

# A Message from Sr. Shirley Anne...

## Habits of the Mind

Anyone involved in education today is caught up in a vortex of acronyms, technologies, strategies, programs and skills, all claiming to be integral and essential in teaching our children to live successfully in a 21<sup>st</sup> century culture and in the words of our national educational agenda, to be college and career ready. Behind the headlines of innovative programs and failing schools, there is another movement, albeit, a much less sensational one, that is challenging us to look at what enduring habits of **being** are foundational as we live in this global world where communication is instant, collaboration essential and critical thinking listed at the top of the survival list. Listed below are some of the more common Habits of the Mind identified by some of these key researchers. Note that they are all verbs which imply an action.

**Persisting** - Stick to it. Remain focused and look for ways to a goal. Not giving up.

**Listening with understanding and empathy**- Perceive another's point of view and feelings.

**Thinking about your own thinking** - Be aware of your own thinking and feelings and their effect on others.

**Taking responsible risks** - Venture out. Living your competence and trying new things.

**Thinking and acting interdependently**- Work together. Work with and learn from others.

**Managing impulsivity** - Take your time. Think before acting. Be thoughtful and deliberate.

**Responding with wonderment and awe** - Find the world awesome. Seek mystery and beauty.

**Finding Humor** - Laugh a little. Find the whimsical, absurd and unexpected. Laugh at oneself.

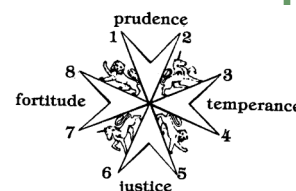
**Remaining open to continuous learning**- Live life with an attitude that says "I have so much more to learn."

**Creating, imagining, and innovating** - Try it a different way. Generate new ideas and novel ways of viewing the world.



Habits in our Catholic faith are not a new idea. We call them virtues and we define our virtues as good habits formed by repeated practice. We teach our children and try to model these virtues. They include the theological virtues of faith, hope and love and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Even

a casual comparison with the emerging set of habits of the mind will easily yield the relationship between the two. Once again our **Catholic Faith**, through its formation programs in **Catholic Schools and Religious Education Program**, has a treasure to inform and form our culture and this treasure has stood the test of time into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



Resource for further reading:

*Learning and Leading with Habits of the Mind*

Authors: Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick