

Chapel
PJ Synk June 25, 2017

Good morning everybody!

100 years, can you believe it?! Look around at your friends in green and grey. We are incredibly lucky to be here, and will be remembered as the generation that got to be at camp during the 100th summer. Our faces will make up the special photo that will forever timestamp the occasion. Pretty exciting, right??

By a show of hands, who in this group likes to be recognized? Everyone should have their hands up. We strive to earn awards and feel special when we are commended. It's an amazing feeling because we have earned that moment in the spotlight.

Some of us may be modest and even feel uncomfortable receiving public praise, but everyone likes and even needs to be recognized, even if it's in private. I have a challenge for you. This summer, take a moment each day to recognize someone who is acting selflessly or trying something new or challenging. Encourage each other!

That being said, there's one thing that sets this summer's celebration apart from that of earning an award or having a birthday - and it's that this is not **just** about us. Sure, if none of us were here, there would be no 100th summer. But we are the result of generations of campers, counselors, and leaders.

Without their effort over the years, it would not be possible for us to be here today. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see." Open your eyes and your mind to see the connection to the rich history of our past and to each other.

Song 1: With A Little Help From My Friends

Timanous is timeless, but even so, it still changes. More cabins have been built, we no longer transport campers in the backs of trucks or have battles during breakfast as the cereal rack leaves the kitchen. We have a new main dock and last summer we enjoyed beach day in the first half of the summer.

However, just because we're here now doesn't make us more important than

those before us. We study history in school to learn valuable lessons and better appreciate what can easily be taken for granted. The true value of camp, the force that links us to so many generations is the experience.

The thrill of shooting a rifle for the first time. The shock of jumping in the refreshing water for a dip or swim. The bonds we form with each other. That emotion is real, it is raw, and this is what connects us to every generation before and to those that will come after us.

Before we continue, let me clarify: this group is important. We play a critical role in not only creating our own memories but in laying the wooded path for future generations. It is important for us to celebrate 100 years of camp, and to be proud of being in the photo. This is not something to take for granted, as we are constantly shaping the future of camp whether looking one day, one year, or one hundred years ahead.

Those of us who have been at camp for a while may remember Sandy's chapel. He showed historic objects and photos from around camp, many of which can be found in the barn. The message behind his talk was that we share a bond with people we may not even recognize or places around camp we can't identify. However, the Timanous lettering on all of their uniforms provides an instant connection between us. Embrace your surroundings and try to learn more since you never know how something may be connected to you.

This is a call to be curious, and with it let's think closely about the Timanous Prayer as we recite it together. You can find it on the last page of your song book, and may quickly notice that everything we are thankful for is timeless.

Timanous Prayer

We thank thee, O Lord for the joy of fellowship
For the beauty of our surroundings:
The tall pine trees and sparkling lake,
The life which teems around us in the woods.
The skies, and clear waters.
We thank thee for the love of doing things,
For active bodies, and minds alert.
For the excitement of something new
And the comfort of things which are old.
For all these we give thanks;
For the cool and quiet of evening,

The restfulness of night,
The glory of starry skies,
The new life which comes with showers,
For our mothers and fathers who have given us our homes,
And for the trials which help us to know ourselves.
For all these, we give thanks.

(Hold up book, blue facing camp and red facing me) This book is red. Many of you appear puzzled. Why? I'm looking at the book right now and it's red! (Turn the book). The difference between my conclusion of it being red and yours that it's blue is solely determined by our perspective.

Don't be too quick to judge, take the time to look for another point of view. Whenever something feels like it's going wrong in every way possible, try looking at it from a different angle, and you may be surprised by the result. When it gets dark enough, you can see the stars.

Look around you, the tall pine trees and beautiful wooded paths. Everything seems perfect! However, we must accept that time will pass. There is no way to stop it, and like a snowflake in your hand or a candy bar in your pocket, it will change. Of course, this can be sad in the moment, but without it we would never have a warm lake to swim in or chocolate fondue. The leaves we see filling our trees now will fall, forming the beautiful wooded paths we love and laying the foundation for next summer.

