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Volume 4

EMBRACING
HISTORY

— TO —
INSPIRE
— THE —
FUTURE

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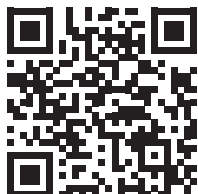
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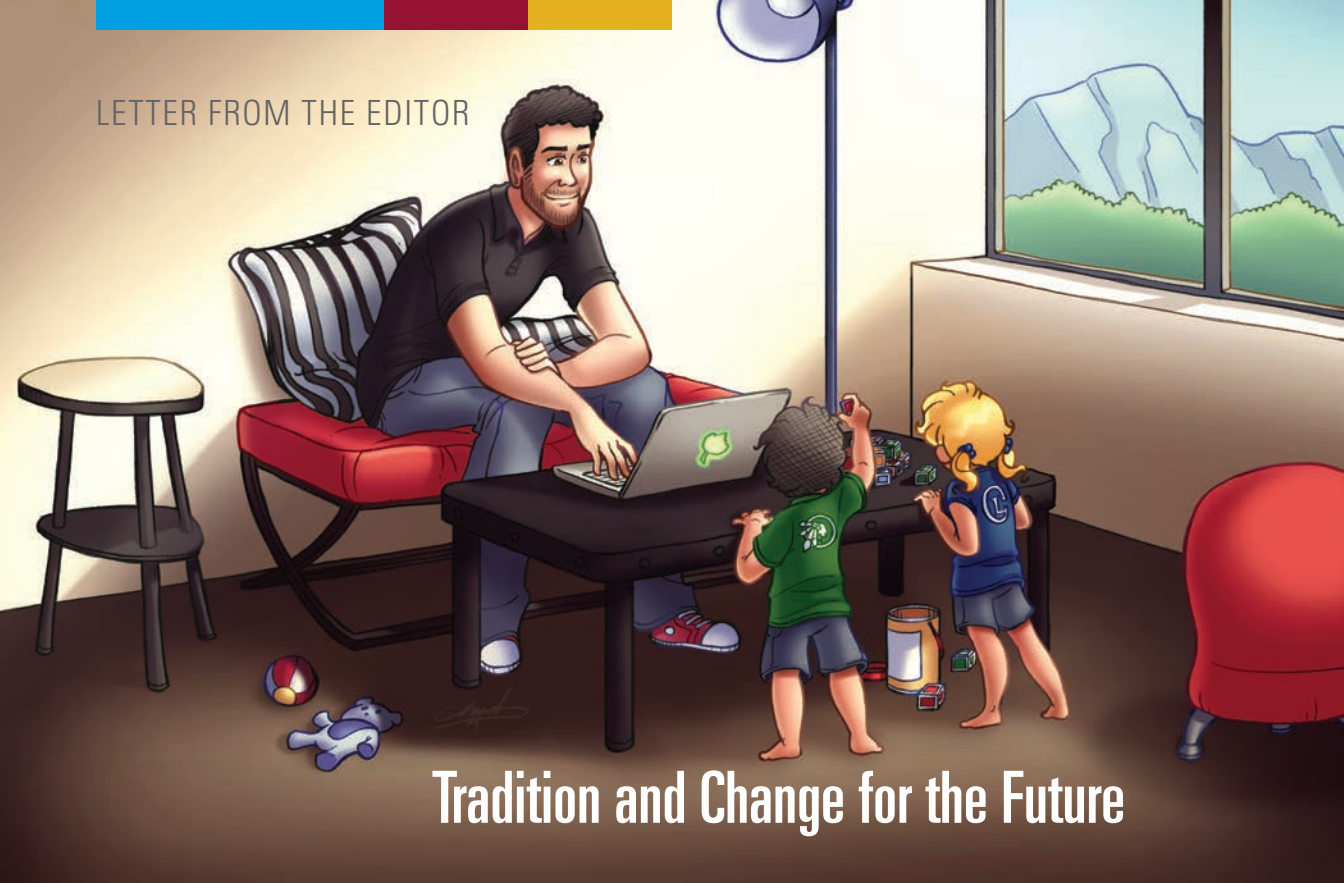
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Tradition and Change for the Future

Dan Konigsberg

dan@campminder.com

We at CampMinder are fortunate to be at the epicenter of a progressive movement within the camp industry. As such, we hear lots of interesting stories about what camps are doing to thrive in today's fast-moving, technological society. In our fourth volume of CampMinder Magazine, we have decided to share some of our favorite stories and ideas we've heard over the past year.

In conversations with camp owners and directors, we continuously hear the same question expressed in various ways: How do we preserve the tradition and feel of camp as the world around us continues to evolve at a rapidly increasing pace? We have focused deeply on this question as the theme of our magazine this year. Our feature section — *Embracing History to Inspire the Future* — is a compilation of three stories written by camp professionals from various backgrounds.

This issue also highlights other interesting trends and thoughts we felt were important to share. From camps adopting solar technology and leaving the grid to the increasing popularity of camps for adults, we think you will enjoy the wide range of knowledge our authors have generously made available through their articles.

This year is an exciting one for me, personally, as my wife will be giving birth to two (yes, two!) future campers around the time this issue enters the world. As invested in the success of this industry as CampMinder and I have been, it is all beginning to hit even closer to home for me. I want to make sure that my son and daughter will have a vibrant camp industry waiting for them when they reach camp age. The coming generation will need the same wonderful camp experience that I — and so many of us camp professionals — were fortunate enough to have when we were children.

So, with that, I invite you to read and enjoy CampMinder Magazine, Volume 4. I hope it gives you food for thought as you plan to make 2015 your best camp season yet.

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*Report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies: Errors harm 1.5 million people every year.



Mastering the Art of Gift Reception

AS A FORMER CAMP DIRECTOR, I know that there is little I can share with our community on how each of us can give “more” or give “better.” We camp professionals are driven by our unending desire to make this world a better place. In our noble pursuit of this cause, we give a lot. We dedicate our lives to the essence of giving so that others might be rewarded. It is for these reasons, in discussing fundraising, that I will focus on the act of receiving, which is where camp professionals may need more guidance.

Before we address becoming better gift receivers, let’s briefly review why you should be a fundraiser for your camp in the first place. Aside from the obvious fact that fundraising brings in financial support to further your cause, effective fundraising and establishing a community of donors can also increase the level of your constituent engagement. Further, it can also serve to fund a campership program for your camp to advance your mission. Even for-profit camp directors can start campership programs to begin fundraising, and the ACA can help you with these efforts.

If you understand these positive outcomes of effective fundraising, do not be afraid of your role as a fundraiser. As a camp director, you already have inherent fundraising skills. You ask parents for their most prized possession — their child. You promise to challenge their children, give them appropriate risks, and allow them to take chances. Asking a parent to trust you to care for his or her child is much more challenging than asking for financial support. So, whether you realize it or not, you’re already asking, and camp families are already giving.



With this in mind, we should spend time considering the impact of successful receiving. Donors enjoy giving, but it is the way you receive their gifts that often determines future contributions.

Consider this: On average, organizations lose up to 60% of all donors after the first gift.¹ Taking into account that financial giving is at an all-time high² implies that most organizations are leaving significant sums on the table by not retaining those donors. When a donor is not retained, you have lost the ability to communicate with him as someone who cares about the financial impact of his gift. Consequently, there is a reduced level of engagement with your constituency.

So why is donor retention so low?

Poor donor retention often stems from a lack of emotional emphasis when a gift is received. Many organizations struggle because they approach the receipt of a gift as a robotic act. For example, when a person pays \$25 for a shirt, there is very little emotion that goes into this action. All the buyer wants in return is the shirt, and there is no expectation of any acknowledgment or recognition. This is a basic financial transaction.

However, if someone makes a \$25 donation, whereupon the donor receives nothing tangible in return, she has increased expectations about how she will be treated after the gift is received. Consequently, it is important for us as fundraisers not to view these gifting moments as merely financial transactions.

In her book, *Donor-Centered Leadership*, Penelope Burk expresses that what donors want in today's world is for each organization to be "donor-centered." She argues that becoming donor-centered involves three actions: a focus on acknowledgement, a recognition that gifts

should be assigned to a specific purpose or program, and that the gift should deliver an outcome.³ These three pillars should form the framework for how we receive donations.

As a donor-centered fundraiser, my experience was that when a donor's gift was received well, their investment in our success went beyond their financial donation. In turn, this one gift (and its positive reception experience) led them to help us at camp in a variety of ways — through helping us fill beds, assisting us in finding great staff, engaging other constituents, and volunteering for leadership roles.

As a camp director, you already possess the natural ability to function in a donor-centered manner. You have never viewed a parent sending a child to camp as a mere financial transaction. By employing that same emotion in how you receive financial support, you'll be well on your way to mastering the art of perfect gift reception. If we focus on how we receive every gift, it will not take long for each of us to lay the foundation for a truly engaged donor experience.

Tom Holland is the Chief Foundation and Funds Development Officer at the American Camp Association. Before he joined the ACA, Tom held the position of executive director of the Teton Valley Ranch Camp Education Foundation. He holds a BA in Education and an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis. He has also completed professional training in non-profit management at Harvard University and Stanford University. He lives in Jackson, WY with his wife and three daughters.

Tom Holland
tholland@acacamps.org

FOOTNOTES

1. Sargeant A. and Woodliffe L. "Building Donor Loyalty: The Antecedents and Role of Commitment in the Context of Charity Giving." *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 18(2), 2007.
2. Giving USA 2012.
3. Burk, Penelope. "Donor Centered Leadership: What It Takes to Build a High Performance Fundraising Team." Cygnus Applied Research, Chicago, Illinois. 2013.



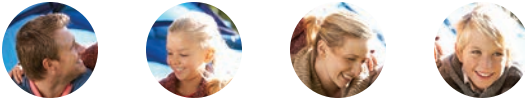
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Connecting for Keeps

This morning, I took a phone call from a 2nd year camp mom. She had a few questions about packing and wanted to make sure all of her son’s forms had been submitted. But I sensed there was something else on her mind ... she seemed to be holding back. I needed to encourage her to open up. On a whim, I turned the tables and asked for her insight: “You know, MY son is attending for the first time this year — do you have any feedback about your child’s experience last year?”

I had presented her the opportunity to be heard and understood, and the floodgates opened. Her subsequent feedback, positive and negative, was invaluable. She even offered a few subtle tweaks and great ideas that will improve the experiences of all of our campers moving forward.

a commitment to the idea of “Camp,” or more specifically, were unimpressed with what you delivered. Parents who were campers and who now have high expectations that their child’s camp experience and enthusiasm about camp will mirror their own are often disappointed by subtle shifts in tradition or leadership. If we don’t take the time to address the perspectives and expectations of all of our parents, we risk disappointing the customer.

THE LOYALTY LOOP

Camp directors take time to listen and to read between the lines. They recognize that if campers aren’t happy, parents aren’t happy. Camp directors know they are in the business of customer service. However, these characteristics are no longer enough to keep our camp families in “The Loyalty Loop.” It is requisite for us to distinguish what keeps our “loop” alive.

Consider the campers. When they don’t enjoy camp, we tend to hear sentences that begin with phrases like, “I didn’t have,” “I would rather,” and “I wish.” While these might actually be relative to real and significant issues, in many cases they boil down to problems with perception. The power of perception can greatly impact a camper’s experience. Sometimes it doesn’t matter what you do ... it’s the child’s perception of why you do it that matters.

