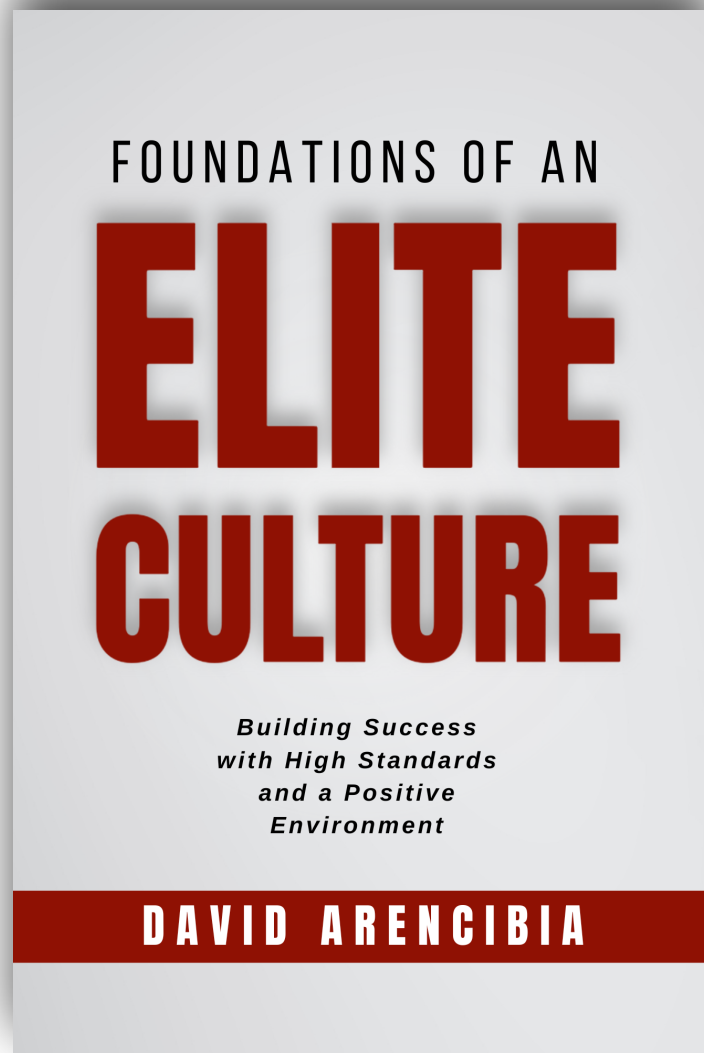


STUDY GUIDE



FOUNDATIONS OF AN ELITE CULTURE

Building Success
with High Standards and a
Positive Environment

Welcome to the study guide for *Foundations of an Elite Culture*. This guide is designed to help you navigate the key concepts from each chapter and apply them to your leadership journey. By aligning with the pillars of high standards and a positive environment, this guide will deepen your understanding of the principles outlined in the book.

Each section offers reflection questions, practical exercises, and actionable strategies, allowing you to engage with the material actively. Whether using this as a personal study tool or as part of a group discussion, this guide will serve as your roadmap to creating and sustaining an elite culture in your setting.

Chapter 1: Elite Culture

This chapter focuses on mindset and how to lead oneself and others through inevitable challenges. It emphasizes that, even in difficult situations, we remain in control of our perspective and approach to life, our teams, and our work.

- How did Davey's early life challenges, such as poverty, learning disabilities, and exposure to violence, shape his mindset and leadership style? How can personal adversity influence one's ability to create an elite culture?
- In what ways did mentorship play a role in Davey's development as a leader? Reflect on a mentor who has positively influenced your growth and describe how they helped shape you.
- Davey learned to focus on what he could control rather than being hindered by what he couldn't. How can this mindset be applied when leading a team or building a positive environment in a challenging setting?
- Davey's story emphasizes the importance of perspective and resilience in overcoming hardships. How can leaders cultivate a mindset of resilience within their teams, and how does this contribute to an elite culture?

Outline of Foundations of an Elite Culture (pgs. 8-10)

