

About 5 years ago, I walked into a depressing office building filled with people from all over the state that I didn't know, about to attend a summer camp my parents made me join. A boring looking man walked up to the front of the room and started babbling on and on about finance and marketing and teamwork and ZOG (zest, optimism, and grit). Throughout the camp, this "cheesy" acronym was used in every sentence the counselors spoke or wrote.

The camp might've been dreadful, but my to-be 7th grade self was insistent on winning the competition we were working towards. Unfortunately, my teammates who were also forced to be there were too busy playing video games on their laptop to care. So I presented my dilemma to the counselors expecting them to give my teammates a stern lecture, but instead I was told to "use my ZOG". Frustrated, I stormed back to my desk, ignored the problem, and took on everyone else's work including my own. That night, I pondered on solutions and realized that maybe if I could show them how much enjoyment they could get from working hard and winning, and bring the ZOG to them, they would actually participate.

By acting like the bleak office building was actually a playful and energetic workspace, it made the team more excited about what they were doing. And over time, somehow, the building actually started looking brighter. Though we didn't end up winning the competition, my zestiness made me feel like I didn't just waste two weeks of my precious summer. The next year, I was invited back, but to the alumni accelerator program! And 5 years later, I ended up as an intern working alongside the people who taught me to be my zestful, optimistic, and gritty self. Not only have I been able to achieve so much with this mindset, but I also have been able to bring in so much joy and serenity into my life. So, I believe in ZOG.