



#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**ANGELA SWEEP  
WYOMING FCCLA**

"We have had Mike several times and each time the students walk away saying that this was the best presentation they have ever seen."

**MATT HAMILTON  
2024 MEA MICHIGAN TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

"There are plenty of good school assembly programs out there, and then there are 'game changers'. Mike Donahue and the Value Up program is a game changer. It opened my eyes to see the value in all of the students and the staff."

**KELLEY DEMPSTER  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION MANAGER, NEBRASKA**

"I have never witnessed a program have the kind of sustainability that Value Up has had in our schools. Students are literally talking about this program and its impact five months later. The follow-up material is excellent and very useful."


**JAY MARTIN  
NEBRASKA SAFETY AND SECURITY DIRECTOR**


"Value Up is such an impactful program that we are in the process of securing funding to put Value Up in as many schools as we can in the state of Nebraska."


## EXCELLENT SCHOOL SPEAKER

**Mike Donahue**  
**Founder and Director, Value Up**  
One of the best programs  
addressing school climate  
issues in America.

#### MIKE'S CONTACT INFO

402-290-4723 

miked@value-up.org 

www.value-up.org 

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## Mike Donahue and Value Up

Mike Donahue is the founder and director of Value Up, an Kearney Nebraska based motivational company that focuses on positive school culture. He has spoken to over a million students throughout the last three decades in live settings. He has worked with young people all over the world including the United States, Asia, South America, and Europe. Mike has authored four books: Reinventing My Normal, Hidden Scars, Talking to Brick Walls, and his latest book, Value Up. He is a highly sought-after speaker and one of the best on the subjects of respect, bullying, resiliency and other school climate issues. He has spoken alongside the likes of Roger Goodell, the commissioner of the NFL, and Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education under President Barack Obama. His candid style and authentic persona keep students engaged throughout the entire presentation and leaves them inspired.

After partnering with thousands of schools and speaking/listening to educators and students, Mike has come to understand that so many teen issues are directly related to how students view themselves. If a student believes they have high intrinsic value and identify with that high value, they make life choices that match their perceived value identity. Students who value and respect themselves make positive life choices and show greater value and respect to others. Value Up was created to amplify value in every student, resulting in strengthening a positive school culture.

### **Three Main Messages**

**1. EMBRACE YOUR VALUE-** The word intrinsic means, built-in. It belongs to itself. Just like you can't take the value out of gold, you can't take the value out of people. Human value is intrinsic and it can't be taken away. Social media puts a strong emphasis on social worth over true intrinsic worth. If you see yourself and identify as someone containing true intrinsic value and have a strong self worth, it dramatically affects your personal life choices and it gives you a baseline of value to build a healthy life on.

**2. MAKE CHOICES THAT MATCH YOUR VALUE-** Mike believes that there is a belief before there is a behavior. He often says in his presentations to young people, "I'm not so concerned about **what** you're doing as much as I'm concerned about **why** you are doing it." People tend to act the way they feel about themselves. Once a person can see their true value and potential, it brings a desire to choose more positive influences. We take care of what we value. If we value ourselves we will naturally make choices that are positive and life giving.

**3. VALUE OTHERS-** Through the powerful metaphor of holding up shoes and telling stories of others who struggle with their own self-worth, the message of empathy and compassion for others comes through very strong by the end of the presentation. Often after hearing these stories and walking in other people's pain for a moment, many students come up to Mike vowing to apologize to someone they've mistreated. In many of the presentations, Mike will give the opportunity for students to apologize directly to one another right in the assembly. We have several emails from students and administrators testifying to long-standing negative relationships being mended.



## Value Up Program Services & Pricing

**\*All Prices include travel costs**

**TOUR DISCOUNT: \$500 off programming if it's a part of a tour. A tour is speaking in the same region for 3 or more days.**

**HALF-DAY COST: \$2,500.** This includes one or more assemblies, and/or a student-training segment. This would have to be completed in either the morning or afternoon.

