

The Discipline of Self-Discipline

Oversleeping will never make dreams come true.

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

As we launch into the new academic year, there is a sense of mission, purpose, hope, enthusiasm...and a sincere desire to make this THE BEST YEAR EVER! Might I suggest, the magic potion to manifesting this vision into reality is SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Certainly we all want to be successful. Success is one of those elusive terms that means different things to different people. What does it take to achieve, to realize, one's chosen success? We have all heard the various clues that have been passed down from our teachers and parents: the Golden Rule, a solid work ethic, balanced living, a penny saved is a penny earned, don't burn any bridges, persistence alone is omnipotent, treat every day as though it were your last, the more education—the less frustration, an apple a day... and all that jazz. If it all had to be condensed into one absolute quality, I think (This is a personal opinion, you know!) it would be SELF-DISCIPLINE. None of the above can exist without self-discipline.

In our profession of teaching, discipline is a must—the discipline required to learn the subject matter, plan lessons, spend extra time and effort outside of class...all wrapped in a healthy dose of delayed gratification. As educators, you have disciplined yourselves to go to college, to study, to take exams, and, now, to complete budget requests, year-long calendars, along with the discipline of disciplining. The people who make it to the top seem to have mastered the art of discipline.

Their self-discipline is constantly being refined. They have learned (through discipline) to make the most out of each and every moment.

One of the first things I do in director workshops is ask what the participants wish to gain. The common answers are:

“Develop a better sense of motivation.”

“Have a more positive attitude.”

“Learn to communicate more effectively.”

“Live up to my potential.”

“Feel good about myself.”

“Discover ways I can help others.”

Several years ago, one particularly frustrated band director found me after a recent seminar and said, “I agree with everything you said, but I'm not disciplined enough to discipline myself!” Well, that is a puzzling predicament, isn't it?! Learning self-discipline is a habit just like any other behavioral habit. We don't just “get it” one day; it is a process of guiding our efforts day-in and day-out. Even this takes a special kind of discipline.

When we all look back to our best teachers, leaders, and mentors, weren't they all people who created a great environment of discipline? Didn't they demand that you create a higher sense of discipline to accommodate their requests? Review your most successful times in life; weren't they coupled with a high sense of discipline?

Too often, the word discipline is associated with punishment, harshness, abuse, restriction, and the like. However, as teachers and leaders,

we can approach the whole subject of discipline in a very positive and exciting way, revealing a realm of understanding that offers a host of benefits to the student.

It is the key to all of the reasons for success mentioned in the first paragraph.

Since discipline is a learned behavior, it can be taught, nurtured, embellished, focused. Might I suggest the most effective way to “teach self-discipline to our students” is to MODEL IT. Now, *that's* going to take some self-discipline!!

With that said, it is now time to:
STRIKE UP THE BAND!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser began his teaching career at Northern Michigan University. He then moved to the University of Missouri, and from there to New Mexico State University. During that time, Tim developed highly acclaimed groups in both instrumental and vocal music. Following his tenure in the college band directing world, he spent three years with McCormick's Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, Tim created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for teacher in-service workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc.

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