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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

The Difference Between Excellence and Talent

There is a difference between excellence and talent. Make no mistake about it. Just because an individual has natural ability does not mean that they will perform well. That's what I want to share with you. Always bear in mind that excellence is more important than any one thing. Why? Because excellence is holding oneself to their highest standard in order to attain their highest destiny. The person of excellence will always seek to achieve the most they can with what they have. They will never cease to be satisfied with where they are. They will always be hungry to do more.

You see, a person of excellence will give you maximum effort one hundred percent of the time but not necessarily a person of talent. I have seen students who have natural ability, but they don't have the internal fortitude to make themselves better. They lack the fire to improve on their ability. Don't confuse excellence with talent. One takes work while the other doesn't.

One area where talent and excellence are distinguished is in the arena of professional sports. Every professional athlete is talented. They would not have made it that far had it not been true. But, not every professional athlete performs with excellence. Like I wrote previously, it takes a great deal of work. But when excellence and talent come together, you can expect great things.

I am convinced that

very few teams win repeated championships because of this issue of excellence. Nothing makes a person a champion more than excellence. It creates the work ethic that is necessary to excel above all others. Most teams strive for a championship without contemplating the significance and value of excellence. Talent wins games—that is certain. To really win a championship requires excellence.

A program, whether it's in sports, academics, or business, must place excellence at the forefront of expectations. More programs and projects thrive because of excellence than by talent. Excellence will create within an individual the necessary enthusiasm and fire to see a project through. Many times those with talent lose their zeal for accomplishing greatness. It becomes too difficult. That's why values and excellence are more important than how much talent you have.

A person of excellence is tenacious and punctilious. They do not quit, and they realize that greatness is in the details. Do you want to become a great person? Commit to excellence. It's a refining fire by which your talent can become ability. Every pro was once an amateur and even the greatest athlete was a beginner. You have probably heard this saying before but when it comes to fundamentals, only the players who use them change. That's what makes excellence the thing all should strive for. It's what I seek.

The secret that will lead you to your goal is not talent but excellence. You may look at others and see how gifted they are in sports, or in speaking, or in academics, or in UIL, or in any other activity. Don't become discouraged because they're so good. Be glad for them and realize there is something you can do. But it starts by making a plan and a goal and then mixing those desires with the element of excellence.

To strive for success with talent but not with excellence is like trying to harvest without having ever planted. I assure you that talent can turn to dust or magic simply depending on the attitude of excellence that rubs against it. If you have the right attitude, you can come out on top while others are squabbling over scraps because they didn't think they had to strive for excellence.

The bottom line is this: excellence is the most important attribute you could seek. I don't care how talented you are. If you don't have excellence, your talent remains a hidden treasure—you never will find that thing inside you that's most valuable.

When you play the game of chess, the king has more ability than the pawn. At the end of the game, both the pawn and the king go back into the same box. They're even. If you really want to distinguish yourself from the rest, make excellence your goal, and you'll stand out even in a box.