**FULL-DAY COST: \$4,000.** This will include everything below.

Full day Value Up program includes the following services:

- General Student Assembly – Students will hear a life-changing story which will inspire and motivate them to value themselves and others, strengthening the community and school culture
- Student Training – Student leaders will be trained to identify and solve on-campus issues and engage disenfranchised students in project-based, student led programs.
- Teacher Training –Educators will be taught how to further connect with their students and prolong the message of Value Up.
- Community Event – Parents will be invited to an evening event where Mike Donahue will share principles from his book, Talking to Brick Walls. This book does a deep dive into resolving communication barriers between adults and teenagers and helps educate parents on the pressures that young people are facing today.
- Culture Building Tool Kit - The Value Up School Culture building tool kit is our way to ensure that the powerful message, stories, and trainings that the Value Up Assembly brings, will not just fade away. Schools will be able to plug this material right in to their current programs, clubs, and classrooms to promote a healthier school social environment. The social climate of a school affects so many aspects of the learning experience, but it is the one thing that is very hard for administrators to control. No matter how many good intentions we have as adults, social culture for students is mostly established by what they say to one another. So how do we get students to say positive things to one another? First, we inspire a Value Up perspective with our powerful presentations and trainings; then we follow up by providing material that will help empower the students to find their voice as key stake holders in the culture.

The culture building toolkit includes media resources, classroom discussion guides, print material, and additional culture building training for teachers and administrators.

# Contents of the Culture Building Tool Kit.

## **A. Every student will have the opportunity to download a free Copy of the book, *Value Up*:**

Written by Mike Donahue, this book has been influential in thousands of teenagers lives across the country. It is a roadmap to helping students understand that their value is not what others think of them; It is intrinsic and can not be diminished or taken away unless surrendered. In addition to every student getting a free download of the book, we will leave five hard copies to put in the library and counseling office.

**B. Club Curriculum:** 20 small group, 45-minute sessions for classroom or social club use. These are powerful lessons for students and adults to discuss the Value Up message in ways that will help them to get to know one another on a much deeper level and strengthen the group as a whole.

The 20 subject sessions are on: respect, active listening, empathy, stereotyping, gossip, loneliness, intimidation, suicide, failure, healthy confrontation, people helping, self harm, breaking free from the past, anger management, setting healthy boundaries, self worth, creating a culture of kindness, acceptance, and personal ethics. (We have provided one lesson in this packet for your convenience)

Your school will receive a PDF of the curriculum and you can make as many copies as you need for your school. We just ask that you don't share it with other school districts.

**C. Specialized Training for Students and Staff:** In both the student and teacher training, there will be additional instruction on how to incorporate the tools in the tool kit. The student training will take place during the day of the presentation. The staff training can take place after school with an overview of the material provided. Every teacher will receive a PDF of the School Culture training manual from Value Up.

**D. Success Academy:** We will do a break-out session for students that are "academically at risk." There may be students in your school that are having a hard time focusing on academics because of out-side distractions. Mike will take some time with these students and encourage them to take advantage of opportunities that your school is providing for them to be successful.

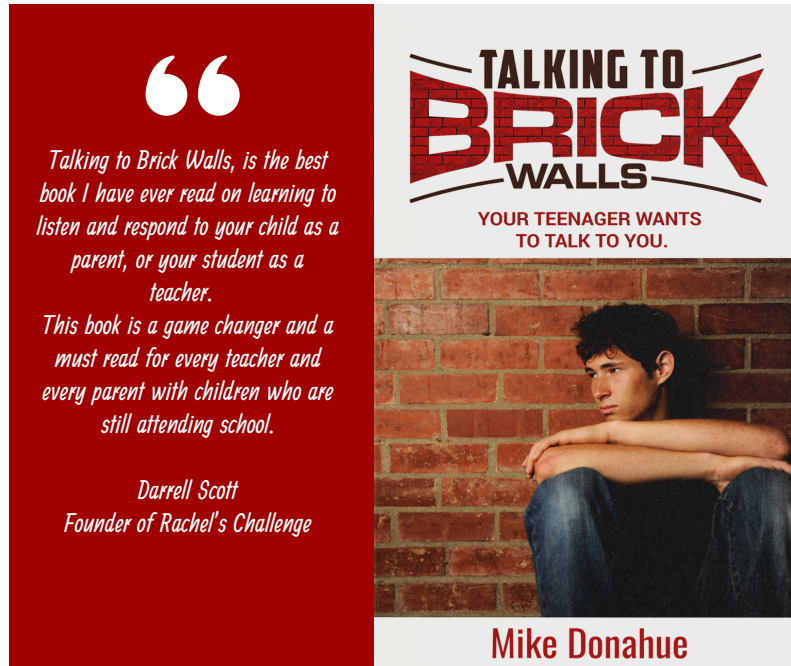
**E. Homeroom Short Discussion Manual:** We will provide a copy for every homeroom teacher in your school. There are 40, five-minute discussion topics that have to do with the Value Up message. Our goal is to stimulate conversation, because, as we have discussed, students establish the culture, adults provide the structure.

