

## A Fine Reputation

You've heard me repeatedly use the phrase, "Give people a fine reputation to live up to." This is the chapter that I learned it from. That single phrase helped me change substantially how I have treated people since I took the Dale Carnegie course in 1990. It's very powerful. It produced an instant change in my behavior.

This is what we're doing when we "speak into existence" how we actually see people - *not* just how we want them to be. That little difference in motive and attitude will make this tool work or defeat its usefulness. It is the difference between a sincere desire to seek the best for people, and a crass desire to manipulate them. See people how they can be, speak to them as if it were already true, and they will mold themselves into the image you have of them.

If you are critical and demeaning, fault-finding and unsympathetic, you will create a corrupted self-image in others. If you are full of praise, uplifting, forgiving and sympathetic, you will create a positive and loving self-image in others. Which of these two approaches you choose will be based in large part on how you see yourself. If you are unforgiving of yourself, you will be unforgiving of others. If you are critical of yourself, you will be critical of others. If you are unable to love yourself, you will be unable to love others.

**You** are the key. If you are dependent on others for your sense of self-worth, then you are going to be in trouble. You need to understand that your worth is independent of what anyone else thinks. God loves you. God accepts you just as you are. God forgives you of everything you condemn yourself for. Trust in that. Believe it. Live by it, and you will be able to care for others as He cares for you.

**Leadership principle:** *[We shouldn't value others by their polished ability to communicate, or by some other external factor. We need to look at them] through the light of God's grace and see character, perseverance, self-control, self-discipline, and a desire to obey.*

Joni Eareckson Tada

If you want to paint an image for someone to grow into, then consider those attributes Joni mentions. Identify them in someone you speak to today, and then give that person a fine reputation to live up to. Give them the respect and the value they're due, because their value already exists. You're simply exposing it. If they are mean-spirited and critical, understand that they are only expressing how they feel about themselves. Prove them wrong about themselves. Help them see themselves as you see them, and how God sees them. Then sit back and watch them change before your eyes...