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THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE

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Cotton Center ISD Mission Statement

“Our mission is to graduate all students with skills and values to successfully compete as life-long learners.”

E.L.K.S.
Excellence
in
Learning
Knowledge
and
Skills

What Does Excellence Mean? (Part 1)

When I was at Spur as the athletic director, I introduced a credo regarding the program that I wanted to implement. The athletic motto was “the relentless pursuit of excellence,” and I placed it on the side of the weight room. That was going to be the core belief that the program was to live by. There was only one problem—I needed a good definition of excellence.

I don’t know about you, but if you don’t know what something means, you cannot implement it very well into a program. I was well aware of the term. I’d seen it on several different school marquees.

Floydada ISD says “Dedicated to Education...Committed to Excellence.” Spur uses the word excellence as a credo. Many schools do. Even our vision statement is excellence in learning knowledge and skills. Yet, how many look at the word *excellence* and think in terms of what it actually means. This is what this newsletter will be about.

I want to define excellence for you and show how important it is to understand the value it plays not only in the education of students but their lives as well. I am certain that if you will apply the principles that I share with you, you will develop coping skills that will cause you to be successful in life when things don’t seem to be going well.

When considering excellence, the best place to

start is with a definition. The one that I developed is as follows: holding yourself to the highest possible standard in order to attain your highest personal destiny.

In analyzing this statement, three questions need to be considered. What is a standard? What is one’s highest standard? And what is destiny? If you answer these three questions, you begin to gain a proper perspective of excellence.

When considering a standard, I like to think in terms of the high jump that track athletes compete in. The monitors set a measurement of height on poles that they call standards. The standards indicate how high the athlete is jumping. They get three separate opportunities to clear a certain height, and if they are successful, then the standard is adjusted at a higher level. Whoever reaches the greatest height wins the competition.

For us, a standard is what we strive for. It can be a goal, but it can also be a value. We set standards all the time. In school we set standards to make the “A” honor roll or to be on an all-district basketball team, or to go to state in UIL competition. We have standards that we set for ourselves.

Sometimes our standard is not very high. Sometimes we are satisfied with making a “C” in class when we could make a “B.” Our standards are subpar and below what we are capable of accom-

plishing. Excellence says that you will not only set a standard, but it will be your highest standard.

I am convinced that the reason individuals do not set as high a standard as they should is because they do not have a personal destiny. What is destiny? This is what you are called to be in life. It’s that intuitive sense that says, “I am here for a purpose, and I need to accomplish that purpose.”

The only way you can reach your highest personal destiny is by setting your highest possible standard. Remember that in the long run, you will only hit what you aim at. And what you aim at is determined by what you dream for.

Too many times we are satisfied with going through life the way we are. Expect yourself to be better than you are, and that will help you to become better. This is not an easy task. It takes exertion. If you expect to reap the blessing of success, you’ll have to work hard. But having a destiny and high standards will motivate you. You won’t quit.

Excellence is not a first time attempt. It’s measured by what you do on the third and fourth try. Therefore it becomes a conscious choice. It will never be just an automatic response.

I encourage you to look at your life from the perspective of excellence. As you read these articles, be inspired to do greater things than you ever have, and you’ll go far.