Even if your camper’s perceptions about camp are positive, parents can still negatively impact your return rates. If the parent lacks commitment to and understanding of your camp experience, that child will often not return. Parents seem to think that camp is often “too much” of something their child (or they) don’t need or want. Parents who do not re-enroll their children are often lacking



AROUND THE LOYALTY LOOP

A representation of the journey of a prospect from initial awareness of you to the formation of a long-term commitment to your camp.

Cultivating the commitment to camp is important. As such, former campers and staff become the foundation for building this commitment. After all, recounting a memorable camp experience is given far more weight than a social media review. But sometimes we lose track of those valuable alumni. Without continued connection, they may have forgotten about camp. In these cases, camp alumni have become disconnected with the impact, importance, and influence of the camp experience. Thus, their commitment to camp is lacking.

Staff, too, can impact camper retention. They are often some of the most vocal advocates of the camp experience. Much research has been dedicated to “the needs of Millennials.” In reality, Millennial staff members seek the same return as our parents, campers, and alumni: a sense of purpose and direction.

give specific examples of what our mission looks like, what it sounds like, and what it feels like for campers, staff, parents, and alumni. We need to recognize the power of objective data. We need to track and share youth development outcomes, retention, marketing trends, and anything else that can help develop a broader understanding of the impacts of camp. We must connect to larger populations by understanding and employing today’s cultural vernacular (why be “tough” when you can be “gritty?”).

In our marketing materials and in our day-to-day communication, we need to share specific, objective, and relevant information about our “why.”

THEY NEED THE “WHY” OF CAMP

Communicating the “why” of camp is much like riding a bicycle. The more we practice riding, the more smoothly we will change gears, the more efficient we become in the saddle, and the more competent and confident we will be as we travel on our chosen paths. Think of your organization’s mission, vision and core values as the front wheel of the bike ... where it points, you go. In effect, it is your “why.”

The front wheel only rotates because the chain and the rear wheel work together to provide momentum. The rear wheel contains all of the “what” and the “how” of your camp: the activities, the training, the resources, your website, your social media presence, etc. The chain contains the “who”: directors, seasonal, and year-round staff, board members, community partners, alumni, parents, and campers.

We connect for keeps by ensuring that everyone who makes up the chain understands that they are an integral part of making sure the “why” of camp continues to roll on and move forward. It is our responsibility as camp professionals to do the work and keep the chain moving. When facing challenges, it is important that we do not lose our momentum (or, the focus of our mission and vision).

We are operating in a much more transparent, value-added economic environment. Today’s families want to know and understand what their child will gain from a camp experience. It is our responsibility to articulate not only the value of our programs, but the value of Camp as a whole. The goal, of course, is amplification in a very noisy environment.

In our marketing materials and in our day-to-day communication, we need to share specific, objective, and relevant information about our “why.” We need to

Great things often take a great deal of time and energy. Building and maintaining successful relationships should be one of your primary roles as a camp director. These relationships, combined with a strict adherence to your mission, will fuel the endurance necessary to keep you pedaling that bike. There will be some steep pitches and some fast descents, but there will also be incredible strength and wisdom gained on the journey.

Ariella Randle Rogge is a Director at Sanborn Western Camps in Florissant, CO. She has spent the last 20 years working as a youth development professional in the camping industry and in the experiential and secondary education fields. She is a passionate advocate and supporter of the Children in Nature movement and utilizes her expertise in social media and youth development to emphasize the importance of outdoor and camp experiences for all children. She lives happily in the Colorado woods with her husband and two adventurous young sons.

Ariella Randle Rogge
sanbornwesterncamps.com

HOT LIST



At CampMinder, we don't have an IT department, we have a Javi. His official title is Database Administrator, which means he is part of a team that manages how all of the data in CampMinder is stored. No small task. Somehow, though, Javi also finds the time to care for all of our in-house IT needs. The guy just loves tech — we can't hold him back. He's uncovered many creative and cost-effective solutions for our team, so we once again picked his brain for ideas from which you might benefit as well. Warning: Javi's brain is a weird place.



Chromecast

google.com/chromecast

Retails for \$35.

This is my new favorite thing. Chromecast (which is only 35 bucks) is a way to instantly make your old DUMB TV into an old SMART TV (provided it has an HDMI port). Once connected to your television, you simply pair it with your WIFI network. You now have several options:

- 1** You can "cast" a Chrome browser tab wirelessly to your TV using Google Cast. (Google Cast is an extension for the Chrome browser that communicates with the Chromecast device connected to your TV. If you're not using the Chrome browser currently, then I've decided that we're not friends and that your email domain is probably @netscape.net. Get your act together and install Chrome.)
- 2** You can "cast" your entire computer screen to your television (again, using the Google Cast extension).
- 3** You can install the Chromecast app to your Apple or Android smart phone and "cast" Netflix, YouTube, HBO GO, and others from your phone to your TV.

I hear you thinking, "Sick!" I know, right?!? Go to your local Best Buy and get one now. He Dicho.

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LastPass

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I have 20 different email addresses (so as to dodge the NSA) requiring an obscene amount of passwords that range from things like “mysocks123” to “2BorNot2Bthatismostlikelytheque\$tion.” But with LastPass, a super-secure bit of software for all my devices, I don’t have to remember them anymore. And even if I forget, I can log in and get my password. No more trying and failing to remember all of your info. Go to lastpass.com and watch the little vid. Worth it.

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Right now you’re probably thinking to yourself, “Oh Javi, Google Drive is old news.” And yes it is, but just this March they dropped the price on it like, whoa. For 10 bucks a month you get a terabyte of storage. A TERABYTE of storage, people! So like, suppose you like listening to the band Phish (yeah, I know they’re awful, but just hear me out). You know how their songs are 45 minutes long? That one file on your computer could be like 50MB. With one terabyte, you can store 1044 Phish songs in Google Drive! I’m sure there are other things to store on Google Drive, but I’d like it if all Phish songs were uploaded to the cloud and then Google ‘accidentally’ deleted them all. Forever. So that they would stop playing in our office all the time.



Universal Media Player

umplayer.com

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I’m not saying that your VLC player won’t work just fine. All I’m sayin’ is this: this media player is the new hotness. It will play everything. It doesn’t even care what you’re trying to watch. MP3, MP4, some weird Russian extension ... Plays all day, err day.

QUICK NOTES

- ▶ Skype announced in April that Group Video calling is now *free*.
- ▶ Last issue, I mentioned LogMeIn ... it was free at the time of the writing, but it’s not free anymore. Check out the “Chrome Remote Desktop” extension in the Chrome Browser. It’s def free.
- ▶ When my computer is acting up, I call it a Communist.



Understand connections like never before.



Robert Gridley

- FO** FORMER CAMPER 1981 – 1990
- FO** FORMER STAFF 1991 – 1995
- PE** PARENT OF ENROLLED CAMPER Laura Gridley
- DO** ACTIVE DONOR September 5, 2013

Laura Gridley

- EN** ENROLLED CAMPER 2012 – present

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MARK MAJOR

*International Sports Training Camp
& Trout Lake*



Respecting Mother Earth is something that always stands front and center at International Sports Training Camp (ISTC) and Trout Lake (TL). We believe in being good stewards of the land. We strive to exist in harmony with our property. Being in the picturesque Pocono Mountains, it's hard not to be impressed by nature and to be inspired to take steps to protect it.

The question that came to mind was, "How do we protect it?" Most summer camps do a great job of caring for their property and land. We as camp directors teach children to respect nature by picking up litter, recycling, and not wasting food. We take many steps to guard our camps' natural beauty and surroundings. For us, those precautions weren't enough. We wanted to do more.

At the start, we explored many options on how to reduce our energy consumption in order to save money and to leave our land in better shape than we found it. We put effort into saving, conserving, and reducing our energy needs. We switched over to LED lighting in as many facilities as possible. Our new health center was designed with geothermal heating and cooling systems that utilize the natural heat energy of the ground to manage our building climates. We installed Inductive Capacitor units on our electric panels that stabilize our draw of energy from the electrical grid, and we have been insulating our buildings with ecological spray foam to decrease our heating requirements. As we continue to replace hot water heaters, we retrofit our existing systems with tankless, instant propane-fired heaters that are over 90% efficient.

Next, we took a look at our budget and realized a large portion was being spent on energy. We also realized that heavy energy consumption equals a large carbon footprint. This was the spark we needed to continue our quest to reduce our energy needs while saving money at the same time. In effect, our motto became "Going green while making some green."



We researched and educated ourselves on the various options available: wind, solar, geothermal, biomass ... the list goes on. Based on many factors — budget, location, available state and federal grants, and the geology of our region — everything pointed toward solar. As we continued researching solar, we learned about the incredible energy savings that solar photovoltaic (PV) systems can provide. The decision was made.

government grants which paid for nearly 50% of the overall project. Installation took approximately four weeks and was immediately up and running once the final wires were connected. We instantly began sending clean electricity back into the electrical grid, ultimately reducing our dependence on our electric provider. Additionally, ISTC/TL receives Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs), rewarding us for generating renewable energy.

Since installation, there has been minimal need for maintenance, and the system has outperformed its original calculations. To date, ISTC/TL has prevented 202,500 tons of carbon emission and generated a total of 119,200 kw of electricity. Let me convert those energy savings into real-world examples:

In 2011, our dream became a reality. ISTC/TL received two separate

THE ENERGY SAVED AT ISTC/TL IS EQUIVALENT TO:



miles traveled in commercial airliners

tons of waste recycled

acres of trees planted

years driving a car

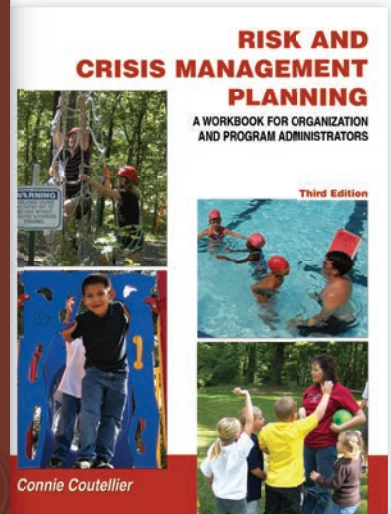
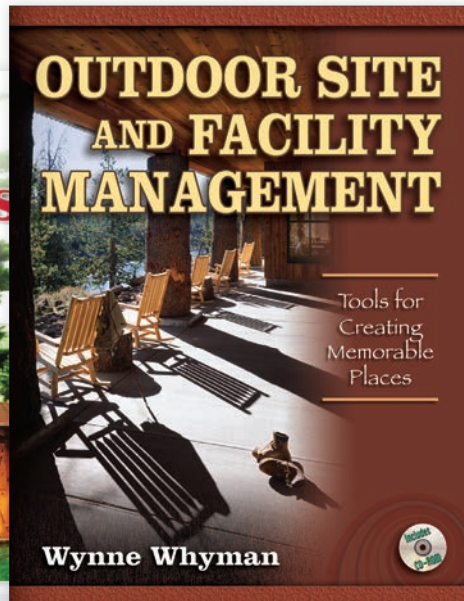
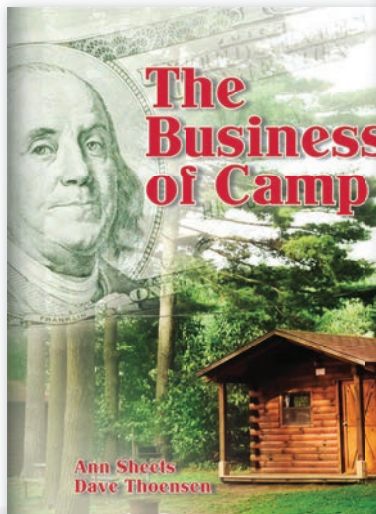
We love educating others about solar energy and the effect that our conscious actions have on the Earth. Our campers' parents truly appreciate the efforts we have put forth. I can't say that our solar production has increased our camper enrollment, but I can tell you that many of our parents and off-season groups truly appreciate the clean energy direction we've taken.

