Report of the Commission on

Principles of Scoutmastership In Relation To Boy Development

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The Commission, in presenting this report on "Principles of Scoutmastership in Relation to Boy Development," has tried to answer the following questions:

1. *What is this development we seek for the boy?*
2. *What is the boy?*
3. *How does he develop?*
4. *What elements of the Scout program are effective in his development?*
5. *What are the resulting principles for the guidance of the Scoutmaster?*

The commission wishes to acknowledge its indebtedness to Dr. William H. Kilpatrick, Professor of Education, of Teachers College, Columbia University, for his assistance in directing the thought of the commission in its approach to the problem and for the use of his ideas on learning as expressed in his book, "Foundations of Method."

Further, the commission expresses its sense of inadequacy for the task and for the fulfillment thereof. It may seem to some that the language of the report is framed too much in the first and second persons, but this style appealed to the commission as the best for its purpose.

I. What is This Development We Seek for the Boy?

Not Change but Growth

Someone has asked, "How much can the boy be changed? Who would want to change him-- this tousled-haired, noisy, fun-loving, vigorous follower of our footsteps? Would we, if we could, have him quiet, subdued, serious? Never. How much can he grow? That is different."

Scouting's aims for boy growth and boy development have been repeatedly stated as character building and citizenship training.

Let us get these aims clearly in mind for there are still plenty of us who, while we seem to accept them, conduct Scouting as if the actual objectives were the teaching of subject matter, the awarding of badges, the making of Eagle Scouts, the development of well-drilled Troop organizations, the perfection of craftwork experts. We must continually remind ourselves that such things are only tools, only means to the end of helping the development of character.

Our Job to Influence Conduct

Let us remember that character is beyond our immediate influence. Our job is to influence conduct-- conduct in the boy's life here and now-- in the hope that it will establish the desired habits which form character.

Our job is to get him to build habits; to practice those traits so nobly set forth in the Scout Law that they will become traits of his conduct as a boy and carry on into his conduct as a man.

We must get him to have the right attitudes inside himself toward helpfulness, toward courtesy and the other points of the Law-- attitudes favorable towards those things which society has found right and attitudes unfavorable toward those things which society has found wrong.

The only way we can help him to develop this conduct, these attitudes is by actual practice in situations, by giving him opportunity for vigorous social living under wise guidance. Let us not think of Scouting as a program of activities but as a way of living.

Let us always remember that while the Scout may see the badges, the awards, the camping and hiking as his objectives, ours must always be the fulfillment of the Scout Oath and Law in the life of the boy.

II. What is the Boy?

He Has Many Names

What is this boy about whom we so glibly talk? To the little lad next door, he is a hero. To his buddy, he is a "good guy." To his mother, he is a lovable mystery. To his teacher, he is a problem. To his sister, a pest. To the average man, he is a dimly remembered past.

What is this "complicated bundle of contradictions" to you and me as Scoutmasters? What is the "nature of the beast"?

Oh, that we all could remember back to our own 'teens-- recalling what we liked and disliked, how we felt and acted; getting in tune again with youth. Some men can do this. They are still young.

We have no excuse, no right to touch the boy's life-- much less to try to guide him, to teach him-- unless we try our best to understand him and the many desires and impulses which surge within him.

We Build on What We Find

It is upon what the boy brings to us that we must build what we hope him to be.

The boy comes to us with certain impulses and desires all his own, inborn, part of his original nature. They are there-- surging within him, affecting his behavior and his outlooks and challenging us to make use of them.

He is (and of course we are speaking generally of the great majority) a thing of action. He is busy; he is doing things. He craves movement, activity.

He wants companionship. He wants fellowship. He wants to belong. He herds. He wants to be of the gang and with the gang.

He seeks adventure. The venturesome, the hazardous, the mysterious, appeal to him. For him, there is romance still left in the world.

He is anxious to get ahead-- to achieve things he considers worth achieving, to overcome obstacles and difficulties in the way of his achievement.

He is a Hero-worshipper

He practices hero-worship and is not ashamed to imitate the things he admires in those he looks up to.

He desires distinction among his fellows and he hopes to be a leader among them. He likes rivalry and competition.

We must not forget that he is with us usually during the period of adolescence, bringing with it rapid physical expansion and the growing discoveries that girls are beautiful and attractive creatures and that younger boys are just "kids." Jane Addams says "He has all the passions of a man, but only the control and experience of a child."

He is pretty much a creature of original instincts, conducting himself as they urge him. He wants to do what he wants to do and the things he wants to do are largely determined by these innate impulses of his.

Many Traits Undeveloped

The traits of trustworthiness, team-play and the like which we consider so necessary to successful social living are still mostly undeveloped and as was pointed out before it is with his acquiring these traits that we are largely concerned.

We must take him as we find him and, with his original impulses as our aides and allies, help him to acquire those which form our objectives.

