

Good morning full timers. I feel incredibly fortunate to be giving today's chapel, to this group in particular. As full timers you see the entirety of the summer unfold, and your commitment to the full seven week session shows love, loyalty, and an understanding of the Timanous Connection. I would also like to welcome my beautiful mother, who's standing in the back there. Welcome, mom. It means so much to me that you made the effort to be here, and having you back there today will probably trigger my emotions quicker than usual. Please, everyone, forgive me if I need to take a moment to collect myself at any point during this talk.

Today I would like to discuss the idea of baggage. Not the trunk that you bring with your bedding and your gear, but the baggage that you carry with you every day of your life. The emotions and tendencies you have developed throughout your youth are the results of major events, and turning points in your life. Everyone experiences the will of life in different ways and in different magnitudes. Everyone has had their own relationship with tragedy. A break-up may feel like a tragedy to one person, while it feels more just like a Tuesday to others. The important part is that we do not judge other people's spectrum of tragedy, but that we aim to understand.

There is a notion in our society that in order to be masculine you must keep your emotions to yourself. In order to be "manly" you can't let anyone see you cry. These are dated ideas. The only way to fully work through and deal with powerful emotions is to talk about them. Be open. Everyone here has baggage with them. My advice to you is unpack for the summer. Air it all out. Now will the choir join me in singing...

### **Sittin by the Dock of the Bay- Otis Redding**

When I was in high school, my dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. At the time, I was much like many of you may be with your emotions. I shut myself off to everyone. I kept everything packed away. I didn't want to show the pain I was feeling, because in my mind- somehow- showing that pain would make me weak. Even my family couldn't get the slightest bit of emotional vulnerability from me. I spent my hours at home, in my room, ignoring the issue that was facing my family. Looking back on those years I was selfish. My mom- and especially my dad- just wanted me to talk. To tell them anything I was feeling. I

was stubborn. It hurts me today to think of the missed opportunities I had with him. The emotional depth that could've been added to our relationship by hashing out our feelings about his diagnosis. Why didn't I share more with him? I knew our days together were numbered but I didn't have the courage to allow myself to hurt.

It's clear to me now that at this juncture I had bought into the idea that I needed to "be a man." I needed to "be a man" in the sense that I needed to deal with the feelings I had alone, without any help. In my mind this approach would be a measure of my emotional fortitude. I had a very positive and loving relationship with my father, but because of my inability to connect emotionally, something was inherently missing during that period of sickness. Openness and vulnerability take practice. Sharing your deepest, most powerful emotions is not an easy thing to do. It takes courage. It takes maturity.

Suppressing your emotions will not make them go away. The weight I carry with the passing of my father will forever be something I deal with. It's also played a role in making me a better person. I've had to learn how to live with the reality that was set before me. I had to learn how to carry that weight. I didn't start to process the loss in a healthy fashion until I became willing to share, and cognizant of the fact that this weight need not be carried alone. I came to this realization because of Timanous. Because of how deeply emotional- in so many different ways- the experience of a summer on Plains road is. It's emotional when we all recite the Timanous Prayer, as a circle, on peaceful and reflective Sunday evenings. It's emotional when we get elected to the Woodsman's club, or receive a commendation. It's emotional when we run the flag across no man's land for a C-flag victory. It's emotional when a man we all grew to know and love would no longer be returning to camp after becoming synonymous with our development as young men. There are a plethora of emotions that come with a summer at Timanous, and these experiences and friendships changed the way I approach and manage grief. I've learned to let my scars show, because they've made me who I am, and the people I've encountered in fourteen years here have made me feel loved- blemishes and all. Fourteen years have made Timanous feel like home. Before last summer, after my dad had passed, I considered not returning. I considered staying home and helping my mom through the move to her new apartment. I felt like she needed someone more than I needed camp. "Nonsense" she said. "You need camp now more than ever."

Now will the choir please join me in singing a medley of...

## **Golden Slumbers/Carry That Weight (Swashbucklin' Style)- The Beatles**

I remember a lot of the phone calls that I had with camp people after my dad's passing. There was a clear difference between the conversations I had with people I'd met here, compared to the people I go to school with. There was an added layer of depth and tenderness with the Timanous circle. A desire to understand, not just listen. A desire to console, but allow for the hurt to show. The Timanous Connection is a very real thing. It's the reason I got the logo tattooed on my back when I was 18. If life ever takes me away from the tall pine trees and sparkling lake, I'll always remember my past, who helped raised me, and where I feel like I come from. And mom, I'm sorry you found out about the tattoo like this, but I hope the context in which you heard it will at least make you somewhat appreciative of it.

I am now going to take this time to read the poem my dad chose for me to read at his service. It speaks about the idea that your relationship with someone does not end when they pass away, but it simply takes on a new form. A spiritual form. It also alludes to the feelings that come with leaving camp. After banquet we will all go back to our morning commutes. The invigorating cold morning dip will be replaced with a hot shower. Free evening will turn into homework time. Inevitably, we will all return to the routine of school and work, but we can rest easy knowing we only said good-bye to Timanous to meet again soon.

The poem reads...

### **No Coming, No Going by Thich Nhat Hanh**

This body is not me  
I am not limited by this body.  
I am life without boundaries.  
I have never been born  
And I have never died.

Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars,  
manifestations from my wondrous true mind.

Since before time, I have been free.  
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass,  
sacred thresholds on our journey.  
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So laugh with me,  
hold my hand,  
let us say good-bye,  
say good-bye, to meet again soon.

At this time I would like to take a moment to invite my mom down to the podium. And I invite everyone to join the choir in signing...

### **Lean on Me- Bill Withers**

In situations of grief it is important to let yourself hurt. It's human nature to want to avoid these feelings. Shut them out completely. Push them down and bottle them up. Fight this urge. Allow yourself to bleed emotionally. And don't think you have to do it alone. The greatest lesson I have learned in my years at Timanous is the importance of being open. If no one else in your life, these are the people to be open with. The positive support you will receive from the people who call this place home is irrefutable. It is overwhelming. Pat, Aidan, Tommy- the friendships I have with you three specifically got me through my darkest times. The love I have for you, and the love you gave to me has changed my life. And I know that everyone here can look around and find faces that they feel the same way about. Embrace these relationships. Take a moment now to tell someone near by the love you have for them.

I've experienced nothing in my life more powerful than a Timanous friendship. I remember after my dad's passing receiving a hand-written letter from Beam. I keep it pinned on my wall at school still. When I see it I'm reminded of the love and friendships that keep me coming back. The love and friendships which make it impossible for me to stay away from this place. My greatest fear in life at the moment is the first summer I don't return. For me, this level of love If you feel as strongly about this place as I do, and a great majority of you do- take advantage of those relationships. Give all of your love and energy to them for the 7 weeks you are here. You will grow in greater ways than you can imagine for yourself if you capitalize on the joy of fellowship...

### **Timanous Prayer**

The beauty of our surroundings:  
The tall pine trees, and sparkling lake,  
The life which teems around us in the woods.  
For 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,  
And 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.

I would like to once again thank all of you for being present in body, mind, and spirit this morning while I spoke. I can't imagine I will ever forget this opportunity. To all of you here, I have a very real love for each and every one of you- in gray or green. We all have 3 and a half weeks left together. Let's unpack our bags.

### **Salutation of the Dawn**

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.