Soaking up nature's beauty is an integral part of the experience at ISTC/TL, so it only made sense to respect that beauty enough to give back to it. Incorporating solar energy into our daily routine at ISTC/TL was a no-brainer, and the exciting results we have seen only strengthen our belief that we made the right choice.

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troutlakeretreats.com

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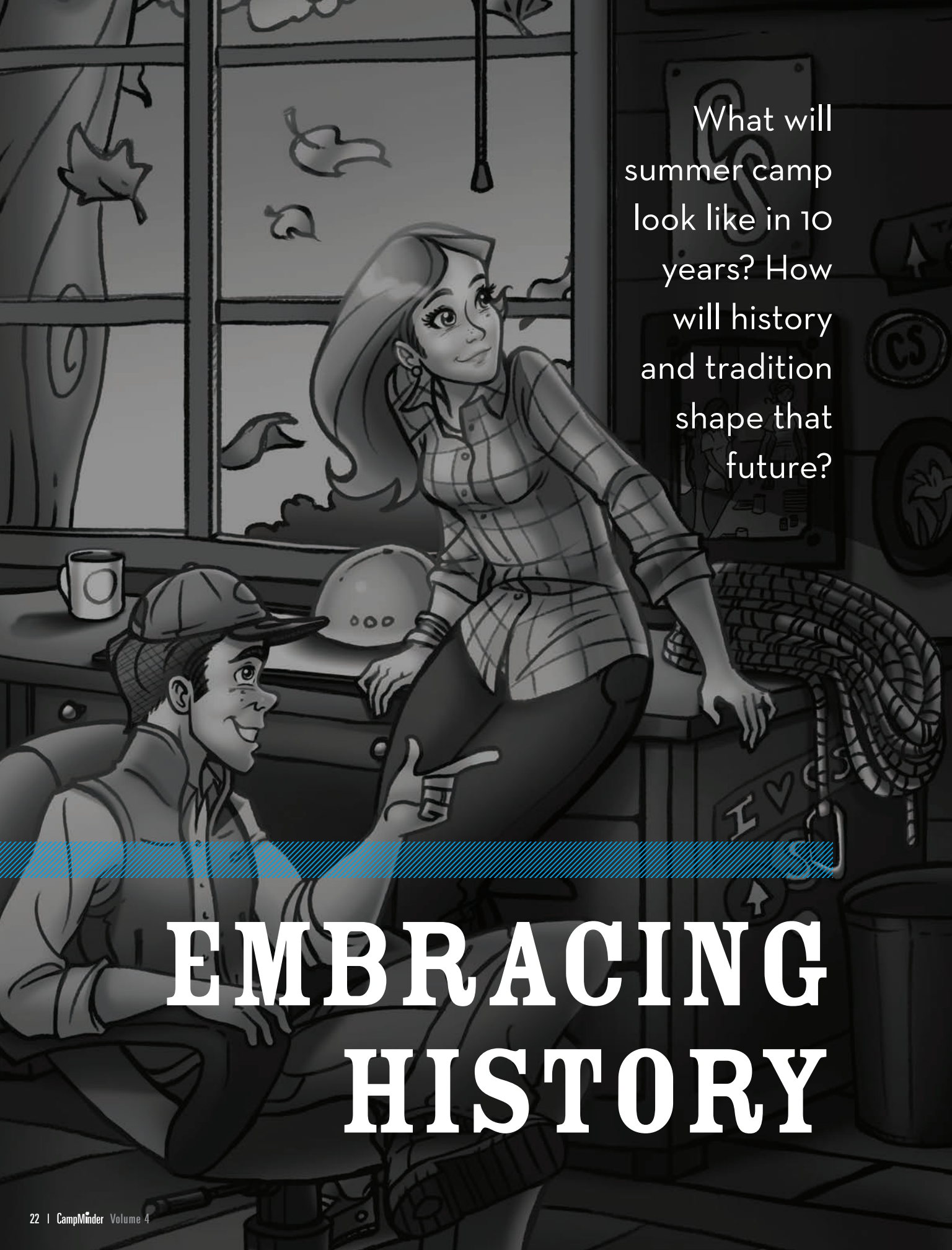
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What will
summer camp
look like in 10
years? How
will history
and tradition
shape that
future?

EMBRACING HISTORY



JEFF KONIGSBERG, owner and director of Camp Takajo in Naples, Maine, talks about operating a traditional camp in today's cultural environment while staying true to his camp's long-standing traditions.



WILL PIERCE, a 4th generation director at Pierce Camps in Roslyn, N.Y., shares the benefits and challenges of a generational shift in his family's camps. Will chronicles his delicate navigation of family, tradition, and progress as he learns the ropes.



JONATHAN LEV, Executive Director of the Boulder JCC, describes how he turned his idea for a brand new camp — one with a program never before seen — from vision into reality.

TO

INSPIRE THE FUTURE

Preserving Tradition in the Fast Lane

JEFF KONIGSBERG
camptakajo.com

Jeff Konigsberg is the owner and director of Camp Takajo in Naples, Maine, a seven week summer camp for boys. He also owns Tripp Lake Camp for girls in Poland, Maine, where his sister, Leslie, is the director. Jeff started at Camp Takajo in 1970 at age nine and has been at Takajo every summer since as a camper, then as a counselor, group leader, and associate director before purchasing the camp in 1988 from the original owner, Morty Goldman. Jeff is also a founding director of the Maine Camp Experience, a group of premier boys and girls camps in Maine dedicated to promoting best practices in the camping profession. Aside from his solid commitment to traditional camp values and reputation for innovative programming, Jeff's most significant claim to fame is that he is the first cousin of CampMinder founder, Dan Konigsberg, and has been Dan's personal guinea pig since CampMinder's inception.

Like you, camp is in my blood. I fell in love with Camp Takajo the moment I arrived on June 23, 1970, as a nine year-old camper. I know the exact date because, in those days, camp always started on June 23rd and ended on August 18th. My father had gone to Takajo, and I had heard about it growing up, regaled with stories of my dad's glory days. I felt a connection to this place I had never seen, however it was still my first time away from home. As I stepped off the bus, Morty Goldman, the owner and director, extended his hand, greeted me with a warm smile, and welcomed me to camp. A simple handshake and eye contact, and I was mesmerized. I felt safe and at home.

THE ARCH IDEALS

The following values are the foundation for every part of Takajo's program and frame the entry arch at camp:

INTEGRITY
TOLERANCE
SPORTSMANSHIP
FRIENDLINESS
SELF-RELIANCE
MAGNANIMITY
LOYALTY
OBEDIENCE
COURAGE
FAITH
LOVE
HONESTY



CAMP ENTRANCE

The entrance arch, framed by the Arch Ideals, has welcomed boys to Camp Takajo for over 50 years (top). Director Jeff Konigsberg shares a laugh with campers under the arch (bottom).

Arrival day was well-orchestrated. As each boy got off the bus, Morty personally greeted and welcomed him. He made sure the bunk counselors were beside him, ready to show new campers to their cabins. Morty understood the importance of first impressions and knew that the key to a camper's initial adjustment was feeling welcome and secure.

As he walked to his bunk, each camper passed through the Takajo Arch which lists the 12 ideals of camp. Every camper would come to know that the Arch Ideals embodied what Camp Takajo was all about. These precepts continue today, forming the beginning of the traditions ingrained in every camper who spends a summer at Takajo. Every camp has its version of these traditions that are passed down through the years, so that campers across generations share a bond through common experience.

"Back in the day" (I guess that means "the old days"), camp was eight weeks long — and that wasn't long enough! We played baseball, basketball, soccer, and tennis, and when the schedule was announced at lineup, we never complained that "we just played that yesterday!" Lacrosse was something they played at schools like Hopkins and Maryland, and roller hockey hadn't been invented yet. Hobby classes were wood-working, nature, and ceramics. Activities like culinary arts or video editing were unheard of at the time. The closest thing to technology was the rotary phone in the main office where we made our two obligatory phone calls per summer.

We didn't have to "unplug" when we got to camp, because we weren't plugged into anything before we got there. We didn't have to relinquish cell phones and iPods and laptops and other electronic devices that have become appendages to today's children. When a camp director advertised for campers, it was in the back of the New York Times Magazine. Today, we all market to families with impressive websites, sometimes indistinguishable from one another, and use the same "meta tags" in hopes of improving our Google rankings.

Some advances in technology are surely for the better. Having a GPS when driving to a camp appointment and a cell phone to call from the car if you're running late are certainly welcome conveniences. Being able



We didn't have to "unplug" when we got to camp, because we weren't plugged into anything before we got there.

to send out information via emails and attachments saves time and money. Having the capacity to organize and manipulate mountains of information in an online database frees us up to spend more time on the fields.

Certainly, times are different now.

What hasn't changed is that families today — maybe even more so than in the past — appreciate the camp experience. Parents recognize the value of being in a secure environment where a child is free to explore the world away from the pressures of school and travel teams, as well as all the other commitments heaped on today's over-scheduled child. Camp provides opportunities to participate in stimulating and challenging activities without the stress of being graded or judged. Studies confirm what we already know: children learn best when they are excited, interested, and engaged in the learning process. This is the essence of camp.

Add to this the lifelong friendships formed by living together in a bunk for an entire summer, over many summers, and camp provides an experience that can't be duplicated.

What is critical for us today as camp professionals is that we not make undue concessions that compromise our principles. For example, the later end of the school year in many of our large markets forced us to shorten the length of our season from eight to seven weeks. That said, we decided to remain a full season, single-session camp and not offer multiple sessions. Even adding new and innovative activities can enhance a camp program as long as they engender the same values as more traditional camp activities.

This extends to technology. Rather than chafing at the evolving landscape, we can embrace technologies that work to our advantage. Regular communication through emails, online photos, and other news from camp can reassure anxious parents. Ironically, this frees children to develop independence and self-reliance away from Mom and Dad's overprotective instincts and technology itself.

If we keep in mind that "kids these days" are growing up in a world that is markedly different and more frenetically paced than the one in which we grew up, we can meet them on their turf while introducing them to ours. If we respect the things that are important to them, they are more inclined to respect the things that are important to us. As we learn from each other, we stay true to our deeply-held traditions while keeping pace with the things that are relevant to today's children. All this reinforces the reasons why we got into this profession in the first place — to make an impact in the lives of children. The added benefit is the impact they make in ours. JK

Generation Next: Making the Transition from One Generation of Family Camp Directors to the Next

WILL PIERCE

campbirchmont.com

Will Pierce is the 4th generation director at Pierce Camps. He graduated from Dartmouth College, not too far from Pierce Camp Birchmont in New Hampshire, where he played on the school's rugby team. When not at camp, Will enjoys skiing, golfing, and hunting with his dog Klaus and of course spending time with his wife Kristie.

