

## About The ACTIVATION CAMP

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My experience?

Standing in the passage of our teaching building I remember filling in the application for this camp. Last minute and half in tears and very lazily but honestly. I remember one of the questions being “name ten things you value”, and thinking “wow you can’t even come up with ten things you are definitely not going to get chosen”...but I did and the rest is history. The activation camp for me was like being on an island playing a game of survivor only there wasn’t prize money at the end of it all. No....I was fighting for my life. Each week took a different level of strength; challenged me mentally and emotionally in a different way. It took courage and challenged my willpower. I had to push past the pain of unacknowledged disappointments; fight off the voices of hyenas that said “you aren’t good enough” and tie a tourniquet around my bleeding heart because I was going to get to the summit. I was going to survive. I mean it’s challenging. I had to open the door to my room of moulded self-worth and webbed self-acceptance and decide that I was going to unpack every box no matter how much it hurt. I was going to clean every corner no matter how daunting it was. I had to repaint the walls; change the floor and get new furniture and now I can enjoy being around myself. I like the person I see in the mirror. I value her and understand why I fight for her. I came into the camp really at a low point, and those come and go, but I realised that so much of who I was and what I felt was saturated with the thoughts and ideas of other people. I describe myself without thinking of all the things the world thought of me and I was drowning....drowning in the ocean of opinions that only existed to fit me into a mould that I was not meant to fit into. My spirit was broken; I had no hope for the future with regards to happiness. I was on autopilot letting my life pass me by. Whilst going through weeks - tackling honesty, self-love, vulnerability, trust - I realised the lacks in my life. Each week was different and pushed me in various ways. There were times I wanted to quit, because growth hurts, but I held on. I think it was the first thing I have ever done for myself; without anyone’s consent and I guess that decision in itself was a step towards growth. I can honestly say I am probably a better person to interact and engage with now. Someone who is in a better position to fulfil their purpose and is definitely happier with their decisions.

What have I gained?

I have gained tools that are helping me to live life better. I am one of those people who need details, who lives their life as a manual but I have learned that although we have the same tools, the journey is not the same and thus you have to adjust. The struggles are different, so adjust Lulu, adjust. Life is really a rollercoaster but the lessons learnt have taught me and made it easier to scream with the highs and hold on for dear life during the lows and to know the difference between the two. It has taught me that I was unhappy because I failed to communicate my needs or expectations. I let my situations take over instead of being in control. Self-assurance and confidence. I am now able to stand up for Lulu, to come to her defence and fight for her happiness (and sometimes sanity). The difference now is that previously I existed alongside life and let it happen around me but now I am able to occupy the space that I exist in – I grew from being a student that felt intimidated, inferior, and inadequate to being able to contribute in discussions and asking when I don’t understand. A student who is able to engage to get the best learning experience without the fear of being wrong.

From being someone who was too afraid to express their opinion especially in a world of very strongly opinionated millennials to being able to articulate my thoughts even when they deviate from the norm. I can now look at the person for who they are, not what I need from them. I engage in relationships, especially with friends and my parents as a contributor and not as a passive dependant. I can communicate my grievances without hiding in my shell and drowning in self-pity. I have gained a different perspective on life....my life has changed for the better.

Why this should be offered to as many students as possible?

If you had asked me this in January I would have told certain people don't need it but having gone through this and also engaging with people about it I can confidently say it is the groundwork that determines the trajectory of your life. Before university we are essentially children following the lead of their parents and I guess university is that freedom in between where one has the learned behaviour from home but also interacts with society and sees different levels to life before everything is consolidated and life as an adult begins. Some of us, most of us, fall into the trap that is not developing one's own values; one's own thoughts. We don't ask ourselves what we are chasing or why we are chasing it; we don't interrogate our hurts and ways of thinking. We just roll over during this period and play dead and end up inheriting a barren life because of pain or unrealised potential or stifled talent because we didn't take time to spend time with ourselves. In this 'instant' era, with so much connectivity but really no connection, it has become overwhelmingly apparent how many of us live fake lives or chase fame in the quest for acceptance but we have not realised that the root has been a poor sense of self. And indeed every person needs an opportunity, deserves an opportunity, to realise themselves. For me this was a major turning point....I am certain my life would look very different having not done this course.