

2016 Chapel

Gratitude

“Appreciate everything, even the ordinary...
especially the ordinary.” – *Pema Chodron*

I would like to speak this morning about the importance of being thankful.

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough,
and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to
clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into
a friend...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a
vision for tomorrow.”

– *Melody Beattie*

****Song 1 – The Weight by The Band**

We have a lot to be grateful for. Our families, our friends, our health, our
safety...the list is long. Acknowledging how lucky we are is certainly an
important practice. It causes us to think about the different aspects of our lives
that perhaps we take for granted. Access to healthy food, clean drinking water,
modern sanitation, access to health care, warm clothes, shelter; these are
things that we all have. However, many, many people in the world do not have
these things, or anything remotely resembling them for that matter.
If everyone would take a moment and consider some things; the shoes on your
feet, the clothes your wearing, the cabin you slept in last night, the water that
comes out of the bubbler, the food you had for breakfast. Think for a moment
about those things, how were they made? How did the get here? Who was

involved in those processes? To me these are just a few examples of things we probably take for granted; yet so much went into their creation.

My point is: take some time every once in a while to think about things like this, when we are able to realize that what we consider common amenities or possessions are actually in the big picture more like luxuries, we can begin to live simpler lives; lives that are filled with appreciation of what is truly important. In times of disappointment we will be able to value all the things we do have, and not dwell on or complain about the things we don't.

****Song 2 – The times they are a changing by Bob Dylan**

It gives me a great sense of pride to be standing up here today. I have heard many chapels over the course of my time at camp, and I have always enjoyed hearing what other counselors value the most about Timanous, why they think it's special, and what they are grateful for. Its something I have wanted to do for a long time.

The experience I have had at Timanous has in every sense been invaluable; and for that I am extremely grateful. From being a 9 year old camper in mallards to a now 26 year old head counselor, each summer has been a new opportunity for growth. From awards won, to friends old and new, great counselors, camping trips, meals in the barn, and announcements in the barn...to council fire, capture the flag, the 4th of july, twilight league, and free swim; and for the simple moments: like relaxing by the barn before meals, taking a cold dip in the morning, a flat rest nap, watching the sun dip behind the pine trees at free evening, hearing the calls of loons lying in bed, and the smell of wood smoke as we exit council fire.

These moments, these experiences help make a summer at Timanous so special; they help make it something to be incredibly thankful for. However, the aspect of camp I believe to be the most special is this community, these people, the men and women in green. My father, the smartest man I know, has always told me that you are who you're with. You will become like the people you choose to surround yourself with. I think the reason why we feel so fulfilled at the end of the summer is because we have grown so much; we have

become the best version of ourselves, all of our good qualities are in a way transferred to one another via association. We become more caring and compassionate, wiser, more generous, better sports, and perhaps more athletic. Timanous people are the best people in the world, and the friendships we make here are timeless...I think we all should consider ourselves so fortunate to be a part of this community; to be around brilliant minds like brooks, beamer, aidan prior, henry, and j-rob, to experience the creativity of pat hayes, congo, and will schoder, and the courtesy and generosity of people like connor, sam sawyers, pj, and googs. There are people like mark, who would literally be willing to help you with anything, no matter how hot, cold, or exhausting it may be. I'm thankful for people like pine man, who taught me to waterski, nick, who put up with me for 3 years when we were counselors in crows...people like bob who for more than 30 years has been working harder than you can imagine to keep us well fed...people like Robert Blake who I have had the privilege to work with, learn from, and be marveled by. That man is a wizard. Then there is Dave and Linda, who continue to make the tough decisions and continue to take the risks involved with running a camp, all in the name of perpetuating this special thing we have going. And lastly there is Sandy; whose loyalty and devotion to Timanous is unmatched, his leadership has literally guided thousands and has helped to instill a sense of belonging among so many of us. He is the spirit of Timanous.

****Song 3 – Friend of the Devil by the Grateful Dead**

Timanous is truly a special place. It changes us for the better, and causes us to appreciate the little things; there is nothing like it in the world, and when you are here you have everything you could possibly need and so much more.

A quote from Buddah:

Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die: so, let us all be thankful.

****Salutation of the Dawn(look to this day)**