Exactly one year ago, I moved back home to work in my family business. I had spent the last seven years working in commercial real estate in Los Angeles, but I have always known that someday I wanted to be a 4th generation owner/director of Pierce Camps. The timing seemed right to make the move. I was newly married, about to turn 30, and thinking about starting a family. Why not start a new career, too? My dad, Greg Pierce, directs our family's resident camp in New Hampshire, Pierce Camp Birchmont, and he was the first person I called to tell the big news.

PIERCE CAMP DIRECTORS (from left) Forrester Pierce, Doug Pierce, Courtney Pierce, and Will Pierce.



"Dad, I'm coming home. When can I start?" I triumphantly declared.

"Are you sure?" my dad answered. Not exactly the response I was expecting. I was hoping to hear more enthusiasm; instead, I sensed some hesitation.

"Yes, I'm sure. Being a camp director is all I've ever wanted to do! I thought you'd be more excited."

"I am excited, but I just want to make sure you've thought it through. You're doing well out there in California, and it's not like your uncles and I are ready to retire tomorrow," he explained.

My dad simply wanted to make sure I understood that "Pierce Generation 3" would still hold the reins for a while before "Pierce Generation 4" (my cousin Courtney and I) would be introduced to the camping community. Fair enough.

I spent my first few weeks observing our business operations, as well as turning the copier room into my office. I started noticing things that I wanted to change, like our use of technology. I also became aware of the reasons behind the initial hesitation in my dad's voice. How was I going to come in here and immediately tell Pierce Generation 3 that I wanted to change the way they operate their business? After all, my family has run one of the largest and most successful day camps in the country since 1918 and a world-class residential camp since 1951; where does the guy who was born in 1984 even start that conversation?

So I didn't say anything. I quietly gritted my teeth as I slogged through our antiquated camp management system. I even bit my tongue as our bookkeeper manually entered each family's credit card one-by-one as we billed our families for camp.

Then came summer, and of course there wasn't time for anything but running camp. Having grown up at Pierce Camp Birchmont, I was already familiar with the residential side of the family business. So I spent the summer learning the ins and outs of Pierce Country Day Camp from my cousin Courtney and uncles Doug and Forrester. I was beyond impressed and quickly reminded of why my family has been successful in camping for so long.

In one of our after-camp meetings, my uncle Doug congratulated us on a successful camp season, but he also warned us not to become complacent. "We need to keep getting better," he said. "We need to stay at the top of our game. We don't want to be Maxwell House, we want to be Starbucks." It was just a comment in the course of a meeting, but something clicked for me. There was no reason I had to be quiet

and wait until I was in charge to push for change, I just needed to communicate it in the right fashion.

Later that week, Courtney and I sat down with our dads and uncles and pitched them web-based camp management. We outlined how it would benefit our office operations and our parents. We prepared for a bit of resistance, since our business and office had operated successfully for the last 15 years on the existing management system. Instead, we were met with enthusiasm and one question: "You guys are going to be responsible for setting this all up and teaching everyone how to use it, right?"

Family can be tricky business, especially when you're in a family business. The vast majority of family businesses fail or are sold by the time they reach the second generation. Only a tiny fraction survive into the third generation.

As it turned out, the biggest challenge to overcome during this generational shift was simple communication. Everyone in our family shares a common goal: continue making Pierce Camps better for our campers, parents, staff, and each other. Open communication has empowered the Pierce family's new generation of directors to start making the changes necessary to reach that common goal. Pierce Generation 3's openness to feedback and suggestions has allowed these changes to occur.

Of course, every new idea isn't met with an enthusiastic, "Yes!" Often, it involves a much longer discussion and consideration from a few different angles. We are at a unique point in time as a family, where we have the benefit of perspectives from two generations that in the end will lead to better decision-making overall. Sometimes we

make a change, but sometimes we hear really smart reasons why we shouldn't. Just this year alone we have implemented Camp-Minder, created entirely new daily schedules, and are about to launch a new website for Birchmont. However, we have decided not to change the discounts we offer, our transportation options, or the format of our Pow Wows.

Family can be tricky business, especially when you're in a family business. The vast majority of family businesses fail or are sold by the time they reach the second generation. Only a tiny fraction survive into the third generation. The dissolution of these businesses usually comes during generational transfers. As I think about how my family is navigating a successful fourth generation transition, I keep coming back to the two things that allow us to do this successfully: we share a common goal and we communicate with each other. By understanding that each generation has a lot to bring to the table, and by being open to those perspectives, we have been able to create a synergy at a time when many families fall into discord. WP

Achieving a Dream: The Story of How an Unconventional Idea Became Reality

JONATHAN LEV
boulderjcc.org

Jonathan Lev, MPA, is the Executive Director of the Boulder JCC. Under his leadership (and as the youngest JCC director in the country), the Boulder JCC has become nationally recognized for its innovative approach to engaging community through unique programming. He has helped raise more than \$18M for a new Boulder JCC campus, won a national competition to launch a new specialty overnight camp (Camp Inc.), and doubled the size of the JCC's camps and preschool.

In the spring of 2009, I sat with Daniel Sorkin, my lifelong camp friend, on the second floor of a gorgeous converted barn at URJ Eisner Camp in Great Barrington, Mass. As the Associate Director of Eisner at the time, I had the luxury of calling this place my second home. We had come up for the weekend to dream, envision, and discuss the future — our future. Daniel and I sat with the barn doors wide open, looking out over the greening Berkshires mountains, talking about camp. You see, it had been our lifelong dream to start a camp. So many times we had sat, late at night, talking about what it would be like if we could create and run one of our own.

Butcher paper covered the walls, and lists, arrows, lines, and diagrams filled those pages. Our brains were whirling with possibility and opportunity. As we sat back and looked at the walls, we began to see elements coming together. As the weekend wrapped up, we had a conceptual list of ideas for different types of camps and the skills they would offer. We left that weekend excited and energized.

Life happens, and years went by with no actual progress on the ideas generated that day. That is, not until 2012 when the Foundation for Jewish Camp, in partnership with the Jim Joseph Foundation and Avi Chai Foundation, announced a competitive incubator program. Any individual or organization could apply to receive funding in order to start a new specialty Jewish overnight camp.

My career had progressed and morphed, and now I sat as the Executive Director of the Boulder JCC. Jewish Community Centers are steeped in a long tradition of excellence in overnight camp, and yet the Boulder JCC offered no such option. On the verge of developing a brand new, 10-acre campus, and in the midst of an \$18M capital campaign, the Boulder JCC operated from a place of opportunity and creative innovation. As one of the country's smallest JCC's in terms of budget and physical plant, we had done a lot with a little up to this point and had seen tremendous growth in programs and involvement. Our community had the vision for something greater; something that would bring a new spin on the traditional JCC.

The possibility of receiving funding to start a camp re-ignited my fire, and I wiped the dust off of our ideas from that weekend in the Berkshires. To succeed in Boulder, we

The camp design quickly became clear: a Jewish overnight camp focused on entrepreneurship and housed in the mountains above Boulder.

would need to start a camp that deeply connected to the local community and established a new approach to the idea of overnight camp. While being surrounded by beautiful mountains, we are also home to an incredible culture of innovation and entrepreneurship (Inc. Magazine calls Boulder “America’s Startup Capital”). The camp design quickly became clear: a Jewish overnight camp focused on entrepreneurship and housed in the mountains above Boulder. With that concept in mind, we submitted our proposal and were awarded one of four grants.

Our Camp Inc. team, along with our funders, began to ask the following questions:

1. Are there innovative ways to attract more and/or different youth to overnight camp?
2. Are there unique ways to grow capacity without investing dramatically in infrastructure?
3. How can the camp community best capitalize on unused bed space in existing camps?
4. Could we create a new product in an industry that has existed for more than a century?

While researching the types of camps offered to teens, we found no programs focused entirely on entrepreneurship and business set in a traditional camp environment. Those short-term programs we found were generally limited to university settings. We also knew that many parents and teens who had aged out of overnight camp were looking for “resume builders” prior to applying for college. Yet they both loved the idea of a traditional

camp setting. We wanted to develop a camp that combines the benefits of a traditional camp with a specialized program wherein campers experience entrepreneurship first-hand.

Once we secured a deal to lease available space from a local residential camp, we were faced with the challenge of recruiting campers for a brand new camp specializing in unusual programming and located in a state where the idea of long-term overnight camping is less normalized. I can tell you that this process was not easy. It felt for a period of time that the camp was a great idea on paper, but that we might not be able to attract such a niche group of campers. Together with our board of advisers, we created a new comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan just four months before camp was slated to begin ... we called it the “Plan of Attack.” In this plan, we approached marketing from every angle: print, online, home meetings, and traveling.

Our Plan of Attack worked: We reached (and exceeded) our goal for enrollment.

Camp Inc., an overnight entrepreneurship summer camp for teens, opened for the first time in the summer 2014 and was directed by Josh Pierce, a seasoned entrepreneur with a strong camp background. It was designed to intersperse the elements of traditional Jewish overnight camp with a focus on learning business and leadership skills. We at the Boulder JCC wanted to enable today’s youth to enjoy the benefits of camp while simultaneously becoming the leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Ironically, and in the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, we employed some of the very skills — creativity, communication, sales & marketing, product development, and business planning — our camp intends to teach in order to bring this new camp to life. The dream we outlined on the walls of that old barn in the Berkshires has finally become a reality. But the work’s not over ... now we’re working to continue the dream by teaching our campers how to transfer their dreams and ideas into reality. JL

CAMP INC. LEADERSHIP (from left) Boulder JCC Executive Director Jonathan Lev and Chief Camp Officer Josh Pierce.



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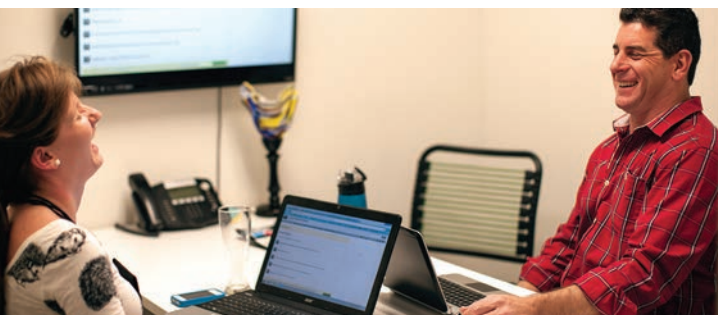
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FOR SOME, THE WEEK BEGINS WITH BOOT CAMP, a one-day series of workshops, aimed to introduce newcomers to the CampMinder system.