**F. Two Value Up Posters to Hang Around the School:** These are well designed posters that are relevant to teens today. These poster messages can be hung up around the school.

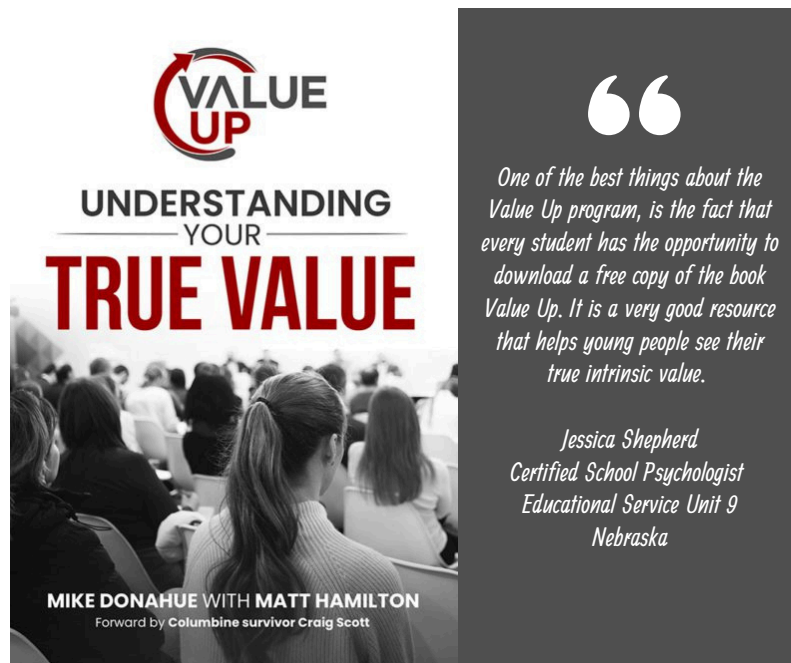
We believe that by implementing these tools into your school's social culture, you will see immediate positive changes in the climate of your school.

## Resources available with Value Up

Five copies of Talking to Brick Walls are left with the administration and counseling office and made available for sale at the parent presentation.



Every Student can download a free copy of the book, Value Up. Hard copies are given to the counselor and the library as well.





## **Recommendations and Endorsements**

**Value Up has received hundreds of letters of recommendations and endorsements from administrators, teachers and politicians over the years. The following are some quotable quotes from a few of them.**

"During my 30 years as an educator, I have had the pleasure of working with many of education's brightest minds and Mike Donahue ranks among the very best youth speakers I've ever encountered. Mr. Donahue has deep professional expertise and it shows." **Laurie J. Kjosness, Ed.S., Yuma School District CO**

"After being in countless activities, assemblies and speakers over the last 13 years, Value Up is by far the most impactful program we ever scheduled." **Russ Sojourner, The Classical Academy, CO**

