

IAN MOOK

Good morning Camp Dudley. My name is Ian Mook, and I have the privilege of being the leader in Ross Cabin this summer. That's right, I said Mook, not *Muuk*. And that's kind of the topic of my chapel talk this morning. To foreground, I first need to share a bit about myself. I grew up in Sleepy Hollow, NY. I lived about 5 minutes from both sets of grandparents, in the house my grandfather grew up in and went to the same school as my older brother from kindergarten through twelfth grade, the same school at which my mother was a teacher and my grandfather had once attended. I guess we were one of those families who found a home and decided to keep it that way for a few generations. It's safe to say that everyone in my community knew my last name was pronounced Mook. What I mean by this is that basically everywhere I went growing up; people knew me- or they thought they knew me.

Everyone knew my last name was pronounced Mook. Everyone knew that I was the younger brother of the brilliant Conor Mook, the son of the infectiously kind Suzy Akin, and the descendants of Jeffrey and Kent Mook – always the loudest cheerers on the sidelines of my local sports games. Everyone knew my last name was pronounced Mook.



So then I came to camp Dudley in the summer of 2009, a shy and sheltered rising 8th grader. I was a junior in Dartmouth lodge.

I arrived at camp, got settled in, said goodbye to my dad, and the next thing I know I was playing laundry lax on main campus and my cabin mate, T.J., says, "Hey Muuk, pass me the ball." So guess what I said? Nothing! I just passed him the ball because I was terrible at lacrosse and wanted the burden of carrying the ball off my shoulders. Soon enough, everyone is calling me Muuk or Mookie and there's not much I can do about it – and I actually kind of liked it. I realized that I was in a new community, a community that was totally knew to me and where I was totally knew to it, and it was awesome.

So a quick tangent: researchers have roughly identified the age group of 10-25 year olds to be what we call adolescents. Meaning that if you are roughly between the ages of 10 and 25, you are, in one form or another, an adolescent. Think about that, that's basically everyone sitting down in Beckman right now and probably about 90% of the people at camp. I share this fact

because adolescence is a period characterized by intense personal growth. It is defined by identity exploration and creation.

When I first arrived at Dudley, I was in the early stages of my own adolescence. And up until then, in my community where every single person I came into contact with thought they knew me or my family and, in short, they knew that my name was pronounced Mook, I found it extremely difficult to explore new identities and help cultivate my own sense of self. When I came to Dudley, and everyone just started calling me Muuk, in this nickname, I found relief, I found opportunity, and I started finding myself.

The reason I share this with you is that camp can be that opportunity for you as well. Even if you are a third, fourth, or even fifth generation camper at Dudley, there will always be opportunities here for you to explore the person you want to be. So for those of you that are new, and for those of you that are returning, keep exploring, try new things. Find out what you like, find out what you don't like, and reflect on why you felt that way. You are doing the most important work of your life at this very moment. Know that nothing is ever set in stone and we are always changing, even those of us in our "post-adolescence" phase. Every unknown, every fear or potential anxiety

represents your greatest opportunity for growth and personal exploration. Lean in to your anxieties and embrace those new opportunities – they are ever-present here at camp. Be courageous in the face of the daunting task of becoming the person that you want to be.

Thank you.