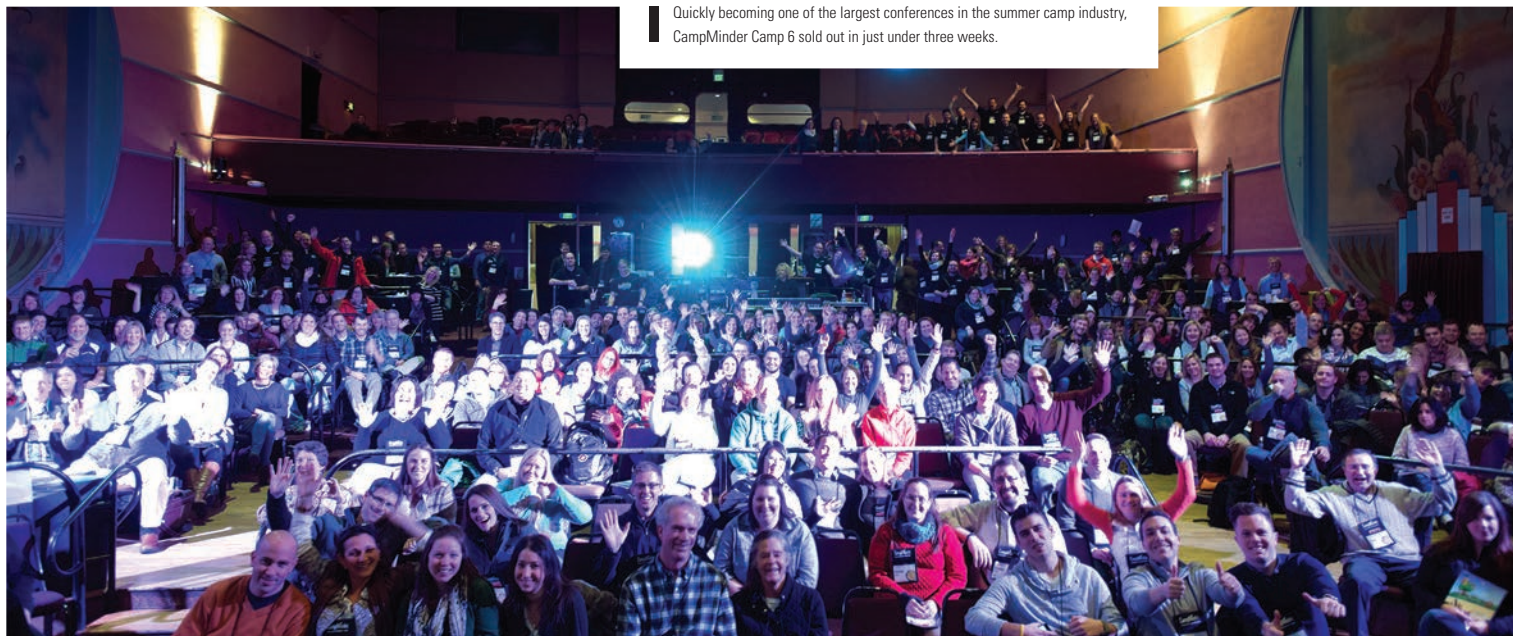


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WITH OVER 20 GUEST SPEAKERS AND 65 SESSIONS, there was a lot to be learned at CampMinder Camp 6. Day one ended where it began, back at the Boulder Theater, with an evening concert featuring The Congress.





Dr. Chris Thurber concluded the conference with a closing keynote address followed by the CampMinder Camp Banquet.



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Day Camp Isn't What I Thought It Was



The Misconceptions of a Former Sleep-Away Camp Director

I've always been a "sleep-away camp" guy. Growing up, I spent my summers as a camper and staff member at sleep-away camp. It was there that I made many life-long friends. I've always felt that sleep-away camp is in my blood. So how did I end up becoming the director of a day camp?

Like many, I thought my summers at camp had ended after my freshman year of college. I needed to focus on my education so I could get a "real job" in the "real world." My plan was to earn a law degree and go from there. Ironically, in law school I met someone who convinced me that camping could actually become a career. She put me in touch with the director of a sleep-away camp in Maine who said, "Come work for me this summer ... what do you have to lose?" Figuring I had my entire life to work in the "real world," I packed my bags and left for Maine. A handful of summers and one law degree later, I joined the year-round team as the camp's program director. For the next eight years, I truly believed I was on my chosen path.

When a day camp opportunity first knocked on my door, I was quick to dismiss it. A camp was available, and my wife (who was also working in the camp industry) and I had a shot at purchasing it. It had been our dream to one day own a camp of our own. However, I distinctly remember telling her that day camp was just babysitting; that only sleep-away camp people really understood camp.

I was wrong. Fast forward eight years, and you won't find a happier babysitter in the world.

While many core experiences of day and sleep-away camp are the same, there are some obvious differences when it comes to day camp. For example, day campers tend to start at an earlier age, transportation occurs daily, there are no evening programs to plan, and camp doesn't run on the weekends. However, for me, there were four areas where the differences were not so obvious: camp tours, enrollment trends, staffing, and marketing.

CAMP TOURS

Tours for prospective sleep-away camp families were typically only scheduled during the summer season, and most meetings with families would take place in their homes. It was truly eye-opening for me during my first year as a day camp director when I was spending almost every weekend giving tours at camp. Our policy was very open; if a family wanted a tour of camp, we were available. While this was great for interested parents, it was exhausting for me and my wife.

We realized that parents were requesting tours to accommodate their busy schedules. To make the process more efficient, we needed to set up realistic parameters. When tour inquiries came in, we offered two or three days each month when tours were available. This balance allowed parents to work around their schedules while also giving us a chance to breathe.

We also had to manage our facility in a way that would allow for year-round tours. The grounds had to consistently be kept clean and manicured, even when camp was not in session. Large scale projects were exciting, and we used them to our advantage by highlighting the enhancements to our facility.

ENROLLMENT

Grasping the enrollment patterns of day camp was another huge learning experience. Many parents begin researching sleep-away camps a year in advance. Parents will often spend a full year researching and visiting sleep-away camps while they are in session.

Conversely, it seems as though day camp parents sometimes wake up in May and realize they haven't yet made summer plans for their five year-old. In our first year, we were shocked when we enrolled 20% of our campers in May and June. We've tried early enrollment incentives and other unique ways to grab parents' attentions throughout the school year. Regardless, after eight years, enrollment patterns have remained consistent. A certain percentage of parents enroll early, some enroll in the winter and spring, and a large portion continue to enroll right before the start of camp.

HIRING

When we started the hiring process at day camp, it was clear from the beginning that we would be traveling down a different road. At sleep-away camp, the vast majority of our interviews were conducted via phone or Skype. Our counselors were all college-aged, and our head counselors were recent college grads.

At day camp, all of our staff live within a 20 mile radius, and we are able to meet every candidate face-to-face. Our counselors range from 16 to 50 years old, with teachers making up a large majority of our staff. Our head counselors are all teachers and parents. Worrying about what sleep-away staff do during their time off at night has been equally replaced with the question of whether our day camp staff will show up again the next day.

MARKETING

Marketing strategies for a sleep-away camp target a national (and sometimes international) population. The day camp market is much more finite, as we only draw from populations within our transportation area. We learned very quickly that our most effective marketing came via current families and local schools. We strengthened our relationships with local principals, donated to school auctions, and worked closely with nursery schools. We eliminated almost all of our print advertising, and instead we focused on hosting large community-oriented events at camp.

With our youngest campers, word-of-mouth became our strongest selling point. We have found that parents of young children typically ask other parents what their plans are for the summer with the intent of keeping friends together. Parents of sleep-away campers often seek opportunities and locations that allow their child to branch out from what is familiar.

Owning a day camp has opened up a whole new world to me. I realize now that camp can positively impact children, regardless of whether they sleep at camp or at home. Most importantly, I understand that we as camp professionals have the ability to change lives, regardless of the setting. This is what keeps me going every day.

After graduating law school, Sam became the Program Director at Camp Laurel in Maine and then the Administrative Director of Elmwood Day Camp. Sam and his wife Ilisha were lucky to be able to follow their dreams when they became the current owners/directors of Woodmont Day Camp in New City, New York. Sam is a proud parent of two sons who have been lucky enough to grow up at Woodmont.

Sam Borek

woodmontdaycamp.com

Owning a day camp has opened up a whole new world to me. I realize now that camp can positively impact children, regardless of whether they sleep at camp or at home.



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As a former camp director, Kenny is the leading expert in camp-specific payment solutions. He is committed to providing innovative services to CampMinder and the entire camp community.

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CAMPING COAST to COAST

the Search for Great Camp Lessons

In the Fall of 2012, after serving the last of many years as both campers and counselors at our beloved Camp Stella Maris on Coneseus Lake in New York, Jack and I had a crazy idea: What if we drove across the country in my Honda Civic, visiting all the camps that would have us? It's fair to say that what we really planned on doing was to visit these camps, hope they would feed us, and just have fun.

Before our trip began, our minds were blown when we attended the ACA Tri-State Camp Conference in Atlantic City, with more than 3,000 people passionately striving to improve camps across the country. After an energetic session led by Steve Maguire, we found ourselves sitting deep in conversation with Matt Weiss, director of Shady Side Day Camp in Pittsburgh, Penn. His excitement for camp and willingness to share his knowledge struck a chord with us. We knew then that we had to visit all the "Matts" across the country. Matt had no idea the impact he had on us (two years later, we returned to Tri-State and reconnected with Matt to thank him for helping to inspire our journey).

Sandy and Missy Schenk from Green River Preserve (GRP) were a few of the many "Matts" we met in beautiful western North Carolina. We walked around camp with Sandy, stopping frequently to investigate animal tracks, discuss the importance of connecting campers with a Sense of Place (a principle

outlined in Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods*), and GRP's mission to combat "nature deficit disorder." It was also there that we were introduced to some of the community organizers of Muddy Sneakers, an organization that connects schools with naturalists and parks in their area.

Something about the mixture of the hot sun, the lack of breakfast, and my generally low blood pressure — OK, it was mostly the lack of breakfast — caused me to faint. Lights out. Utterly humiliated, I woke up to find Sandy making sure I was alright. Politely dismissing the rest of the group, Sandy invited Jack and me into his home for some turkey sandwiches and hummus.

No matter where we went on our travels — whether it was fainting for a free lunch with Sandy, hiking Devil's Doorway with Topher Aderhold and the Camp Gray crew in Reedsburg, Wis., or sharing stories and flat ginger ale with Marty Ferguson at YMCA Camp Chief Ouray in Granby, Colo., we encountered this

2 years

44 states

80,000 miles

100+ camps



kind and open attitude at every turn. We feel so grateful for the beds, the meals, and the showers (Jack desperately needed the showers), but mostly for the life-long friends and memories we made with all the camp directors who shared with us along the way. Our trip was highlighted by meetings like these with so many welcoming and brilliant people.

Here are three meaningful lessons we learned during an adventure that took us across the country, through 44 states, 80,000 miles, to over 100 camps, and two years.

Camp is More Than Candy

Steve Baskin at Camp Champions in Marble Falls, Tex. drove home the importance of our industry becoming better at articulating that camp is more than candy. Camp is not only a delicious treat but a nutritious way to fuel kids for the future. Children come away from camp with memories of a lifetime. But more than that, camp has the potential to teach habits and skills that can lead to happy, successful adults. At camp, children have the freedom to be who

they are and the power to play with others. Play is the best way for kids to learn empathy, cooperation, confidence, collaboration, creative thinking, and problem-solving. These skills, which are all but ignored in schools, are often the key to happy successful lives.

The Power of Community

We would sometimes feel lost or miss home, but time and time again we'd meet people like Sandy and Marty, who welcomed us into their homes and reinvigorated our purpose. The importance of building community is something we heard often. Camps have been creating inclusive environments that foster love and genuine connection for over 150 years. We found that the most successful camps had staff members at every level of the organization who were able to articulate why their camp was special and unique.

The Search For Great Teachings

We encountered many great camps employing such diverse philosophies and management techniques that our heads were often left spinning. It was amazing to hear passionate directors describe their own philosophies and choices. Our world was seriously rocked when we met James Davis, executive director of Vanderkamp Center in Cleveland, N.Y. James challenged our conventional beliefs about childhood freedom and true happiness. He encouraged us to always start with "why," to continue to search for great teachings, and not to get hung up on finding a perfect teacher. We are excited to be working with James this summer at Vanderkamp and to continue finding new ways of sharing great ideas and love with the summer camp community.

