



SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS KIT · GRADES 9-12

"Let's Talk Respect"

*Ready-to-send copy for your newsletter,
your website and your social accounts.*

Everything here is yours to edit, cut or rewrite.

Robert Hackenson Jr., MBA, CAOL · Dynamic Influence
dynamicinfluence.com

How to use this

Everything in this kit is written for you to paste and send. Change the voice to match your school's, cut anything that doesn't fit, and swap in your own details wherever you see brackets.

Two things make this land better than a standard post-assembly notice:

Send something within 48 hours. The window where students are still talking about it is short, and a note that arrives while the banana conversation is still happening at kitchen tables gets read.

Point parents at one thing, not five. The parent resources page is built to be the single link. If you send a newsletter with six attachments, families open none of them.

ABOUT THE LINK

Wherever you see [\[PARENT PAGE LINK\]](#), use the parent resources page Dynamic Influence set up for your school. It holds the presentation recording, the parent guide, the conversation cards and the help resources in one place, so you only ever have to share one URL.

ONE THING WORTH DOING

Ask your teachers to run the classroom session within two weeks. The survey data from other schools is consistent on this: the assembly alone moves the numbers, and the assembly plus the classroom sessions moves them considerably more. If you want something to tell your school committee in June, that's where it comes from.

Blog post

Headline options

- **"Everybody Is That Person to Someone": What Our Students Heard This Week**
- A Magician, a Sealed Glass Case, and a Conversation About Respect
- Why We Brought "Let's Talk Respect" to [SCHOOL NAME]
- The Assembly That Started With a Card Trick and Ended With a Banana

The post

Our students spent 50 minutes this week with Robert Hackenson Jr. — a professional magician and certified hypnotist who has spent more than twenty years doing prevention education in schools. The program is called **"Let's Talk Respect,"** and it is not the assembly most of us sat through as teenagers.

Nobody was told to be nice. Nobody was told to be friends with everybody. Robert ruled that out in the first two minutes: *"it's not like you need to love everyone, be friends with everybody — that's not realistic."*

What he asked instead was a question about this building. **What kind of school do you want to go to?** And then he said the quiet part out loud before any student could: that he could feel the room thinking *nothing ever changes*. His answer wasn't a pep talk. It was that accepting that thought, and repeating it, is what keeps it true.

WHY THE GOLDEN RULE WASN'T THE POINT

Younger students get a simple version — put yourself in the other person's shoes. Robert told our students that rule, and then told them exactly where it fails for people their age:

"Have you ever had the experience where someone's like, 'would you want that said to you?' And you'd be like — I don't care."

He treated that as an honest answer, which it is. So he rebuilt the rule around something teenagers do care about.

He fanned out a stack of cards with strangers' names on them. Nobody cared about any of them. Then a student wrote down the name of **one person she would protect** — somebody where, if she heard what was being said about them, she'd get angry. The card went back into the stack, and moments later it turned up alone, folded, inside a sealed glass case that had been sitting in front of her the entire time.

She read her own handwriting out loud. *"My dad."*

Everybody is that person to someone. Treat others as you would want *that person* treated.

WHERE EMPATHY ACTUALLY STOPS WORKING

Robert gave students a structure for why judging people comes so easily. Every decision comes out of what you know, and what you know comes from three places: formal education, personal experience, and outside influence. **Nobody has the same three.** So when you look at what somebody did and think "*I would never,*" you are judging their decision using information they don't have, about a situation you were never in.

There is only one way in: **you have to ask questions.**

He applied it to the way students see themselves, too — that we accept labels, from circumstance or from other people, and then live up to them. "*Once you think you're something, then I'm gonna act to live up to that.*"

THE DEMONSTRATION THEY'LL BE TALKING ABOUT

Two students stood facing each other. One closed her eyes. Robert tapped the one whose eyes were **open** — and the student with her eyes closed felt it, on the same shoulder.

"Sticks and stones may break your bones, words will never hurt you." That phrase came before the internet.

Just because you don't physically touch somebody doesn't mean they're not going to feel it. He paired it with the honest problem about online cruelty: in person, you know a joke has gone too far because the person is crying. Online, you don't — and "*the biggest danger is that you don't see the hurt.*"

The test he left them with is short enough to actually use: **would I want this on a billboard for everybody to see?**

WIN, OR LEARN

One of the strongest stretches of the hour had nothing to do with bullying. Robert argued that we don't need more debate — we need more conversation — and the difference is the goal. **The goal of a conversation is to listen and learn. The goal of a debate is to win.**

He proved it with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, an argument about the right way to make one, and the same piece of information delivered two ways: once as "*you're wrong,*" which the room pushed straight back against, and once as "*here's another way I heard,*" which they leaned into. Same content. **Choose your words so people can actually learn from you.**

AND THE BANANAS

Asked why we don't step in when we see something happening, students gave three honest answers: *they might target me next · it was done to me · it's always been this way.*

Robert's reply to the last one was, "and to that I say — bananas." Which is how our students learned that we have all been opening bananas from the wrong end our entire lives, and that every other primate does it the easier way. Why do we do it the hard way? Because whoever taught us did it that way.

