

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Students

Students are often apt to decry the rules, regulations, personal and dress codes at Hanson. The basic answer is that all of the rules and regulations are designed for each student's future success. Moreover, it's basically routine. Every cultural subgroup (e.g., Marines, Knights of Columbus, your family, street musicians) has its own code of conduct. Students at Hanson, therefore, subscribe to a collective code. These codes are part of a group ethic and instilling of self-respect, without which respect for others diminishes. Our codes are neither extraordinarily difficult nor apart from the norms of successful behaviors. Stephen R. Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* is one of a myriad of starting points upon which to reflect. Essentially, Covey argues, "**Change starts from within,**" with a **spiritual dimension at the center.**

Covey's principles include these traits, drawn from <http://www.leaderu.com/cl-institute/habits/habtoc.html>:

1. "**Seek first to understand, then to be understood,**" is perhaps the most important of the habits. None of the other core values below can be met if understanding is missing. Most people want to be heard, want their ways, but fail to really stop, listen, and consider other points of view. We cannot understand another person's position of thinking until we truly know that person; **thus honest communication is the most important character trait.** Understanding and communication depend on compassion and empathy.
2. "**The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.**" We are a family at Hanson. Any action that hurts another is a direct contradiction to our mission and values. Thus, "look for the good in others. You can express ideas, feelings, and experiences in a way that will encourage others to be open also."
3. Students must be mindful of actions. Character, therefore, depends on "integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the adherence to the Golden Rule." Poor choices have consequences. "**Self-awareness enables us to stand apart and examine the way we see ourselves.**"
4. Each person is a leader whose actions are a matter of principles: "**Our lives need to be centered on correct principles** -- deep, fundamental truths, classic truths, generic common denominators."
5. Most people selfishly operate under a win at all costs mentality, but we should really think "**win-win.**" What solution to conflict is mutually satisfying?
6. "The spiritual dimension is your core, your center, your commitment to your value system." How does Catholic doctrine, acting in a Christ-like manner, to simple, everyday behaviors? The administration at Hanson encourages **random acts of kindness** by students and teachers. For ideas, go to <http://www.actsofkindness.org/>.