"As a new principal in a high school of over 1100 students, I knew I wanted Value Up to come to my school because I had worked with them in the past. The impact was great and students are still talking about it. Furthermore, we did student surveys after the assembly and 93% of the students said that the topics from Value Up related to issues that were going on in the school. 94% said they want more Value Up presentations in the future. Lastly, over 60% said they wanted to part of making a positive change in the school. I highly recommend Mike Donahue and the Value Up message to any school that is wanting to make a positive impact on staff, students and the community." **Russ Tronson, Principal, Beaver Dam High School, WI**

"A major "plus", in my mind of the Value Up program is the resources that allow us to take this message and continue having conversations throughout the year. I have been amazed by some of the conversations that are occurring in our school and love that this is a piece of what we are doing to positively impact our culture and climate. If you have an opportunity to have Mike Donahue and Value Up in your district, don't hesitate." **Cam Smith, Principal, MOC-FLOYD School District, IA**

"The Value Up message goes beyond the subject of bullying – it starts to repair those relationships with each other – no matter if the situation was a bullying incidence or not." **Peggy Duffield, Ortonville Public Schools MN**

"Effective communication means that the students will absorb a high percentage of the information given. Mike Donahue knows how to get his message assimilated better than anyone I know that speaks to teenagers. We bring him in every October. We have had students contact us years later wanting his information so they could bring him into their organizations because they remember the impact that he had on them when they were students here. Mike is a brilliant communicator." **Dr. Deborah Beagle, Director of Student Activities, Vernon Hills High School- IDSA Exec. Board**



"Honestly....Today changed and possibly saved lives. THIS is what our students need. I saw some of my roughest senior boys with tears in their eyes during and after the Value Up presentation." **Melissa Anderson, Union High School, Tulsa OK**

"If you are looking for a program that will impact the social climate of your school for the entire school year and beyond, then you need to bring Value Up to your school. They are simply the best at what they do." **Dr. Sarah Updegraff, New Hampton High School IA**

"I am not a fan of the one-time speakers through out the course of a school year, but I have found that the Value Up message can stick with students for a long time. I would say that this program can help any school strengthen its culture and further refine the positive values that we, as administrators, want to instill in our students." **Marc Snavey, Principal 7-12 Wilton Public Schools, IA**

"Social anxiety among teenagers is a huge issue today which manifests itself in so many negative ways. Value Up addresses social issues like no other program I have seen. They get to the heart of the matter." **Matt Hamilton, School Climate Liaison East Jordan High School, Michigan**

"I am quit sure that in my fifteen year career in education, I have heard a minimum of 25 motivational presentations. There is no doubt in my mind that Value Up is the very best I ever heard." **Kerby Baier, Principal, Wright High School, WY**

"Value Up came to our school and it was FANTASTIC! The students were riveted. They were engaged, ALL of them. This isn't a presentation just for students with meager or abusive backgrounds. It's not just for students who disrespect others or who are disrespected. It's for everybody to understand that each person has a battle they are fighting that we don't know about. It gave great perspective for our kids." **Andy Cronin, Principal, Valentine High School, NE**

"Rarely do students receive a talk that resonates with them the way this one did. Mike Donahue's candor was refreshing and I liked how he got his message across to the students in a way that they really heard it. It was perfect for their age. He really adapted it so that it wasn't just the students sitting and listening to him talk. I was reminded that we don't know what happens to these kids when they walk out of the building at the end of the day. This was the most relatable assembly I have ever seen at Wray HS." **Elizabeth Wrigglman, School Counselor, Wray High School, CO**

*"I just wanted to acknowledge how great your presentation was today. Honestly, no school assembly I've ever been to has made such an impact on me. You didn't dumb anything down or sugarcoat it and I appreciate that. Normally I don't like any kind of assembly, but this one was different. I felt like you were trying to connect with the students and really dig deep into our perspective. Many speakers come to our school and say the same S%@# every time, but your presentation was a breath of fresh air. Thank you Mike."*  
**From a student in Dewitt IA (Fall 2021)**





Texas Association, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America  
1107 W. 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78756  
[www.texasfccla.org](http://www.texasfccla.org)

Greetings,

Mike Donahue has had his foot in the FCCLA door for many years, and it's time to break it wide open again. Mike recently completed the five-stop tour of Texas FCCLA by keynoting at our region conferences and connecting with over 6,000 of our members. It was powerful seeing the reaction that our members had to his relevant message and his words, actions, and service to our members has not gone unnoticed. If you are looking for a keynote speaker that brings a relevant and much needed message for your members, I wholeheartedly recommend Mike Donahue.