These surroundings are actually a metaphor. We have something else in common with them – the people around camp will change over the years. This can be a sad process, as nobody likes to leave camp at the end of a summer. However, without time, a caterpillar will never become a butterfly and a mallard never a crow - and this is what has allowed us to continue for five generations.

Song 2: Wooded Path (Page 7)

If you look around the group, how can you tell it's 2017 and not 1917? We don't have any electronics, we send and receive handwritten letters. We cook burgers over an outdoor camp fire, and live in cabins as we gradually move up the bunkline.

What is time at Timanous? For activities each day, the passing of time is

measured by the bell. But from a longer perspective, the days quickly flow into each other. We all know when it's Friday, because, well...who would miss out on candy? But one Friday will rush to another. Any of us who have been here previously can surely view time as our enemy during the summer. From my perspective, it goes way too fast!

Looking back on my camper days, so many people helped me on the journey. Nick taught me to become a better swimmer. Tom gave me the confidence to come out of my shell and enjoy camp without being self-conscious. While it is still shocking to realize campers I had as a new counselor in Mallards 2012 are now in Crows, Cardinals, and Ravens, sometimes that summer feels like just yesterday.

It was exciting and terrifying and while everything seemed familiar, it was completely different! I was tempted to follow the lead from older counselors since I still didn't feel as capable as them. However, Jason, Pineman, and Brooks provided feedback and opportunities to improve myself. Congo helped me conquer my biggest counselor fear: telling stories before bedtime. Now I look forward to story time - and really hope my Mallards do too.

The point of this is that others will view you as someone to look up to even though you may not see yourself that way. Campers certainly saw me as a leader before I felt like one. The best way to become comfortable with anything is to have patience with yourself as you learn new skills.

This does not mean you have to be good at everything. The key is to approach challenges with enthusiasm. My best memories are of the times when I lived life with an exclamation point. No holding back, just all-out enthusiasm...when it's appropriate. I still remember how great it felt being commended as a camper. The letter I wrote home afterwards was filled with exclamation points - and I didn't even wait until the next Sunday to write it.

You can jump start your summer. Go for morning dip. It's more memorable than hiding under the warm covers. Try something new with someone you just met. Camp is a do-over. It's a chance to remake yourself to the best you can be. You just have to push yourself to try.

Song 3: Try Everything (Insert)

Having been a younger camper in this group, I know it can be difficult to remain

quiet and pay attention after an extended cabin cleanup. However, if you just remember one thing from this chapel it's that you make an impact. Everybody here is shaping camp not just Dave and Linda, not just the head counselors, not just the crows, but every one of us.

All of us in this group can agree that a critical role model during the last half century was, of course, Sandy. He truly believed in the mission of Timanous: to help people become the best version of themselves. Like Old Chief Timanous, he was a leader brave and true, and remained humble despite his authority and influence.

While we may not all be at camp for 50 years, or have a building named after us, we all make an impact. We may not all feel like leaders but there's something you can learn from everybody. Try new things and remember personal growth is about more than just awards. Older campers and counselors, be the person you needed when you were younger. Everything we do says something about who we are.

You will be amazed at just how much a few thoughtful words can mean. To borrow a piece of advice from my friend and mentor Sandy, "Above all else, be kind."... You can become the person you want to be and you can help others on their journey too.

We literally all create the spark for council fire together and we can do the same every day. Kindle your own Timanous spirit. Take chances and cheer each other on to the next hundred years. We link camp's history with the next chapter of the story and it's up to us to write a great one.

Look to this day:

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth; the glory of action; the splendor of beauty.

For yesterday is already a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision.

But, today well lived, makes every yesterday

A dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day!

Such is the salutation of the dawn!