

Experiences and benefits of profound experiential education

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Profound experiential education can be gleaned from outdoor recreation adventure activities. This is a personal reflection paper of the experiences and benefits derived from the them. During the adventure challenge course, orienteering, rock climbing, rowing, and sea kayaking participants learned how to work together, to communicate effectively to accomplish tasks, to respect each others' individuality, to trust and to develop leadership skills that will prove essential in future endeavors.

We learned how to work together. We learned how to work together despite individual differences. When personal well-being is on the line people tend to lay differences aside to cooperate. At the accomplishment of a particular task, some would revert to introverted behavior while others would revel in the victory. Nevertheless, the threat of discomfort as caused by natural consequences is one good motivator to help people who are not such team players get into the habit of becoming an integral part of a group effort.

We leaned how to communicate effectively. Again, the impetus for the preservation or accusation of creature comforts often motives people who are not so inclined toward effective communication to delve past their own insufficiencies in language and non-verbal behavior. Those who are given to meaningless small talk in daily society find that perpetual commentary on their own thought patterns is radically unnecessary. Those who are given to silence find that in order to negotiate the path of least resistance toward a goal they must speak up from time to time. This is the nature of nature. It tends to bring about certain survival behaviors while quelling those that are not so helpful to individual survival.

We learned to respect each other's individuality. We differed in origins. We

differed in personalities. We differed physically. We differed in knowledge. We differed in skills. We differed to some extent in every conceivable way, but under the demand of our tasks, we found the means to not only respect but also cherish and apply our individualities for the good of our group endeavor.

We learned how to trust. And we learned how to do it with a grain of salt. Those of us that at the outset were not so fond of one another found that despite our interpersonal differences we were still able to count t on one another when the going got tough. Conversely, those who seemed to be such great pals at the start found that superficial friendship is sometimes a liability when it keeps the group from moving forward in its task.

We learned how to develop leadership skills. The most profound lessons in leadership could be stated as a maxim. No one can lead everything all of the time, but everyone must lead at least sometimes. Although some are given to leadership more than others, even those most given to following must lead sometimes and vice versa. Good leadership is dynamic and flexible. The contrary may still be termed leadership but perhaps not so good.

This has been a personal reflection on the experiences and benefits derived from the adventure challenge course, orienteering, rock climbing, rowing, and sea kayaking. We participants learned how to work together effectively, to augment tasks with appropriate communication, to respect each others' individuality, to trust, and to develop leadership skills that will prove essential in future endeavors. Profound experiential education can be gleaned from outdoor recreation adventure activities. I recommend this

course to anyone wishing to broaden their effectiveness from the most basic behavioral levels.