

Hypocrisy: when the unacceptable becomes unavoidable

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Hypocrisy: When the Unacceptable Becomes Unavoidable Oh, the life of an Honors student.

Other students look on with jealousy as the Honors student rushes by with her college level books in hand, perhaps trying to read just a few more glorious sentences before they get to class ten minutes early. With their high GPA's and class ranks, they run the school. An Honors student is praised by parents, teachers, and classmates alike for his dedication to learning and commitment to school. So devoted to his grades and class rank, everything else takes a back seat. Homework is the first thing an honors student does when she gets home, with the hope that if she finishes early, she might even sneak in an hour or two to read ahead in her history book before her self-set bedtime of 9: 30.

Likewise, on the weekends, why would an honors student choose to go to a party on Friday night when there is so much calculus that has yet to be discovered? Honors students uphold a certain academia ethic: they don't know the meaning of sick days and certainly never complain or cheat. They are Honors students after all; that would be hypocrisy! Hypocrisy- a pretense of having a virtuous character; something Honors students learn best by doing. Perhaps hypocrisy is too strong of an accusation, given that the focus of Honors students has shifted from gaining knowledge to getting branded with a certain number. This is not to say that there isn't a select few who not only maintained their love for learning, but also uphold the ideals aforementioned. I'm going to be honest- I'm not one of them.

As a high school “ Honors” student, I’m under a lot of pressure; from colleges, my parents, teachers, and perhaps the most important for all of the wrong reasons, my peers. Trying to maintain our status as honors students, we have lost our ethics in a fight for the best class rank. Our entire educational career is defined by a number. These numbers determine what college we will get into, what college we will be able to afford, and ultimately where we will end up in life. Because of this, Honors students, from the valedictorian to the bottom end of the top ranks, at some point are faced with the choice between ethics and the easy route.

Let me spell it out for you: The esteemed Honors students lie, cheat, and complain more than the rest of the student body. It all starts with the pressure from colleges and parents, healthy pressure to push us to succeed. Due to this pressure, I become just a little worried about getting a bad grade on this take-home test, so I’ll call up one of my friends, it’s no big deal. Ultimately students start bragging about grades, and it turns into a competition. Now, maybe I should look online for ideas for my next essay, see what’s out there. A little “ teamwork” becomes straight cheating and plagiarizing in no time at all.

Luckily for our Honors students, they are smarter than your average high schooler, and the majority of honors level cheating goes un-noticed. Ask any Honors student with a Facebook page (like you can find one without) and he or she will at least know of several facebook groups dedicated to sharing answers, regardless of whether he or she is a member. The motives for cheating at the beginning are clear: I just want to get a better grade. But

Honors students are pushed so much, and stretched too far; eventually they simply burn out. Remember that “ healthy” pressure from colleges and parents? Well, taking five AP classes that force a student to forego sleep more often than not is not healthy; sooner or later he just needs a break.

When this happens, procrastination completely takes over. Our minds just need to veg out in front of the TV or computer for awhile, and once we start, it’s hard to stop. Everything is put off until the absolute last minute. In other words, some nights go by and sleep just isn’t an option. Obviously, the longer an assignment waits to get done, the more likely the student is to cheat on it. If a master procrastinator is trying to do a Physics worksheet in the five minute passing period before Physics class, chances are he is copying someone else’s.

Another side-effect of procrastination is complaining. I mean, surely one more day to work on our essays won’t affect what goes on in class. It’s a sad sight when an AP class whines like three year olds to get an assignment pushed back, but it is not all that uncommon. As an “ Honors” student myself, I question what being an Honors student really means. One would think that the term Honors refers to honorable qualities, such as honesty and dedication, not just good grades, or even for the case of the National Honors Society, which most Honors students are a part of, community service and extra-curricular activities.

But our High school years have become so competitive and so demanding that for the average teenager, maintaining good grades in hard classes, doing community service work, participating in extra-curricular activities,

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having a life, and getting enough sleep is impossible without a few slip-ups in character. Although the vicious cycle of over-extending, procrastination, insomnia, whining, lying and cheating may never really end, I do believe it can be helped. Somewhere we need to draw a line between the “ Honors” students and the above average students, the Harvard’s and the selective state schools. As I stated earlier, true Honors students do exist. These are the students that are headed towards the Ivy League.

If we can make a distinction between these students and the rest of the so called honors students so that parents, colleges, and even students themselves understand the difference, the term “ Honors” would have more meaning. Maybe for some students, they should only be in Honors for Science and Math, or maybe they can’t handle any honors classes and still enjoy their high school years, or maybe they are one of the select few who can be an Honors student for every subject and succeed without becoming a hypocrite. It’s all about finding a balance, and until we do, “ Honors” students will have to settle for hypocrisy.