

Outward Bound July 2nd - July 22nd, 2018

These past holidays I spent away from home, family, friends, and without technology or much contact with the outside world. I was on an Outward Bound Course called Mind Body Soul. I was located near Picton in a small place called Anakiwa. This course is one meant to challenge you in many different ways both physically and mentally, and to develop and learn more about yourself. You are put into a group containing 13 other 16-18 years old's, and these are the people you will live with and spend almost 24 hours of the next 21 days together. For some people this may be a pretty scary thought, but it is awesome to have others to share the many challenges with and support each other to make it through and get the most out of your course. Due to all the time and experiences you share with your watch group you also come out of the 21 days with 13 new best friends, or a Whanau.

Day 1 of my course involved catching a boat from Picton to Anakiwa with around 60 other nervous and excited teenagers who were all about to embark on a similar, yet unknown, journey. After the welcoming Powhiri our names were called out along with the names of our 2 instructors and our watch name. Each watch is named after a famous explorer and my watch was called Batten, after Jean Batten known for her incredible accomplishments with flying.

The way my course was set out we stay in a watch house which is basically a big bunk room, the place we sleep, bond and live for the duration we are there. This watch house needed to be cleaned by us on a daily basis and we would have to receive a watch house check each morning and were expected to gain a score of at least 8 out of 10. We were not at school, which is what they call Outward Bound base, every day as we were often out on adventures. However, every morning we were at school, we had PT at 6.20am, which involved a light warm up of various exercises followed by a 3.2km run. At the completion of your run, you continued running into the sea and had to fully submerge, which was not a warm experience being the middle of winter.

For the kayaking activity our instructors trained us how to flip each other back up once we had rolled, before kayaking down river rapids the next day. We went rock climbing, did a high ropes course, and our instructors lead many activities and discussions to develop ourselves and share things with each other. They also trained us early on in our course in how to navigate off track while tramping, and how to go sailing on a cutter. This lead into a 5-day expedition towards the end of our course where we received little guidance from our instructors while we got from point A to point B while tramping over 2.5 days. Once we reached point B or Momorangi Point, we met our other instructor who had the cutter ready for us to complete 2.5 days of sailing. This was an awesome experience that tested us as a watch, and as individuals, both mentally and physically, especially as we had to retrace our steps back up a hill during the tramp, before realising we needed to head back down it again anyway. When we went sailing, well actually a lot more rowing was done, we got a lovely warm day which was nice, except it meant there was very little wind. However, we made it to an incredible island which was a bird sanctuary, which was very cool. This boat part of the expedition resulted in us sleeping on the cutter for 2 nights, which is actually a lot comfier than it sounds and we mainly all preferred it to sleeping in the bush. Along the couple of

days spent on the water we experienced some amazing scenery such as seeing dolphins, we caught a sunrise due to setting off at 6:30 am one morning, and also saw amazing starry skies at night time.

Outward Bound is very considerate of the environment and leaving a positive influence. This aspect involved an environmental message each morning, delivered by the watch who was involved in helping prepare breakfast, as well as sorting our recycling into around 8 categories as they do their own recycling at Outward Bound. Going along with this, our service day of the course was spent in the community and our watch helped to replant, or restore trees affected by the river which had recently flooded. Wherever we went, whether tramping or sailing or anything else in between, it was enforced that we leave the environment in the same or better condition to when we arrived.

Another part of the course involved a solo, which is where you stay 36 hours, so 2 nights, in the bush on your own. This was quite a daunting experience for me as I would much rather be around others than hang out on my own. However, it was a good chance to reflect and write letters to people back home, as well as catch up on some sleep. It was a good challenge, and was better than I expected, one of our instructors came and checked on you a couple of times a day and I had a nice river beside me to break the silence.

On the second last day of our course came the much feared $\frac{1}{2}$ marathon. This involved running 21km, 3km of which was a continual uphill. This isn't something I had thought I would do anytime soon, before heading to Outward Bound, but I completed it with the help of many skills I had learnt from my time on the course. The purpose of the half marathon is a final challenge to implement the mental skills you have learnt as well as the physical fitness you have gained from the past 21 days.

In typical Outward Bound fashion, we still had to get up for PT the day after this, our final morning before heading home that afternoon. However, it was a fun version of PT and we didn't have to do the run, although we didn't get out of the ocean dip.

Overall, Outward Bound was an amazing experience for me, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who is up for a challenge. I thought I knew myself before I left, but I have learnt so much more about myself, others, life skills, and I have made connections with 13 others my age, that I know I will keep in contact with for a long time. Something I learnt at Outward Bound was their motto, "There is more in you". This may seem like a cheesy slogan, but it really is what the course teaches you and I thought about this many times during tough parts of my course, and since I've been home.