

33rd Kerrisdale Centennial Troop Patrol Leaders Training 3

Leading makes use of many skills....

Knowing and Using the Resources of the Group

Most of the members of the Owl Patrol were new Scouts. Harry, the patrol leader, thought the Scouts should be trained to pitch tents just before their first campout. He picked Phil to run the demonstration because he was aggressive and always seemed sure of himself.

Much to Harry's surprise, Phil's tent-pitching demonstration was a bust. It was pretty clear to all that Phil didn't know which part of the tent to fasten down and which part to put up in the air. But Bob, another patrol member, helped Phil out and soon had it going right. Then Bob helped the others set up their tents. Later on, Harry learned that Bob had done a lot of weekend camping with his family and knew a lot about tents. But why had he picked Phil to do the demonstration?

Harry probably thought that Phil, being as confident as he was, could handle it. It never occurred to him that Phil didn't know anything about tents. And because Bob was quieter, it didn't enter Harry's mind that he had some skills.

Harry didn't learn about Bob's knowledge and skill as a camper until it was almost too late. How could he have avoided embarrassing Phil in front of the patrol?

As patrol leader, Harry needed to know what resources were available to him. A resource is a thing you can use. A book, a tool, a piece of wood, or a handful of sand may be a resource. People can also be resources, because:

- They know how to do things.
- They have information or knowledge.
- They know how and where to get other resources.

Every member of every group is some kind of resource. Not everyone has something to give to every job, but each member of a group

should be encouraged to add what he can.

From our example, it is clear that Harry needed to learn the resources of each of the members of his patrol. How might he have done this? Here are four ways:

Through observation. In the case of Phil, Harry had seen him as a resource because he was always self-confident. But he was the wrong resource for that job. Later, Harry learned that Bob knew a lot about putting up tents. But the big disadvantage of this method is that it takes so long. You may make a lot of mistakes before you find out what resources everyone has.

You may find out various Scouts' interests and skills by casual talk with them. Or you may hear about it from some other person. But this is also a slow way to find out what you need to know.

You can ask questions. Harry might have asked his patrol who had experience in tent pitching. He probably would have discovered Bob's skill in this way.

Give each member of the group a resource sheet with specific questions on it. For instance, it could read, "Check below all of the skills you think you are pretty good at: knot tying, nature lore, hiking, cooking, etc." The resource sheet might also include a suggestion that members of the group show which skills they think they could help others to learn.

However you find the resources in your group, make notes of them in your notebook or keep a card file of personal resources. Don't trust your memory.

How much do you know about the Scouts in your patrol or troop? What would it be helpful to know? Their special skills? Their past experiences? Their hopes and fears? Their weaknesses as well as their strengths? Goals? Attitudes? Find out these things and keep a record.

It may be that you will sometimes find ways to strengthen other Scouts by helping them learn to do things they have had little chance to do. You may give them experiences doing things they may have been afraid to do. In such ways your resource knowledge works to benefit each Scout.

From time to time, check over your resource file and ask yourself whether you are keeping it updated. Has your patrol program improved through your use of the information recorded on each boy's card? Are you helping him to grow? Has knowing these resources made you a

better leader?

A leader must know the resources of his group. He can never know too many. Every time there is a job, some of these resources should be used. Which ones? The ones that will (1) get the job done and (2) keep the group together.

"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.