

Selfless

Camp will require that you put your own needs behind the needs of the kids and the camp. That one sentence comes with so much that it is lost in its simplicity. So, let me offer some examples of the kind of selflessness that goes beyond what people may think of at the outset.

All Staff

- You wake up everyday with the thought “What can I do today to make the campers feel special?”
- On a day off, it is tempting to stay out late and do fun things, but a good night’s sleep and some down time are going to leave you in the right mental and physical state for a new week with the campers.
- The staff house could use a little tidying. You didn’t make the mess, but you take a little of your time and straighten things out and finally take out the trash – it stinks. You don’t do this all the time, and you don’t resent spending a little of your precious time off to make a contribution to a community that isn’t always perfect.
- Instead of children sapping your energy, they feed it. The more time you are with kids, the happier and more energetic you feel. Staff are always excited to devote their time to children; it’s why they are at camp. *This point is critical, and it defines the difference between people who love camp, and those who struggle with it.*
- Although you have specific areas of responsibility, if you see that there are others areas that could use your help, you lend a hand. *There are no bean counters or clock watchers at camp. At camp, you have overall responsibility, and not a job.*
- A wide game of Capture the Flag is being played. You can make the occasional run, walk around, and play the game. Or, you could throw yourself totally into it. You can jazz your kids, plan daring attacks that end in hilarious disaster, demonstrate exceptional sportsmanship, and be mindful of kids who are and are not engaged. Even if you don’t like the game, you are 100% in it, and you need to find a meaningful role.
- If you’re spending your time off at camp and a camper approaches you, we hope you’ll be warm and present with them. Your time off is yours, but the kids sometimes don’t know it.
- Dressing up, being wacky, simply playing with the day, your kids, and being fully present and alive. The alternative is to go through the rote requirements of the day, without engaging your full spirit and mind.
- Telling a story, singing a song, getting a new campfire skit together, evening embers, special wakeups, really cool cabin activities, creating something extra in clinic areas . . . such things can be done or not. We hope the excitement of creation and giving will inspire you to create excellence.

Counselors

- During a rest hour, you’d like to rest, but you know that taking a child aside who has been struggling to get along with the other kids in the cabin would really mean a lot to him. You play cards with him for a little while, and ask him how things are going while continuing to play cards. Finally, you’re able to get some thoughts and feelings out of him, support him in those, and help him to create change in his behavior and thoughts that will help him out.
- A young girl hasn’t had a bowel movement for several days. When she is nervous, she can’t seem to go. You know that from the information the parent confidentially provided, and you’ve been keeping tabs. You take the child to the bathroom, and lead her through guided relaxation exercises for an hour, after the kids have gone to sleep, and she finally goes.
- At night, although you could do some quick evening embers (nightly chat/event with cabin right before lights out) and call it good, you go the extra mile. You care about what you’re going to do, how it happens, and the end result. You want your kids to remember these times as special, fun, meaningful, and memorable.

Non-Counseling Staff

- You spent the morning in the trees/horse arena/blacksmithing area and it was HOT. You’re tired and you just want a rest. You want to lay down during lunch, but you know that the counselors are not able to do the same and that part of your role is to support the counselors at meals. You join a cabin and start staring contests with the campers, and offer to go grab mail from the counselor’s cubby.
- It’s your night to claim jump and you know that you will get off of your evening task early to shower. A counselor asks if you can join their embers because they need a ceramics facilitator (like you!). Though you were looking forward to the extra shower time you join the embers anyway and then head to claim jumping.
- You work in the office. Counselors on their hour off are sitting nearby talking about day off plans. It all sounds so fun and you’re tempted to go over and join the conversation, but you know that if you do then this spreadsheet won’t get finished. You put on your headphones and buckle down.
- You are comfortable sitting in front of your computer for many hours a day doing often self-directed work. You know that Augusta often operates like a start-up and you will need to fill a need if you see a need rather than wait for someone else to do it. You are comfortable owning projects completely and receiving feedback - positive and critical.

After 30+ years in camping, it has been my experience that it is NOT possible for people to do this as a sacrifice. We don’t need martyrs. We don’t need people to give food from their own plate to others. That leads to malnutrition. What we need are people who are able to give as a natural part of their being.