

# **Boy Leadership in the Scout Troop: A Supplement to the Senior Patrol Leader Handbook and the Patrol Leader Handbook**

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This document is intended to supplement the Senior Patrol Leader's Handbook and the Patrol Leader's Handbook. It provides advice on leadership techniques which are both important and practical. A scout who reads, learns, and practices these techniques can almost be assured of success in their leadership role, both in scouting and elsewhere.

What is leadership? The word and the concept mean different things to different people.

The definition I'd like to adopt for boy leaders in the scouting program is as follows:

Leadership is the process of taking care of scouts whom the leader is responsible for (i.e., junior scouts). The idea that will come up repeatedly in this document is that the relationship between a leader and a junior scout<sup>1</sup> is an implicit contract of mutual trust/dependence: each trusts (and depends on) the other to "take care of" them.

The junior scout's contractual obligation is to take care of the leader. The junior scout does this by doing what the leader asks of him (within reason). If the junior scout is unwilling to do what the leader asks, the junior scout shouldn't have elected the leader in the first place! The leader is counting on the junior scouts to carry out their part of the bargain. If the junior scouts don't do what the leader asks (again, within reason), the troop/patrol will not be successful. Nobody wants to be part of an unsuccessful troop/patrol.

In exchange for doing what the leader needs them to do, the junior scouts depend on the superior (i.e., the leader) to make prudent decisions, to communicate effectively both up and down the chain of command, to be a compassionate and effective mentor/teacher, and to well represent their interests to superiors (e.g., at meetings of the Patrol Leaders Council). The junior scouts are counting on the leader to take care of them.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term "junior scout" and "junior" refer to subordinates in the leadership structure of the troop/patrol. A scout who is "junior" in this sense to his leader is not necessarily younger or less experienced than the leader. For example, in this sense, a 17-year old scout with six years of experience in the troop is "junior" to a 15 year old Senior Patrol Leader with only three years of experience in the troop.

## **Chain of Command**

One concept that all scouts need to understand is the Chain of Command in their troop. Chain of Command refers to the structure of responsibility. Who is responsible to “whom?”

To begin with, note that the issue isn’t “Who is the boss of whom?” Being “the boss” and ordering people around isn’t what leadership is all about. Leadership is about taking care of others. The leader takes care of those he leads and the scouts being led take care of their leader.

The operational head of the troop is the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster is responsible to the troop committee for running the troop’s program. The Senior Patrol Leader is likewise responsible to the Scoutmaster for virtually the same operational program issues. Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders and Patrol Leaders are responsible to the SPL.

Within a patrol, the Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) is responsible to the Patrol Leader. Other patrol office holders and patrol members are responsible to both the PL and the APL.

Other troop office holders (e.g., Quartermaster, Scribe, Historian, etc.) are responsible to the ASPL.

So that is the “Chain of Command” for a scout troop. Why is this important? Because using the Chain of Command is an important key for enabling leaders to lead, which in turn is an important component of the troop’s success. Without a Chain of Command, it would be difficult for leaders to lead. Whom would they lead? Who would any particular scout in the troop know to follow?

Let’s look at the way that the Chain of Command is supposed to work.

When the SPL needs something done (e.g., building a fire for a troop campfire program), the SPL might ask a Patrol Leader to do it, who in turn might organize his patrol to build the fire. Who is in charge of the patrol building the fire? The Patrol Leader. This is the way it is supposed to work – the Patrol Leader is leading the effort.

What would have happened if the SPL had gone directly to the scouts in the patrol, bypassing the Patrol Leader entirely? Who would be “in charge” of the patrol building the fire? Certainly not the Patrol Leader. He may not even be aware of the SPL’s desire (he wasn’t told). So either nobody is in charge or the SPL is in charge. Nobody being in charge is obviously a recipe for disaster. The SPL is too busy trying to run the troop to supervise every little thing like this. So the troop suffers if the SPL bypasses the Chain of Command by NOT using the Patrol Leader as he is supposed to do.

