

Growing Creativity at Camp: How to Increase Creativity with Camp Staff

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How do we encourage our counsellors and programmers to stretch their imaginations and use their hidden skills?

This article will explore how the camp director or supervisor can encourage and grow creativity at camp with their staff and campers.

We will look at specific ways to encourage and grow creativity at camp with your staff. They will be able to take specific ideas back to camp to grow creativity this summer. We will explore five ways to encourage creativity at camp:

1. To grow creativity at camp, you must be creative.
2. The environment must welcome creative thinking.
3. You must encourage those who show creativity.
4. The campers, as well as the staff, should be included in your plans for creativity.
5. You need to start to grow your creativity today.

Growing Creativity

When we talk about leadership and training, we often talk about the skills of problem solving, teamwork, and communication. One component that is often left out may be the most important—creativity.

How do we help our staff become more creative? Let's find out.

- 1. To grow creativity at camp, you must be creative.** You show leadership at camp. To help your staff become more creative, you must be creative. Help your own creativity grow by doing activities that encourage you to think outside of your comfort zone.
- 2. The environment must welcome creative thinking.** Make sure that you think before you speak. I know that we all know this, and hopefully we practise it. You must welcome creativity, and you can do this with kind words, with an open mind, and by letting others try things their way.
- 3. You must encourage those who show creativity.** When you see creativity, encourage and reward it. If you see someone try a new idea—whether it fails or succeeds—encourage them. We need to show our staff what creativity looks like so that they know what to aspire to.

4. The campers, as well as the staff, should be included in your plans for creativity. Run a session on creativity for your campers, like arts and crafts, a puzzle session, or a discovery session. You can incorporate it into your already existing program with simple ideas.

5. You need to start to grow your creativity today. It can be easy to introduce creative thinking to camp, and you should start doing it as soon as you can. Encourage your staff to come up with something creative to show that they want to return, or have them come up with an idea for a session that they can lead.

Creativity can be difficult to put your finger on. I have included a list of creative quotes, books, and principles that will help you on your journey.

Many people do not consider themselves to be creative. We need to train ourselves to think like a young child and believe that we can do anything. We want to get our staff to believe that they can succeed at trying new things.

Creativity is the missing link in many leadership programs; creativity can make the difference between a good leader and a great leader.

Principles of Creativity

1. Creative thinking isn't always easy.
2. Creative thinking takes time.
3. Creative thinking isn't just the bright idea.
4. Sometimes the obvious is the creative.
5. Your comfort zone can be a dangerous place.
6. Boundaries are often imaginary.
7. Never settle for just one solution.
8. No problem is impossible; some just take longer to solve.

Creative Thinking Book List

This list is a collection of useful books that I have accumulated over the course of 10 years.

Eyre, Richard, *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There* (New York: Fireside, imprint of Simon and Schuster, 1994). New maxims to refresh and enrich your life.

Pentagram, *More Puzzlegrams* (New York: Fireside, imprint of Simon and Schuster, 1994).

Pentagram, *Puzzlegrams* (New York: Fireside, imprint of Simon and Schuster, 1989).

Raudsepp, Eugene, and George P. Hough Jr., *Creative Growth Games* (New York: Perigee Trade, 1990). A book of 75 fascinating games to expand your imagination and unleash your originality.

Slocum, Jerry, *The Puzzle Arcade: For People Who Like Lots of Hints* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998).

Townsend, Charles Barry, *World's Toughest Puzzles* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 1991).

Wujec, Tom, *Five Star Mind* (New York: Broadway Books, 1995). Games and puzzles to stimulate your creativity and imagination.

Wujec, Tom, *Pumping Ions* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1988). Games and exercises to flex your mind.

Zelinski, Ernie J., *The Joy of Not Knowing It All: Profiting from Creativity at Work and Play* (Mill Valley, CA: Visions International Publishing, 1994).