Pillar 1: High Standards

Pillar 2: Positive Environment

A. Elite Mission: There's always a clear focus on the end goal.

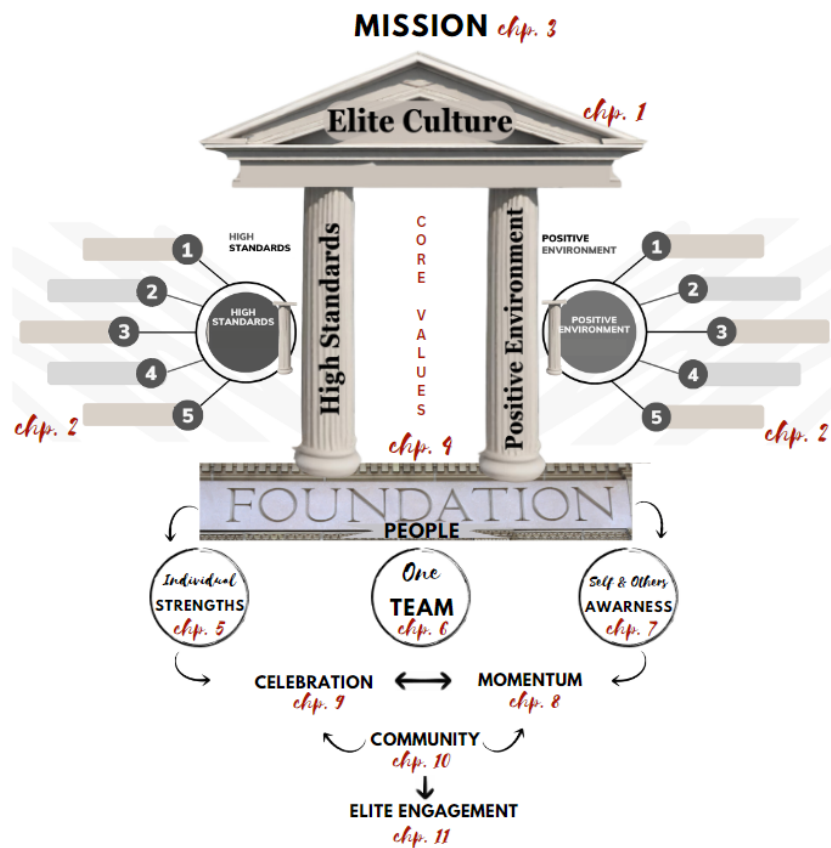
B. Elite Values: Your values align with how you want to accomplish your mission.

The fibers of the materials within the pillars include the following:

1. **Elite Strengths:** Understanding how to utilize our own personal strengths and talents, as well as those of the people around us.
2. **Elite Team:** Building a team that aligns with our core values helps to execute our mission effectively.
3. **Elite Awareness (Preventing Burnout and Retaining Talent):** A deep understanding of why one chooses to do the work and comprehending what motivates them and you to excel fosters a sense of connection.

4. **Elite Momentum:** We create momentum by celebrating all accomplishments, big and small, and by avoiding always working in silos.
5. **Elite Celebration:** Raise the praise! We celebrate everything, fostering a collective uplifting that propels the momentum forward for everyone on the team.
6. **Elite Community:** Engage the entire school [or workplace] community; it takes a village.
7. **Elite Engagement:** Engagement vs. Compliance: there's a difference.

Foundations of an Elite Culture Image Framework FlowChart



Chapter 2: Elite Pillars: High Standards and Positive Environment

- How can an individual and/or group balance the emphasis on high standards with the need for a positive environment to create a culture of excellence?
- Why do you think organizations often struggle to maintain both high standards and a positive environment? What are the consequences of focusing only on one pillar over the other?
- What strategies can be implemented to ensure that high standards are maintained without compromising the well-being and morale of the group?
- How do positive relationships within an organization contribute to sustaining high standards and driving overall success?

Activity

Take a minute or two to read the introduction on pages 13 and 14 and engage in the following:

1. Reflection: Reflect on the reading and consider how it applies to your specific setting(s).
2. Discussion: Discuss your thoughts with a partner or team, and listen to what others share to gain additional understanding and perspectives.
3. Share outs: If in a larger group setting, a person or two, share something that was said or heard that stood out to you.

Post Activity Reflection:

Even though I may do well balancing high standards and a positive environment, I might still emphasize one pillar over the other. Which pillar do I tend to favor, and why?

What is an area of focus where I can be more strategic within my routines and systems to better support the pillar I don't naturally lean towards?

Activity

Activity: Pillar 1 - High Standards (pg. 17)

Using the Pillar 1 image below, reflect on the role of high standards in driving excellence within your environment. Jot down five characteristics you consider most important.