The above is an example of “jumping the Chain of Command” in a “top-down” fashion. The results are just as bad if the Chain of Command is violated going up the responsibility chain as well. Here’s an example:

Scouts Bobby Jones and Steve Brown of the Mallard Duck Patrol would like to leave camp to go to the camp trading post. They approach the Senior Patrol Leader to ask permission. The SPL is in a bad position if every troop member does this. Is it reasonable to expect him to keep track of all 45 or so troop members? If he gives permission, will he be able to remember which scouts he gave permission to go where and when he expects each of them back? It is probably unreasonable to expect one person to remember that kind of details. Far better would be for Bobby and Steve to approach their Patrol Leader for permission. If the Patrol Leader isn’t sure whether it is OK, he can in turn consult with the SPL. If the SPL agrees that it is OK, the Patrol Leader can give permission. Who then is responsible for keeping track of where Bobby and Steve are? The Patrol Leader. This is the way it is supposed to work. But if Bobby and Steve bypass the Patrol Leader and go directly to the SPL, they both force the SPL to do the Patrol Leader’s job (which he probably won’t be able to do very well because he is so busy doing other things) and preclude the Patrol Leader from doing their job.

Lesson learned: USE the Chain of Command, both going up and down the responsibility chain. If you don’t use the Chain of Command, it won’t function and the troop will be dramatically less efficient at virtually everything it attempts to do.

## **Delegation**

An important part of leadership is getting things done. Superiors in the Chain of Command are often asking you to do things. The Senior Patrol Leader is getting requests both from the Patrol Leaders and his Scoutmaster almost constantly. He is surely unable to personally accomplish all the things that he is asked to do. So how in the world will they get done? He must delegate.

Delegation means asking someone else to do something for you. The Senior Patrol Leader can’t run the troop by himself. When the Scoutmaster asks him to do something, does he have to do it personally? Sometimes the answer is yes. But usually, he can (and should, and often must) ask someone else to do it for him.

### *Delegation of Authority versus Delegation of Responsibility.*

When the Senior Patrol Leader authorizes a Patrol Leader to in turn authorize his patrol members to leave camp, using the buddy system, to go to the camp trading post, he is delegating authority to the Patrol Leader. Who is responsible for ensuring that the Patrol Leader uses this delegated authority responsibly? Well, the Patrol Leader is obviously responsible to the Senior Patrol Leader for ensuring that he carries out this task well. But if the Patrol Leader doesn’t do a very good job at exercising judgment in authorizing his patrol members to leave camp (let’s say that he doesn’t insist that they use the buddy system), who is at fault? Well, the Patrol Leader may be partially at fault. If the SPL

made it clear that the buddy system had to be used, then the Patrol Leader certainly should be insisting on it. But ultimately, the responsibility remains with the Senior Patrol Leader. If the Scoutmaster asked the Senior Patrol Leader to do it, he expects the Senior Patrol Leader to provide whatever leadership is necessary to ensure that the task is adequately carried out. What could the SPL have done differently to ensure that the task was adequately carried out? Well, he could have trained the PL better regards his intentions. He could have supervised the Patrol Leader better to ensure that he was doing the task adequately.

While the Senior Patrol Leader can delegate his authority, he cannot delegate his responsibility. The SPL remains responsible for virtually everything that happens in the troop – both good and bad.

*Good things:* The Senior Patrol Leader is responsible for all the good things that happen in the troop (and the Patrol Leader is responsible for all the good things that happen in the patrol) because he has laid the foundation for them to happen. When the troop's leaders are effective in operating the Chain of Command, it is because the Senior Patrol Leader has insisted that it be used effectively. It is also because the Senior Patrol Leader has effectively mentored his Patrol Leaders (just as the Senior Patrol Leader is being effectively mentored himself by the Scoutmaster).

*Bad things:* The Senior Patrol Leader likewise is responsible for the bad things that happen in the troop (and the Patrol Leader is responsible for the bad things that happen in the patrol). It is important to learn from mistakes in order to keep them from happening again. While this burden of responsibility might seem exceptional for a boy leader in a scout troop, you do not bear it alone. You have help. The Scoutmaster is constantly supervising the actions of the Senior Patrol Leader to ensure that any "bad things" that happen aren't too bad (just as the Senior Patrol Leader is constantly supervising his Patrol Leaders). A less than optimal situation isn't any reason to get too upset. "Bad things" are actually good in a way – they are an opportunity to learn a lesson which might turn such bad prospects in the future into better results.

