5 ways to boost your self-respect shared

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Want to boost your self-respect and unlock your full potential? We believe that self-respect is the foundation of confidence, ambition, and success. So, when 150 students at Christ the King Aquinas School in South London gathered for our International Women's Day panel, they received a masterclass in self-worth from some inspiring professionals.

Here are five key lessons from the event to help you take yourself seriously and boost your self-respect.

1. Master your Mindset – Be your own "Thought Bouncer"

Victoria Silverman, Head of Communications at Urban Synergy, shared some valuable advice about managing negative thoughts. "I frisk my thoughts like a bouncer with a toothache," she said. Rather than allowing negativity to drain your energy, focus on finding solutions. If an invading force were approaching your town, you wouldn't just dwell on the attack—you'd create a plan of action.

Lesson: Control your thoughts—they shape how you see yourself and the world.

2. Push forward through Rejection

Hawa-Kaytee Jalloh, IT Placement Analyst at TJX Europe, Chair of Urban Synergy Youth Council and Cyber Security Undergraduate at Aston University, highlighted an important truth: you will face rejection. Whether it's a job application, a university place, or an opportunity you really want, setbacks are inevitable. But self-respect means recognising that you are more than just a single "no".

Lesson: Rejection isn't failure—it's simply a step forward in disguise.

3. Present yourself with Poise and Confidence

First impressions count. Dianne Johnson, Head of Programmes & Engagement at Urban Synergy, spoke about the importance of looking and acting the part. Whether you're attending an interview or stepping into a new environment, presenting yourself with confidence and professionalism earns respect—from others and from yourself.

Lesson: Show up smart, poised, and ready for the opportunities you want.

4. Don't let grades or expectations define you

One of the most thought-provoking audience questions was, "What do you wish you had done differently?" The panel's advice was clear: don't assume you need top Maths grades to work in technology. The industry requires many more skills beyond numbers. One panellist achieved B, D, D, E at A-Level, and another had no A-Levels at all—yet both still built successful careers.

Lesson: Find what you're good at. A mentor can help you see beyond what your parents or teachers expect.

5. Identify your Strengths – and play to them

Megan Harris, Head of Operations at Dynamic Planner, spoke about the importance of recognising your strengths. "Work out what you're good at," she advised. Rather than dwelling on weaknesses, focus on developing your natural talents.

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Lesson: Respect yourself enough to lean into your strengths.

Final Thought: Take yourself seriously

The panelists left the students with one key message: self-respect starts with YOU. Whether it’s through perseverance, presentation, or personal growth, owning your worth is the first step towards success.

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