

Self-Respect: Taking Care Of Yourself

Know what's best for you, to find the person that's best for you.

Anyone who's ever dated knows that this world can feel like a nasty game, a scrappy race, or even a fierce battle. People won't always treat you right. However, while you can't control how other people act, you can control how one person acts.

You can control what *you* do.

This is where self-respect comes in. You have control over what you'll accept in a relationship, over who you'll give your energy to, and how you'll respond to those you meet. This control gives you incredible power over what you'll get out of a relationship.

“
Self-awareness and inner peace are crucial in dating.

When you're looking for that special someone, don't just think about who you're pursuing. Think about the other person being pursued: you! Just as you want to find someone who will make you happy, consider all the qualities you have to offer. Your sense of humour, your caring heart, or your creativity will all make someone incredibly happy. It's not always easy, but if you don't find the confidence to know what it is you offer someone, you'll never recognise the truth: that a relationship is a two-way street.

While you have value, you also need to recognise that you're not just some object to be attained by someone else just because they want you. Being wanted is great. Who doesn't want that? But if someone truly wants *you*, then they should want to respect you. They should want you happy, which means they need to be okay hearing “no” – and you should be okay saying it.

This can be easier said than done. For some people, especially those in the gay community who may have been taught there



NEW AFRICA/ADOBESTOCK

was something wrong with them, it takes practice. That's why when dating, working on self-care is so important. While it's fine to want to make other people happy, you should make sure you're taking care of yourself, and living a life that ensures you are growing. If you don't focus on yourself, you'll end up in a relationship that's one-sided, and that's not a healthy way to grow together.

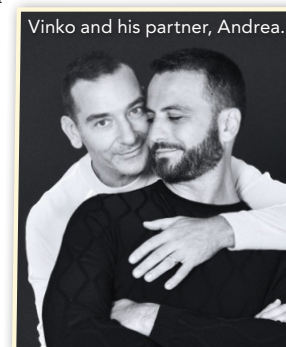
You can learn to focus on yourself by being mindful and by being aware of your needs at all times. Be aware of what it is you want in a relationship, of how certain situations make you feel, and how you react to them. In doing so, you can teach yourself to take better care of yourself. It may seem counterintuitive to focus on yourself when you're dating someone *else*, but self-awareness and inner peace are crucial in dating. If you're not looking for what's best for *you*, you won't find the *person* who's best for you.

Sometimes, we may feel tempted to date someone who looks good on paper. Or maybe we just want to get with someone because they're *there*. It's a mindset that plagues online dating and “serial swiping” culture. If you are practicing self-awareness, though, and being true to yourself, you won't run into this issue. If you're true to yourself, you'll pick someone

who is kind to you, gives you what you need, and respects you. You'll be honest with others – and yourself – about what you're looking for in a partner. That's the best way to show yourself respect.

When you're dating, focus on practices that align with your needs. That may mean putting extra thought into who you date, or partnering with someone like a matchmaker who is dedicated to finding you a partner, not a one-night stand or random hookup. You deserve what's best for you, and only one person knows what that is: yourself! So, it's up to you to pursue it.

To understand self-respect, we must also understand its evil twin: self-hatred. More on that next month!



Vinko and his partner, Andrea.

W: beaubrummellintroductions.com
#DNA Partners