

Culture with Phil Cooke



What Does Excellence Really Mean?

The word “excellence” is tossed around a lot in leadership and creative circles these days, but the truth is, few people really understand what it actually means. Everyone wants to be excellent, and most people associate it with quality; however, real excellence is so much more. Here’s a few attributes of excellence that you should consider:

Relevance

To be excellent means to be relevant. Relevant isn’t about appealing to a young audience or being trendy. Relevance is about selecting the right tool for the job. That simply means that when you’re being excellent, you are using the right strategy to fix the problem. Good decisions are a key component of excellence.

Appropriate

There are many ways to solve a problem, behave, be creative, or lead, but the right way in the right circumstance is the excellent choice. As the #MeToo movement continues to grow, we’re seeing more and more situations where leaders made bad choices – and while those

leaders may have been influential at the time; their choices were in no way excellent.

Relational

No matter how great the quality of your product, project, or action, unless it’s relational, its excellence will be in question. Great leaders understand that they work through people, so it’s never just about making a project or product.

Resilience

I always include resilience in any conversation about excellence, because the ability to come back after a failure or setback is critical to an excellent outcome. Be tough. Have grit. Stop taking “no” for an answer.

Quality isn’t always the best definition of excellence. Being extraordinary at what you do is only the beginning of the road to excellence. Quality matters, but next time you desire to be excellent, think of the bigger picture, because that’s how people are looking at you.

Who You Spend Time With Will Determine Your Future

Since we were kids our parents warned us about hanging out with the wrong people, and as adults, we look back and realize they were exactly right. The truth is, the people you run with are the people who will inspire, educate, and motivate you – or ruin your life. In short, they have a very big impact on your future. I was watching one of my “*guilty pleasure*” TV programs the other day: The A&E Network show “*Intervention*.”

It’s a program about people struggling with alcohol and drug addiction and eventual interventions with professional counselors. It hit me how many of the episodes reveal that at some point, they started in the wrong direction because of people they were spending time with. Over and over in the series you’ll hear that they were doing great- all-star athletes, scholars, creatives – but then they met _____. And after that, everything went south.

In the same way, during news reports after a young person commits a horrible crime – robbery, arson, or murder – when the parents are interviewed they almost always say, “*He was a great kid, but at some point he fell in with the wrong crowd.*”

Now, think about it in terms of your career or calling. Who do you spend the most time with? Do they inspire you to accomplish more? Explore your spiritual and creative side? Push your limits? Encourage you to not give up? Support your ideas?

Give it some serious thought, because if not, this might be the moment to start spending more time with different friends....