When the SPL asks the PL to do something, he needs to ensure that he has adequately communicated to (and trained if necessary) the PL to do what needs to be done adequately. Further, he needs to provide adequate supervision to the PL to ensure that the PL is carrying out his request adequately. If after asking the PL to do something, his supervision reveals that the PL obviously didn't understand either what needed to be done or how to do it, the Senior Patrol Leader will need to step in to provide further guidance/training/teaching of the Patrol Leader as necessary in order for him to be able to adequately complete whatever tasks are required.

Like most things about leadership, this applies at all levels of the Chain of Command. Senior Patrol Leaders aren't the only ones who can delegate any more than they are the only scouts who can exercise leadership. Just as a Senior Patrol Leader often delegates his authority to Patrol Leaders (and needs to then supervise them), the Patrol Leader might further delegate his authority to one of the scouts in his Patrol. Example: "Hey,

Johnny, could you come over here with Bill and Steve and lead them in building a fire for the troop campfire program this evening? The program will only last about an hour, so it needn't be a very big fire.”

### *When to Delegate*

In general, most tasks should be done by the lowest level of responsibility which is able to accomplish them adequately. While the Senior Patrol Leader could certainly accomplish virtually all tasks in the troop on his own, if he had enough time, the fact is that he doesn't have enough time. If he delegates his responsibilities and moves his role from that of doer to that of delegator/supervisor, he will see several beneficial things happen:

- He will be less stressed and overburdened. This is certainly a good thing – for both him and the other scouts who have to deal with him.
- Other boys will get more leadership experience (from being given the opportunity themselves to exercise delegation and subsequent supervision skills). If the Senior Patrol Leader personally did everything himself, not only would he be depriving himself of true leadership experience, but he would be depriving his junior scouts of the same thing.
- Other boys will get the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the troop. Everybody likes to feel needed and appreciated. If the Senior Patrol Leader personally did everything himself, he would be depriving other troop members of this desirable feeling of well being.

### **Supervision**

In the delegation section above, we discussed the necessity of providing adequate supervision when you have delegated something. Follows are the steps involved in effective supervision:

*Understand the task.* Obviously, if you don't well understand the task that needs to be done, you won't be able to convey it very well to a junior scout. So, for example, if the Senior Patrol Leader is asked to do something by the Scoutmaster, and the SPL doesn't know how to do it, he needs to tell that to the Scoutmaster – so that she can teach him what he needs to know. After delegating a task to a junior scout in the Chain of Command, a leader needs to ask for feedback to ensure that the junior understands what is needed – this provides an ideal opportunity to clarify anything that isn't understood very well.

*Assess the task.* The leader must understand how urgent/important the task is. If it is extremely important or especially urgent, this suggests that you need to convey this urgency/importance to the junior to whom you are delegating. Further, it suggests that you ought to delegate it to someone whom you are more certain will do the task well.

*Evaluate proficiency.* The leader must evaluate both how well HE could do the task and how well the scout to whom he is delegating can do the task. If the delegated scout can probably do it a lot better than the leader can, the leader should probably supervise fairly closely just to better learn how to do it himself.

However, leaders generally get to be leaders because they are good at accomplishing things. So, in the more likely case that the leader believes the scout being delegated to might need some help learning how to do the task, he either has to instruct the scout himself, or ask another experienced scout to teach the delegated scout the necessary skill.

*Intensity of supervision.* A leader who has delegated something needs to determine how much supervision is required.

- Close Supervision. This is only appropriate for extremely important, complex, or especially difficult tasks. Six steps are required for minimum close supervision:
  1. Delegate the task to a junior scout. Ask the junior scout to rephrase what you asked them to do in order to ensure that they understood you. Estimate approximately how much time will be required to do the task. The scout(s) you delegate to might be able to help you make a good estimate.
  2. After about one-fifth of the time has elapsed, you visit the scout(s) doing the task or ask the scout to whom you delegated to give you a progress update. Note that the project may not be very far along at this point.
  3. At the half-way point, visit again, or ask for another progress update. By this time, the task should be well underway. If necessary, provide specific guidance regards how to best accomplish the task if you think that it would markedly improve the efficiency or quality of the project.
  4. At the three-quarter point visit, you should check the final preparations. Depending on the quality of the effort at this point, you need to decide whether or not to increase your level of supervision in the time remaining. If it looks like the project will be delayed quite a bit, it may be necessary to go up the Chain of Command to warn the leaders who delegated the task to you that there may be a delay.
  5. Just prior to finishing the project, make one final spot check to ensure the project is finished adequately.
  6. Finally, after the project is finished, take the scout(s) aside to whom you delegated the task and tell them how well they did. If they did well, tell them! If there was something that they could have done better, tell them that too – and tell them how they might do it better in the future.
- Normal Supervision. Four steps are required:
  1. Delegate the task to a junior scout.
  2. Visit at the halfway point.
  3. Make a final spot check.
  4. Critique the final product.
- Minimal Supervision. Three steps are required:
  1. Delegate the task to a junior scout
  2. Visit at the three-quarter point or make a final spot-check.

