



Friday, 18 February 2022

We Are Only Leaders

We are not experts.

We're your next-door neighbours.

We're not perfect, we are just parents like you.

We don't have any more spare time or energy than you do, we all work full time and juggle our families and our schedules and try to keep it all together as best we can. The only difference between us is that we believe in what Boy Scouting has to offer. So much so, that we contribute our time, our miles, and our talents to help our sons and your sons grow in Scouting.

- We complete authorization forms, budgets, and registrations, and fill our homes with boxes of paperwork that you will never see.
- We are required to take 13-20 hours of training the first year, as well as attend roundtable meetings every month, so that we can meet our greatest challenge providing a variety of programs which meet the needs and interests of very individual boys.
- We try to involve parents who want us to understand that they don't have the time to drive on outings or help at meetings. We rejoice at the generosity of others.
- Sometimes we find ourselves going in too many directions, We run out of steam. We have memory lapses. Communication lines break down. Time slips by. But that doesn't mean we don't care.
- So many evenings we spend on the phone, seeking advice and support from other leaders when disappointments or problems occur. "How do I keep my boy's attention?" "What are your ideas for the ceremony?" "How do you work with boys in three different grades?"
- Our dining tables are covered with bits of rope, menus, tour permits, and merit badge cards for each and every boy in the troop. A couple of them won't show up, and don't think to call and let us know. Sometimes we feel unappreciated.
- Yet, these boys can fill us with pride at their determination and accomplishments. Their smiles light up a room; and when they say "Thank You" it makes it all worth it.
- We help these boys build relationships. Some struggle more than others. Trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly... is encouraged by the Scout Oath and Law. And sometimes we too must learn these lessons over and over again with the boys. But we are willing to keep learning.

Please be patient if we appear distracted or frustrated or overwhelmed at times. Forgive us if we are not the kind of Boy Scout Leader you would be if you had the time. Instead, provide us with encouragement or offer your help. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers. We are, after all, only mentors...role models...leaders. Volunteers who have taken an oath to give these boys, your boys, the most precious gift we have to offer- the gift of time.



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Leaders - The Essential Link

Perhaps this article should be titled "Leaders - The Forgotten Link". Most of the emphasis of the Scouting program is on the youth, and rightly so. But the crucial link between the youth and the program is, the Leader.

What is a Leader? In a lot of cases, it is a parent, who has been talked into "helping out" with the section. In some cases, they move up a section or two, and in rare cases, they continue on as a Leader after their own children have finished in the Group. Why they continue is not a mystery. It is because they know that they are making a difference in the lives of the youth they lead.

There has been a lot of talk about the Introductory Interview, and Essential Training over the years, but in most instances, these two facets of a Leader's career are passed by. This is due mainly to the fact that Leaders are hard to find, harder to keep, and no one wishes to "turn off" a new Leader by insisting upon these two elements. This may be fine, but somewhere we must attempt to "turn on" these new Leaders to the goals, aims and objectives of the Scouting program, and to show them just how worthwhile it is.

The main emphasis, of late, has been increasing our enrolment, keeping those numbers up, and maybe even giving the youth a better program. Unfortunately, the numbers do not rise by themselves, and the program doesn't run itself either. You can deliver a step-by-step program guide, but if the Leader is not able to carry it out, then the program will not succeed. However, a Leader who is knowledgeable, "turned-on" to the successes of Scouting, and able to create programs on their own, usually produces a successful program, and as a result, the numbers remain the same, or increase. Unfortunately, though, these Leaders are hampered by others.

If the Leader in the Section preceding, is not nearly as capable, then the number of youth going-up to the next section will not be as large.

So, how do we excite these, Leaders? The standard answer is - Train them. However, most of the Leaders that do not have any training have any one of several hundred excuses. Most of the excuses are valid, but a lot are motivated by apathy. Again, how do you motivate? Seems a little circular, doesn't it?

One answer to this dilemma may be to bring the Trainers to the Leaders

Yes, I know, this is a lot of work for Trainers, but it takes dedicated Scouters to produce dedicated Scouters.

Hundreds of courses are cancelled every year due to the enrolment not being enough. How many is enough? The answer should be one. One more trained and dedicated Leader is more important. On numerous occasions, I have heard or overheard about training courses having been cancelled (sometimes again). The Leaders affected not only have rearranged their own personal schedules to



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attend, but also end up being disappointed. How much more work is then needed to undo the damage?

In summary, without trained, enthusiastic Leaders, our Scouting program will not thrive or survive. And survive it must do, as it is the only all-round youth program that also teaches and encourages decent moral behaviour. Our country, and our youth depend on it. Let's hit our 100th anniversary on a high.

