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Garrett Snedeker, Aides Counselor

Good morning everyone. As we begin a new summer together, we have the fantastic opportunity to do things that we've never done before, forge friendships with people we've never met before, and make memories we couldn't have dreamed of before. That is why my message to you today is simple: be open to change, allow that change to transform you, and live life as evidence of that change. Change is never easy. Sometimes it can be scary. Economists have a technical term for this human behavior: risk aversion. Since we love the comfort of things which are old and we are afraid of people, places, and experiences which are new, we sometimes miss out on tremendous opportunities because we want to play it safe. However, that is not how we gain a greater appreciation of this life. There's an old saying from philosopher Howard J. Lattimer: anything that's worth anything ain't easy. To find lasting fulfillment and happiness, we must often do things which risk our short term stability. That is the nature of change. Nevertheless, when you let new experiences influence you, you are not only becoming more aware of the world around you, but you are growing into a wiser and more mature person as well.

Being open to change requires us to open up to the possibility that the things we take for granted in our world are not as perfect or completely understood as we might think. The late writer David Foster Wallace recounts a story about how we are often blinded by the travails of everyday life. Two young fish are enjoying each other's company one day when they pass an older fish who sees them smiling. Eager to engage them, the older fish says, "Good morning guys. How's the water today?" The two young fish look at each other puzzled, "Huh? What's water?" When we are unaware, or choose to be unaware, of the things around us, we do not leave open the possibility for change. If you're one of the fish who is unaware of the water around you, you'll likely be the same fish who is surprised when that hook with a worm on it appears out of nowhere. In short, because we don't know any better, also we don't expect any better. One piece of technology reflects this tendency. Consider the computer keyboard we all use. It's the one with QWERTY across the top line of letters. Did you know when it was created or for what purpose? First, it was created not for the computer, but for an older machine called a typewriter, used most commonly around the time when the Cheerio was born, dinosaurs roamed the Earth, and Pineman was already 46. The typewriter had metal parts connecting the keys to levers which would

have ink on their ends. When you pressed a key, the inky end would slam onto a piece of paper the letter you pressed. Sounds good right? Well, good luck if you ever made a mistake. One of the most common mistakes typists made was typing too quickly. On early typewriters, the arrangement of letters placed the most common letters such as E or S in the middle of the keyboard so you could type them quickly. However, this presented another problem: metal levers would often jam up if you pressed too many keys all at once. Therefore, innovators designed the specific QWERTY formatted keyboard to solve the problem of quick typists...by slowing them down! The inventors of the QWERTY keyboard ensured that by spreading out the most common letters, we would type far more slowly and avoid these annoying typewriter mistakes. Let's fast-forward to today though. Do we have any problem with computers keeping up with our typing speed? No way! So why do we continue to use a keyboard that slows us down? There are many reasons why the QWERTY keyboard remains, but a big reason is that people are not open to change what they have learned already if there is no tangible, direct benefit. If we look beyond the short term pain of changing something we take for granted in favor of the long term benefits of better time spent on a better experience, we may find that some sacrifice in the present makes the future

far more enjoyable. To anyone wondering though, I wrote this chapel on a QWERTY keyboard. Sue me. It's still easier than hand-writing it or doing it on Suitcase's iPad.

Once you identify what you should change, you need to allow that change to transform who you are and what you do. At camp there are tons of areas where you may find yourself transformed. Some of the most basic include your daily routine: being responsible for yourself each day without someone reminding you about everything. However, other more difficult ones include how you value friendship and how you consider yourself. What are the qualities and actions that a good friend should display? What are the attributes that I want others to remember about me? The latter areas are the ones which I feel Timanous has most transformed me. Brief story: eleven years ago, I started my first summer at Timanous as a half-time camper in Ravens. My half-summer was fairly memorable to me, but one of the moments I remember well was my final night. I thought I was going to be commended (which for the new campers is when a counselor praises a camper for something from the past week or over the course of the year) like many of the fellow boys who were leaving in the circle. But I wasn't. Nonetheless, I listened closely to the reasons why each person was