### 3. Critique the final product.

#### **Following**

Virtually all leaders are themselves followers to some other leader. Even the Senior Patrol Leader is a “follower” to the Scoutmaster, and, in a sense, to the Patrol Leaders’ Council. Part of being a good leader is being a good follower. Without good followers, there can be no good leaders. How does one go about being a good follower?

*Verifying the task.* When a leader asks you to do something, it is important to ensure that you understand what they want done. The best way to do this is to paraphrase back to them what you think they asked you to do. If, after you do this, it is clear that you understand adequately, the leader will tell you so. If you have a misconception, the leader will correct you.

Example: The Scoutmaster asks the Senior Patrol Leader to “Please ensure that the patrols are done with dinner by six o’clock so that we can go on our evening hike.” The SPL might then say to the Scoutmaster, “So you want me to ensure that everybody starts dinner by six o’clock so that we can go on our evening hike?” The SPL obviously didn’t get the message properly, and the Scoutmaster can then correct the misunderstanding immediately. But if the SPL thought that the Scoutmaster intended for the troop to start eating by 6 o’clock instead of finishing by 6 o’clock, the SPL obviously wouldn’t be able to ensure that the project was adequately accomplished.

*Asking Questions.* If a superior asks you to do something and you either don’t understand what they are asking you to do or you have no idea how to do it (or you are pretty sure that you are incapable of getting it done adequately), you owe it to yourself – and them – to communicate this to them immediately. Remember – leadership is about taking care of each other. When your leader asks you to do something, you need to take care of them, by making it clear to them if you think there might be a problem. The earlier you point out such things the better – it gives the leader a chance to formulate a revised plan. Perhaps he will better elaborate what he wants you to do or how he thinks you ought to go about doing it. Perhaps he will assign other more experienced scouts to help you learn how to do whatever needs to be done. Perhaps he will assign the task to another more experienced scout and ask you to watch him do it so that you can learn how to do it yourself.

*Reporting completion or problems.* When a superior asks you to do something, not only do you have to do it as well as you can (i.e., in the scout oath, you promise to “do my best”), but you have to report back that you have accomplished it. If a task is important enough for a leader to ask you to do it, and it is important enough for you to do, surely it is important enough to go back to that leader when you are done to tell them that you have done it! If you don’t do this, the leader might wonder what the status is. Further, just as you owe it to them to report back when the project is completed, you owe it to them to give them periodic updates throughout the project and to notify them as soon as possible if any problems arise which might cause the project to either take longer than

anticipated, or to have a less than optimal outcome. The leader needs to know about problems as soon as possible in order to take them into account.

Example: If you've been asked to build a campfire for a troop campfire program that is to begin at 7 pm, but you and your patrol are having trouble gathering adequate firewood, and you think that you may not have the fire built by 7 pm, you need to tell this to the leader who asked you to do it as soon as possible. He needs to know this so that he can plan an alternate activity for the troop from 7 pm until you have the fire ready to go. Perhaps he will ask the troop Gamemaster to lead the troop in a game or two. But the sooner you inform him the more time he will have to work with the Gamemaster to develop an alternate plan.

## **Communicating**

Communication is one of the most important responsibilities of leadership.

