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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 Scope of Excellence (Part 1)

I believe that the quality of an individual's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence regardless of the field of endeavor. In perusing and exploring the various aspects of excellence, such analysis dictates that I cover various areas where such attributes should be utilized. These observations, when applied to daily living, will help one better clarify the expectations that excellence requires.

There are ten fields of endeavor that I feel are critical to our life and need to fall under the lens of the performance microscope. They are as follows:

- Education
- Communication
- Relationships
- Employment
- Diet and hygiene
- Exercise
- Appearance
- Finances
- Character
- Possessions

Each of these characteristics affect a person's life, and the quality of living can either diminish or improve depending on one's approach to excellence.

The tools of excellence (a daily pledge, understanding the meaning of excel-

lence, goals, steps to excellence, and the law of eminent success) can enable students to rise above mediocrity and strive for the sublime that accomplished dreams can render. An improvement in these ten can surely lead one to success in their daily life.

Education—one of the most critical aspects in one's self improvement is education. This attribute is not just about a high school or college diploma. It's about improving one's knowledge base whether it be in vocabulary, reading comprehension, memorization tasks, or improving one's skill and craft. If a person is going to excel through life, education must be a high priority. The greatest contribution of education is the change that occurs. One who continues their education continues to change.

Communication—this important aspect of life governs one's life as much as education, and it's not simply about speech. There is nonverbal as well as verbal communication, and how well one improves this skill often determines the kind of career one enters. Strive towards excellence when communication is an issue.

Relationships—a person cannot escape relationships. Whether in a family, a job, or at school, relationships abound. Striving for excellence in relationships means improving the responses one makes, increasing the respect one feels, and developing the interaction one makes towards

those that are close.

Employment—without excellence, an employee will remain at the lowest level of their job. One story I was told involved the arrival of a CEO at a train depot. The employees lined up to shake hands. The CEO noticed one particular man and began to chat with him as though they were long time friends. When the CEO left, this man's coworkers gathered round and asked how they knew each other. He explained that they had worked together early in his career. Curious, the men asked how this CEO rose in the ranks of the company while he was still employed at the same position. The man simply said, I went to work for the beginning wage. He went to work for the company. Striving for excellence in employment sets one up for promotion.

Diet and Hygiene—This may not seem very important, but striving for excellence in eating habits and appearance are indicative of what one will look like. We are what we eat and people judge a book by its cover. These two clichés apply to us when it comes to taking care of ourselves physically. Strive to look and eat better and one avoids regrets 20 years down the road.

You can only accomplish on the outside what you possess on the inside. Continue to ask yourself two questions: where else can I improve, and how much better can I improve. Excellence, character, and values will enable you to be the best.