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English 30-H

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### **Determination Supports Success**

“Travis time to get up!” my mother yelled from the kitchen.

Oh man, I had to get ready to leave for summer camp, yuck. It was one of those things you had to go through in life, for many a fun time, for me, not so fun. I was one of those reclusive, shy types. I really didn't want to “experience new things,” or leave my “comfort zone.” However, my Auntie had dragged me into it, and I wasn't getting out.

So off I went to Goldeye, located near the resort town of ... Nordegg?! Yes we were pretty much in the middle of nowhere. Everybody filed off the bus, took a look around, and decided it wasn't that bad after all. The cabins were nice, and the lodge was cool. I admit it, the week was looking better.

The first activity we did was an icebreaker; now I hate icebreakers. They are the worst thing for a timid young guy like me. We all formed a circle, looking as nervous as a bunch of Grade 7's on their first day of Junior High. After we had gotten organized (a surprisingly difficult task for 30 teenagers), the embarrassment began. After being slave driven by a bunch of strangely dressed adults, it was time for supper. “Supper!” My eyes lit up, now that is something I do enjoy. As you can well imagine, there was a stampede towards the door, all of us like racers in the Tour de France right after the starting gun; falling over each other, all in the effort to be first in line. When I had gotten my food and sat down at a table, I took a look around and noticed that most people had already begun

to form groups, all but me. That's when I finally decided that it really wasn't a whole lot of fun being the "loner." I was like Archimedes in the bath when he first discovered displacement; it was that profound for me. Of course I didn't jump up and yell eureka, nor did I run around the camp in the nude, but I became determined to make friends even if I had to leave my comfort zone. When Lance Armstrong fell during Stage 15 at the Tour de France he told himself, "If you want to win the Tour de France, do it today." He told reporters after the race that, "After the fall, I had a big rush of adrenaline." He was determined to win the race and it showed. He put his all into the race, physically and psychologically. That was what I had to do.

The week went on and I began to come out of my shell. I was determined to make people notice me and let me join their group. We did all sorts of things, group cooperation activities, leadership activities, and of course some more activities in which the goal was to embarrass yourself as much as possible. All the while I got to know people better and by the end of the week we were all friends.

It was amazing how determination affected my attitude during that week. I became more outgoing; I didn't turn red whenever I spoke, and I made the effort to talk to other people. William James once said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." This is most certainly true. During that week I was more respected than I ever had been before. At the end of the week, while we were all saying our good-byes, one of the councilors (who were all young, in their twenties) told me that if her children grew up to be half the person I was, she would be blessed. Yep, she said that to me, I have to say I was a bit taken aback. Left my week on a bright note.

I was a bit afraid that when I got back home I wouldn't have the same spark, but when school started I was determined to keep the attitude I had at camp. I know, you might be thinking that it must be impossible to do without icebreakers! It was hard I'll admit, but I got through. I did in fact make friends and I'm forever thankful.

Now camp doesn't seem so bad after all. All it took was determination. The determination to change my attitude, to change my outlook on life. After all, icebreakers only get you so far.