

Camp, Creativity, and a Trunk Full of Possibility

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What is possible? Anything...

This article covers the planning that is needed for having a successful summer at camp as a camp counsellor. What do you bring? How do you prepare? What should you put in your trunk to make it the most magical summer ever?

We will cover various steps in helping our staff be prepared and helping them bring the right tools and attitudes to camp to make it the best summer yet.

The discussion will revolve around my “Trunk Full of Possibility” (built over 20 years on staff at camp). We will discover that with simple tools we all can have a trunk full of possibility that will make every camper’s stay the best it can be.

A Trunk Full of Possibility

Bring things to give away. Campers love to get stuff and think that it is just for them—they love it.

Bring your passion and share it: hold a yo-yo club at camp; have special juggling workshops. Bring the idea, and then work out how to make it so—juggle yarn, or pinecones!

Bring extra stuff—extra flashlights, an extra blanket, extra understanding, extra attention. Your campers may need it, or *you* may need it.

Bring toys, games, and activities to keep you and your campers entertained when they think they are bored. (Remember, “Only boring people get bored!”) It is the little moments that make a camper’s summer.

Bring books—books for you to read, books for your campers to read, and books for you to read to your campers. Share your favourite story with your campers.

Bring a deck or two of cards. Kids know what to do!

Bring odds and ends that you always thought might be handy. They will be handy.

Bring yourself, and give your all to your campers. Get your sleep and rest, focus your positive energy on your campers, and you will be surprised at how much energy you will get back from them.

Bring a roll of duct tape. No kidding—it is one of the handiest items to have around.

Bring or make a nametag and wear it on arrival day, on the first two days of camp, and always on parents' or visitors' day. More campers will know your name (it will surprise you how many!). Make sure to learn campers' names; a camper will respect you more if you know his or her name.

Bring some of your favorite quotes and put them up around you. This will give you strength when you need it and help others to understand you.

Bring *lots* of stuff; if you don't use it, so what? You'll kick yourself if you think of it when you are there and it is sitting on your desk at home.

Bring comfort items for yourself. A pillowcase, a blanket, a picture—whatever gives you that special feeling.

Remember, the summer is what you make it!

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 you 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).