Examples:

- a) Scout Jimmy Boosman in the Foxbat patrol is, for whatever reason, unable to attend a troop meeting. At that meeting, application forms are passed out for an upcoming campout. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that Jimmy gets an application? It is the Foxbat Patrol Leader's responsibility. Jimmy is counting on his patrol leader to "take care of him" by ensuring that anything important at the meeting is somehow passed on to him in a timely fashion. Jimmy's Patrol Leader should take an extra copy of the application and call up Jimmy to notify him of what he needs to know so as not to miss out on this opportunity. Jimmy's Patrol Leader should do this automatically, without being asked. It is not easy to be a good Patrol Leader. A good Patrol Leader is constantly on the lookout for what needs to be done to "take care of" the members of his patrol. If a Patrol Leader does this, he will tend to have no problems with the scouts of his patrol loyally doing whatever he asks of them. Such a patrol will tend to be quite successful in everything they set out to do. It is a pleasure to be a member of such a patrol. And it certainly is a pleasure to be a leader of such a patrol.
- b) The Scoutmaster asks the Senior Patrol Leader to pass word to all members of the troop that the upcoming meeting is cancelled. The Senior Patrol Leader contacts his ASPL and the several Patrol Leaders. The Patrol Leaders, in turn, contact the scouts in their patrols. It is important that each and every scout in the patrol get the word. The boys are counting on their leader informing them of such things in a timely manner. How would you like to be the one who doesn't get the word and ends up wasting their time by going to a meeting that has been cancelled? Or worse, let's say that there was a unique "once in a lifetime" opportunity to do something special on a non-meeting day? How would you like to be the one who doesn't get the word and misses the "once in a lifetime" opportunity simply because your leader didn't care enough to "take care of you?"

## Call Downs

Troops and patrols often find themselves having to disseminate information to each scout in the troop/patrol. Often, such a call down begins with the Scoutmaster asking the Senior Patrol Leader to pass down some message to all scouts in the troop.

Such occasions are easily handled by a process called the “call-down tree.” The “call-down tree” is just a procedure to ensure that everybody gets the word.

As discussed in the section on “Following,” any time a leader asks a junior scout to do something, it is not enough that the junior scout simply do what was asked. After doing what was asked, it is important to notify the leader that the task was successfully completed (or not completed for whatever reason, as the case may be). The leader must always be kept informed of the status (either good or bad) of the task he asked the junior scout to do. The “call-down tree” process has an element of feedback to ensure that all levels of leadership are kept adequately informed of the status of the portion of the calling tree that they have responsibility for.

How does it work?

*Senior Patrol Leader:* The troop calling tree starts at the top. Typically, the Scoutmaster would ask the SPL to pass some word to the troop. The SPL is responsible to ensure that this happens. The SPL needs to report the successful (or unsuccessful) completion of this task back to the Scoutmaster.

The Senior Patrol Leader contacts the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and the various Patrol Leaders. He passes the word to each of them. He asks the Patrol Leaders to pass the word to their respective patrols and then report back to him by a certain time, perhaps the end of the following day. If the Patrol Leaders don't report back to him, he can't report back to the Scoutmaster! So the SPL is counting on the Patrol Leaders to report back to him.

*Patrol Leaders:* Once the Patrol Leader has been informed by the SPL that they must pass some word to their patrol, they spring into action. It is important to get the job done quickly. Several people are counting on them to do this. The SPL is counting on them. He is waiting to hear back from them that they were either successful in reaching everybody or that they reached everybody except Johnny Kingsly – and they will continue trying to contact Johnny Kingsly and will report back once that is accomplished. The patrol members are also counting on the Patrol Leader. They need to get the word and they are counting on the Patrol Leader to “take care of them” to ensure they find out whatever information is being disseminated.

This might sound like a big job for a Patrol Leader. Fortunately, the Patrol Leader has an assistant – the Assistant Patrol Leader! If the Patrol Leader doesn't want to make all the calls to patrol members himself, his first call might be to his APL. The PL and the APL might decide to split up the patrol, with each calling half of them. The APL would then

be responsible for reporting back to the PL that he had either finished successfully contacting his assigned patrol members (or not). The PL is counting on the APL (as are the boys in the patrol). The PL can't report back to the SPL until he hears from the APL.

That's about it. This process isn't very hard for anyone if you share the workload. There isn't any reason why anybody needs to make more than six or so telephone calls. In this way, each scout will get the word as soon as possible and the "higher up" leaders will be kept informed about the status of the communication.

Each of the leaders needs to do their part. If the Scoutmaster doesn't hear back from the SPL in a timely fashion, he will call the SPL to ask for a status report. If the SPL in turn hasn't heard from one of the Patrol Leaders, he will have to call that Patrol Leader to ask for a status report. Likewise, if a Patrol Leader hasn't heard back from their assistant, the PL will have to call back the assistant to check status. All this checking for status is wasteful and is best avoided simply by each level of leadership keeping the immediately higher level fully informed of the status of making the calls.

