

## Honor

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When America was first invented, steps were taken to prevent the structure of oppression prominent in Europe from destroying the individual freedom sought by the colonists. The European structure was erected on a system of Lords, Dukes, Barons, and, of course the Monarchy. The preventative measure was the declaration that all men are created equal and that a titled class must never be part of the American system. Instead of being born to a Duchy or being elevated to Lord by the King, the American system was to rely on what was deemed honor. Personal honor and personal freedom are inseparable. Should one exercise his personal freedom in a responsible manner in all things, the other men 'honored' him. The honor was not something claimed, but something bestowed by others who admired his actions and his sense of right and wrong.

Over the years, phrases such as, "he is such an honorable man" became a common means of describing someone who live by a solid and moral standard of behaviour. Oaths were taken "On my honor" to demonstrate that a failure to live up to the oath would cost the person his status of being an honorable man.

The concept is fading, however. There are now people who won't speak to the common person unless they are addressed as "Senator," or, in the academic world, "Doctor." The greatest aberration is in the court system where judges must be addressed as "your honor" whether they are, in fact, honorable men or not.

The consequence of what seems a trivial complaint is the same as it is with respect. Both honor and respect cannot, and should not, be demanded. They must be earned or the words are meaningless.