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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 2)

In my last article, I talked about the meaning of excellence. Excellence is to hold oneself to their highest possible standard in order to attain their highest personal destiny.

I've heard excellence defined as doing the best you can. The dictionary defines it as the condition of being better than others, unusually good quality, and superiority. All these are tied to the definition I have for excellence, but there is so much more. In fact, the discussion of excellence is almost interminable.

Because it would be difficult to exhaust the subject of excellence, I have collected a compendium of 21 elements that are tied directly to this subject matter. In these articles I hope to clarify the various aspects of excellence not only as it pertains to education but also to life in general.

Excellence is holding ourselves to the highest possible standard in order to attain our highest personal destiny. Setting a standard is not just about goals that you can reach. It's also about setting a standard based off attitude. Attitude is inward feelings expressed on the outside and based off how one perceives their situation. If succumbed by feelings of hopelessness, stress, or fear, one's attitude will reflect negativity.

Don't let attitude rule you and defeat you. By walking according to the dictates of excellence, one can control and regulate their attitude by princi-

pled living.

In truly setting your highest standard, you can make things come to pass that might not have normally been accomplished. Have you heard the saying, "If you reach for the moon, you may never leave the earth, but if you reach for the stars, you'll at least land on the moon?" This is true excellence—setting your standards to such a degree that you accomplish more than you expected had you not set them so high.

This, however, is not easy. The toughest thing about excellence is that it requires determination and tenacity. You have to keep pursuing it. Excellence by its very nature says that the standard is set, and I must reach it.

The time you spend doing that is more important than even the way you spend your money. I know this sounds odd, but money mistakes can be corrected. However, time is gone forever. Yesterday is gone, tomorrow never comes, and all we have is today. Pursuing excellence in all that you do is the only way to ensure that time is utilized to its fullest capacity.

A school is on its way to success when excellence no longer needs to be preached and that awards for excellence are seemingly ridiculous. I know that we award our students for different things. We have Elk Bucks that award students for staying out of trouble, making good grades, and attending school. These things

are small examples of excellence. Perfect attendance, good behavior, and high grades are things students should strive for.

But we need to reach a time that to strive for an award in excellence is as ridiculous as an award for getting out of bed in the morning or eating a nutritious meal. Reaching and maintaining an attitude of excellence should be our whole purpose. Striving to reach excellence, although not an original concept, is new to most people. So it's understandable why individuals feel they deserve something special for their accomplishments.

In order to make excellence a lifestyle, the gold medal, the pay raise, or any other extrinsic award cannot be the only motivation. There has to be a conversion to intrinsic values. This character trait of excellence will eventually lead to a self-induced motivation.

Standard driven motivation will create within us the belief and dream that even the impossible is possible.

Excellence—there's no telling what you can do when you get inspired by it. There's no telling what you can do when you believe in it. And there's no telling what will happen when you act on it.

Let's get inspired by the challenge of a higher standard. Let's believe that we have a great destiny to achieve. Let's act on excellence. By doing so, we'll become better than we ever thought possible.