

Title:

Boot Camp Short, Sharp Shock

Word Count:

419

Summary:

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Keywords:

NOT available to public

Article Body:

The term 'boot camp' can have a multitude of meanings, though through them all there remains a common theme - hard work, and no talking back! Perhaps most frequently associated with the military, the phrase has been adopted by a variety of other organisations seeking to imbue their efforts with the same no-nonsense mentality, and as the popularity of boot camp type programs increases, it seems that a touch of discipline is what many of us need.

The question of whether societal expectations have undergone a gross unleashing is not a new one, and it is a fairly well established tradition that any generation will lament the habits and preferences of the one that follows. It is arguably only in recent years, however, that criticisms of the current generation's excesses have trickled down from above and younger people find themselves questioning their own choices. While debates rage on regarding our apparent unwillingness to assume responsibility for our actions, an increasing number of people are taking drastic action to change their lives for good by engaging in boot camps of various kinds.

While one of the most notorious types of boot camp must remain the one to which parents send their errant teens, a huge number of these discipline driven programs are specifically designed for consenting adults who find themselves unable to deal with particular problems alone. 'Fat camps', for instance, are available for overweight people who have been unsuccessful in losing weight with solitary dieting. Employing the strict routines and rigorously filled timetables formerly associated with the military, these camps help those who may have been unable to help themselves.

But do these kinds of programs really work? Some would argue that while

immediate effects are certainly seen, the achievement of more long-term results requires something more. It could even be argued that rather than bypassing our 'blame-someone-else' culture, these boot camps perpetuate this mindset by using what might be described as bully tactics to forcibly change the subject's lifestyle. And while behavioral therapy can be effective, can what was learned in the strict environment of boot camp really be translated into every day life?

Most experts agree that boot camps are not a long-term solution, but rather a stepping-stone toward more permanent change. Providing a short, sharp shock, they deal out a quick reality check that can lead a person to seek out a more enduring plan for change. Boot camps are perhaps not the answer, but they are a good place to start looking for it.