Furthermore we must keep in mind that the boy today comes to us in a day of changed and changing home life. Science and modern invention have altered the conditions in the home. The boy no longer shares with his parents the necessary operations for supplying the elementary constituents of life, with which he gained not only skill and experience, but also insights and attitudes. He has fewer home duties, fewer responsibilities, few opportunities to really live.

Then too, life now is more complex. It is harder for a boy to see and understand. Consequently our obligations to give him a chance to live are tremendously greater.

As education in general is changing to meet this need, so must the Scout Movement recognize the situation and brace itself to meet the demand.

III. How Does the Boy Develop?

How Does Learning Take Place?

How does the boy grow? How does he learn? We have stated what we would like to do with him and we have an inkling of what we have to work with. How are we going to accomplish it?

We can do no better than seek out the best educational advice of the time; to state it simply; to make it our own and to discover how we can supply it to fit our own Scouting needs.

"To learn anything," says Kilpatrick, "we must somehow practice that thing. To learn how to form judgements we must practice forming judgements-- under conditions that tell success from failure and give satisfaction to success and annoyance to failure."

Let us try now to state in simple terms, as we understand them those principles of learning which seem to have particular application to our job of boy development.

Readiness a Big Factor

1. Readiness-- When a boy is ready to act, to do something, to act gives satisfaction and not to act gives annoyance. When a boy is not ready to act, to be forced to act gives annoyance.

2. Satisfaction-- If an act is accompanied by satisfaction, the boy is more apt to do it again. If an act is accompanied by annoyance, the boy is more apt not to do it again. "Satisfaction strengthens, annoyance weakens or success strengthens and failure weakens."

3. Use-- The more often the boy makes a certain response to a situation, the more smoothly and surely is the response made when the situation again presents itself.

To combine the last two statements-- to develop properly, a boy must have opportunity and use it to "Practice the right with satisfaction and when he does wrong it must be accompanied by annoyance."

Pleasant things, successful things which happen to an individual are remembered longer than unpleasant and unsuccessful things.

4. Interest and Purpose-- A boy engages in an activity readily if he is interested in it; more readily if he has his mind set on engaging in it and more readily still and with whole heart if he himself has purposed the activity.

5. Difficulties-- The presence of difficulty-- if not insurmountable-- stimulates a boy to greater effort.

6. Coercion-- A boy is less likely to engage in an activity or to learn therefrom if he is forced into it by an outside influence, although there is possibility that his attitude may change and he may become interested.

7. Associative shift-- A boy may learn to do a thing from one motive-- such as for reward and may later shift to do it from a more worthy motive, vis., the intrinsic value of the activity. Although the shift is not certain to take place.

8. Group enterprises-- Group enterprises offer real opportunity for moral education.

IV. What Elements of the Scout Program Are Effective in the Boy's Development?

In light of these principles of learning, how does the Scout program as it is conceived (not always as it is practiced) look to us.

Scouting Built on Boy Nature

1, Interest-- Scouting presents no great problem of interest. Boys are interested in its many and varied activities which have been laid out with an understanding eye to boy nature. Boys join because its fun.

The action in Scouting appeals to the boy's impulse to be doing something. The tests, mainly, call for demonstrations and doing. As contrasted with his social life and religious instruction, the Troop meetings, hikes, camps and contests are essentially periods of activity.

Even the code of Scout conduct is presented to him in terms of action-- be trustworthy, be loyal, Be Prepared, do a Good Turn daily.

There is adventure in Scouting. There is always adventure in the woods and after dark. There is adventure in tackling a job alone-- all by oneself. There is adventure in trying to find a Good Turn to do everyday, in company with King Arthur and Sir Lancelot.

There is chance for companionship and fellowship in Scouting. The patrol is the boy's gang.

In Scouting there is always an urge to achieve. A harder test, a higher badge always looms ahead.

Distinction to be Gained

There is distinction and leadership to be gained-- recognition from one's fellows even more than from adults. A boy may attain recognition for his skill and achievement through his Scout advancement and for his growth in conduct through his leadership promotions.

Scouting is full of heroes to be worshiped-- the men who lead him and his fellows are outstanding.

Scouting seems to be built around the boy's nature.

Practice-- Our program offers tremendous opportunity to practice living. Every Scout assembly, if the leader isn't doing all the directing and all the talking, it is a real social experience in team work, promptness, consideration, helpfulness and the like. This is especially true of the hikes and camps, and makes them therefore especially important.

Purpose-- Conditions in Scouting are most favorable for the boy to purpose his own activities. What test will he attempt next? What will the Patrol do this week? What Scouting activity will he do today after school?