commended. Helpfulness, generosity, enthusiasm, stick-to-it-tiveness. During that commendation round, as I was about to leave Timanous, everything finally clicked. It wasn't about the commendation: it was about being a part of a place that celebrated these things...and I was leaving this special place. In three and a half short weeks, I had been introduced to a place like none other: a place that celebrated winners as much as the people who tried their hardest and people who had diverse talents in many different areas but were all remarkable. The transformation into a more mature person was not complete, but it was now underway. On my way out of camp, I bawled my eyeballs out...and that was before I knew guys like Tomm well! All I wanted to do was be a part of this special place a little while longer so I would not have to just lie there until the next summer to experience that tremendous feeling once again. The fact I can look back eleven years ago and pinpoint that exact moment should tell you about how change works: in the words of Ernest Hemingway, it happens both gradually and then suddenly. Although he was talking about something a little bit different, bankruptcy, Hemingway highlights how we may not realize how experiences change us until they indisputably do so. Camp changes you in many subtle ways: expectations of pleases and thank yous, special traditions, and group bonding come to mind.

However, camp also changes you in profound ways: expectations of maturity, goal setting, and tolerance of different people and ideas to name a few. What is important is the wisdom that Timanous tries to impart on you: remain open to constant improvement throughout your whole life.

Living life as evidence of your personal growth requires great persistence. Since new ideas which improve our lives can come from many different places, people need a bit of humility before others. Humility is a trait not celebrated in our highly individualistic and media-driven society which celebrates individuals such as Donald Trump rather than Norman Borlaug. If I polled the crowd, a far greater percentage of people would know who the former is but not the latter. Yet, we, and all people in the developing world, owe a far greater debt to the work of Dr. Borlaug than the work of Mr. Trump. Who is Norman Borlaug? His scientific research only changed the face of food production. Many of us have heard of the Green Revolution in food production throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This is the man most associated with it. Wheat production had always suffered from the effects of traditional fertilizer making wheat stalks grow too long and thick and thus when blowing in the wind, they would snap and wither. Thus, an opportunity to employ genetic modification to wheat presented itself. Borlaug combined

one form of short growing wheat with the original form and voila! The new genetically modified wheat yielded three times the previous crop. Although opposed by local industry and environmentalists (Borlaug sure needed a lot of persistence!), Borlaug's modified wheat, combined with the idea for fertilizer, has led to the following improvements: "Since 1900 the world increased its population by 400 percent; its cropland area by 30 percent; its average yields by 400 percent and its total crop harvest by 600 percent. So per capita food production has risen by 50 percent." As we can see, we owe a great deal to his research. Yet, Borlaug was always a humble man, so we do not think of him whenever we sit down to enjoy our cheap plentiful food.

Once you realize that great new ideas can come from anywhere, especially at a place like camp, you open your eyes to the possibility that you can always improve the world around you. If you're a Crow, a Mallard can offer you a refreshing perspective on how to be more patient with others. If you're a Head Counselor, you can learn from an Aide who has the freshness of coming straight from the bunkline recently and can relate to current campers well. Examples are all around you if you remain humble. One book I read recently called *Better*, written by a professor at Harvard Medical School named Atul Gawande, delves into how humility in the medical profession

yields progress. Gawande, a surgeon, details difficult medical problems and how thinkers outside the box have successfully approached them. One of the most interesting tidbits comes from when Gawande travels to his native India to witness surgery performed in poor Indian towns and villages. Although India lacks the high hygienic and educational standards that we in the US are accustomed to in our hospitals, the surgeons there have another skill: broad knowledge about a wide range of different types of surgeries. Here in the US for better or worse, we have become super specialized with our doctors and surgeons so that if you have a specific surgery you need performed, you will need to go to a specialist to have the surgery performed. What this means is that each different type of surgery is performed by a different person. In India, many hospitals don't have that luxury. However, Indian doctors, using their own ingenuity, have developed some incredible surgical procedures that have even been adopted in the US. They have even rewritten the textbook on perforated ulcers. As long as we remain open to these new ideas coming from different places, our world can a better place.

So where does this leave us? We are at the beginning of another wonderful summer in Maine with friends old and new. We all want this summer to be the best we've ever had...and now we have the chance to make

it happen. It is true, that to find ourselves, we must lose ourselves. Lose ourselves in the splendor of this place and lose ourselves in the change that this place fosters. In the end, it may be tough, but we come out better because of it. Go out and enjoy the summer 2011. But remember, you are part of a special place that is changing who you are for the better, and will always be a part of you.