

"I and Thou" Embers

www.campaugusta.org

Theme: Examining our relationships with each other, and how well we truly know people

Age of campers: 13+ (works well with adults also)

Time allotted/actual: 45 – 90 minutes

Location: Somewhere quiet and secluded.

Props/Materials/Symbols: the book "I and Thou" by Martin Buber (or core comfort with internet analyses of his work), pens and paper for everyone. *See links below for suggestions.*

Prep done: Read up on the concepts in advance and ensure that you have your thoughts and insights in order.

Opening/Mood set: Begin by framing a discussion about the I and Thou relationship as described by Martin Buber in his book. Essentially the word "thou" is an obsolete term in the English language that used to be used as a more respectful pronoun for you. As Buber outlines, there are 3 types of relationships that humans have in this existence: the I-It, the I-You and the I-Thou. The I-It is obvious and relates to the inanimate, and the I-You is the general relationship that most individuals will have with others. The I-Thou is special as it pertains to an intimate knowledge of another's soul. To call someone "thou" is to say I *know* you. This relates to trust and intimacy on a deep level within the heart. These relationships define who we are and feed the soul in ways that no tangible things can...

Questions/Activities:

1st activity: Ask everyone to write down the names of 3(or less) people that they have an I-Thou relationship with. Showing them is not necessary. Ask for thought on how these relationships formed and what might be common strands between them.

2nd activity: Next, push the discussion into the realm of those who may have this relationship with you---has anyone ever surprised you by offering or showing a level of trust in you that you didn't realize they had? Write down the name of at least one and invite everyone to share those stories.

3rd activity: When all have spoken as much as they care to, ask for a final note---everyone write down a promise to themselves: what is one thing you will do in the next (X) amount of time to recognize, foster and develop these relationships in your life, and who you would like to have them with...

Closing: Walk back to the cabin in silent reflection and dwell on your relationships and how you will re-engage with them in the morning with intention and appreciation.

Were other people involved? None needed.

Thoughts on pacing? If the discussion gets going quickly, it can open a floodgate and a LOT more time can be taken than anticipated. If this happens, facilitate and guide as normal.

What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it? Adding a moment of reflection at the beginning would help as well, in the light of people considering the most important people in their lives, and why they are important; what the nature of connection is and how it is fostered and maintained as well.

Camper feedback: Well received with appropriate age, less so with young campers.

Notes

-<http://www.amazon.com/I-Thou-Martin-Buber/dp/0684717255>

A link to Amazon and the book *I and Thou*

-<http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/buber.html>

A layperson's analytical essay on the book *I and Thou*

-http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_and_Thou

Wikipedia page on *I and Thou*