

# In Relationships, Respect May Be Even More Crucial than Love

*Guest post by Peter Gray.*

It is useful, I think, to compare and contrast parent-child relationships with husband-wife relationships. In both of these, respect is absolutely essential for the relationship to work. Love without respect is dangerous; it can crush the other person, sometimes literally. To respect is to understand that the other person is *not* you, not an extension of you, not a reflection of you, not your toy, not your pet, not your product. In a relationship of respect, your task is to understand the other person as a unique individual and learn how to mesh your needs with his or hers and help that person achieve what he or she wants to achieve. Your task is not to control the other person or try to change him or her in a direction that you desire but he or she does not. I think this applies as much to parent-child relationships as to husband-wife relationships.

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