

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Kerrisdale Centennial Troop Patrol Leader Training 2

Leading makes use of many skills....

### **Communicating**

A patrol leader sent two Scouts on an errand from camp. Rusty and Bruce did fine until they came to a stream.

"Hey, whereya goin'?"

"He said turn left."

"He did not. He said turn right here."

"No, that was back there. By the clearing. He said when we get to the stream, we turn left."

"No he didn't. But go ahead, wise guy. I'll see you there."

So Rusty turned right and Bruce turned left. They were soon out of sight of each other. Bruce followed directions and reached their destination in a few minutes. When he arrived there, he found no Rusty. Half an hour later, still no Rusty. Bruce finally raced down the trail back to camp, got help, and they began searching. It took 2 hours to find Rusty. He had taken the wrong turn at the stream, soon lost the trail, and couldn't get back.

Why did this happen? Here are some possibilities. Which do you think was the problem:

Rusty didn't listen to the patrol leader's instructions.

Rusty thought he understood the directions when he really didn't.

The patrol leader gave poor directions.

The patrol leader should have made sure both boys knew the directions.

Now let's consider each of these statements.

Rusty didn't listen. This may be true. But the patrol leader didn't know that Rusty didn't listen or, at least, he didn't find out whether he did or not.

Rusty thought he understood. This is probably true. He was pretty convinced when he argued with Bruce. But we must ask how the patrol leader managed to let him go away with the wrong idea.

The patrol leader gave poor directions. Bruce got them right, so

they were OK to him. But since only one of the two boys understood the directions, we have to suspect that they might not have been perfectly clear.

The patrol leader should have made sure. This is certainly true. If he had made Rusty repeat the directions, he would have found where "right" replaced "left."  
Whatever happened, we need look at the results.

Information wasn't given and received properly. The job didn't get done. (And the search for Rusty prevented some other jobs from getting done.) Besides, the confused information began to affect the way members of the group felt about each other. This kind of thing threatens the group's morale and effectiveness

How could this misunderstanding -- of one word have been prevented? Check any of the following that would have helped if the patrol leader had done them:

- He made sure both boys were paying attention before he gave directions.

- He spoke slowly and clearly.

- He had Rusty and Bruce -- make a diagram and write the directions in a notebook.

- He had the boys repeat their instructions.

You probably checked all of them. And you are right. Any one of them might have prevented the misunderstanding.

Notice that leaders both give and get information. Communication happens both ways.

How can you apply these ideas in your leadership tasks? Easy. To improve your skills in getting information, follow these rules:

- Pay attention and listen carefully.

- Make notes and sketches.

- Ask questions and repeat your understanding of what was said.

To improve your skills in giving information, there is a similar set of guidelines:

- Make sure the others are listening before you start giving information.

- Speak slowly and clearly.

- Draw diagrams and pictures and have those receiving the instructions make notes.

- Have the others repeat back their understanding of the information.

From time to time you can check yourself to see whether you are improving in the skill of getting and giving information. Ask yourself these questions:

Are your Scouts forgetting less?

Do they take notes regularly?

Do they ask questions when in doubt?

Do you take notes yourself and review them to be sure you don't forget things?

*"Leading makes use of many skills...." 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.*