'll be much harder to ask for a four-day work week when you have a family.

Speak up. Communication is key in all aspects of life, but never more so than between the people you work with—and for. If you have a difficult boss or co-worker, don't grin and bear it and then hightail it to your best work friend's office for an all-out venting session. Instead, go to the source of the problem. Tell them what you need and then ask them to do the same, suggests Macavinta. "When people are being honest with you, you need to be open to that," she says.

Don't be a mean girl. Let's face it: women can be catty. Especially when they're trying to one-up each other in the workplace. Don't join the party. "It's been said before, but really, really try to avoid gossip and negativity," Macavinta cautions. "It just drags you down. And any kind of woman versus woman competition just isn't healthy." Focus on being a source of strength and support for your female colleagues. Yes, you're fabulous on your own, but think about what you can accomplish with a whole team of strong, smart women behind you. The possibilities are limitless.

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