# 11 Points of Leadership

## Leadership Defined

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal advancement in a given situation. Thus the leadership process is a function of the leader, the follower, the goals, and the situation at the time. It is active, excerpts influence, requires effort, and is related to goals.

## Skills

### Knowing and Using Resources:

Two types of resources can be used - those available to the group and those available from within the groups own members. Resources available to the group include literature and books (e.g. Scout Handbook) members of the chartering organization, parents and friends of the troop, local business and community organizations, and the local council and district.

Usually the resources available within the group are greater than any individual member is likely to perceive. The personal resource questionnaire filled out by each group member is a way to begin. Each member of the group lists some facts about his or her background, attitudes and abilities. The questionnaires are shared and group members quiz each other to expand on what has been noted. As members see the resources available to the group and from within the group, they gain a better understanding of each other and the potential for what the group can achieve.

### Communicating:

Communication involves several factors: receiving, storing, retrieving, giving and interpreting information.

Most people learn approximately 11 percent of what they know by listening but 83% of what they know by seeing (observation and reading). People recall 20% of what they heard but can recall 50% of what they both saw and heard. Thus a "multimedia" approach to communicating is vital.

Clear communication is essential. The success of establishing and maintaining a group will depend largely on how well its members communicate with each other and with those outside the group.

### Understanding Needs:

Understanding the characteristics and needs of the group and its members: Each member of a group has some important needs. At the basic level is his need for food, water, shelter and warmth. The next level involves the need for safety and security. Next is the

need for friends, association with others, relationships, order and a feeling of belonging. At the fourth level, needs include recognition, self-respect, independence and esteem. The final level involves the need for self-fulfillment, confidence, achievement and growth to the individual's full potential. Recognizing these needs and how well they are met will often explain the characteristics of the members of the group. If one level of needs has been somewhat met, then other needs emerge as dominant.

**Planning:**

Proper prior planning prevents pitifully poor performance.

1. Consider the task
2. Consider the resources
3. Consider the alternatives (what is plan B? What are emergency procedures?)
4. Reach a decision. Delegate responsibilities.
5. Write down the Plan. The act of writing down an action plan may cause it to be revised or refined.
6. Put the plan into action.
7. Evaluate. As each step is taken, it is evaluated against the previous step to assure that the original task is still being considered.

**Controlling the Group:**

Controlling the group is an important function of leadership but it is often misunderstood. To some, control implies that a whip-cracking boss is in charge. Good control is much more subtle. A group needs control to keep its members moving in the same direction for best results. Control involves six basic operations.

1. Observing. The leader should be in position to see the group, communicate with the members, be available, but not appear to dominate. Good work is praised. Suggestions, rather than orders, are given.
2. Instructing. The leader must often give instructions as the work proceeds and the situation changes. As long as the work is progressing well, the leader should not intrude.
3. Helping. the leader does his own job well, takes a positive approach and gives a helping hand when needed. Care is taken to see that an offer of help is not implied criticism.
4. Inspecting. The leader must know what he should expect to see. A checklist is valuable. If the work is not correct, the person is led to the proper performance of the task.
5. Reacting. How the leader reacts to the efforts of the group is important. Praise the person if the work is good, but the praise must be sincere. If the work is not correct, praise the parts that were done well and accept responsibility for work not done well. "Gosh I guess I didn't explain it very well" doesn't hurt the leader but makes the person feel good about corrections that are suggested.

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6. Setting the Example. The most effective way of controlling the group is the personal example of the leader.

**Effective Teaching:**

Often the leader has to teach his group. Five elements are involved.

1. Learning objectives. It is first important to know what is to be taught. "What should the participants be able to do by the end of the session?" determines the learning objectives.
2. Discovery experience. A discovery experience is any sort of happening that has three results.
    - knowledge is confirmed. The person discovers what he does know.
    - Need to know is established. He discovers that he does not know something that he must know in order to be successful.
    - Motivations. He discovers that he wants to learn more. A discovery experience is often the introduction to the learning activity. It could be as simple as a leading question or more complicated as in dramatic role-playing.
3. Teaching-learning. The actual teaching is similar to the skills under communication. People learn best by doing a task, second best by being shown the task, and worst by being told about a task. The good teacher uses all three in his presentations.
4. Application. Each individual should have an immediate chance to apply what has been learned.
5. Evaluation. Review what has happened to see if the learning objectives have been met.

Okay, my fingers are getting tired so I won't put as much for the rest of the skills :)

**Representing the Group:**

The leader is often the go-between between the group and the outside world. This necessitates a clear understanding of the resources and needs of the group, also what they want to do. The role of the patrol leader in sharing the interests and desires of his patrol to the PLC-and carrying out the decisions of the PLC with his patrol members-is a classic example of representing a group in Scouting.

**Evaluating:**

When an event or a project is done it is important to find out how well the objectives were met and if improvements can be made for the future.

- Did the job get done?
- Was it done right?
- Was it done on time?

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- Did everybody take part?
- Did they enjoy themselves?
- Do they want more?

Evaluation should be done after any event (say at the next PLC) but it should also be going on during the course of the event.

**Sharing Leadership:**

Five styles of leadership are generally recognized.

1. Telling. Here the leader makes all the decisions and tells the group what to do. This appears autocratic.
2. Persuading. Here the leader still is making the decisions and then has to sell them to the group.
3. Delegating. Here the leader identifies the problem, sets some guidelines, boundaries, or rules and then turns the problem over to the group or to one of its members.
4. Consulting. Here the group members participate and provide input. The leader suggests a tentative plan and gets the reaction of the group. The final decision lies with the leader, but it is generally based on the consensus of the group or a majority.
5. Joining. Here the leader steps down as leader and joins the group. He agrees that he will abide by the group's decisions.

No single style of leadership is best. Each depends on the situation, the needs of the group, and the task to be done. As leadership styles move from telling to joining, the leader's authority appears to diminish and the group's participation increases. The good leader needs to determine which style is best for any given time.

**Counseling:**

The leader often has to counsel members of the group. There are six keys.

1. Listen carefully.
2. Ask yourself "do I understand what he is trying to say?"
3. Summarize back frequently to assure understanding.
4. Additional information may be all that is needed. The person may not have all the facts or resources. The counselor must be sure to give information, not advice.
5. The person should be encouraged to think of different ways of handling the problem. He may already have a solution but is only seeking confirmation.
6. Above all, the counselor must not give advice. The objective of counseling is to lead the individual to his own solution. A general rule is to keep the individual talking. Also, the youth leader must recognize when the problem is beyond his ability to deal with and be able to refer the person to someone else (say a professional counselor, the Scoutmaster, clergy, school counselor).

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**Setting the Example:**

The most persuasive leadership skill is the personal example of the leader.

- Obeying the rules.
- Trying hard.
- Showing initiative.
- Acting with maturity.
- Knowing the job.
- Keeping a positive attitude

The youth leader is the role model for the boys in his patrol. He should remember that they will act to him as he acts to the senior patrol leader and scoutmaster.