We often think back on our time on the road remembering the amazing visits, great friends, important lessons learned, and even the food (if Jack asks me to eat another peanut butter and nutella sandwich, I might kill him). After two years on the road, the one consistent truth we took from every experience is that great summer camps are made of great staff who give campers — like our adventure gave us — an opportunity to learn, the confidence to connect, and the freedom to experiment.

Laura Kriegel and Jack Schott are camp consultants, trainers, and proud Millennials. You can find out more about who they are and their camp journey at campingcoasttocoast.org

Laura Kriegel & Jack Schott
campingcoasttocoast.org

A young person is sitting in a black wheelchair on a paved surface. They are wearing a light grey t-shirt and dark shorts. Their right leg is in a black cast and is resting on the wheelchair's footrest. Their left leg is extended forward, wearing a white sock and a white and red sneaker. The background shows a paved area with a yellow curb.

{ INTEGRATED }

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CampMinder

RACHEL GALLAGHER

I WAS A 27 YEAR OLD

I felt like a kid again for first time in years, and I needed it. For three days this summer, I felt more connected to me, my environment, and the people around me than I have in many years. I felt more joyful than I can ever remember feeling. I had that “after-camp” glow.

My first experience with summer camp was my initial interview at CampMinder. A recent college graduate with huge hopes and dreams about my first “real job,” I had no idea what world I would be stepping into or how profoundly it would change my life. Summer camp was always a distant idea to me. I never attended as a child. I was not exposed to any friends who went away for the summer, and frankly the idea of it terrified me when I was younger.



A NOTE ON PHOTOGRAPHY Since digital devices of every kind were forbidden during my Digital Detox at camp, I took all of these photos on film, which I haven’t done in a long time. That’s why they appear distinctly “old school.”

FIRST-TIME Camper

CAMP GROUNDED
Anderson Valley, Calif.
Summer 2014





On a daily basis, I am more connected to the world through technology than I have ever been in my life. Between my computer, my shiny new iPhone, and my television, I am in front of a screen up to 13 hours a day.



My mother was always intent on keeping us around, using our summers for household chores, playing outside, and trips to Astro-World on the weekends. I was never bored or found myself wishing for something more during the summers. I always felt fulfilled by play time with my sisters, and I was blessed to have a mother who could stay home full-time to wrangle us.

My first few months at CampMinder were mostly a blur. I was learning the navigation and functionality of the system while at the same time being introduced to a large circle of clients (many of whom I would speak to more often than my family). Once fluent in CampMinder, I was able to focus more on what happened at each of these camps, and I began to feel green with envy. I realized I had missed out on opportunities to try new activities like archery, to play outside all day with my friends, and to make new friends each summer. I found myself daydreaming about camp life while looking at camp websites and pictures. I began imagining where I would send my children if I had any. I found myself choosing the activities I would like to do while helping a client set up their Scheduling system. I suddenly felt that I had missed an entire world of fun, and I was blissfully unaware of it until now.

CampMinder Camp is always my favorite time of year. Putting faces to names brings me joy without fail, and this year it was the crucible for a new idea that has blossomed into a fully-developed way of thinking. I was lucky enough to attend Levi Felix's "Digital Detox" seminar. Levi asked us to take a moment to think about what being constantly connected is doing to our psyche, and he requested that we take back some time and space to be human, be quiet, and feel free.

On a daily basis, I am more connected to the world through technology than I have ever been in my life. Between my computer, my shiny new iPhone, and my television, I am in front of a screen up to 13 hours a day. It is

rare that I spend any time at all in the quiet peacefulness of my own mind. I speak to most of my friends or family over the phone or through email, and I rarely have meaningful face-to-face contact. I found myself with my mouth agape when Levi finished speaking. How could an idea so simple have changed me in such a small period of time? How did this man who preached about digital detox end up at a conference hosted by an Internet-based software company? He closed his hour with a friendly plug for his "adults only" summer camp called Camp Grounded. At that moment, I knew my goal for the summer. Thankfully, Dan and Paul helped that goal become a reality.

CAMP GROUNDED

My nerves prior to arriving at camp in Anderson Valley, Calif. proved to be more intense than I had anticipated. I usually see myself as a confident and outgoing person, and suddenly I was confronting fears my adult mind had buried deeply. Would I make friends? Would people like me? What if I embarrass myself attempting an activity that requires more coordination than my wine-and burger-infused body can handle? All my middle school emotions came flooding back, taunting me with memories of being an awkward and nerdy kid. With sweaty palms and a fluttering heart I pointed my rental car toward the camp gates.

Each camper within the gates is known by only a nickname, one you give yourself or one that is given to you by a gregarious bunch of people called the "Naming Crew." I will never forget the image of Pickle and Honey Bear jumping with excitement, waving

my car over to the side of the road. I was greeted with hugs and smiles from two people I had never met. Instantly, I wondered what would happen if I attempted to hug a stranger in the “real” world? In the same moment I realized how good it felt to hug people and share just one breath together. I realized I was missing this in my life!

The pair asked me one simple favor; leave the world outside these gates behind. They each created a crude bowl with their fingers and held them close to my face. “Take a deep breath and blow your fears into this holding place. Let go of everything that is making your heart sick or your mind clouded. Enter this place with a new start and a clean slate.” And even though it was not real — just like a kiss that takes away the pain from a toddler’s cut finger — it worked. It felt like each breath allowed my soul to release tensions that had been building up for years.

Inside the Camp Grounded gates was another world altogether. Not only was it my first time as a camper and the first time I had seen redwood trees, it was also the first time I felt in touch with myself in as long as I can remember. I made friends without knowing their real names and ages or (best of all) what they do for work. I placed all of my technology into a plain paper bag and handed it over to be stapled shut for three full days.

All time stopped. No longer did something start in 15 minutes. How long did we have until lunch? Two N’Sync songs, or maybe the length of a football game. Suddenly I was immersed into an environment where when asked the time, it was acceptable to say “Now.” Whatever I happened to be doing within the present moment was exactly what I was supposed to be doing.

We spoke often about “No FOMO” (Fear of Missing Out), and I realized I live most of my life in a constant fear of that exact thing. The stress of missing out had been turning me into a person I no longer recognized. I closed my eyes while redwoods towered over me, and I knew in that moment I needed to make a change. I needed to be brought back to the person I once was — one with hobbies, interests, and easy laughs.

Luckily I was in the right place to make it happen.

I became a part of a community that relied on each other, one that rejoiced in the simplicity of a meal together and relished in pure unadulterated fun. I felt comfortable sitting down next to total strangers, genuinely interested in how they were feeling at that moment. I found out things about people that were close to their heart while sharing things that are close to mine. I listened to two of my fellow Rattlesnakes (my village) tell their love story. They had met at Camp Grounded the year before, and this anniversary moment was special to them. I even sneakily planned a white tablecloth dinner for them Saturday night with my favorite counselor, Lunch con Queso, and my best friend, Cheese. Something so simple became the highlight of the weekend, and it was solely because I wanted to do something kind for someone else. There were other moments during those three days when the buzzing in my mind actually stopped. I experienced total silence for the first time in years.

In our final embrace before leaving camp, I felt an outpouring of emotion. I whispered into Lunch’s ear, “I needed you to be here, and you were.” It was the truest feeling that came over me. I really did need her to be my counselor, and I needed her to bring me to the place I am now. I am not a different person; I am just a better person because camp changed me. For that, I am forever thankful.

.....
Rachel Gallagher
rachel@campminder.com



In our final embrace before leaving camp, I felt an outpouring of emotion. I whispered into Lunch’s ear, “I needed you to be here, and you were.”





BUNKCONNECT™

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▶ **The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC)** has always grappled with the affordability of camp. Quality summer experiences are not inexpensive. As camp people, however, we know the benefits far outweigh the costs. It is our mission to ensure that every Jewish family understands the value of camp, and that we can help them to afford it. Not only is this our mission, it is our passion — the fuel that drives us.

Over the past few years, working with the Center for Entrepreneurial Jewish Philanthropy, we put together a consortium of funders to support our camp affordability initiatives. They pushed us to be innovative and to think beyond scholarships. Could a camp add one more child into a bunk with low incremental cost, capitalizing on open beds that otherwise might remain empty? How do we make this an opportunity to gain new campers from families who think overnight camp is out of their reach?

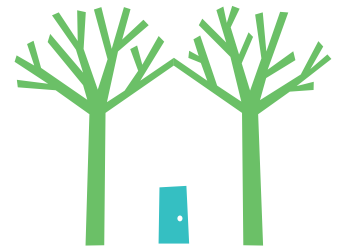
Introduce BunkConnect, a spin on *hotels.com*. Spurred on by one of our funders, Mike Leven (COO of the Sands Hotel), we spent months meeting with several prominent camp directors from both non-profit and private camping. We set out to create an online marketplace that gives camps a new recruiting tool.

The system would give camps the ability to strategically offer less popular sessions at special rates. It had to be intuitive for both parents and camps. There are scholarships and assistance programs out there, but the

we wanted BunkConnect to do. We knew we could make something that was visually beautiful. A Brooklyn-based communications firm, Big Duck, had redone our branding about five years ago and helped with the evolution of our One Happy Camper incentive program. We wanted to incorporate our distinct look and feel. Big Duck already understood our style, and we knew we could leverage their experience and creativity to make the site user-friendly.

With only six months to build the system, there was no room for do-overs. We spent a full day around a conference room table with FJC staff, CampMinder's Dan Konigsberg, Big Duck and Josh Sternberg of Camp JRF in Honesdale, Penn. After that meeting, the sketch of the front end was born.

We wanted parents to be financially pre-qualified and search with the peace of mind that they could indeed afford camp this summer. We developed a simple, six-question quiz to determine



FOUNDATION FOR
JEWISH
CAMP

Eventually, this information will feed into the databases of CampMinder clients.

What we accomplished in six months to meet the launch date is pretty incredible. Technology hasn't caught up to our grandiose plans of a completely unobtrusive financial check, but maybe it will get there in time. For now, a lot of deserving kids will race down zip lines, celebrate Shabbat together, and have the summer of a lifetime.

Allison is the director of marketing and communication at the Foundation for Jewish Camp where she oversees the marketing of One Happy Camper and BunkConnect as well as the organization's overall marketing strategy and development. Before joining the FJC team, Allison spent 10 years at Newsweek working on brand marketing. Allison's love for Jewish camp — and a rockin' song session — started in fourth grade at NJ Y's Camp Nah-Jee-Wah followed by five summers at URJ Camp Harlam. Her two daughters, Madeline and Charlotte, have a deep appreciation for her extensive lanyard and string bracelet skills.

Allison Cohen
bunkconnect.org

How do we make this an opportunity to gain new campers from families who think overnight camp is out of their reach?

application process can be intrusive and disheartening. We wanted to design BunkConnect to be simple, with a sense of anonymity, to attract families that have been frustrated by or self-conscious about their prior experiences with financial aid programs.

Most camps in our community welcomed the fresh approach and entrepreneurial spirit that accompanied the idea.

Months — actually years — of research, notes, conversations, emails, and brainstorming was distilled down to a brief specification of what

eligibility and offer families a selection of over one thousand opportunities up for grabs. Once a parent finds desirable options, she creates an account to express interest directly with the camps. When the parent finalizes her camp and session selection, she logs in to BunkConnect for final income verification to secure the discounted rate.

