

CHRIS & CARRIE KALLAL'S

STEALTH THINGS

The word 'STEALTH THINGS' is written in large, bold, black-outlined letters. Each letter contains a different photograph of an outdoor activity: 'S' shows a woman with blue goggles; 'T' shows a person on a zipline; 'E' shows a person climbing a rope ladder; 'A' shows a person shooting a bow; 'L' shows a campfire; 'T' shows a person in a purple shirt on a zipline; 'H' shows a person in a purple shirt using a tool; 'I' shows a person in an orange shirt kneeling; 'N' shows a group of people on a trail; 'G' shows a person in a purple shirt on a zipline.

25 RULES FOR UNPARALLELED HOSPITALITY



THE KALLAL'S



Chris Kallal is the Executive Director at Southeastern Baptist Youth Camp in Greensburg, Indiana. Chris, an Illinois native, has been a camping professional since 2001. He started off at Camp Manitoumi, in Illinois, serving as their program director for 10 years while also teaching 6th grade at Washburn Middle School. Then he spent 3 years learning to be a boy scout as the Camp Director of Ingersoll Scout Reservation. The next 10 years, Chris served as the Executive Director of Camp Good News in Illinois.

Carrie has been working at Camps longer than Chris! Starting as a CIT at Camp Manitoumi in 2000, then moving onto Girl's Leader, Dining Room Hostess, Counselor, Craft Person, Camp Store Director, Canteen Manager, Bookkeeper, Food Service Director, Assistant Director, and now Guest Services Director! In her free time, she loves to craft, test out new recipes, and talk camp!

When they find time, Chris and Carrie love to search online for the newest, unique ideas to implement into their Camp as well as visiting multiple camps over the years to "steal" ideas from them!

The Kallals love camp so much that they spend a lot of their free time teaching others about camp! They have taught camping classes at different conferences around the world and written a ton of books about the various aspects of camp life. As well, Chris co-hosts a podcast, Scamp Life - The Programming Side, where he talks all things Camp Programming.

They have a total of 4 children, Rowan, Emmalina, Autumn, and Aurora, as well as a couple dogs, cat, some hissing cockroaches, bearded dragon, leopard gecko, frog, couple turtles, and a pet skunk, named Stinkerbell!

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CORE MINDSETS

CAMPFESSION

I CAN RECITE OUR CAMP'S ENTIRE
MISSION STATEMENT, BUT
FORGET MY PHONE NUMBER
WHEN ASKED

I. Customer Service is Everyone's Job

Customer service isn't a role - it's a mindset. When everyone takes ownership, we create an experience where every moment is tailored, every need is met, and every person feels valued.

- Make customer service the responsibility of every employee.
- Train every staff member, from counselors to kitchen staff, to see themselves as service providers.
- Empower all team members to solve problems.
- Encourage staff to notice and act on opportunities to assist campers, even outside their assigned roles.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

2. Everybody Matters

Every person deserves to feel seen, heard, and valued. When we make the effort to connect, understand, and respond, we don't just meet expectations - we create lasting, meaningful experiences.

- Prioritize personal interactions with each camper and family.
- Train staff to learn and use every camper's name within the first day.
- Train employees to recognize and respond to needs proactively.
- Follow up on concerns or complaints immediately to rebuild trust.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

3. Serve with Heart

When we serve with warmth and empathy, we turn moments into memories

- Approach interactions with warmth and sincerity.
- Take extra care with special requests and unique needs.
- Make parents feel confident in leaving their children by providing regular updates
- Follow up after service to ensure satisfaction.
- Create personalized moments, like celebrating birthdays with a special dessert.
- Show gratitude with thank-you notes or special perks.
- Ensure campers have sunscreen, water, and proper footwear for activities.
- Double-check accommodations for dietary restrictions and special needs.
- If a camper is feeling homesick, create a special "home-away-from-home" care package. Assign staff to work with them closely and highlight their bravery during a group meeting

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

4. Listen Up

People usually want to be heard more than they want to be agreed with.

- Actively listen to feedback, without interrupting, to identify areas for improvement.
- Actively listen to concerns and implement changes when possible.
- Show guests their input is valued by acting on it.
- Don't make excuses.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

5. Choose Your Words Wisely

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.

- Use positive language that emphasizes solutions.
- Encourage staff to focus on what can be done instead of what can't.
- Train employees to communicate, clearly and respectfully, how to respond to common camper questions or concerns
- Never talk poorly about other staff, campers, groups, or competition to customers.
- Develop scripts for key moments, like welcoming campers or resolving complaints.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

6. Take Responsibility for Mistakes

Perfection as an overall goal is overwhelming and unobtainable, but we are going to get as close as we can.