Engaged. That's the word to describe the Texas FCCLA member's reaction to Mike Donahue. In a world where our young people are often distracted by their devices, through his message, Mike captivated our audiences from beginning to end. He was saying something they needed to hear, and they stopped and listened.

Poignant. The trials and tribulations of day-to-day life are unimaginable for so many of our youth, but he exposed the necessity of having and developing a healthy self-worth. He champions that with self-worth comes the opportunity to lead, model, and be positive forces in the world. His address goes straight to the heart, as he talks about the hard stuff.

Transcending. Mike also goes beyond the message on the stage. In the midst of what could've been one of our member's worst days ever, Mike answered the call to action. In a selfless act he was sitting on a balcony with his arm outstretched. Quite possibly he shared the words that were instrumental in saving one of our member's lives.

Through an engaging, poignant, and transcendent message Texas FCCLA members stopped and listened, and in today's fast paced world, that alone is a gift. Mike will be back on a stage at a Texas FCCLA event in the future. Any keynote speaker can deliver a message, but Mike put his words and message into action. Mike is a captivating, relatable, and all-around fantastic human and keynote speaker.

Best Regards,

Melissa Isaacs  
State Advisor

A Career and Technical Education student organization involving over a million young men and women since 1945.



10/22/2019

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to recommend Value Up to any Middle or High School who is looking for a dynamic, engaging presentation that connects with students, and adults alike. I have known Mike Donahue founder and presenter of Value Up for the past 15 years. I first saw Mike speak to an audience of middle and high school students at a state leadership conference for FCCLA. I was amazed at how he can connect with his audience in just a few minutes. I was moved by his message and knew I had to bring him to my school at the time to share the message there.

I did just that and brought him to my school not once but twice in a period of five years. Each time he came, he connected with our student body. Students would say that he is real and speaks their language. They feel he is authentic and honest. They also feel he can provide a positive influence to help change their lives. Many people ask me, what does he talk about. He talks about his life as an adolescent and teen growing up in a toxic environment, dealing with abuse, and self-medication. He talks about how hard it is to walk down a school hallway each day without being judged. He shares that we all should take time to learn about each others story; as we all have one. We all have value it just may look differently than each other. Take the time to walk a mile in another person's shoes.

As a building high school Principal of 1100 students in a new school district, I immediately knew that my student body and adults could benefit from hearing Mike's message and becoming a Value Up school. I reached out, and Mike recently just visited our district presenting to our High School, Middle School, and Alternative School. He also spoke to student leaders, faculty and staff, and parents and community members. His message resonated with all audiences. His impact was great and students are still talking about it a week later. As we continue to move our district forward, we will be looking to incorporate the Value Up system in our culture. Student survey results showed that 95% of students either somewhat or fully related to Mike's presentation. Furthermore 93% of students either somewhat or fully believed that topics Mike covered relate to issues in their school. 94% of students want more Value Up in the future. Lastly, 60% of students feel they could be empowered to be a part of a positive change in their school.

I highly recommend Mike Donahue and the Value Up program for any school who is looking to engage students and staff in a powerful message about Value and self-respect.

Russ Tronsen, Principal  
Beaver Dam High School

Beaver Dam High School

500 Gould Street • Beaver Dam, WI 53916 • [bdusd.org](http://bdusd.org) • Phone: 920.885.7313 • Fax: 920.392.5184



# Lewis-Palmer High School

1300 Higby Road, Monument, CO 80132 - (719) 488-4720 - FAX (719) 488-4723

August 24, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that we as an administrative team endorse Mike Donahue and the Value Up Program. In just a short time, Mike has positively impacted thousands of our students through his message and his book. His message is authentic and his style immediately engages students with humor and depth of character.