Learning About Leadership

"Learning About Leadership" is adapted from Patrol and Troop Leadership, the handbook on leadership development written for Patrol Leaders and published by the Boy Scouts of America in 1972.

Why Leadership?

In most football teams the quarterback is the team leader. Why is that? Is there something magic about the position? Does he automatically become the leader -- the guy who makes the team go -- when he is named quarterback by the coach?

No, there's more to it than that. Lots more. Usually, he is named quarterback because he's already a leader. He's already the kind of guy the other players like to follow.

And if the coach is wrong about him, he probably won't stay quarterback very long. If he can't lead the team, he won't have much value even if he can hit a receiver at 40 yards.

Because every successful team must have a leader that goes for your Scouting team, too -- your patrol and your troop. In fact, if the patrol and troop are to succeed, you need several leaders. Guys like yourself who want to try "quarterbacking" in Scouting. One of the aims of your local council Junior Leader Training

Conference is to show you how to become a better leader.

Let's begin by being honest about it. This handbook is not going to make you a good leader. You are not going to find 5 or 10 simple rules to follow to become a good leader. If leadership were as easy as that, almost everyone would be a good leader. And you know that most people are not.

There are no rules for leadership. But there are certain skills that every good leader seems to have. You learned about them at your local council Junior Leader Training Conference and have practiced some of them in your troop at home.

Some of these skills you may already have even without knowing it. That's the funny thing about leadership -- a good leader doesn't necessarily know how he does it. He just does what comes naturally and the others follow him. Although he may not know it, he has mastered the skills of leadership.

This doesn't mean we guarantee that you'll be elected student council president next year. Or that you



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will be the Super Bowl quarterback 15 years from now or President of the United States in 35 years. But we do guarantee that you can make yourself a much better leader in just a few weeks or months.

What Is Leadership?

Leadership is a process of getting things done through people. The quarterback moves the team toward a touchdown. The senior patrol leader guides the troop to a high rating at the camporee. The mayor gets the people to support new policies to make the city better.

These leaders are getting things done by working through people -- football players, Scouts, and ordinary citizens. They have used the process of leadership to reach certain goals.

Leadership is not a science. So being a leader is an adventure because you can never be sure whether you will reach your goal -- at least this time. The touchdown drive may end in a fumble. The troop may have a bad weekend during the camporee. Or the city's citizens may not be convinced that the mayor's policies are right.

So, these leaders have to try again, using other methods. But they still use the same process the process of good leadership.

Leadership means responsibility. It's adventure and often fun, but it always means responsibility. The leader is the guy the others look to to get the job done. So don't think your job as a troop leader or a staff member will be just an honour. It's more than that. It means that the other Scouts expect you to take the responsibility of getting the job done. If you lead, they will do the job. If you don't, they may expect you to do the job all by yourself.

That's why it's important that you begin right now to learn what leadership is all about. Wear your badge of office proudly. It does not automatically make you a good leader. But it identifies you as a Scout who others want to follow -- if you'll let them by showing leadership.

You are not a finished leader. No one ever is, not even a president or prime minister. But you are an explorer of the human mind because now you are going to try to learn how to get things done through people. This is one of the keys to leadership.

You are searching for the secrets of leadership. Many of them lie locked inside you. As you discover them and practice them, you will join a special group of people-skilled leaders.

Good exploring -- both in this handbook and with the groups you will have a chance to lead.

The Tasks of Leadership

In this section, we will consider several common statements about the people who serve in leadership positions throughout our world. After you have read the statement, decide for yourself whether you



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feel it is true or false and why you think it is.

Here is the first one. True or false?

The only people who lead have some kind of leadership job, such as chairman, coach, or king. Do you think that's true? Don't you believe it. It's true that chairmen, coaches, and kings lead, but people who hold no leadership position also lead.

And you can find some people who have a leader's title and ought to lead. But they don't. In other words, you are not a leader because you wear the leader's hat. Or because you wear the patrol leader's insignia on your uniform. You are a leader only when you are getting things done through other people.

Leadership, then, is something people do. Some people inherit leadership positions, such as kings, or nobles, or heads of family businesses. Some are elected: chairman, governor, patrol leader.

Some are appointed, such as a coach, a city manager, or a den chief. Or they may just happen to be there when a situation arises that demands leadership. A disaster occurs, or a teacher doesn't show up when class begins, or a patrol leader becomes sick on a campout.

Try this statement. Is it true or false?

Leadership is a gift. If you are born with it, you can lead. If you are not, you can't. Some people will tell you that. Some really believe it. But it's not so.

Leadership does take skill. Not everyone can learn all the skills of leadership as well as anyone else. But most people can learn some of them -- and thus develop their own potential.

You don't have to be born with leadership. Chances are, you weren't. But you were born with a brain. If you can learn to swim or play checkers or do maths, you can learn leadership skills.