- Empower staff to own up to mistakes and make things right and learn from them.
- Model accountability at all levels of the organization.
- Foster a culture where problems are resolved collaboratively.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

7. Learn to Love Complaints

There is a better way to do everything. There is often a brilliant idea right behind a bad one.

- View complaints as opportunities to identify and improve recurring problems
- Thank complainers for pointing out issues.
- Encourage employees to provide constructive feedback.
- Create safe spaces for voicing concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Use complaints from within to identify and fix internal inefficiencies.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

8. There is No "No"

A problem is a chance for you to do your best and impress the giver of the problem

- Reframe refusals into alternatives or solutions. (like offering a different snack for dietary restrictions)
- Train employees to say, "Let me see what I can do," instead of, "That's not possible."
- Focus on what can be offered instead of limitations.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

9. Learn to Say "I Don't Know, But..."

Nobody knows what they are doing before they do it.

- Teach staff to admit when they don't have answers but promise to find solutions.
- Train staff to follow up promptly with the correct information.
- Encourage transparency to build trust.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

10. Always Be Professional

Excellence is not being the best, but doing your best

- Maintain a polished appearance and demeanor.
- Teach staff to stay calm, respectful, and empathetic, even when campers are upset.
- Treat every customer interaction as an opportunity to build trust.
- Encourage staff to maintain professionalism and a positive attitude, even during downtime.
- Remind staff that every interaction shapes guest's perceptions.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

CAMPFESSION
I'VE BECOME AN EXPERT
AT DECIPHERING CAMPER
HANDWRITING

CAMPFESSION
SOMETIMES I DAYDREAM ABOUT
GOING TO ANOTHER CAMP JUST SO
I DON'T HAVE ANY RESPONSIBILITIES

CAMPFESSION
EVERY TIME SOMEONE ASKS IF THIS
IS MY REAL JOB, I RESPOND WITH "NO
I'M JUST HERE FOR THE SMORES"

STAFF AND FACILITY

CAMPFESSION

I PRETEND TO CHECK THE SYSTEM
WHEN A PARENT ASKS IF THEY
CAN UPGRADE, THERE ARE NO
UPGRADES, JUST BUNKBEDS

II. Hire the Best

If you want to make any meaningful change, you have to surround yourself with a great team.

- Recruit counselors and staff who are enthusiastic, kind, and ministry-oriented.
- Conduct interviews that focus on candidates' interpersonal skills and spiritual maturity.
- Invest in comprehensive on-boarding programs.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

12. Lead By Example

All it takes for something extraordinary to happen is one person with enthusiasm.

- Lead by example in attitude, work ethic, service mindset, kindness, patience, and enthusiasm.
- Inspire staff to adopt a service-first mindset through consistent encouragement
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and personal growth.
- Leaders should model exceptional hospitality so counselors and staff emulate it.
- Mentor junior counselors and volunteers to build their confidence and skills.
- Encourage staff to teach each other new techniques for leading activities or engaging campers.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

13. Be Busy Bees

Success thrives in motion. When we work with purpose, support one another, and balance efficiency with excellence, we create a buzz that propels everyone forward together.

- Work efficiently while maintaining quality.
- Train staff to multitask effectively without compromising camper safety or experience
- Encourage cross-training to promote teamwork and versatility.
- Foster a culture of mutual support and collaboration.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

14. Make Yourself Available

It's not about doing more. It's about doing more of what matters.

- Ensure leadership staff are visible and approachable for campers and parents
- Establish clear channels for communication and support.
- Offer open office hours for staff to voice ideas or concerns
- Follow through on promises and commitments.
- Build trust through reliability and attention to detail.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

15. Always Be Prepared

Success happens with preparation meets opportunity

- Anticipate needs before they are expressed, like having extra towels near the lake or a cooler of water at the trailhead.
- Prep activities for various scenarios to avoid last-minute scrambling.
- Be prepared with solutions for common challenges.
- Monitor feedback to identify emerging trends.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

16. Master the Basics

Every interaction-no matter how small-has the potential to leave a positive impression. Even routine moments, like greetings or farewells, can be transformed into extraordinary acts of care and service with intentionality. Every interaction is an investment into the future of the ministry and can impact one's decision to come back

- Reinforce the fundamentals of good service regularly.
- Reinforce basics like smiling, eye contact, and genuine greetings at staff meetings
- Simplify processes to make basic tasks easier to execute.
- Streamline check-ins and activity sign-ups to reduce wait times.
- Provide clear instructions and schedules to avoid confusion.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

17. Keep Your Focus

Mastery lies in the moment. When we focus fully on the task at hand, we elevate every interaction, turning ordinary into extraordinary.