This fall, Lewis-Palmer High School will implement the Sources of Strength program in our school. We have been through extensive training and feel like it is going to be very beneficial for our students. Through the training and working with Mike, we are still brainstorming the best ways to combine Sources and Mike Donahue and his Value Up assembly program. After his assembly and a parent community meeting, we realized that the two programs are a perfect fit! Mike's message that Value is intrinsic and does not depend on social performance was a home run with our students. You could have heard a pin drop during the one hour and fifteen minute assembly of 1100 plus students. Mike did a great job of taking away the stigma of getting help when things are tough. He talked about not masking pain or pressure with substances or other negative coping mechanisms, but reaching out for help (taking advantage of sources of strength) and reaching for the "top shelf." Here are some of the comments that came in after Mike's presentation:

"Value Up is brilliant and Amazing!"

"I wanted to say how much you have impacted me and changed my view on life and on other people, and I also felt inspired to share my story with you."

"You taught me a lot and helped me to strive to see myself in a new light. You're honestly the only speaker who has come to my school that people actually listen to. You tell real stories, real things kids can relate to."

"You really changed my perspective and my whole life really. Everything is different now. It's almost like everything has color again."

"This is exactly what our school needed. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today."

"Thanks Mike, now I know I'm not alone."

Even though Mike's message was inspirational and very well received by our students, the content of his message has deep roots and is very complimentary to the Sources of Strength program. We are very excited to be able to now begin the process of implementing Sources knowing that we can give legs to Mike's message that everyone has Value. Mike was also very willing to adapt his program to meet the needs of our specific student body. We highly recommend the Value Up program for any school, but specifically if you are using the Sources of Strength program it is a great way to stir up momentum and get the students on board with you right away.

As administrators, we appreciate that Mike is willing to work with our existing structure and initiatives to strengthen our culture. He is weaving his message into our existing Pillars of Excellence and he has met with our athletic director to find ways to build on the work the Athletic department has done as well. With tremendous partnering such as this, we look forward to working with Mike and moving our school culture where each student does, indeed, feel that they have Value.

Sincerely,

  
Bridget O'Connor, Assistant Principal

  
Dawn Klein, Assistant Principal

  
Anthony Karr, Principal 2017-18

  
Nick Baker, Athletic Director/Assistant Principal

We believe in a local, national and global stewardship to create strong citizens who will secure a better world.  
This is why we educate.

# RESPECT:

## How are we doing?

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### DURING THIS SESSION WE WILL...

- Identify behaviors that communicate respect in your school
- Identify behaviors that communicate disrespect in your school
- Interact with other students in a respectful way
- Experience an activity that helps students see that differences do not need to divide them

### WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

- Whiteboard or chalkboard or large poster board
- Paper and pens

### INTRODUCTION OF TOPIC: RESPECT

One of the core ideas of Value Up is that when we value and respect ourselves, we are more likely to value and respect others.

We will dig into what it means to respect ourselves in another discussion. Today, let's talk about what respecting one another looks like.

### REPECT LIST

*Have everyone pair up.*

**Over the next few minutes each pair will write a list of ten people you respect.** You won't turn this in, so don't worry about spelling or penmanship.

You can list anyone you want, living or dead.

Two details make this more challenging:

- You must agree that each person on your list is worthy of being respected.

- You must agree why that person is worthy of respect. If you can't agree, that person comes off your list.
- For instance, you might both agree that Abraham Lincoln is worthy of respect. But unless you can agree why he's worthy, you have to cross Lincoln off your list.

Ready? You've got five minutes to craft your lists.

*Give a one-minute countdown after four minutes have passed so everyone knows it time to wrap up discussions.*

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

*Ask for volunteers who will read their lists aloud. After several volunteers have read, ask the larger group:*

**Is there anyone on those lists you would not have included on yours? Who—and why?**

*Encourage participation and be careful to remain nonjudgmental. If someone mentions someone outrageous, the other students will comment; you don't have to.*

**Did anyone put someone on your list that you know personally? Why is that person there?**

**Most of our nominees for respect are people we don't actually know personally. It's been said that the more we know about someone, the harder it is to respect that person. Do you think that's true or false—and why?**

*Solicit a variety of opinions and let students express themselves. You'll model the respect you want to see students extend to each other if you encourage participation without passing judgment.*

Let's have each pair find another pair so you form a group of four. After you've done that, I've got something for you to discuss.