## **Advancement**

In general, most boy scout leaders are already pretty good at advancement. Typically, they would have had to meet rank prerequisites before being elected/appointed to a position in the first place. While it will remain important to set a good example to your junior scouts by continuing your advancement activities, the scout leader has a more important job: helping your junior scouts to advance.

Remember what it was like when you were a young scout. When you first joined the troop, you didn't know what the process was for advancing. What did you have to do? How do you learn the skills? Who can you ask for help learning the skills? How do you earn a merit badge? What is a Board of Review and how do you get one? What is a Scoutmaster Conference and how do you get one? If you need to do something that there are few opportunities to do, how do you arrange to do them?

The scouts who are junior to you are looking to you to help them figure out all these things. This is yet another way that you need to take care of them.

*Teaching the Advancement Process.* We discussed above how a young scout's Patrol Leader needs to teach the scout how the advancement process works. If the Patrol Leader doesn't do it, who will?

*Teaching the Skills.* While most scouting skills can be learned by studying the relevant pages of the Scout Handbook, it may be useful for a scout's leader to teach him some of the skills necessary for advancement. For example, if a scout is having trouble learning lashing skills, it might be useful for the Patrol Leader either to teach these skills himself, or to ask another scout who is known to be skilled at lashing to teach the skill to the scout.

*Keeping Track of Advancement Status.* A good leader constantly keeps track of the advancement status of all scouts immediately beneath them in the Chain of Command. So the Senior Patrol Leader needs to keep track of his ASPL and the Patrol Leaders. The Patrol Leaders need to keep track of all members of their patrol. Or perhaps the Patrol Leader might delegate this task to their Assistant Patrol Leader. Here's how this might work: Every troop and/or patrol meeting, the Assistant Patrol Leader would examine the Scout Handbook of each patrol member to become aware of what each scout has completed and, more importantly, what each scout still needs. After doing this, he can make a summary report to his Patrol Leader of any scouts that are doing particularly well, or having particular problems. Scouts doing particularly well, could be recognized for doing so in front of the whole patrol or even the whole troop! Scouts having problems with advancement could get extra attention from the Patrol Leader. Perhaps the Patrol Leader could arrange to meet the scout on a weekend to go over the required skills. Or perhaps the scout needs to go on a hike or something. The Patrol Leader could mention to the Patrol Leaders Council and/or the Senior Patrol Leader that we probably should try to plan such a hike into the schedule for an upcoming campout. If this scout needs this requirement, there are probably other scouts who do too!

It is difficult to convey how important it is for a scout's Patrol Leader (or , for Patrol Leaders, the Senior Patrol Leader) to both take an interest in their advancement and to actively assist with problem areas.

Remember, this scout is taking care of you by cheerfully doing what you ask whenever you need anything done in the patrol. You need to do your part by taking care of them as well. **THE SUCCESS OF YOUR JUNIOR SCOUTS IS YOUR SUCCESS TOO!**

### **Explaining Decisions and Sharing Information**

Scouts who are juniors under effective leaders feel empowered, not dominated. When the reasons for being asked to do things are not apparent, the likelihood of the task being disregarded increases. A steady diet of such tasks breeds resentment.

Emergencies, when there is no time for explanation and a leader must rely on trust, occasionally arise (e.g., when somebody's life is at stake). Trust is usually built through a scout's discovery over time that their leader has good reasons for what they ask. A good leader doesn't ask their junior scouts to do things merely based on their own arbitrary personal preferences. Indeed, if a leader's requests are viewed that way, their junior scouts will not be "good followers."

Outstanding leaders understand the importance of providing reasons for what they ask their junior scouts to do.

When junior members of the troop know what is going on, their status is increased, as is the respect shown them by their own junior scouts when these junior scouts realize that their seniors are "in the know." To believe that what they are doing is worthwhile, scouts

must believe that their presence is important, that they make a contribution. By keeping them informed, their leaders encourage them to believe this.

### **Praise and Reprimand**

Praise in public and reprimand in private. This is one of the most basic tenets of leadership. What does this mean?

*Praise in public.* When one of your scouts does something good, make a point of recognizing him in front of the whole patrol, or even the whole troop. This will tend to make the scout feel good, it will increase the esteem that he is held in by his peers, and it will tend to serve as a model for other scouts to emulate. Any time you have anything nice to say about one of your junior scouts, say it in front of as many of his peers as you can.

