

What Camp Middlesex Means to Me
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Love. Its a small word, but one that can mean so much. There is more content in those four letters than the entire plotline of Marvel comics. Love can be directed towards a person, an activity, an inanimate object, anything really. I don't quite know what category Camp Middlesex fits in, but I know the amount I love that place, those people, cannot fit into one word, one essay, or even one novel. I could write another entire *Odyssey*, describing how much I love that camp and all the different ways I care about it. I've spent the better part of my free time just dreaming about the day I could return there. During the past year that's all camp has been, a dream. It seemed too good to be true. But just the idea of a place where I could be myself, where I could dance, sing, play, create, socialize, with no breaks in between, was worth waiting for.

I'm still not sure what is so appealing to me about camp. It may be, that no one there tells you how to be, but rather, appreciates who you are. It may be, the kindred spirits there, how everyone seems to have someone to whom there cannot be any separation. It may be just the idea of a place where the entire purpose is to have fun, but better yourself while doing so. The idea of bettering yourself is appealing to everyone, but the work it takes to do so may not be. Camp is a place where the work to better yourself becomes enjoyment. And in the end, you may find that you will continue working to better yourself, whether it be fun or not, just for the sake of bettering yourself. You may even find that the work has become enjoyment just with the knowledge that you're bettering yourself. For the goal at Camp Middlesex is to make the best better.

Even that may not be it. It's increasingly difficult to improve yourself when you don't know who you are. If this is your problem, camp can help you solve it. There, you can find yourself by being yourself. Doing the things that everyone enjoys with no criticism, you'll find that you become who you really are. At camp, there is no one who will tell you you're doing this wrong, but rather how you can do better. And you will learn about yourself, about your character, and about your true soul. This is what I believe they mean by "learn by doing".

There are four H's core of the camp, and each H has it's own meaning. Heart is where I shall start (no rhyme intended). This H has the most content, mainly because it has to do with love. The Heart H refers to caring in camp. It refers to the people who will step aside to wish their counselor fun on his or her time off. It refers to the people who give their candy winnings to other people. It refers to the people who will show a new camper around camp and help them become comfortable. It refers to the people who stand up and sing with a shy camper when he puts his elbows on the table. It's these people who create and form this H.

The next H is Head. This H means the smart guy, who can make good decisions without thinking. Who can take cardboard, duct tape and an engine and make a rocket. Who can explain to a new camper what camp is all about... Who can calm two campers down when tempers are aroused... Who listens to counselors whether they are orders or opinions... Who can take in everything said by a counselor, and every mistake made by them, and learns from them. Who not only follows rules, but also understands why the rules are in place. It's the people who can do that who create this H.

Hands is the H I know best. It consists of those who clean up Arts and Crafts without tiring or taking any consideration of a break. It consists of the people who clean their entire table without even asking the counselor for help. It consists of those who tirelessly do their chores until they are done, whether time is up or not. It consists of the people who pick up trash whenever they see it, not just when it's their chore. It consists of the people who will always help out, especially without invitation. It consists of the people who are always up for being anyone's buddy to the bathroom, nurse, or anywhere. These people create the hands H.

The most interesting and diverse H is Health. These are the campers who change every article of clothing everyday, take whatever time given to shower and keep themselves clean. It's those who will take some one hurt in an accident to the nurse. It's those who will sincerely apologize to any one they had offended, whether it was intentional or not, but not because it's camp policy, because it's the right thing to do. It's those who clean the entire cabin when his cabin mates are occupied. It's those who pay attention to every tiny detail of cabin cleanliness, not to win Cabin Beautiful but so the cabin is clean. It's those who put other people's emotions and safety before their own. Those people define this H.

I suppose you can call this my conclusion, but the only thing it's concluding is this view on camp. It doesn't end the ideas instilled at camp, and certainly not the camp itself. I could write much more but I'm afraid if I continued this essay would become a novel. This may or may not have touched you, but please don't ignore the lessons here because they're more than words. They're ideas, emotions, people, but ^{there's} also a philosophy on life given to all those who attend this magical place, where dreams come true, even more so than Disneyworld. The point is Camp Middlesex is not just a place, or a camp, and four H's are not just letters on a clover. They're a lifestyle, the child of a corrupt society, which has on its own become something greater than the society itself. It has become a symbol. And anyone who has seen the Batman movies knows that a symbol can be powerful if it is incorruptible.