

## REPUTATION vs RESPECT

Every school has them. The loner. The “outsider.” The person no one else talks to. Along with these people comes the myth that if you associate with people such as this you will damage your reputation. Really? While I was in New York a while back I read a story about a boy that would say otherwise.

Here’s what happened:



**A city bus pulls up to a bus stop. Three teenagers get on and sit toward the back of the bus. Winter time, 20 degrees, snow on the ground. The bus pulls away and shortly after makes another stop. A homeless lady gets on. She reaches down into**

her torn apron, pulls out some change to pay and then sits towards the back of the bus where the 3 teenagers are. Two of the three teenager start making fun of the fact that the lady had no shoes on. She had rags wrapped around her feet to keep them warm. “Hey lady,” one boy said. “Where did you get those shoes, J.C. Garbage?” Both boys laugh. The third boy got up, looked at his friends, and then walked over to the lady. He paused for a moment, looked back at his friends, then bent down, took off his brand new sneakers that he just bought at the mall and then handed them to the lady saying, “here lady, you need these more than I do.” His friends went crazy.

“Man, what are you nuts!!?” one shouted. “They cost \$85. Why you giving them to that old lady!!!?”

The boy said nothing.

The bus stopped, the boy glanced over at his friends, then got off the bus in his stocking feet, in the snow, in the 20 degree weather and walked 8 city blocks to his apartment. His feet must have froze.

Do you think the boy in this story damaged his reputation in any way? Maybe to a couple of self-centered “coconuts” who claim to be friends but in reality would turn on you in an instant. Truth is, this boys’ reputation wasn't damaged at all. In fact it was enhanced BIG TIME if not to others, to, more importantly, himself.

It’s true what they say,

***“The strongest person in the world is he who stands alone.”***

I hope you remember this the next time you see someone in your school who can use a little compassion. You will stand alone. But you will be that much more better for it.