How about this statement. True or false?

"Leader" is another word for "boss."

Well, what do you mean by "boss"? A guy who pushes and orders other people around. No, a leader is not one of those. (But some people try to lead this way.)

Or do you mean a boss is somebody who has a job to do and works with other people to get it done? This is true. A leader is a boss in that sense.

True or false?

Being a leader in a Scout troop is like being a leader anywhere else.



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This one is true. When you lead in a Scout troop, you will do many of the same things as any leader anywhere.

The important thing now is Scouting gives you a chance to lead. You can learn how to lead in Scouting. You can practice leadership in Scouting. Then you can lead other groups, too. The skills you will need are very much the same.

What Does a Leader Deal with?

Every leader deal with just two things. Here they are the job and the group.

The job is what's to be done. The "job" doesn't necessarily mean work. It could be playing a game. It could be building a skyscraper. It could be getting across an idea.

A leader is needed to get the job done. If there were no job, there would be no need for a leader.

The group, such as a patrol, is the people who do the job. And in many cases, the group continues after the job is done. This is where leading gets tough, as you'll see later.

Think about this situation. Mark has a lot of firewood to split. There he is, all alone with his ax. He's got a job to do. Is he a leader?

We have to say in this situation that Mark won't be leading. Why? No group. There's nobody on the job but Mark.

Here's another example. Danny and three of his friends are on their bikes. They have no place to go. They're just riding slowly, seeing how close they can get to each other. Is Danny -- or any one of the others -- a leader?

From what we know, we have to say no. Why? No job. There's a group of friends, but nothing special to be done. You don't need a leader for that. (You don't need a group, either.)

The Job of a Leader

A leader works with two things: a job and a group. You can always tell when a leader succeeds, because:

1. The job gets done.
2. The group holds together.

Let's see why it takes both.

Frank was elected patrol leader. That same week, the patrol had a job cleaning up an old cemetery.



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It was Frank's first leadership position, and he wanted it to go right. In his daydream he could see the Scoutmaster praising him for the great clean up job. So when Saturday morning came, Frank and the patrol went over to the cemetery, and Frank started to get the job done.

He hollered. He yelled. He threatened. He called them names. He worked like a tiger himself. It was a rough day, but the cemetery got cleaned up.

Frank went home sort of proud, sort of mad, and very tired.

"How'd things go, Frank?" the Scoutmaster asked a few days later.

"Good."

"No problems?"

"No." Frank wondered what he meant by that.

"Oh! Well, a couple of the boys in your patrol asked me if they could change to another patrol. I thought maybe something had gone wrong...."

And that was how Frank learned that getting the job done isn't all there is to leadership. He had really given the group a hard time, and now they wanted to break up.

Almost anybody with a whip and a mean temper can get a job done. But in doing it, they usually destroy the group. And that's not leadership. The group must go on.

Another new patrol leader called a meeting at his house. Everybody seemed to be hungry when they came. So they got some snacks from the kitchen. Then they tossed a football around. It began to get dark, and one by one they went home. Everybody had fun. But the patrol meeting -- the job -- never started.

One of the following statements is the message of this section. Which one?

- a. Nice guys finish last.
- b. Mean guys finish last.
- c. Leaders get the job done and keep the group going.
- d. Leaders have a special title or badge that makes others like to follow.

We'll take the third one. Will you?

What Affects Leadership?



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Leadership is not magic that comes out of a leader's head. It's skill. The leader learns how to get the job done and still keep the group together.

Does this mean that the leader does the same things in every situation? No. Here's why.

Leadership differs with the leader, the group, and the situation.

Leaders -- like other people are all different. No leader can take over another leader's job and do it the same way.

Groups are different, too. A great football coach might have difficulty leading an orchestra. A good sergeant might be a poor Scoutmaster. So when a leader changes groups, he changes the way he leads.

Situations differ, too. The same leader with the same group must change with conditions. A fellow leading a group discussion needs to change his style of leadership when a fire breaks out. As a Scout leader, you probably can't lead the group in the rain the same as you do in the sunshine.

An effective leader, then, must be alert at all times to the reaction of the members of the group; the conditions in which he may find himself; and be aware of his own abilities and reactions.

Leadership Develops

Picture a long scale like a yardstick. On the low end, there are no leadership skills. On the other end, there is a complete set of leadership skills.

Everyone is somewhere between those ends!

Where do you find yourself at this time? Unknowingly, you may be further up the scale than you realize. As a staff member you'll now have the opportunity to find out.

How Will You Know you are Improving?

You learn leadership best by working with groups. That is something like learning swimming best by getting into the water.

Yet you can't keep track of your progress without a guide. You must know and understand what you are trying to learn. This means you have to know what the skills of leadership are.