## **RESPECT IN YOUR SCHOOL DISCUSSION: GROUPS OF FOUR**

*After students form groups of four:*

We haven't all agreed about who's worthy of respect during the past ten minutes, and life is like that. We don't always agree. Not about politics, how to spend money, or what's important. We don't all share the same belief system or goals in life. We are all different, but we can be different people who respect each other.

**As a group of four, talk about this in our school. List some ways people show respect to each other? And list some of the ways people show disrespect?**

Someone needs to take notes. You'll be sharing this with the larger group in a few minutes.

*Let the groups talk for a while. This peer to peer conversation is critical for gaining new perspective.*

*Give a one-minute countdown when you're ready to move along in the session. This gives students the chance to wrap up their discussions.*

## **RESPECT IN YOUR SCHOOL DISCUSSION PART 2: LARGE GROUP**

*Ask note-takers to call out ways in which respect is shown in your school. Bounce around the room instead of just having a person read their entire list.*

*Write their ideas on the white board or chalkboard.*

*Write a separate list of the way lack of respect is displayed in your school.*

*Leave the lists where students can see them.*

When it comes to communicating respect for others, there are behaviors that help that happen. But there are other behaviors happening at our school that communicate disrespect.

Look again at our list of behaviors that communicate respect.

Three things I want you to see:

- First, we communicate respect when we value people.

When we value people, we listen to them and honor their opinions. For the most part, we held respectful discussions here today—we listened, were considerate of others' opinions, and were sensitive to each other's feelings. All of that

communicates respect.

- Second, we communicate respect when we communicate directly.

You worked in teams today. If you disagreed with someone you told them directly. No one ran over to another team to say, "Man, Derick is an idiot—he doesn't know anything." No talking behind the back of others, no mocking, or reputation assassination. Direct communication—saying what you mean to the person involved—is a way to show respect.

- Third, we communicate respect when we appreciate others.

When you worked with partners today, everyone contributed. Everyone brought something to the table. Nobody got shut out because of how they looked, how they dressed, how athletic or smart or rich or poor they are.

So, let's make things awkward.

Right now, turn to the other people in your foursome and thank them for what they contributed.

*Pause so this can happen, then continue:*

Here's what I appreciated about you: You demonstrated respect as you shared your thoughts with openness and honesty. You worked well in teams. You valued what others said and held negative comments to a minimum. Those are all behaviors that build a culture of respect at our school.

## **RESPECT ACTIVITY**

Let's do one final activity: please stand and form a circle with the others in your group of four. Stand fairly close and make sure you can take a step forward and back without hitting something.

- If during the time you've been a student at our school you've ever felt disrespected, take one step back.
- If you've ever felt that what you said or thought didn't matter, fold your arms across your chest.



- If you've ever felt hurt by words used by someone else, turn your back to your circle.
- If you've ever felt alone, lonely, or lost, stay right where you are. If you've never felt that way at school, even once, turn around and face back into your circle.
- Stay where you are, but let's take a moment and see how disrespect and not valuing one another changes our body language and can pull us away from each other.
- If someone has ever made you feel like they cared about you, face into your circle again.
- If you've ever felt appreciated by a friend or fellow student, uncross your arms.
- If someone listened to you when you needed them to, take a step forward into your circle if you can.

Everyone can be seated again.

### **APPLICATION CHALLENGE**

It's great to talk about respecting others but having intentions without action isn't worth much.

- Think of someone here at school to whom you've recently been disrespectful. Perhaps you mocked another student or ignored a staff member. Picture that person.

Here's a challenge: In the next 24 hours, preferably before you leave school today, find that individual and show him or her respect. Maybe that'll come in the form of an apology or just in the form of a kind word.