Success and Failure-- Conditions are constantly present in Scouting which enable the boy to tell success from failure. He wins his badge or he doesn't. His meal on the hike tastes good or bad. His conduct helps the Patrol's record or hinders it. He is thrown in contact with men and older boys whose respect he desires and he knows when his conduct pleases or displeases them.

Scouting Uses the "Gang"

Group enterprises-- Scouting makes real use, through Patrol and Troop activities, of group enterprises with their attendant possibilities to develop habits of conduct.

Difficulties-- The Scout program of activities, as the boy sees it, is difficult enough to challenge, but not too difficult to be overcome.

Associative Shift--The badges and awards of Scouting may attract a boy who is not otherwise interested in the subject matter itself. We find many times that after working for a badge the boy's interest shifts tot he subject matter and in a larger degree to the practice of due Scout conduct. A real danger presents itself here in the case of the boy who seeks the badge alone and who gets no new interest and no new attitudes. He must be watched and guided.

Physical Development-- The Movement has wisely taken notice of the physical development of the boy in his later 'teens and has provided opportunity for him to continue in Scouting in conformity with his own feeling of his advanced station in life. I refer to the rank of the Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and especially to the fast developing Sea Scout division. Here an older boy may continue his practice in living under conditions which he approves and with companions he wishes to associate with. He is no longer a boy, but he is still a Scout.

V. What Are the Resulting Principles for the Guidance of the Scoutmaster?

What Are We Going to do About It?

Keeping in mind that our immediate aim for the boy is to influence his present conduct so that a strong character will result; keeping in mind that the boy is as he comes to us; keeping in mind the ways in which a boy learns and keeping in mind what we find in Scouting to aid us, let us consider what are the principles we Scout leaders shall use to help the boy's development.

We see every day that boys are developing in some degree through Scouting under trained leadership and we cannot help but feel that this development will be immeasurably increased as Scoutmasters learn more skillfully and wisely to use the tools to which our program and laws of learning provide. The greatest value of Scouting to the boy will only be realized as we train ourselves to properly apply it.

The writer remembers going through one of the public buildings in Washington, D.C., with a party in charge of a guide. You can imagine how we were herded from room to room; how the monotonous voice of the guide pointed out in stereotyped language the features to be observed-- "On the right we have so and so. On the left you will see so and

so. Overhead is so and so." One thing after another in quick succession. You can see us being dismissed at the main entrance gasping for air, confused and rather bewildered.

We Discuss Guiding

The writer also recalls being in a party which climbed Mount Monadnock one bright morning in company with the man who maintained the lookout station. We were following the Red Cross Trail. We were finding the trail. Our ranger was in the rear. It was all new ground to us and it was fun finding the way. We stopped as we wished to examine a rock formation and to marvel at a waterfall. We asked questions and the ranger answered us. We came to a place where the trail was in doubt and we argued about it. The ranger was there to settle it when we inquired.

As we broke out above the timber line and the country at our feet spread out like the pictures in our grammar school geography, we discovered the lakes and the villages and the railroad lines as if they had never been seen before. The guide volunteered no information, except to throw in a hint here and there and to answer our queries.

Probably we missed a lot of interesting features. Probably we didn't see all we should have seen, but we surely got more in every way out of that trip, under that guide, than we did out of that human encyclopedia in Washington, D.C.

Scoutmastership is to us the Monadnock types of guiding-- a gentle pushing rather than a vigourous pulling; a quiet suggestion rather than a noisy command, a problem offered rather than a solution given.

A poor Scoutmaster may build obedience, but a good Scoutmaster build morale.

Boy's Interest Must Be Maintained

Our contention is that the boy is interested in Scouting and it is the duty of the Scoutmaster to see that his interest is retained.

Unfortunately there are many instances in which Scouting as it is presented to the boy in his Handbook and Scouting as it is presented to him in his Troop activities are two different articles.

Scouting interests boys, because it is soundly built to appeal to boy nature, but when a Scoutmaster removes actions and adventure and gang activities and change for achievement and boy leadership, and dehydrates the program into a series of drills and classes and business meetings and adult-oriented activities he is effectively killing the boy's interest, and with it his only opportunity to help the boy.

Scouting's interests are at their best in the out-of-doors, and the indoor-minded Scoutmaster starves and neglects them until they are gone, (and so are the boys).

There is plenty of interest in Scouting for the boy if we play the game from the boy's point of view. If we only try to remember back to our 'teens and try to recall how we felt and acted. To us this is the Scoutmaster's first job.

Purposing Activities

Now we've pointed out that a boy will engage in an activity readily if he is interested in it; more readily if he has his mind set on doing it and still more readily if he himself has purposed the activity.

This purposing by the boy results in stronger efforts to accomplish the end. It results in a better organization of all his powers to see the thing through. And furthermore he learns better from the experience.

This is a great argument for boy-planning of Troop and Patrol activities-- for self-determination of the things the boys will do.

