

EXCELLENCE: THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE!

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

As we move into 2023, we bring to all of those wonderful New Year's resolutions to catapult us forward with the best-of-intentions to fulfill our visions of a grand semester ahead. Since we are part of a profession that seeks EXCELLENCE in the processes leading us to quality performances, we are dedicated to ongoing improvement as we journey along the artistic highway of music making and music learning.

During a workshop (many years ago), the legendary Director of Bands at Northwestern University, John Paynter, was asked,

"How do you differ in your expectations in a rehearsal from that of a performance."

"Excellence is excellence regardless of the situation."

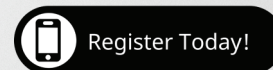
Professor Paynter replied quickly, "I don't." After an awkward lengthy silence, he went on to say,

"Excellence is excellence regardless of the situation."

There was more silence followed by his inquiry,

"Are there any further questions?"

There weren't any!



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Mr. Paynter's words continue to echo in my mind:

"Excellence is excellence regardless of the situation."

With that BOLD TRUTH in mind, let us reach to our friend, ARISTOTLE, and tap one of his classic quotes:

"Excellence is never an accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities."

EXCELLENCE IS NEVER AN ACCIDENT...

If we are waiting for EXCELLENCE to happen, we're destined to be held hostage to our own naive and ill-fated vision. The world of agriculture has taught us much: PLANT-FERTILIZE/NURTURE-HARVEST.

To breakdown our Greek philosopher's thoughts:

IT IS THE RESULT OF HIGH INTENTION, SINCERE EFFORT and SKILLFUL EXECUTION...

"**High intention**" means we have clearly defined our goals and we are emotionally connected to achieving them.

"**Sincere effort**" is an effort built on a foundation of HONESTY, GENUINENESS, PURITY, and DEPTH.

"**Skillful execution**" generates quality; quality is never an accident, but it is always the result of careful intention and planning.

"**The vision to see obstacles as opportunities.**"

This could well be the most important cornerstone of Aristotle's wisdom. Obstacles, for some, provide a reason to GIVE UP or GIVE IN; they offer an excuse to not move forward, to not seek an alternative pathway, to not explore other options. Others will embrace the obstacle as a challenge and use it as an opportunity to recalibrate the plan-at-hand. "Where focus goes, energy flows." Self-confidence (belief in yourself) will provide the motivation to push through these unexpected difficult times.

Award-winning author, Dr. Wayne Dyer writes,

"If you believe it will work out, you'll see opportunities. If you believe it won't work out, you'll see obstacles."

Whether you're Aristotle, John Paynter or the person we see when we look in the mirror, the key to developing a first-class band/music program is based on the standards we set-and-achieve. Success creates success. If we accept less-than-excellence, our students will deliver accordingly. On the other hand, if we role model EXCELLENCE in our teaching style, the culture of our bands will begin to reflect the established (and demonstrated) style.

Let us be reminded, BAND DIRECTORS are (for so many) the most important educators-influencers in a child's life. Our students are watching us at all times. YOU are the fuel for their positive growth and development. With that said, it's 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.