

Pasquaney *archives*



I want to begin by telling you a little about the best teacher I have ever had. He is eighteen years old, sketches cartoon characters like there is no tomorrow, and every Friday we make our ritual trip to the video store. He is my brother, Owen. When Owen was diagnosed with Autism as a two-year-old, I didn't really understand what that meant, I just remember my Mom telling me that Owen was a little different than other kids. In the seventeen years since then, Owen has struggled with and overcome barrier after barrier that has stood in his path. At times it has been tough, but having a brother like Owen has taught my parents and I lessons we never would have learned otherwise, and helped us become the family we are today. And although maybe at eighteen and twenty we are a little old to be going back to Disney World year after year, and yes, maybe our encyclopedic knowledge of the characters in Fievel Goes West isn't quite the norm for most families, but as far as I'm concerned, I wouldn't have it any other way. The joy my brother finds in things that most people would roll their eyes at has helped to let my family realize what is important to us, and that makes every up and down along the way not a blessing in disguise as some might call it, just a blessing. When I wonder if life would have been easier if Owen was a "normal" kid, I always remember it is because of him that I am the person I am. The hard work Owen puts in day after day in taking on the myriad challenges that stand before him—and because I know he works harder in a single day than I could even imagine possible—helps me to realize that as tough as things may appear at times, it is in the face of the seemingly insurmountable challenges that you have your greatest victories and learn things about yourself you never thought possible before.

There is nothing like the challenges of life to reveal who we truly are and things about us that we never knew. While we may hope that life can be one Hobbs Field grand slam after another, the fact of the matter is, the obstacles and adversity that we face day in and day out—on the hillside and out in the real world—are going to stare us down and challenge us whether we like it or not. This summer you have been and will continue to be faced with many such challenges. At first these challenges may seem insurmountable, and it may feel easier to ignore them altogether and take the easier way out. Heck, the challenges may even get the best of you at times. But it is when you get back up and dust yourself off and keep on pushing that you realize how strong you really are. And as the Adidas's slogan says, "Impossible is nothing".

Just last week, all of us stared down just such a challenge out in the woods on expeditions. Amidst long days, and wet, rainy weather many of us at one point or another probably believed that the rigors of the week were simply too much for us. I know that I for one was not sure after a brutally wet and cold Wednesday whether the guys on my expedition, as well as Sam and I, could make it another day. At that point we could have headed out of the Wild River and headed back to camp. Instead with a little extra grit and determination, the eight campers persevered and two days later had shown themselves and their counsellors how far they could push themselves when it came right down to it.

The seven weeks that we get to spend each summer on the hillside provide the perfect setting for which to test yourself and your notions of what you think you can and cannot accomplish. With all of the different activities, there is always going to be something that seems totally foreign to you. Whether it is learning to hit a serve on the courts, skipping a 420 out on the lake, or even trying to build a box up in the shop, you have the opportunity at camp to see these goals through by getting to those activities and making the most of each day

we have. As much as I loved being down on the ball field and around the tennis courts working on my game as a camper, I never felt a better sense of accomplishment or pride than when, as a sixteen year old, Mike Hanrahan brought me up to the shop and while graciously overlooking my never having made a Pasquaney box, let me make two clocks. Although the clocks may have been pretty simple projects in the long history of Pasquaney woodworking, for me it seemed as daunting a task as had ever been done. But with some long activity periods, and some helping hands along the way, the last holes were drilled in right before Watersports chapel. One small step for man, one gigantic step for a clumsy first time woodworker.

Each and every one of us has had and will have experiences like this in camp and out, and from person to person the experience will differ in ways that will be unique to him and him alone. These victories, whether they be large or small, help to give us the courage and confidence to stand up to the challenges of the future that we all will inevitably face.

As Mike Hanrahan discussed in his final tree talk last season, confidence is the ability to trust in your self. Each time you accomplish something you at one point thought was beyond your ability, you are building up that trust in yourself that lets you know that you can overcome what stands in your way. The more frequently you take on a new challenge the more that confidence will grow, and you in turn will grow and change in ways that you may not have thought possible before. So as we roll on into the second half of this summer, remember: there is no hike too far, no crew race too long, or climbing tree too high. Each step you take, each stroke you row, each board you nail is getting you that much closer to overcoming what once seemed impossible. In each obstacle recognize the opportunity and reward that awaits you. Now go get 'em.