

Habit Help

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

Understanding the Habit

In a nutshell this habit means:

1. It is better to listen first and talk second.
2. You have two ears and one mouth- you should be listening twice as much as you talk.
3. Listen to people sincerely.
4. When another person speaks, we are usually 'listening' at one of four levels:
 - Ignoring
 - Pretending
 - Selective listening
 - Attentive listening
5. Be an empathic listener. Empathic listening is risky.
6. Only 10 percent of our communication is represented by words we say, another 30 percent by our sounds, and 60 percent by body language

When we listen with the intent to understand others, rather than with the intent to reply, we begin true communication and relationship building. Seeking to understand takes kindness; seeking to be understood takes courage. Effectiveness lies in balancing the two.

“In years to come, your students may forget what you taught them. But they will always remember how you made them feel.” - author unknown

Habit 5 will teach students to:

1. Demonstrate attentive listening skills to build and maintain healthy relationships.
2. Cultivate good social and communication skills.
3. Show compassion toward others, share, and put others first.
4. Appreciate different relationships.
5. Learn to relate to people who are alike as well as different, and work effectively in group settings.

Putting the Habit into Practice

Getting started

- Read the Habit 5 story from 7 Habits of Happy kids with your class. Have a discussion about how Jumper learned from others how to listen the right way. And what it means to be a good friend.
- **Introduce the habit with an object: magnifying glass**
*We need the magnifying glass to Seek First to Understand; to see the smaller, important things. Then take time to slow down and truly listen with your heart.

- Read other books from the school library that go along with this habit, or a few of these books:

My mouth is a Volcano by Julie Cook

The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

Corduroy by Don Freeman

Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel

Roses are Pink, Your Feet Really Stink by Diane DeGroat

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Vera Aardema

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jan Scieszka

Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard

Hey Little Ant by Phillip and Hannah Hoose

- **Hand Clapping Activity**
Materials: Any object found in a classroom setting
Instructions:
Take one student aside, where they will not be able to hear as you explain the instructions to the rest of the class. Pick any object in the classroom. The chosen student will have to find the identified object. Explain to the class that, without any verbal communication or pointing, they will have to guide the student to whatever object is chosen by clapping. As the student walks close to the object they will clap louder and faster, and as the student walks away from the object they will not clap at all. (Comparable to the Hot and Cold game) Once the student has identified the chosen object the game is complete.
Lesson:
The student must understand what his/her classmates are trying to communicate to them. When you are not able to talk, it makes the task much more difficult and frustrating. In Seeking First to Understand they must try to figure out what their classmates are trying to tell them without asking questions.
- **Count to 20**

Instructions:

Tell the students that they are to count to 20 as a group. When they all start talking, stop them and explain the rules.

Rule 1: Only one student can say a number at time, if multiple students say the same number, they must start over

Rule 2: You cannot say more than one number

Rule 3: You must count in the chronological order

Rule 4: The students cannot communicate with each other

Once the rules are explained have them try again. After a few attempts stop the game and provide some examples of how they can accomplish their task. If one student takes a leadership role and points to their classmates to have them say the numbers they will eventually win.

Lesson:

When everyone is yelling out numbers and does not know what anyone else will say, they will never be able to accomplish anything. Someone needs to become a leader and guide the rest of their classmates if they want to finish.

Baby Steps:

- Try to go one whole hour without talking even once. Instead, just watch the people around you and listen to what they are saying. Good luck!
- Think of someone in your life who you think is a good listener. Your grandma? Your dad? Your best friend? What do they do that makes them a good listener?
- The next time one of your friends is sad, notice her eyes or the way he holds his body. Tell them you know they are sad and you want to help.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted” –Aesop

Habit 5 Update:

Putting the Habit into practice

Getting Started:

- **Introduce the habit with an object:**
Telephone- play the telephone game.
Giant ears- practice “pretend listening”, see how frustrating it is for the other person. Then practice real listening.
- Read books from the school library that go along with the habit, or a few of these books:
Are you my mother? by P.D. Eastman
Is your Mama a Llama? by Deborah Guarino
Marrying Malcolm Murgatroyd by Mame Farrell
Rules by Cynthia Lord
Veronica knows best by Nancy Robinson
The Bully of Baham Street by Leonard Shortall

Using a Diagram to Teach this Habit

Try the Brainstormer-

Brainstorming is used in creative thinking and planning. It allows students to generate and organize their ideas in a nonlinear way. To use the Brainstormer, write the central concept in the middle of the page and write related concepts on lines or bubbles anywhere around the central concept. Multiple ideas may branch off any concept. Brainstorming may be done individually or as a group. It is best not to critique or eliminate ideas while brainstorming. Just go for quantity of ideas and encourage creativity.

Explain that the Brainstormer is used to gather many ideas in one place.

Think of a class situation that needs some work: transition time, end-of-the-day routine, break time, how to act when a substitute teacher is in the classroom, etc. Use a Brainstormer to gather students’ ideas on how the class could improve or act differently. Also, how could the classroom run more smoothly.

Ask, “What do you think when you walk into the room and see (fill in the blank)?” Allow students time to voice their ideas, and then ask, “What is the same/different when (fill in the blank)?” Allow students time to voice their ideas, then say, “Sometimes the day does not go smoothly when (fill in the blank). We are going to use a Leadership tool, called a Brainstormer, to think of several ways to make the day run smoother when (fill in the blank).”

In groups of 3-4, have groups choose one of the ideas from the Brainstormer and role play the situation for the class.