Camp directors and administrators have an easy-to-use backend that allows them to access their leads and update the sessions and beds available to parents.

COLO BORN



WHAT DOES A ROOT BEER FLOAT,
A CHEESEBURGER, AND VIAWEST
ALL HAVE IN COMMON?

THEY WERE ALL COLORADO BORN!

ViaWest was born in Colorado in 1999 and is celebrating 15 years of providing tailored solutions to more than 1300 customers across 7 regions. We are happy to be headquartered in Colorado and to have recently launched our newest data center Compark.

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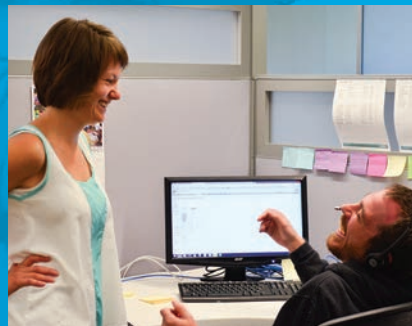
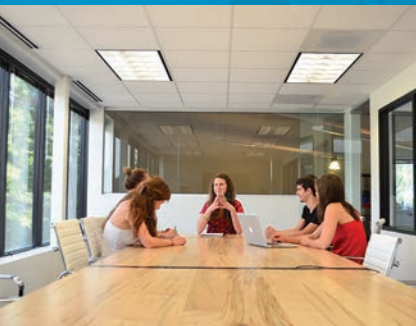
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YOUR

PANTONE DS 99-1 C

BRAND

PANTONE DS 5-2 C

IS NOT YOUR



LOGO

Nicholai Ronningen
RONNINGEN DESIGN



PANTONE DS 99-1 C

W

What do I want you, the reader, to do? I want you to take your brand seriously. I want you to value it. It may be more important than you realize.

Before I begin, you need to understand one thing: your brand is not your logo.

Logo, colors, fonts — these are merely expressions of your brand.

BRAND *noun* \ˈbrand\ :

A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories, and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. If the consumer (whether it's a business, a buyer, a voter, or a donor) doesn't pay a premium, make a selection, or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer.¹

Reading this definition, just about anything related to your business is your brand, and the function of the brand is to make someone do something. Managed properly, your brand can make your camp more profitable. Executed consistently, it can help you build a loyal base of raving fans.

Let me share an example with you. Back in '94, I worked as an assistant manager for Abercrombie & Fitch. Grunge was the new thing, and the company was hot — it was the hip place to be. We had lines out the door during the holidays. It seemed like the clothing sold itself.

There was a lot going on behind the scenes. Abercrombie was a carefully crafted experience. The store always looked perfect. Anything less was unacceptable. Every morning we sprayed half a bottle of cologne out the front door and turned the music up so you could hear and smell Abercrombie from a distance. Employees had to have a certain look and were only permitted to wear Abercrombie clothes. Details, details — everything had to be just so.

My time at A & F taught me to consider every aspect of how a consumer experiences a company and how these experiences collectively influence the decision to buy. Seth Godin defined a brand as a “set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships ...” Somewhere high up in the Abercrombie corporate structure was a team constantly thinking about every conceivable way you could experience the Abercrombie brand. Their job was to cultivate the desired expectations, make the right memories, tell the stories, and build relationships.

When you apply this to your camp, you must understand that your brand is so much more than a logo, brochure, or website. It's the 100 year-old traditions, the ceremonies, special meals, and activities people experience at camp. It's the smell of pine trees and mulch, fresh bread baking, horses, and open air cabins. Your brand even includes the sights and sounds a visitor is greeted by when he or she first arrives.

¹ SETH GODIN campminder.com/4-seth-godin

You might not spray cologne around your camp office, but what if you had fresh baked cookies for touring camp families? You might not play rock music when a caller is on hold; instead play a recording of campers singing in the dining hall.

There are endless details to consider, and no one is going to do it all for you. You must intentionally cultivate your brand and put your best foot forward on all fronts. Take your brand seriously, because everything has a bearing on the impression you make in the minds of others.

WHY WOULD I CHOOSE YOU?

Simon Sinek says, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy Why you do it.”² I don’t think people bought Abercrombie’s clothes just because the store smelled great, the music was loud, or even because of the clothes themselves. No, Abercrombie gave them a great “Why” that they identified with.

Abercrombie’s “Why” was rebellion. Grunge was all about rebellion. Enough of shaving, tucking your shirt in, and combing your hair. A & F projected rebellion with their loud music, they said it with their window displays, and the cut of their clothes. Of course the kids turned out in droves.

Sinek’s “Why” proposition is obvious when you think about it. People have a desire to connect, and the strongest connection is emotional, not intellectual. In his 2009 TEDx talk

he contrasts Dell with Apple. Dell is a “What” company, while Apple is a “Why” company. Sinek compares Dell’s failed MP3 player (sorry, I don’t remember if it had a name) with the iPod.

The iPod was never presented as an MP3 player; it was your whole music collection in the palm of your hand — it was the future, it was revolutionary, and it was fun. Apple

sells us our dreams of a better life. That’s a powerful “Why.” Dell sells business computers. People aren’t passionate about business computers.

Dell and Apple are very different brands. They have made very different connections with people. Apple has a raving fan base. Dell is the boring side of corporate America. Remember Apple’s “Hello, I’m a Mac” television commercials? You’ve seen them, but they’re fun to watch again. I still laugh. I would never go back to a PC.

Watch Simon Sinek’s talk and then watch “Designed by Apple” — “Why” is powerful.



HELLO, I'M A MAC

campminder.com/4-im-a-mac

SIMON SINEK'S TED TALK

campminder.com/4-sinek-ted

DESIGNED BY APPLE

campminder.com/4-apple-design

HERE'S HOW YOU APPLY THIS BRANDING STUFF

Start with your “Why,” and work out from there. This is your message to the world. First, you need to know it yourself. If you’ve grown up in camping or been doing it for a while, it may take some time to see what’s right in front of you. It’s been the air you breathe for so long that now you take it for granted. You might want someone like me to draw it out of you. Bear in mind, this is an article in a magazine. Everything is oversimplified. There’s a lot more below the surface for Abercrombie and Apple, and the same is true for you. Your message will have nuances and facets that will come to light little by little. Exploring your brand takes time, and it’s good to have trusted partners who see you from other points of view.

After you’ve got your “Why,” your message, in hand, then start looking at all of the other things. Consider what your camp looks like to a visitor. Think about the child’s experience as well as the parent’s. Are these consistent with your message? If you’re not living it, then you need to make some decisions. Either you don’t mean what you say, or you’re taking shortcuts and not living up to your own standards. Look beyond yourself, and consider your staff. They are the ones making the experience happen day in and day out. If their “Why” is different, you’re going to have problems. People notice inconsistencies.

Now you can start thinking about your logo and marketing materials. Do they line up with your “Why?” They better. Read the second half of Godin’s definition again: “If the consumer ... doesn’t pay a premium, make a selection, or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer.” This is where it all comes together. If your brand (and that means your website, tour experience, parent handbook, staff demeanor ... everything all together) doesn’t convince the consumer that you’re worth a premium, that you’re worth talking about, then you’re in trouble.

The following is an example to which everyone in the camp world can relate. Can you tell I love this? I’m a storyteller at heart, and that’s such a big part of branding. People love stories. You need to be a storyteller too.

Imagine one of your camp moms, Jill, is working out with her friend Kate. As you know, word-of-mouth is always going to be the best source of new camp families. So, Jill spins on her stationary bike and starts talking about the summer and how much her son enjoyed camp. What do you think Kate is likely to hear? What do your families

**If your brand (and that means
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say about you? Moms and dads are going to talk about the things that matter to them. Jill talks about the fun, the great counselors, how impressed she is by the facilities, and she talks about you. She goes on about how much she trusts you, and what a wonderful person you are. The conversation could end there, but if you know your "Why" and have effectively communicated that to Jill, she'll share that too. She'll give Kate a reason to remember you, and most importantly, a reason to take action. Your message is so important!

The peddles slow as Jill wraps up her workout. What happens next? Kate whips out her phone and types your camp name into her web browser. She wants to see for herself.

BAM! FIRST IMPRESSION

Jill created an expectation, and it's your turn to meet that expectation. Your website comes up in a flash, and before Kate scrolls, reads, or does anything else, she starts forming her impressions. Quality, competency, value, worth — it's all on the chopping block. Your logo, your photographs, the way the words look on the screen — the sum of who you are, visually, is instantly compared to the expectation Jill created. Now the visual aspects of your branding come to the fore. Page by page, more is taken in. Photography conveys the mood. Headlines make your points. Yes, dates & rates matter a lot, but they're weighed against perceived value — against your "Why."

Where is your brand in all of this? Everywhere. Your brand exists in Jill's mind, and it influences how she speaks about you. Your brand begins to exist in Kate's mind as she listens to Jill. Your brand springs to life when your web page loads for the first time. Your brand comes to her mailbox when Kate requests information. Your brand is reinforced when she picks up the phone to ask questions about the summer. Your brand is experienced when her child arrives and is greeted by the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of camp. Your brand and your message are intertwined, and they are much more of an experience than something you point at.



A LOT MORE THAN A LOGO

Branding is pretty powerful stuff when you stop and think about it, and it sure is a lot more than a logo. It's OK that you don't know how to say or do everything on your own. It's OK to get outside help defining your message, creating your visual identity, and crafting your brand. Ultimately, branding is a collaborative process. You are the gatekeeper. No one knows your brand as intimately as you do. The challenge comes in the definition and execution of your brand, so you need someone you can trust — someone with insight and talent who can help you communicate who you are. Brands don't happen overnight; they are always being defined and should be jealously guarded.


At the end of the day, your camp families are your brand ambassadors. They need you to define your brand, clarify your message, and communicate it to them. Make a big deal out of being amazing. Wow your camp families every way you can, then do it again. Make your mark on the world by caring and telling others why your "Why" matters.

They will love you, and they will tell others. You do your part first. Get to work.

Nicholai Ronningen is a husband, father, home educator, camp parent, and business owner. He attended Culver Woodcraft Camp, Space Camp, Action Quest, and the Discovery Program. He worked as an activity counselor, camp photographer, and is now a camp parent. Nicholai has been helping camps communicate with families for nearly 15 years. At home, he loves activities that he can pursue with his family, especially reading out loud, cooking, and playing Four Square.

Nicholai Ronningen
websitesthatdostuff.com





5 Important Concepts for the Next 5 Years

Anybody who has been a camp director for more than 10 minutes knows this: camp is changing quickly. Looking at the pace of change since I started directing summer camp in 1994, I think we are in store for more change at an even faster rate. We are at a critical point for the summer camp industry.

For camps to be equipped to deal with change, directors must force themselves to think beyond the daily struggles of their jobs and consider what is going on in the rest of the business world. Consider this: for those camp staff entering college in the fall of 2015, many of their job titles do not yet exist. In this changing environment, we must be willing to transform ourselves and our camps.

As we navigate our changing world, I hope you'll consider the following five concepts that I believe are essential to running a successful summer camp over the next five years.

Become a Visual Storyteller

Creating an emotional story about your camp must involve visuals. Think back to how, just this morning, you quickly scrolled through your Newsfeed on Facebook. Think about the stories and posts that captured your attention. I guarantee you that a vast majority of them involved some sort of video or an engaging photo.

Summer camp is such an emotion-driven consumer purchase because it involves children and parents. We need to become great at telling emotional stories through photos and videos.

