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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

Be a Doer of Excellence

The last article dealt with the thought life; this article deals with action. Honestly, thinking right eventually leads to correct action, but students still need to act. Excellence is an action because it is tied to improvement in achievement. Even more so, unless a person puts into action what they hear, those thoughts fail to take root inside the individual's psyche. They actually forget what they heard if they do not act on it in some way.

As a teacher, I know that a student must not only hear instruction, but they must also participate in some type of engagement. They must do in order to learn. And so it is with excellence. The time is always right to perform with excellence.

A person's thinking is known not when they tell us what they think but by their actions because it is not what one is but what one does that matters. The man doing excellence is better than fifty preaching it. Acting with excellence is about consistency. The difference between an act and a habit is found in the commitment of the behavior. Excellence comes about as a result of a habit.

The very nature of excellence declares that there is a goal to reach, a standard to break, or a dream to accomplish. This takes action on the part of the one striving to reach their destiny. Do not be like those who face the temptation of mediocre and remain satisfied with current accomplish-

ments. Otherwise, a year from now you may wish you had started today.

Another axiom I shared with my football players dealt with action. I would say, "Sow an..." and then I would stop and they would finish with "action." Then I would say, "reap a..." and they would finish the statement with "habit." Then I would say, "Sow a..." and they would say, "habit." Then I would say, "reap a..." and there would be a pause. Then they would say, "character." Finally I would say, "Sow a..." and they would respond with "character," and then I would finish with "reap a..." and they would finally say, "destiny."

I would have my students say idioms like this because I knew that the concepts of excellence were not adopted automatically. They had to be driven into practice with courageous patience. We are the only ones that can use our ability. That is an awesome responsibility because only we can develop and use it. But it is accomplished with action.

If a person is going to maintain an attitude of excellence, they must always be on the move towards improving themselves. There is no greater mistake than doing nothing because a person can always do something.

The difference between a person of excellence and someone who is mediocre is not a lack of strength or a lack of knowledge but a lack of

will.

I am convinced that by putting the principles of excellence into effect, there is no telling how far a person can go. The sky is the limit. But a person must truly believe in excellence. Action finds its foundation in what one believes. Excellence will never be reached if what one believes in is different from what one does. One's belief system generates their actions. In fact, if what you believe does not effect how you lives, then what you believe is not really important.

That is why excellence and the principles of excellence such as character, values, and goals need to be instilled in young people. Excellence never says quit; it promotes continued attempts at success in spite of competitive outcomes. Excellence knows that one is not finished when they are defeated. They are finished when they quit.

Yesterday is gone; tomorrow never comes; it is only today so use it. Think in terms of striving to be the best that you can be. Excellence holds oneself to the highest personal standard in order to attain one's highest destiny. Excellence promotes values such as hard work, teamwork, and integrity. It is never satisfied with mediocrity but is always looking to discover ways to improve.

To be the best one can be requires not only a belief in excellence but an action of excellence.