*Reprimand in private.* During the occasional times when one of your scouts needs to be reprimanded, you shouldn't do it in public. This tends to needlessly embarrass the affected scout. Good leaders don't use threat of embarrassment as a leadership tool. If you need to censure or otherwise counsel a junior scout for something that they did or did not do, you should do it in private, away from others. Nobody else needs to know about this – this is just between you and him. If talking to the scout doesn't resolve the problem and an undesirable behavior continues, consult with your superior for assistance in addressing the situation.

Example: Fred Raymond of the Diamond Patrol has been getting into fights with other scouts. Fred's Patrol Leader should take Fred aside and point out how inappropriate it is to fight with fellow scouts. They're all nice fellows out to have fun, just like Fred. You might urge him, any time that he has a problem with another scout, to get you involved so that you can help resolve it. Of course, if this approach fails to correct the problem, you need to inform your superior in the Chain of Command. If you are a Patrol Leader, this means informing the Senior Patrol Leader. If you are the Senior Patrol Leader, it means informing the Scoutmaster.

### **Know Your Scouts**

We've gone through many ways that you need to take care of scouts junior to you. If you don't know them, how can you take care of them? A good leader knows his junior scouts well. What sorts of things do you need to know about them? Well, if you know that a certain scout is good at knot tying, you might be able to call on him to teach a new scout some knots. This will make the scout feel good that his skill is acknowledged and appreciated. Or let's say that you have a scout you know to be great at lashings. You could put him in charge of a patrol pioneering project. Not only would this likely result in a successful project, but it would allow this particular scout to grow in stature in the eyes of his peers. Further, he would have the opportunity to develop his leadership skills.

### **Avoid Micromanagement**

Some leaders feel the need to control every aspect of what their superiors do. They rationalize this by telling themselves that they clearly know the best way to do it – so their junior scouts need to do it the best way.

However, a leader who specifies in too much detail what needs to be done and how to do it tends to have several negative effects:

1. The junior scouts doing the task feel like their own skills and abilities aren't being valued. If you don't allow them to use their own judgment, they will think that you don't value their judgment. This makes for bad feelings.
2. The junior scouts doing the task may actually have some better ideas than you do, but you won't find out because you are forcing them to do it your way.
3. You will tend to spend a great deal of time explaining in detail what you want done and closely supervising every task. This results in you being overburdened and overstressed, neither of which is a good thing.

## **Mentoring**

In the background of every good leader is a good mentor. A mentor is a knowledgeable, experienced friend who keeps an eye on you and does what they can to help you learn what you need to learn when you need to learn it. Just as having a good mentor is an important part of your development as a leader, BEING a good mentor is an equally important part of your performance as a leader.

Good leaders mentor their junior scouts with the goal that the junior scouts will someday be able to competently replace them in their leadership role.

Basically, a Patrol Leader serves as mentor to his patrol members. He tries to teach them what they need to know in order to eventually takeover as Patrol Leader. Likewise the Senior Patrol Leader serves as mentor to his Patrol Leaders and his ASPL. He tries to develop them so that they will be able to competently serve as SPL in the future.

The Senior Patrol Leader is mentored by the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster is constantly working with the Senior Patrol Leader to ensure that they know what they need to know to effectively and efficiently run the troop.

Nothing is more satisfying to the mentor than watching the subsequent success of those whom he mentored.

## **Keeping Scouts Involved**

It is a pleasure to be in a troop/patrol with a good leader taking care of you. Part of their responsibility is to ensure that all scouts junior to them are involved in the current project at hand and that everybody is working together to complete the assigned task.

Example: The Hissing Snake patrol is developing two patrol skits for an upcoming campfire program. Most of the guys are huddling around the Hissing Snake Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader brainstorming about possible skits. The Patrol Leader looks around and finds that scout Paul Westrick seems to be moping off on the side, away from the group. The Patrol Leader (or perhaps, the APL) needs to go over and see what's going on with Paul. Perhaps he doesn't feel included for some reason. Is this his first outing? Is he feeling homesick? Perhaps he's upset about something. His leaders need to recognize that he might need some attention and give it to him. Remember – he takes care of you whenever you ask him to do anything – and you need to take care of him anytime he needs help.