

I arrived at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the fall of 2011 for my freshman year of College after a successful and enriching summer as a first year counsellor. I was looking forward to putting my head down and committing myself to playing collegiate soccer and beginning my degree in Mechanical Engineering.

My first day on campus included a 7AM fitness session, and noon and 4PM training sessions. A busy one to say the least. I was exhausted and weary about my place on the team and only concerned about when I could collapse into my bed. This plan was quickly squashed when two senior captains approached me and mentioned I should go out to dinner with "Tuna."

My first thought and I'm sure yours as well is, "Tuna? Is that a person?"

Without hesitation I said, "Sure, why not."

Just why I agreed to this dinner date is beyond me. Shortly thereafter, I received a phone call from a Massachusetts number. In a very shaky yet strangely confident voice like he knew me for years he said, "Hey Eric, and mumbled what resembled a shotty effort at my last name, I'll see you at seven outside Stoddard [my freshman dorm for that year]."

Right on time a random Subaru pulled up to me. I stuck my head in and saw a quaint, gray haired, elderly man driving on a wooden platform, apparently wearing a pair of Mr. Vinnies' white Wal-Mart sneakers with no shoelaces.

This must be Tuna.

A short drive later to one of the most popular restaurants in Worcester, I devoured a steak and cheese sub as he nibbled at a Pilgrim Sub, without cranberry sauce of course. A dinner filled with questions about myself, family, soccer, and

naturally Pasquaney was a long part of our exchange. Most importantly he filled me with knowledge about WPI, the long history and the great experience I will undoubtedly have at this university, a place filled with ambitious staff and students.

When I look back on it now, my college application and selection process that determined four years of my life was done with minimal thought.

I found myself at WPI, a very successful engineering university after a draining day of preseason training and out to dinner with an eighty year old Middlebury alum who called me a “flaming turkey” on multiple occasions and spent roughly thirty four years as a Dean of Students at WPI and an avid WPI athletics supporter.

How? Again I couldn't tell you. I just kind of went with it.

Earlier this year I was approached and tapped into the Skull Senior Honor Society at my university. I knew vaguely of this “secret society.” Just that it existed and the hundreds of rumors that floated around campus were all I knew.

Who was a member, What was the building they met in, the activities they part took in, why they existed, and why me? were all questions that I did not have an answer to and questions that did not concern me. The one thing I did know was that Tuna was apart of this organization.

Why not? I'll join. Should be a great experience!

These decisions to go to lunch with an eighty year old man named tuna who "chooses" not wear shoelaces and sits on a piece of plywood and join an honor society that I only knew rumors of may of seem questionable to the typical person in the 21st century, but I did without much information and relied on Blind Faith.

Blind faith occurs when someone puts their faith into something without any evidence, true understanding, perception, or discrimination. Or more simply put trust.

Each and every one of us on this hillside had blind faith to an extent when first choosing Camp Pasquaney as a place of residence for a summer in the mountains of New Hampshire. All not knowing much about your soon to be fellow campers and best friends, the counsellors that will be guiding and teaching you, the daily routines, what the mines were, how to sweep Cardigan, cleaning a lantern, the state of New Hampshire and even the United States. We all took a step of blind faith with the trust of Mr. Vinnie at hand.

Back at home and in our communities we are all surrounded by skeptical and doubtful thoughts. Thoughts like "I'm going to fail this test;" "I'm not good enough to play this sport;" "They won't accept me because I'm not cool enough;" or even "Wow an all boys camp, that can't be any fun."

This lack of faith doesn't just happen at home in our day to day lives outside of camp, but it unfortunately creeps into this amazing community we all have a piece of this summer. This expedition won't be fun. A half mile is too long. The showers are so cold. This tree talk is going to be boring.

An attitude or mindset far too easily becomes the dominant thought in our mind when faced with a situation, event, or obstacle. This is where some blind faith proves critical and beneficial. Instead, we can make the difficult act of choosing and using blind faith with thoughts like, "I'll learn a lot about myself and the wilderness

on this expedition;" "A half mile can't be that long;" and "I can't wait to hear what Eric has to say."

To use an saying recently used by Mike Hanrahan, "If you discover a goldmine in your life, can you really complain that you found it a little late? After all, you still have the goldmine."

My goldmines spawned from a seed of trust from two senior soccer captains, a man named Tuna, and Vincent Broderick. I would have never been apart of three amazing communities that I hold close to my heart today and will for the rest of my life.

A seed of trust and a good amount of blind faith can go a long way in how things affect you.

So this summer I hope you all find your goldmine here at camp! We all are going to try something new this summer without any experience. Whether you're a new boy, a sixteen-year-old, or even a councilor we all have facets of camp we do not excel at. Sailing, nature and performing in the Watson Theater are some things that can yield learning experiences if we maintain some blind faith and trust and exciting experiences will ensue. For me this poised especially true for myself as I entered my sixteen-year-old summer here at camp. Just one day before I was set to join the class of '09 and be on the hillside (a day early to prepare camp and us for our greatest summer together), I broke my right hand playing lacrosse. All though not serious, this break required an x-ray that helped identify three other previous breaks that required surgery. Skipping camp was never a thought that crossed my

mind but what did was how drastically it changed how I dreamed of my sixteen-year-old summer playing out.

No senior league baseball, no tennis tournament, no senior canoe race or tilt, no swimming, barely any shop, and no expeditions. Most things I wanted to achieve this summer physically were just unable to even be attempted.

You may think, *Well, Eric you should have just had some blind faith and all would have been good.* Well the thing is I wish I had! My sixteen-year-old summer I was surrounded by my best friends, most of whom are on the council today, and it was not my happiest or my best summer because of that lack of blind faith. Those thoughts I just previously mentioned were my thoughts exactly. I did not have faith in the fact that camp offered so many other aspects that can be excelled in other than the physical ones. I was naive and concentrated on the very tangible things that my hand affected, like playing a sport or performing an activity. Rather than excelling in the less physical parts of camp, I faltered in both realms, for the sole reason I did not believe coming into a summer with a mallet of a hand would produce anything worth while. The broken hand should have never stopped me from enjoying times of casual conversation with a fellow camper, walking up from soak, or the peaceful sound of taps, but it had. Blind faith was not present.

We will all head into the wilderness this Monday with new experiences waiting to be taken advantage of. No matter if this is a new hat or an old hat, an attitude and mindset of positivity of what the White Mountains has to offer will provide a more defining moment for you to enjoy.

With our seed of trust in the shack always doing what's best for the hundred and twenty one of us on the hillside, we have the ability to live life for these seven weeks with risk and reward letting blind faith provide even more exciting times than just your residence on a hillside above Lake Newfound.