Thoughts About Excellence

How do you define excellence? Excellence for us is more a lifestyle or a mindset than a destination.

The concept of excellence had one of its earliest appearances in ancient Greece. The Greek word *arête* means *goodness, excellence or virtue*. In ancient Greek culture, *arête* stood for courage and strength in the face of adversity and it was what all people aspired to. It also represented living up to one’s full potential.

“*The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.*”
—Vince Lombardi

Excellence, therefore, defines who you are as a person. When you live it, it exudes from you and influences everything you do, as well as those around you. Living a life of excellence brings peace, joy, and fulfillment.

**Excellence is a mindset. Define it, choose it, make it a habit!**

Give excellence your attention. Define it . . . tune into it . . . own it . . . set your mind to it.

To tune into excellence, we start by defining excellence for ourselves. What does it look like when we tune into excellence? What do we look like? What does our environment look like? What are we saying and feeling? What are our actions, our interactions?

When we actually make a choice and set our minds to excellence, it’s much like setting a thermostat that functions to establish and maintain a desired temperature automatically. We are in effect setting the bar for our actions, for our thoughts, for our words, for our life. We’re defining a standard or level that we aspire to, that we wish to maintain in our lives . . . that we wish to strive for every day.

Choose excellence . . . make it a habit!

“*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.*”
—Aristotle

A habit begins with a thought, followed by a choice, followed by consistent action.

**The 8 Keys of Excellence**

The 8 Keys of Excellence taught at SuperCamp are sound principles to live by. Principles define the character of a person, and when we embrace and “live” the 8 Keys of Excellence they serve as catalysts that propel us toward a life of excellence.

**INTEGRITY**

*Match behavior with values*

Demonstrate your positive personal values in all you do and say. Be sincere and real.
FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS
Learn from mistakes
View failures as feedback that provides you with the information you need to learn, grow, and succeed.

SPEAK WITH GOOD PURPOSE
Speak honestly and kindly
Think before you speak. Make sure your intention is positive and your words are sincere.

THIS IS IT!
Make the most of every moment
Focus your attention on the present moment. Keep a positive attitude.

COMMITMENT
Make your dreams happen
Take positive action. Follow your vision without wavering.

OWNERSHIP
Take responsibility for actions
Be responsible for your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. “Own” the choices you make and the results that follow.

FLEXIBILITY
Be willing to do things differently
Recognize what’s not working and be willing to change what you’re doing to achieve your goal.

BALANCE
Live your best life
Be mindful of self and others while focusing on what’s meaningful and important in your life. Inner happiness and fulfillment come when your mind, body, and emotions are nurtured by the choices you make.

Bobbi DePorter, our founder and president, developed the 8 Keys of Excellence some 35 years ago by studying highly successful people and identifying the traits they shared. These shared qualities became the 8 Keys of Excellence: Principles to Live By, and they form the core of our SuperCamp programs for students. In addition to SuperCamp, thousands of teachers across the country use the 8 Keys of Excellence character education program in their classrooms to inspire and guide their students.