

You thought you knew, and then you knew that you didn't, but it was too late

The three-and-a-half-week-staff training was awesome, and will be remembered for years to come. You're psyched; you're ready . . . this is what you wanted. Your love of children is tested and not in question. You are goal oriented, you're up for a challenge, and you love the philosophy of the camp. . . . Flash forward to the end of the first week of camp.

The most physically, emotionally, and mentally tired you've ever been is either tied with how you feel now, or this beats it. Tears from 1st year counselors, male and female alike, happen every year. Your expectations and preparations paled in comparison to reality. All your plans for an exciting day off melt away as you realize that rest is all you're capable of.

Is eight more weeks of this possible? "No one can be expected to keep this pace and survive, let alone be happy!! Darn it, this is impossible!!! And, if it is possible, it isn't healthy or right – this is torture!!" Can you maintain your level of energy, dedication, and creativity for the remaining weeks, or will you disappoint the children and yourself?

Many first-year counselors felt like this, and so did some who had already worked at camp for several summers elsewhere. That isn't good for you, the camp, or the children. Although there are 65 staff overall for 90-95 campers, the schedule and demands are an 8 out of 10 on the summer-camp-intensity scale (different than the life intensity scale). You could **very, very easily** find camps that are less intense and demanding. Fun in the sun with cool people playing around and enjoying children and the summer . . . super, lots of camps are like that in the 3-7 range of intensity. ***We'd be happy to send you a list of nearly 50 other camps you'd be really excited to work at.***

Reflect. Deeply reflect, over a day or two. Do children give you energy, rather than sap it? Have you been with children this intensely for long periods of time? Does your physical stamina allow you to rock on when others similar to you have fallen away? Could your emotional skills, endurance for frustration, and social skills earn you a place at the United Nations?

We want people here who are going to thrive, and you want to thrive too. Camp Augusta is significantly more demanding than almost anyone expects, even experienced camp staff. If you aren't already confident in your physical stamina, emotional resilience, and ability to work long days with kids, please take that seriously. We'd rather you find the right fit elsewhere than struggle here.

Finally, sometimes people are up for a challenge so they can push themselves and grow. While admirable, you need to be ready for this challenge already; it is already more than you expect. We'll teach you an enormous amount, but you need to be physically, emotionally, and mentally ready for Camp Augusta when you arrive, and not after the 3rd week of camp. Be realistic, and don't let your Ego or your desires cloud your character and better judgment.

Everyone is counting on you.

Campingly yours,
Randy

(See open letter from counselor and HERO Michelle 2013 below)

Camp Augusta from the mountain peak I am standing on

Having read all the material, watching all the videos and passing the exam, I believed that I knew where I was going to. Augusta being a Camp of Wish, Wonder and Surprise, there was one waiting for me just as I arrived.

For those of you on a spiritual journey, however, who love your time for meditation and relaxation, I would advise you find a place less intense than Augusta. Most of the days, there will be no time for you to relax as there will always be a schedule or a conversation to guide. Camp is very intense, pushing all your limits, constantly challenging you, there is hardly time for taking a break as deep conversations continue during meals. If you need time to sleep over a challenge or issue in order for your brain to soak in new information, the camp might not need be the right place for this. If you are a hero you will work from 7am to 10pm without a break, besides 40 minutes breakfast, lunch and dinner, during which there is sometimes the expectation for you to play a character in order to bring magic to the meals, or help out counselors. The camp is thus great choice for those who love to talk, challenge themselves and express their feelings publicly. Being a person who needs quite some time to seat in silence, I was very blessed to be able to learn a great lesson this summer. The intensity of camp taught me to remain focused and balanced as well as to meditate every single moment of my life. I started singing mantras silently and thus got myself away from negative thinking, being present, happy and at peace all day long without my usual meditation practice. Thank you Augusta for enabling me this huge step.

Action, adventure and adrenaline are three important A-s at Augusta. The majority of the activities at camp are adrenaline based and this is why the kids come here for. Their vision is to be active, not stopping for a second because they want to try it all out. Although sometimes exhausted, kids prefer to go on and follow the schedule. Relaxation and rejuvenation are not representing an important part of the focus in the camp's program - at least they were not promoted as much as other active clinics during this summer.

In case there are no groups or kids around the camp, the counselors do work projects. Those projects are mainly cleaning and manual work. It is expected that the projects are done quickly and effectively. Most of the time there will be KM note on how to do something, everyone is working to accomplish projects in their best manner.

I hope those couple of lines help to some of those who might misunderstood what the camp is about. It is not the oasis of relaxation and miracles. It is one of many summer camps with children wanting action, improvisation and many, many, many games. The team is very helping and I am sure they will love to answer more of your questions - so please do ask them and make sure this is the place you want to be next summer. It might not have been the way you have envisioned, but it will make you stronger and more ready for future challenges. Thank you Camp Augusta! I wish you a wonderful, magic summer again.

Michelle, 2013