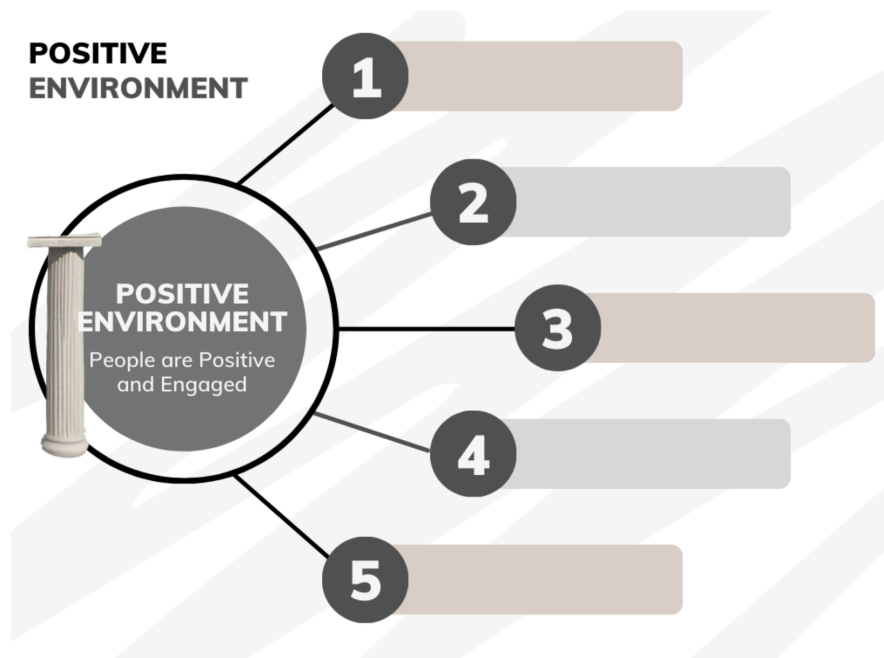


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Activity

Activity: Pillar 2 - Positive Environment (pg. 20)

Using the Pillar 2 image below, reflect on the role of a positive environment in driving excellence within your environment. Jot down five characteristics you consider most important.



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Activity

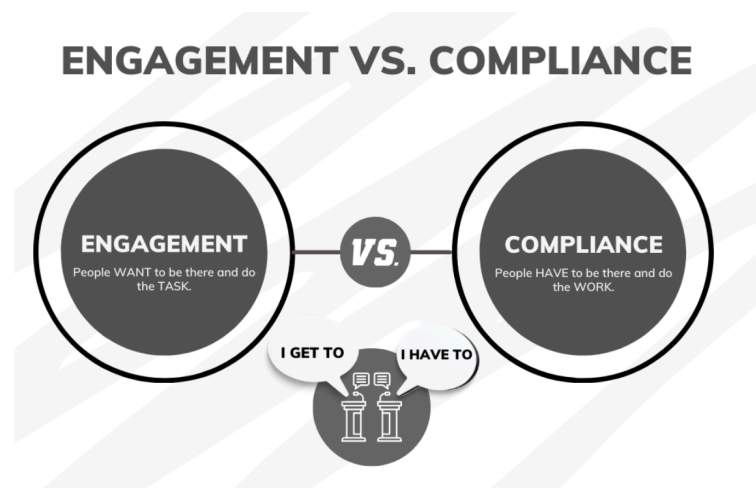
1. *Reflection:* Take a minute to review your ideas on the two pillars and engage in the following:
2. *Discussion:* Discuss your thoughts with a partner or team, and listen to what others share to gain various perspectives.
3. *Share outs:* If in a larger group setting, a person or two, share something that was said or heard that stood out to you.

Work on the Work: Guiding Questions

1. How can I create time within my day to focus on elements of either Pillar 1 (High Standards) or Pillar 2 (Positive Environment)?
2. Knowing my strengths in either Pillar 1 or Pillar 2 makes me uniquely different. How can I double down on my strengths and spread my influence within that pillar in my daily routine?
3. How do I lead others around me by leveraging my strengths in either Pillar 1 or Pillar 2?
4. How can I encourage others to support the pillar where I may not be as strong?

Activity and or Discussion Points:

1. Review the graphic on Engagement vs. Compliance and reflect on what it means in your setting.



2. How does a positive environment contribute to engagement and, ultimately, to morale?
3. How does engagement contribute to staff retention?

Activity

1. Reflection: Review your ideas on engagement and participate in the following:
2. Discussion: Discuss your thoughts with a partner or team, and listen to what others share to gain various perspectives.
3. Share outs: If in a larger group setting, a person or two, share something that was said or heard that stood out to you.
4. How does a positive environment contribute to engagement and, ultimately, to morale?
5. How does engagement contribute to staff retention?

Activity

1. Reflection: Review your ideas on engagement and participate in the following:
2. Discussion: Discuss your thoughts with a partner or team, and listen to what others share to gain various perspectives.
3. Share outs: If in a larger group setting, a person or two, share something that was said or heard that stood out to you.

Chapter 3: Elite Mission and Vision

- How are you actively empowering and inspiring those around you to uphold and advance your mission? How are you weaving in your mission throughout your communication?
- Positional leaders with an established vision and mission: how do you ensure the sustainability of staying on track toward your mission goals?
- How do you effectively communicate and reinforce your mission to others, especially those new to your group?

