

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Kerrisdale Centennial Troop Patrol Leader Training 4

Leading makes use of many skills....

### **Setting the Example**

A Cub Leader came to a pack meeting without his uniform. A week later, two of the Cub Scouts appeared out of uniform.

"Why?" demanded the Den Mother.

"Bill didn't wear his last week."

Bill never said to any of the Cub Scouts, "It's OK if you don't wear your uniform sometimes." But that was the message that came through. His good example of coming in uniform broke down only once. That was enough for a couple of his group.

Which is stronger, good or bad example? We can't always be sure. Setting a good example will often not work all by itself. But if you exchange it for a bad example, you may get immediate action (of the wrong kind).

Alan was elected senior patrol leader. He took his new job very seriously. If there was ever any horseplay, he stayed out of it. He felt he had to in order not to set a bad example.

On one camping trip the patrol leaders got some horseplay going after "Taps," and Alan joined in. Everybody had a ball.

The next day, every one of the patrols got completely out of hand. The Scoutmaster finally had to step in and settle everyone down. Then he and Alan had a talk --

"That's the first time I've done anything like that since I was elected," Alan complained.

"What effect do you think it had?" asked the Scoutmaster.

"I don't know. There's been a little trouble before, but never like this. They always knew I wouldn't put up with it."

"Always until when?"

"Until... well, until last night. I guess I showed 'em a little fooling around is OK."

Thus, Alan learned to keep a good example going. Even if it seemed not to do much good. Because a bad example would almost certainly make things worse.

People learn from models and examples. I show you my square knot. I untie it and tie it slowly while you watch. Then you try to tie a knot like mine.

We use models in teaching because they work. Models let people know what we want. Models say, "Here, do it like this." People are models themselves. A girl models a dress for a customer. The message is, "If you'll buy this dress, you'll be as beautiful as me."

A leader is a model whether he wants to be or not. He doesn't have to tell the group to follow his example. In fact, he can even tell them not to follow his example, but they will.

"What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say," said Emerson.

Setting an example is more than staying out of trouble. It is an important element in leadership. It is showing the way. It is an active process that raises standards and goals. It is a great deal more than just avoiding the wrong things. Setting an example means doing the right things, and knowing why.

As a leader, you are observed by others at all times. Other Scouts are watching you and learning to do what you do. Are you proud of what they see? How can you set a good example?

Follow instructions. There's at least one right way to do everything.

There may be a dozen wrong ways to do each. Don't expect others to do things right if you don't.

Try harder. If you'll settle for last place, so will the group. Get up earlier and run faster than anybody. They can't follow you if you are not out ahead.

Take the initiative. Shakespeare wrote, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Don't wait for leadership to be thrust upon you. Find out what has to happen and make it happen.

Act mature. If you act like a half-wit, you'll be a good model for those trying to win the half-wit badge. That's not what your group needs. You'll get a lot more respect by acting mature than by being a silly kid.

Know your job. Never quit trying to do a better job. Know your group and its resources. Pick up new skills and improve on old ones. You can't learn too much about leadership. (But it's very easy to learn too little.)

Make a special effort to conduct yourself at home, school, and during Scout activities so that you will be pleased when others

follow your example. How you act includes what you say and do and how you dress. It includes your attitudes and how you relate to others.

As you work at improving your example as a leader, you should take stock from time to time. What new area can you develop? How is your conduct in meetings of the troop and the troop leaders' council? What kinds of attitudes are others "catching" from you?

*"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.*