Just because it's the way it's always been done doesn't mean it's the best way. The only way to change it

is action and education.

If your teenager corrects your banana technique this week, that's the assignment. Let them.

FOR FAMILIES

Everything from the presentation is gathered in one place for parents and caregivers — the recording, a parent guide with conversation openers that actually work on teenagers, printable conversation cards, and where to go for help.

[PARENT PAGE LINK]

The most useful thing you can do tonight is ask one question: *"Who at school would you go to if something was wrong?"* It isn't the answer that matters so much as how long it takes.

Email blurb

Subject line options

- What our students heard this week
- "Everybody is that person to someone"
- Following up on this week's assembly
- Resources from Tuesday's presentation
- Ask your teenager about the banana

Body

Dear families,

This week our students spent 50 minutes with Robert Hackenson Jr., a magician and prevention educator, for a program called "**Let's Talk Respect.**"

It wasn't a lecture about being nice. Students were told outright that nobody expects them to be friends with everybody. What they were asked was a harder question — what kind of school do they want to walk into every morning, and what are the small decisions that build it.

A few things they took away:

- **Everybody is that person to someone.** Treat others as you'd want the person you care most about treated — not just yourself.
- **Be curious, not judgmental.** Once you've decided what something means, you stop asking questions.
- **Put it down. Calm down. Then go talk.** Not over text.
- **You don't see the hurt.** Online, you never see the reaction — which is what makes it easy and what makes it dangerous.

Everything is gathered here, including the recording and a parent guide with conversation starters: **[PARENT PAGE LINK]**

One question worth asking tonight: *"Who at school would you go to if something was wrong?"* If your teenager can't name somebody, please reach out to us — that's useful for us to know.

And if they tell you that you've been opening bananas wrong your whole life, they were paying attention.

[SIGNATURE]

Social posts

Facebook

Our students spent 50 minutes this week with magician and prevention educator Robert Hackenson Jr. for "Let's Talk Respect."

Nobody was told to be nice. What they were asked was what kind of school they want to walk into every morning.

One moment stuck: a stack of cards with strangers' names on them, and nobody cared about any of them. Then a student wrote down the name of one person she would protect — and that card turned up alone in a sealed glass case. Her answer: "my dad."

Everybody is that person to someone.

Resources for families, including the recording and conversation starters: [PARENT PAGE LINK]

Instagram

"Everybody is that person to someone."

50 minutes on respect, perception and what we do with a screen between us. Magic, a sealed glass case, and — somehow — bananas.

Families: everything's at the link. Ask them about the banana. 🍌

LetsTalkRespect #[SCHOOLHASHTAG]
#BullyingPrevention #SchoolCulture

Short version — texts and newsletter sidebars

Students heard "Let's Talk Respect" this week. Big idea: **everybody is that person to someone**. Resources and the recording for families: [PARENT PAGE LINK]

If you post the survey results later

We asked students before the assembly and again after the classroom sessions. [X]% moved up on *"if I saw somebody being targeted, I would do something about it."* [X]% can now name an adult in this building they'd go to.

That second number is the one we care most about.

A few notes before you publish

Don't name the students who came on stage. The volunteers in your assembly were terrific, and their names are in the recording, but a name in a public post is a different thing from a name in a gym. Describe them as "a student."

One line in the presentation is worth knowing about in advance. When Robert asked the room what stops us from treating each other well, a student answered with a crude word, and Robert took it seriously rather than correcting it — he said *"that's genuinely true,"* because the room was being honest about why they don't bother. It is a good moment and it does not belong in a newsletter. If a parent raises it, that's the context.

Skip the statistics about body language. Robert mentions figures for how much of communication is nonverbal. Those numbers get quoted far more confidently than the original research supports, so leave them out of anything you publish — the demonstration makes the point better than a number does.

"Be curious, not judgmental" has a disputed attribution. Robert credits Walt Whitman on stage. That attribution doesn't hold up, so if you quote the line — and it's worth quoting — don't attach a name to it.

The results you report include the classroom work. If your teachers ran the follow-up sessions, say so when you share survey numbers. "Assembly plus monthly lessons moved these numbers" is a stronger claim than the assembly alone, and anybody who has run a program evaluation will respect it more.

About Robert

Robert Hackenson Jr., MBA, CAOL is the founder of Dynamic Influence and a Professional Member of the National Speakers Association. A professional magician and certified hypnotist, he has spent over twenty years as a prevention educator, delivering magic-integrated programs to schools, colleges and organizations across 49 states and internationally.

His work uses a non-fear-based approach: students are given the reasoning and the tools rather than a warning, on the premise that teenagers who understand *why* make better decisions than teenagers who have been frightened.

Programs include: bullying prevention and school culture · digital citizenship and social media · vaping and substance awareness · goal-setting, perseverance and resilience · student leadership.

dynamicinfluence.com

Questions, or want Robert back for another grade band? dynamicinfluence.com