

## RESPECT

### Definition

A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

### Story

When Mario Herrera walks through the halls of South Houston High School, he can be difficult to find – he’s barely four feet tall. But the varsity football-playing senior is a big man on campus when it comes to the respect he’s earned from teammates and opponents alike. Herrera was born with a rare birth defect called Unusual Facies Syndrome. While his upper body is of normal proportion his thighbones never fully formed. Herrera had a difficult childhood, but he worked up the nerve to approach South Houston High football coach Dwayne Lane.

Lane said about Herrera, "He's looking up and he goes, 'Do you think I could play football?'" Lane told Herrera, "If the doctors approve you to play, I'll let you play football. I no more than got that sentence out of my mouth and he said, 'I have a physical on file with the trainers. I'm ready to go.'"

Herrera played two years on the junior varsity team. He wasn't in the starting lineup, but he did get to play from time to time. However, one thing clearly bothered Herrera. Once an opposing team clearly eased up on Herrera and moved out of his way. "I don't like anything being given to me," Herrera said. "I like earning it. Dream big and work hard. I'm dreaming big to play varsity and I'm working hard to get there."

Herrera made the varsity football team that year. And in a game against the South Houston Trojans that was a blowout, Lane decided to give Herrera his chance at left corner on defense. The opposing team's running back swept right, directly toward Herrera. Herrera wrapped his arms around the running back's legs and hung on for dear life.

Herrera said, "As he spins around I know I have him! I have him! A couple seconds later I hear the PA announcing my name saying that I got the tackle. I hear the crowd cheering for me. It's an amazing feeling. That's a moment I will never forget."

Herrera has become an inspiration to others. Coach Lane said, "Everybody was just excited for Mario, looking up to Mario, like wow, he can do it."

One of his friends was quoted saying, "He's earned everybody's respect, and we respect him tremendously, and he's just an amazing guy."

Mario says an opposing coach once told him after a game that he was what high school sports was all about. Herrera said, "That moved me and that made feel really good." He hopes to take that heart into a career as a motivational speaker.

### **Quote**

"I've worked too hard and too long to let anything stand in the way of my goals. I will not let my teammates down, and I will not let myself down." **Mia Hamm**

### **Interaction**

1. What are some things you can do to earn the respect of your teammates?
2. Have you ever felt like you did not have the respect of someone? How did that make you feel?
3. Who is someone in your life that you have or had great respect for? Why did you respect them?

### **Main Idea**

It is good to show respect, but it is also good to work hard to earn it. Take pride in earning the respect of those you admire.

### **Take Away**

Respect is not imposed nor begged. It's earned and offered.