- Train employees to stay present and attentive during interactions.
- Limit distractions that might affect service quality.
- Encourage mindfulness and concentration.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

18. Aesthetics are Super Important

First impressions are shaped by the eye, and excellence is revealed in the details. A clean, polished environment speaks louder than words, setting the tone for an unforgettable experience.

- Ensure facilities appear clean and well-maintained.
- Conduct daily inspections of cabins, dining areas, and restrooms to ensure they're spotless.
- Provide matching camp shirts to ensure a polished appearance.
- Clean up project messes from guest's view

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

CAMPFESSION

WHEN SOMEONE COMPLAINS
ABOUT ALL THE BUGS, I RESIST
THE URGE TO SAY "WELCOME TO
NATURE"

CAMPFESSION

I LOVE WHEN PEOPLE SAY HOW
PEACEFUL CAMP IS WHEN THEY HAVE
NO IDEA HOW MUCH CHAOS WE
HANDLE BEHIND THE SCENES

CAMPFESSION

I ALWAYS HAVE AN EXTRA MAP
FOR THE CAMPER WHO INSISTED
THEY DIDN'T WANT ONE

BEST PRACTICES

CAMPFESSION

SOMETIMES I HIDE IN THE
WALK-IN COOLER JUST FOR A
FEW MOMENTS OF PEACE

19. Steal Great Ideas

*Creativity is thinking up brand new ideas.
Innovation is taking old ideas and doing them better*

- Learn from other successful camps or ministries and adapt their best practices.
- Encourage staff to share ideas they've seen work elsewhere.
- Stay informed about trends.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

20. Solve Problems Immediately

So much of leadership is being able to solve problems with efficiency and effectiveness. If you aspire to lead, in any capacity, learn to solve problems. Our common experience is that problems tend to arise daily. Leading to prevent them is highly advisable but not always attainable. Developing leaders who can find solutions will always lead to profitability, encourage creativity, and promote quality

- Empower staff to resolve issues immediately. (like replacing a broken flashlight or correcting a meal order)
- Apologize sincerely and take responsibility for mistakes.
- Follow up to ensure guests are satisfied with resolutions.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

21. Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep

Trust is built on keeping promises, not making them lightly. It's better to under promise and over deliver than to risk disappointing those who rely on you.

- Set realistic expectations during interactions.
- Communicate delays or changes transparently and promptly.
- If an activity is canceled, offer an equally exciting alternative
- Make commitments carefully and honor them consistently.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

22. Give Warm Welcomes

People will forget what you do, they'll forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you made them feel.

- Make it a camp policy to greet every camper and parent with a warm smile.
- Make first impressions a priority during customer interactions.
- Teach staff the impact of positive body language.
- Reward staff who consistently exude warmth and friendliness.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

CAMPFESSION
I'VE PERFECTED THE SKILL TO
DISAPPEAR RIGHT BEFORE
BEING ASKED TO KILL A SPIDER

CAMPFESSION
IT KILLS ME WHEN PARENTS DON'T
READ THE NEWSLETTER....OR
EMAIL...OR TEXTS....OR WEBSITE...OR

CAMPFESSION
I CAN ALWAYS POINT OUT THE TEEN
GIRL THAT WILL COMPLAIN ABOUT
CELL SERVICE FIRST

THE WOW FACTOR

CAMPFESSION
I CAN TELL WITHIN 10 SECONDS
WHICH GUEST WILL ASK FOR
THE WIFI PASSWORD

23. Improvement Never Stops

True growth comes not from reaching a destination, but from the constant pursuit of better. Every step forward is an opportunity to refine, innovate, and listen - because improvement never stops, and neither should we.

- Continuously refine processes and procedures.
- Encourage innovation and experimentation among staff.
- Host regular staff meetings to brainstorm ways to improve the camper experience.
- Solicit regular feedback to identify improvement opportunities.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

24. Make Camp Fun

Fun is the spark that turns an experience into a memory. When we embrace creativity, laughter, and play, we infuse joy into every moment and make every interaction unforgettable.

- Infuse humor and playfulness into the camp experience.
- Encourage staff to create joyful moments for guests.
- Use themed events or creative promotions to engage and delight.
- Gamify tasks, like creating friendly competitions for the cleanest cabin or most engaged activity leader.
- Set up photo-worthy moments. Design spaces or items that encourage guests to take photos.
- Celebrate small wins with rewards or recognition.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

25. Give People a Reason to Come Back

Creating memories worth revisiting is the heart of lasting connections. When we serve the right way, we give people a reason to return - not just once, but year after year.

- Exceed expectations to create memorable experiences.
- Create annual traditions or events campers will want to return for every year.
- Regularly thank and acknowledge repeat customers.
- Write personalized thank-you notes. Reference specific moments from the interaction. Handwrite the note for authenticity
- Build strong relationships with local suppliers by treating them with kindness and respect.
- Invite vendors to camp events as a thank-you.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

26. Go Above and Beyond

We have an opportunity, a responsibility, to make magic in a world that desperately needs more of it.

