

Creation and Destruction Embers

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Theme: Creation and Destruction through Fire

Age of campers: 12-16

Time allotted/actual: 30-60 minutes

Location: Anywhere that a campfire/bonfire or other burn has died out.

Props/Materials/Symbols: Actual glowing embers of a fire that has died down after a long burn, ample seating so everyone can be comfortable and not distracted.

Prep done: Meditation and reflection upon the power of fire and its uses and dangers, thoughts in mind about greater metaphors of creating things like the Fire Phoenix at 4th of July and the beautiful irony of creating something just to destroy it.

Opening/Mood set: Opening question: is destruction a form of creation?

Note: campers created a wooden structure and subsequently burned it, helping to have an active portion, and a direct physical experience of the following conversation.

Questions/Activities:

1st activity: What is the point of breaking something that you worked hard to build? Why are people willing to do build something for no other reason than to destroy it? Think about all the examples: fireworks, action movie sets, potlatch, cabin activities galore, Burning Man, piñatas, and so on... can you come up with more?

2nd activity: Thoughts on the fleeting or temporary nature of people and the things that they build in general. What do people look like in the big picture with their cities and societies between catastrophic events and global changes?

3rd activity: Can use the quotes at the bottom of this page.

Closing: Put the embers of the fire out together, so essentially destroying the destruction. What does it feel like to have control of this? Do you really have control?

Were other people involved? Not in the current form.

Thoughts on pacing? Take it as slowly as possible and let the campers really think. Silence and reflection here are magical, as is time to meditate and let rhetorical thoughts or ideas simmer.

What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it? Add something that can be built or made WHILE the discussion is happening, then be put into the fire at the end.

Camper feedback: "Cool, but very philosophical. Some people just don't think about that stuff much."

Kent M. Keith quotes

"The Paradoxical Commandments

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered.
Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway .

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.
Be honest and frank anyway .

The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.
Think big anyway .

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.
Fight for a few underdogs anyway .

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway .

People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.
Help people anyway .

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have anyway .”