



... and what it isn't

When I was 14, my second summer at Chateaugay, my counselor was a guy we called "Togie." He was smart... really smart. He just completed his first year at Brown and was completely fired up about it. He's now on the camp alumni board.

One night, a group of us were outside, goofing around under what turned out to be the aurora borealis. It was a relatively rare and beautiful thing. Obviously, as a group of adolescent boys, we weren't paying a single ounce of attention to it.

Togie said, "Hey, guys, knock it off. This is a moment! Take a look. Just be quiet with yourself and look at the sky."

We respected Togie so much, so we did. A group of 14-year-old boys, quiet, staring up and looking at the sky radiating with vibrant undulating purples, greens and blues. Togie was right. It was a moment.

That was the first time I ever had someone describe mindfulness. It came from a teenager just one year into college.

Why We Teach This

The word "mindfulness" can sound a certain way to people these days. Granola, sandals, sitting on a mountain top somewhere picking raspberries. But it's not about any of those things.

Napoleon Hill spent twenty years studying the most successful people in America. Carnegie. Ford. The industrialists who built the country. He was looking for the common thread.

He found mental discipline. The ability to direct your own attention before the world directs it for you.

That's the skill high-performers eventually figure out. Camp gives kids a head start.

Meditation with Mitch



There's an elective at camp called Meditation with Mitch. It's optional and kids choose to come. More than a few show up every session.

We sit outside, somewhere quiet and shaded. Initially I lead a guided meditation. Campers sit or lie down and listen the sound of my voice. It's a chance to be still and recharge but focused on something fun. No phones. No grades. No pressure.

One of the first exercises I run is a meditation where campers will "meet their spirit animal." Kids close their eyes, follow along, and at the end I ask each one to share an animal that came to mind and one word that describes it.

Then we go around the circle and share our animals. Sometimes you get "cute dog." Sometimes "shiny dolphin." Sometimes "orange fox." And sometimes you get a kid who says, "misunderstood tiger." It's those unexpected names that quietly crack something open — a hint that there's more going on beneath the surface.

That's what children will see for themselves with you give them the space to look.

What Your Child Brings Home



The world your child is growing into is loud. There are phones, social feeds, school, and just the noise that shows up in everyone's head at some point. Camp gives kids a place to put all of it down and hear themselves for a minute. That matters more every year.

Meditation an elective like every other elective at camp right along with water skiing, soccer, and Gaga. Kids show up because they want to.

And what they get all summer is an introduction to mindfulness. Much like Togie gave us all those years ago with that aurora borealis.

See you this summer.

Mitch

PS - Want to chat about camp for your child, schedule a call with me [here](#)