- Surprise campers and guests with thoughtful gestures or perks. (Impromptu treats, like popsicles on a hot day, a late-night snack, or campfire treat delivered to their bunks. Include small surprises in their daily schedules, like a spontaneous group hike or water balloon fight)
- Offer complimentary add-ons.
- Look for small, low-cost ways to make experiences extraordinary.
- Train staff to identify moments where they can go above and beyond.
- Provide your team with a budget or flexibility to go above and beyond.

Identify My Camp's Faults:

Resolution Desired:

Actionable Improvement Steps:

CAMPFESSION

SAYING IT'S ALL PART OF THE
ADVENTURE IS HOW I EXPLAIN
THE LACK OF HOT WATER

CAMPFESSION

I'VE DEVELOPED A TALENT FOR
LOOKING CONCERNED WHILE A
GUEST COMPLAINS ABOUT THE
WEATHER, AS IF I CONTROL IT!

CAMPFESSION

WHEN A GROUP TELLS ME THEIR LOW
MAINTENANCE, I MENTALLY PREPARE FOR
AT LEAST 3 SPECIAL REQUESTS WITHIN
THE HOUR.

KEY QUESTIONS

CAMPFESSION
THE SMARTEST GUESTS BRING
THEIR OWN COFFEE AND
COFFEE MAKERS!

Key Questions

- How do we define true hospitality, and how does it differ from just meeting expectations?
- How do we ensure that every guest feels heard, understood, and valued during their time with us?
- What small gestures or actions can create a lasting positive impact on a camper or guest's experience?

- How do we make them feel part of something bigger than themselves?

- At what point do we need to trade some control in favor of trusting the campers and guests?

- Does a rule bring us closer to our ultimate goal, connecting with people, or does it take us further from the goal?

- Can you think of a time when we went out of your way to make someone feel welcome?
What did we do?

- In what ways can we empower our staff to make decisions that enhance the guest experience without needing constant approval

- How can we ensure consistency in delivering exceptional hospitality, even when facing challenges or busy times?

- What does hospitality look like when things don't go as planned, and how do we turn challenges into opportunities?

- What are 5 things we can do today to make our guests feel a sense of belonging the moment they arrive?

- Are there any groups we need to recover and rebuild trust with. How can we do that with them?

Steal This Books

Steal This: Ideas of Awesomeness
(updated: December 2018)

Steal This: Ideas for Outdoor Ed & STEMiness
(updated: Oct 2019)

Steal This: 50 Ways to Be Awesome
(updated: November 2019)

Steal This: Ideas of Portableness
(updated: October 2019)

Steal This: Ideas of Contemporary Craftiness
(updated: February 2020)

Steal This: Ideas of Virtualness
(updated: May 2020)

Steal This: Ideas for Time Fillers & Brain Breakiness
(updated: August 2020)

Steal This: Ideas of Camp Boxiness
(updated: April 2021)

Steal This: Ideas During Covidness
(updated: April 2021)

Steal This: Ideas of Social Distancedness
(updated: May 2021)

Steal This: Ideas for Escape Rooms & Puzzleness
(updated: October 2021)

Steal This: Ideas of Teambuildingness
(updated: October 2022)

Steal This: The BIG Book of Awesomeness
(updated: Feb 2023)

Steal This: Ideas of Games & Funness
(updated: October 2023)

Steal This: Ideas CAFÉ Bagginess
(updated: October 2023)

Steal This: 25 Rules for Unparalleled Hospitality
(updated: Feb 2025)

More from Chris

Good News Candy Co Virtual Escape Adventure
(updated: March 2021)

Time Quest Virtual Escape Adventure
(updated: February 2019)

Trivia Nights
(new ones added often)

Camp Coloring Pages
(updated: June 2020)

DIY Escape Crates & Boxes
(new ones added often)

Table Top Adventures
(new ones added often)

Escape Bags
(new ones added often)

Escape Room Walk-throughs
(new ones added often)

Princess Diary
(updated: October 2021)

Man Book
(updated: October 2021)

Church Notes
(updated: October 2022)

CAFE Bags
(new ones added often)

Coming Soon

- Steal This: Ideas of Staff Trainingness
- Steal This: Experiments of Wackiness
 - Steal This: Ideas of PVCness
- Steal This: Ideas for Escape Rooms & Puzzleness Vol. 2
- Steal This: Ideas of Contemporary Craftiness Vol. 2
 - Steal This: Ideas of Teambuildingness Vol. 2
 - Steal This: Ideas of Fun Fundraisingness



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