My challenge to you: every time you sit down to type out a communication or message, try to figure out how you can use photos, images, or video to replace your text.

This skill will become essential to telling the story of the transformations that happened because of summer camp.

Get Comfortable with Technology

Technology is intimidating for everyone. Even those of us who are comfortable being surrounded by and experimenting with new technologies can be quickly overwhelmed. That's why I think we must, as responsible business managers, figure out a way to keep on top of technology. Even an exercise as simple as the Hour of Code™ can help us keep learning.

While I strongly believe that summer camp itself provides an important opportunity for kids to get away from the stresses of technology, I also know that the willingness to use new tech is essential for camp professionals.

Make It About Them

We have fallen into a trap.

When we talk about our camps, on the web or in person, we tend to talk about ourselves. We try to recruit families — many who don't understand summer camp at all — by telling them about our camper-to-staff ratio or how

we are a “traditional” camp. This style of discussion assumes that parents have a baseline knowledge of how camp works. Many of them don't.

If we are to reach more families without prior camp experience, then we must talk about camp in completely different ways. One important method to grab their attention is to stop talking about ourselves. Instead, parents need to see themselves in the stories we tell. Can you imagine how much camp would stand out from all of the other summer activities if your website focused, in part, on what life is like for today's families? For example, imagine supplementing that photo of three campers hugging each other with an image of a stressed-out mom attempting to talk to her kids while their faces are buried in their phones.

By including this type of imagery on your website, it demonstrates to today's families that you understand their lives. This will allow you to craft the story of the transformation that will happen to their families because of summer camp.

Make Bold Statements

Because we spend our days creating safe and welcoming environments for other people's kids, we tend to describe our amazing product in very boring terms.

I love the quote by Simon Sinek who says that “people do not buy what you do, they buy why you do it.” What Sinek is saying is that people

need to understand the very foundational ideas upon which your camp is based. They need to understand your Why.

I believe that your Why needs to be bold so that it stands out among the many competing summertime options for families.

Our goal with the CampHacker network is to create an industry-wide message so strong that parents will feel they are failing their children if they are unwilling to educate themselves about camp.

That is our bold statement.

I know that the words “failing their children” will be alienating to some camp leaders. By design, bold statements are unapologetic, direct, and evoke strong emotion. It is safe to say that those camp professionals who do not connect with the CampHacker message may not want to work with us. Those who do are willing to wear their passions on their sleeves.

Learn to Relax

Implementing these concepts can be strenuous and tiring, and that's why my fifth concept is about balance. To maintain the energy required to run successful camps and transform lives, we need to take the time to consciously relax. It's essential to our ability to do this job.

I think that each person must find his or her own way to relax. For me, it is early morning trail walks with the dog or taking 100 meditative breaths per day. We need to put as much intentionality into finding balance as we do improving the lives of our campers and staff.

There are many important changes coming to the camp industry over the next five years, and I intend to be along for the ride. I hope we're in it together.

Travis Allison is a driven, passionate, and charismatic multimedia professional. He is active as a professional speaker, marketing consultant, and photographer catering to the professionals of the summer camp industry. Travis produces the CampHacker podcasts and blog, the Scott Arizala show, and manages the Summer Camp Professionals group on Facebook.

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Travis Allison
camphacker.tv



CAMP MINDER

ON TOUR 2014-2015

2014

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| September 22-23 | ACA Southeast | Savannah, Ga. |
| November 18-20 | YMCA Camp Marketing & Financial Symposium | Potosi, Mo. |
| November 18-20 | ACA Keystone | Macungie, Penn. |
| November 19-21 | ACA Rocky Mountain | Florissant, Colo. |
| December 3-4 | WAIC | Tucson, Ariz. |

2015

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| January 22-23 | CampMinder Camp | Boulder, Colo. |
| January 26-28 | YMCA Northeast | Frost Valley, N.Y. |
| February 4-5 | ACA National | New Orleans, La. |
| March 2-3 | CAMPference | Kerrville, Tex. |
| March 17-19 | ACA Tri-State | Atlantic City, N.J. |
| March 26-28 | ACA New England | Manchester, N.H. |
| April 16-18 | ACA Mid-States | St. Charles, Ill. |

EVENTS MAY BE ADDED DURING THE COMING YEAR. HOPE TO SEE YOU!



OP-ED

You Can't Downplay Play

SCOTT ARIZALA
Camp Tall Tree

One of the most powerful memories I have of childhood is playing in my backyard with my best friend. We had an old wooden (and probably unsafe) climber, a sandbox, a tree house (again, probably unsafe), and space. Space to roam, space to create, and space to play.

I clearly remember the weighted contraption we built from ropes, pulleys, old PVC pipes, and other assorted garage fodder to slow our fall as we jumped from the main tree. At the time, it was the most fun I'd ever had. That memory has stayed with me because of what it represents: I was engaged, interested, and independent. Looking back, it also was instrumental in teaching me how to problem-solve, create something from limited resources, adapt, and work with others ... not to mention the principles of physics, geometry, negotiation, and basic first aid.

So here I am, decades later, the father of three small kids. In the fall of 2013, my daughter was diagnosed with a brain tumor, and my whole world came to a standstill. I'm happy to say that seven months later she is doing great, physically recovering quickly, and cognitively and emotionally right on track with her peers. Recently, her therapists and doctors have offered interesting advice as they begin to phase her out of formal physical therapy: they simply want her to play.

Playing outside, keeping up with her peers, building things, kicking the soccer ball, attempting to climb trees, and the like are at the top of everyone's lists. Then in the same breath they

advise us to sign her up for gymnastics, dance, martial arts, and even a structured "Play at the Park" group (yes, that exists). I diligently signed her up for all the recommended classes (except for the "Play at the Park" group, that one is just ridiculous). Now I spend most afternoons driving a mini-van around town, taking my daughter to various classes and programs. I'm that Dad!

So now all of this pre-programmed fun is competing with unstructured free play. What an interesting experiment!

When she does just go outside and play, guess what I see? I see her problem-solving with the limited resources she finds in our garage. I see her managing arguments with her 2 year-old brother who desperately wants to be included (but is a very inefficient collaborator). I see her adapting to her surroundings. I see her imagination explode into stories and narratives that I couldn't make up if I tried. I also see her balancing, lifting, climbing, pulling, and manipulating both large and small things.

We do a basic gratitude exercise with her every night at bedtime. Before reading books, we each talk about our favorite part of the day. At the end of a particularly epic day — she had done the big balance beam in gymnastics and had a massive party at dance class — I was gearing myself up to relive it all during "favorite part of the day." When it came to her turn, she said, "I had the most fun with the rope and that box!" Having pretty much no idea what she was talking about, I asked a couple of follow-up questions. Sure enough, she was talking about the hour or so that

she was outside and had dragged a rope and a box out of the garage. That was her favorite part!

As camp professionals, you have the power to create that experience for kids. Just like for my daughter, kids at your camp enjoy the programs and pre-scheduled activities. They can learn specific skills, and some of them may even find some passion or future direction. But they will learn more if you just let them play. They will discover what's inside of them. They will work on skills that can help them be successful in other environments. They will create cherished and lasting memories when you create time and space in your program for kids to go outside and play.

In fact, my thinking on the entire topic of unstructured free play at camp has evolved from "would be nice" to "imperative." In my opinion, programs that don't have unstructured free play as a major component are neglectful and will struggle to stay relevant. That's how much I believe in play.

The best camps and programs have time, space, and staff that oversee camper-directed, unstructured free play. Those camps that don't offer a laundry list of reasons why it won't work for them (these are all direct quotes from camp directors I know):

"There isn't enough time in my program day to make sure that campers also get exposed to the most popular and sought-after activities."

"Our camp doesn't have a physical space that is conducive to just playing, and we would not be able to supervise the campers appropriately in the space we do have."

"Our staff are trained to supervise and lead activities, so it is very hard for them to switch gears."

I am so committed to the idea of free play that I am willing to say this: If you let excuses like these get in your way, you will have a sub-par program, and I wouldn't want to send my kids to your camp.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

Here are a few ways to make unstructured free play a reality at your camp:

TIME

Your schedule is up to you. Yes, there is a flow to your camp program that has probably been established over a very long time. Change it. Take something out. Decrease the amount of time for other activities. Create time in your schedule for free play, and make that sacred. For example, at my camp, rest hour is sacred. It is for resting. It's not for meetings or planning or anything else; it is for resting. The same should be done for free play.

SPACE

Some camps have areas designated for free play that include a random assortment of fun props: rope, water, hoses, PVC pipes, old tires, cans, sand, buckets, and any number of other things. Other camps have natural areas that entice kids into free play, such as woods, a beach, natural springs, an open field, etc. But all camps have somewhere to play; a gym, parking lots, sidewalks, the edge of a sports field, a grove of trees ... anywhere works. The point I'm making is that it doesn't matter which spaces and props you use.

STAFF

The final piece of the puzzle is staff. We need to teach our staff what free play means and how to be comfortable with it. Most of the staff who work for us didn't experience a lot of unstructured free play as kids, so they are unsure about what it is and how it will work. Who is in charge? How will the kids know what to do? How should I participate? They ask these questions because they have no framework for what free play is. As an industry we need to teach our staff how to oversee free play.

I want to send my kids to your camp. Give me a reason: Tell me how you include free play in your program. All you need are kids, staff, time, and the directions "go and play," and it will happen.

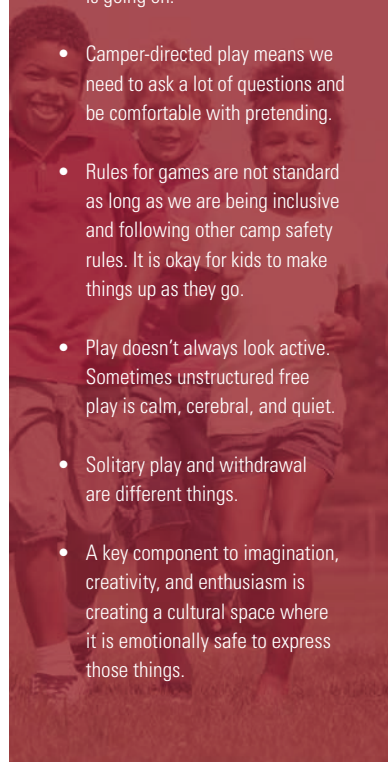
Scott is a leading expert, trainer, and consultant in summer camp, working with hundreds of youth programs and thousands of staff & administrators across the country. He is the Owner of Camp Tall Tree, a resident camp for kids with unique challenges, the Camp Director of Dragonfly Forest, a camp for kids with serious illnesses, and the Camp Director for Camp Kesem, a national organization for kids whose parents have cancer. He is a pioneering contributor to Expert Online Training, is the award-winning author of the best-selling book, S'more Than Camp, and is the developer of the online staff training resource The Camp Counselor Insider.

Scott Arizala

campahtalltree.com

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Unstructured does not mean unsupervised. We still need to be present and aware of what is going on.
- Camper-directed play means we need to ask a lot of questions and be comfortable with pretending.
- Rules for games are not standard as long as we are being inclusive and following other camp safety rules. It is okay for kids to make things up as they go.
- Play doesn't always look active. Sometimes unstructured free play is calm, cerebral, and quiet.
- Solitary play and withdrawal are different things.
- A key component to imagination, creativity, and enthusiasm is creating a cultural space where it is emotionally safe to express those things.



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