Chapter 4: Elite Core Values

- Do you have an established set of core values? If so, what does daily life say about your culture, and does it match your values?
- Can your team members, including your colleagues, clearly articulate the core values? How are core values communicated to new team members?
- Positional Leaders: Is there a formal onboarding process that emphasizes the importance of these values?
- Are there mechanisms to recognize and celebrate individuals or teams that embody the core values?

Chapter 5: Elite Strengths

- How can recognizing and leveraging your unique strengths enhance your effectiveness as an individual?
- How can understanding and tapping into the strengths of others improve team dynamics and overall performance?
- How can self-awareness of your strengths help you address potential downsides or perceived weaknesses in your daily interactions?
- How can connecting with others' strengths and incorporating them into team activities or meetings foster a more positive environment?

Chapter 6: Elite Team

Reflection Activity

Remember, throughout this study guide, you can interchange the roles. For example, a "group" can refer to any group, such as your family, team, class, school, department, work colleagues, organization, etc. A "leader" can be a parent, teacher, administrator, superintendent, president, CEO, or any other individual in any form of leadership role. Now, read the opening paragraph on page 59 and reflect on where you believe you currently fall within the following types of leaders:

- *Positional Leader*: Followers comply out of necessity due to their position/title.
- *Relational Leader*: Relationships develop, and team members walk alongside you.
- *Effective Leader*: High-quality work leads to increased willingness to follow based on performance.
- *Elite Leader*: Success and credibility result in followers who trust your leadership, and you cultivate high-quality elite cultures.

Based on this reflection, what steps should you take or continue to sustain to advance toward becoming an Elite Leader in the leadership cycle described?

1. Harvard Business Review Insights: What strategies can you implement to communicate expectations and standards to new team members, ensuring alignment with high performers and minimizing the impact of low performers?
2. What characteristics are you seeking in a new team member who will align well with your organizational culture?
3. What would those characteristics entail if you were to create a portrait of the ideal candidate for your team?
 - 3a. For leaders in a position to hire, what questions should you ask during the interviewing process to ensure that prospects align with your values?

Chapter 7: Elite Awareness: Preventing Burnout and Retaining Talent

- Have you felt recognized or appreciated for your efforts in the past week? Reflect on moments when your contributions were acknowledged. How did this recognition impact your motivation and engagement? In the same light, have you had a chance to recognize someone else this week?
- How do you seek and offer support to those around you in times of need or high stress?
- Reflect on the importance of presence and visibility in your interactions. How does being engaged with others affect your relationships and morale?
- Do you understand and respect how people around you prefer to receive encouragement and support?
- How do you maintain a positive and supportive atmosphere in your interactions, and how does this affect your well-being?

Chapter 8: Elite Momentum

- How can recognizing achievements, both big and small, create a self-sustaining cycle of success?
- How does celebrating others' accomplishments contribute to building momentum in your culture?
- How can creating a culture of celebration shift the overall mindset and morale within your school or organization?
- How can you strategically manufacture wins to maintain high energy and motivation in your team?
- How can leveraging social media platforms help shape a positive narrative and highlight the momentum within your organization?

Chapter 9: Elite Celebration

- What could you do to ensure that successes are consistently recognized and celebrated?
- Staff Recognition: Reflect on the importance of recognizing others. How often do you give or receive recognition? What are some small yet meaningful ways you can acknowledge the efforts of your colleagues?
- Creating a Cycle of Positivity: Think about a "cycle of positivity." What steps can you take to ensure that appreciation and recognition are continuous and ingrained in the culture?
- Expanding Celebrations Beyond the Walls: How can you share celebrations with the broader community? What platforms or methods could you use to extend these celebrations and engage community members and others?

Chapter 10: Elite Community

- Can you identify specific examples where increased parental engagement led to measurable improvements in student outcomes?
- Reflect on when active parental involvement positively impacted student behavior in your school. What strategies were used to foster this involvement, and how can they be replicated or enhanced?
- Teacher Appreciation Initiatives: Consider the impact of teacher appreciation initiatives in your school. How have these initiatives contributed to staff morale and retention? What new ideas can be implemented to show continued support for teachers?
- Maximizing the Impact of School-Community Partnerships: Think about your school's partnerships with external organizations. How can these relationships be strengthened to benefit students, staff, and the community?

Chapter 11: Elite Engagement

- What are some strategies to create anticipation, excitement, and a welcoming environment?
- How can schools support students facing challenges to ensure they remain resilient, hopeful, and prepared for postsecondary success, whether in trade, college, or the military?
- What systems do you have to ensure no student slips through the cracks? How can a data wall or other tools be used to monitor and support students holistically?

Chapter 12: Constructing an Elite Culture

- How will you apply the High Standards and Positive Environment pillars to intentionally shape an elite culture in your own setting, ensuring every step you take aligns with your mission and values?
- What strategies will you implement to maintain elite momentum, prevent burnout, and foster engagement within your community, ensuring long-term success?