

THE LEADERSHPE VIEW

June 2022 - Part 2

This monthly column from CEO Chris Wilkie and other members of the SHPE executive team covers the state of SHPE, current events, organizational vision, and even some personal thoughts and philosophies. Please share your feedback with ceo@shpe.org.



Hello again, Familia! And welcome to the second edition of *The LeaderSHPE View!*

Today I'm going to introduce a philosophy that informs much of my leadership and organizational approaches. It's a lens with which I look through often – whether I am considering a substantial strategic move organizationally, or negotiating with my 10-year-old daughter.

As y'all have probably figured out by now, I'm from Texas – born and raised. And sometimes the phrasing I find normal, might seem quaint or folksy to those living outside of the South. Now that I represent a national organization like SHPE, I find myself translating these otherwise common Texas sayings.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to think that the Lone Star State has not been drastically influenced by Hispanic culture. In fact, Latinos and Hispanics make up nearly 40% of the Texas population. Their contributions can be seen in every industry and way of life. So while the language I use might not indicate a Spanish origin, the values and concepts they represent certainly do.

So back to this philosophy of mine. I call it ***Grit, Grace & Grillin'***.

Now grit and grace are words used frequently in our day to day lives, but you usually hear them referred to separately. They are seemingly diametrically opposed ideas. But I find that the tension they create when used together constitutes a perfect balance of toughness and tenderness.

To be honest, there is nothing regarding grit that I can teach SHPE members, because much of what I have recently learned about the meaning of this word has come from them. The tenacity, perseverance, and resilience our students and professionals employ to achieve their dreams and change our communities is ***inspiring***. What I hope to encourage, however, is how they can utilize this muscle to further their STEM careers and become the leaders our industry needs.

And grace? Well, grace is showing kindness when someone is struggling, makes a

mistake, or fails to meet expectations. And you know what? That someone can be you. The pressure to succeed – to get that internship, to pass that class – can be intense. Grace is about believing you did your best given the circumstances. Grace is also about extending that belief to others. Grace is ultimately about leading with empathy and compassion.

I believe as leaders, no matter what area of life we are talking about, we have a responsibility to deliver a profound experience of growth, success, and happiness to those we serve. Approaching each situation with grit and grace helps me do this. Finally, let's talk about grillin. I love food. I love the art of cooking, the combination of flavors, and the feeling of kinship it brings to any situation. When you're at my table, you're family! And when I tackle a recipe, I find that it is the perfect place to practice employing grit and offering grace. Sometimes the preparation is long and exhausting. Sometimes the technique requires careful finesse. But the end result is always an achievement we can share and celebrate together.

Y'all, Grit, Grace & Grillin' has made me a better leader, coworker, father, and friend. I use these combined theories every day at SHPE, and I look forward to showing you how over the next few months.

As I mentioned in the last edition of The LeaderSHPE View, I'll be offering more examples, insights, and personal reflections about all of this on my [LinkedIn](#). Please check it out and follow if you want more! Oh, and there will be food. Lots of food!

Until next time, take good care, Familia!

Chris Wilkie
CEO, SHPE