

How To Be A Professional Adult by Dennis Gaskill

That's an interesting concept—being a professional adult. We can earn educational degrees, job titles, plaudits and awards that signify our professionalism in the performance of duty, but how do we become a professional adult to crown the quality of our character?

In order to become a professional adult we need to live it full-time so it becomes part of our nature. Maturity can't be turned on and off at will because sooner or later a person's true character will reveal itself in moments when we react without thinking. After all, you can dress a pig in a tuxedo, but underneath the fancy clothes it's still a pig, and that's what will always show through in due time.

Here then, are my keys to being a professional human being, listed in no particular order:

» Attitude

Having the right attitude is a choice, not an emotion, but too often people let their emotions rule their attitude. We should not easily give up control over something as important as our attitude to something as fleeting and mutable as emotions. Choose the kind of person you want be known as, and then start living that way each day so others will have a reason to think that way of you.

» Integrity

Be honest and fair in all you do. Let your personal word be your bond and fairness be your calling card. Say what you mean and mean what you say so that no one has to read between the lines with you. People who know you should know without doubt that you are trustworthy and dependable.

» Ethical

Closely related to integrity, the quality of being ethical has the additional value of conforming to accepted standards and practices in social, business, and professional behavior, to complement the integrity of personal behavior.

» Generosity of Spirit

Be generous with your kindness. Each person has their own burden of secret sorrows and worries, but all thrive on genuine affection. A smile, a kind gesture, an encouraging word can bolster anyone's day. That you have the power to make a positive difference in the lives of others is reason enough to

be generous of spirit. The fact that generosity of spirit also works to your advantage is secondary.

» Personal Responsibility

Be accountable in word and deed. Have a deep commitment to your duties and don't try to shift your responsibility to others. Do all you can for yourself - the world owes you nothing, it was here first - so don't expect or ask for a free ride. Don't try to cover up or hide from your mistakes, own up to them like an adult should.

» Respect

Recognize that each person is unique and valuable and accept them as they are. Be willing to listen to each person you come into contact with. Show deference to authority and give each man, woman and child the respect they deserve. It's sometimes difficult because some people are plainly disagreeable, but you'll be well-respected in return.

» Sense of Purpose

A professional adult does not drift through life on the winds of fate. Instead, get interested and enthusiastic about something. Set goals and outline the steps you need to take to get there. Live for your chosen reasons rather than just because you're here taking up space!

» Understanding

Show an understanding of the human condition by treating others with kindness, generosity, and a forgiving heart. When we're wrapped up in only ourselves we make a pretty uninteresting package. We must each do our part to make the world a better place or it won't get better. We all make a difference, make it a difference for the better!

» Honor Relationships

We should be builders in life, not destroyers. To allow our own selfish ambitions and desires to degrade existing relationships between others is a dance with iniquity. You cannot respect others without respecting their relationships, and you cannot respect yourself without respecting others. There may be exceptions to this, but be careful where you make exceptions. Parents do need to provide guidance to children, and no one should have to live with abuse.

» Appreciation

Be thankful for what you have, it's more than you realize. The gift of life, a clear mind, freedom, material blessings, relationships, your unique personality and talents...there is so much to be thankful for, and yet so much we take for granted. Developing an appreciation for our blessings is a blessing in itself, because it deepens our awareness and strengthens our attractive power to draw even more blessings into our lives.

» Humility

You are special, but so is everyone else. We all want and need to feel important, but do not try to steal another's joy by trying to one up them during their moment in the sun. Let your actions and others do the crowing for you. If you have to brag, it's a drag. If you think not, go stand in front of the mirror and look yourself in the eye and tell yourself how wonderful you are. You'll get tired of it soon, and so do others.

» Perseverance

Pursue worthy goals with determination and patience, do not give up at the first sign of trouble. Instant gratification fades fast. Goals that are more difficult to achieve have a lasting value and build confidence and character.

» Self-discipline

One of the truest measures of personal greatness is how well you have mastered your impulses, desires, and habits. Whomever can master the self will master their destiny.

» Courage of Conviction

Do what you know is right, never following others when you know the others are wrong. Be a shining example and stable in all your ways. Those who master this are seldom lead far astray by winking trouble and smiling lies.

» Attention

Give your attention to those who seek it. You are not so great and others are not so small that you can afford to disregard them. If you need to make an exit, wait for an opening and do so politely.

» Citizenship

Be a law abiding citizen and have loyalty to your country. Your place in it was reserved by the blood of those who have gone before you. Be respectful of the Earth, it's the only planet we have. We are all riding the same blue marble through space, so we are all dependent on each other to some degree - don't take our home for granted.

» Service to Others

Spare a little of your time in service to others. This would be a much colder and more cruel world if everyone lived only for themselves. There are ways you can help others that would not be helped if not for you. Be of service and watch your self-image soar. The law of cause and effect dictates that we do eventually reap what we sow, so giving of yourself in service to others will sooner or later return to bless you.

» Curb Thy Tongue

The tongue can help heal or it can destroy. Don't be the nitpicker that must point out the faults of others and steal their joy. You cannot build yourself up

by tearing others down. We are all one in this web of life, when you destroy part of the web, you destroy part of yourself. Refrain from speaking poorly of others behind their back. The people you do this with will suspect you talk poorly about them behind their back as well, whether true or not.

I have given you several major points already, and the final point is to encourage you to discover on your own other opportunities for growth that are unique to your life. By always striving to mature, to intentionally seek growth in character and spirit, to feed our mind knowledge and wisdom, we embark on a process of enlightenment that increases our power even as our bodies grow weaker with age. In making this choice, we will indeed become professional adults.

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