We have set up in our Troop machinery the Patrol Leaders' Council to take care of this purposing of Troop activities by the boys and the wise Scoutmaster will use this tool.

You say, "I've tried that. It doesn't work."

Well, perhaps not the first time, or the second time or the third, but you'll surely get suggestions and ideas and wishes by the tenth or the twentieth trial.

Give the boys practice in purposing, and make it practice-with-satisfaction by using their suggestions.

Then here enters the wise guidance of the Scoutmaster. He suggests an objective, a purpose, and activity-- quietly, cleverly, so that in a little time the boys can hardly remember whether the suggestion was the Scoutmaster's or their own.

Wishing the Things They Do

For after all, it is as much a problem of having your Scouts wish what they do as it is to do what they wish.

In a Troop in one of the crowded sections of a big city, the Scoutmaster who had just taken charge couldn't arouse a spark of interest in hiking. Not one of the kids had been in the woods or seemed to care to go there. Instead of trying to force a hike down the throats of the boys in hopes that they would like it, the leader picked on something he could get an interest in-- that of making things.

He started the youngsters making tin can cook kits. The kits made, they had to be used and immediately the cry of "hike" arose. The boys now wished to hike.

We used to stand in front of our Troops and announce-- "Every Scout will pass a test this week-- or three tests this month."

Now we are beginning to learn that self purposing pays and that we get further if we can get each Scout to set his own objective in test passing-- "I will try to be second class by Thanksgiving" and the like.

So it follows that we should use this principle in all our Scouting-- to get a boy himself to purpose to get a uniform, to purpose to be trustworthy, to purpose to do a Good Turn daily.

The Individual Needs Attention

Right here is the opportunity of the true Scoutmaster-guide to give his attention to the individual boy-- the retiring youngster, the "queer duck," the "rambunctious" kid-- to study his interests and help him to get the right attitudes and purposes.

The law of readiness is one which every Scoutmaster must utilize. If you don't believe it just call to mind the time at camp this summer when the youngsters were all ready for a swim and some "big gun" arrived who had to "talk to the boys."

Lets use this law of readiness.

If there has been a big accident in the neighborhood, that's the time to teach first aid.

If Byrd is off on a new trip of discovery, that's the time for an exploration hike.

If Lindbergh's modesty and courtesy have captured the world, that's the time to set up the practice of modesty and courtesy in the Troop.

If every Patrol wants an inter-Patrol contest, why wait till after Christmas just because you've planned something else?

Remember Law of Readiness

In conducting Troop meetings it is particularly important that this law of readiness be used. Keep up a quiet instruction period too long and see how much annoyance it gives the boys not to move around.

We recall a Scoutmaster who had carefully worked out a very find program for a Troop meeting. Half an hour before the meeting a fire broke out in a house a block away. The whole Troop attended. The fire was over quickly, and at assembly the Troop fell in, excited, chattering, shoving, pushing.

The Scoutmaster started his program, but the boys would have none of it. They were full of fire.

Being an observing Scoutmaster, the leader changed his plans and promoted a meeting of intense activity, noise and spirit-- from which great satisfaction resulted and some degree of learning.

You must change your plans, because you can't change the law of readiness.

"Learning by doing" has long been one of the by-words of Scouting, but many of us have used it as a sort of trade mark (nice for exhibition purposes, but not so necessary for use), and others of use have used it for such things as First Aid and Mapping, but have forgotten it when it came to matters of conduct.

We've seen to it that our Scouts actually could tie knots and use them, but we've been satisfied to have them stand in line and repeat "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, etc", hoping that by some miraculous power these qualities would get into their hearts.

To Learn One Must Practice

"To learn a thing, we must practice that thing," we are told, and that applies to the habits of conduct that we wish to grow in a boy, as well as to skills and facts.

If Scouting is a program of living, we as Scoutmasters must see to it that our boys have real opportunities to live-- opportunities to practice being friendly, being kind, being cheerful, being clean, being reverent-- under such conditions that they practice the right with satisfaction and the wrong with annoyance.

I know of no other way to do this than to expose the boy continuously to such situations and experiences in the life of a Troop and the Patrol, in the meeting and in the camp, as will cause him to react with worthy habits of conduct-- to be loyal, to be cheerful, to be helpful, etc.

It is vastly important that we should always keep in mind that a boy does not learn one thing at a time. He learns many things simultaneously. While he is learning to chop down a dead chestnut, he may also be learning consideration for those around in the way of his axe. He may be learning perseverance or quick surrender. We must recognize always the presence of these attendant learnings, many of them dependent largely on the way we introduce the subject to be learned and on the way we as Scoutmaster-guides treat the learner.

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

"Nothing succeeds like success-- nothing fails like failure," says the old adage.

When a boy throws his two Second Class Cooking test potatoes into a hot fire and drags them out a while later, burned to a crisp, he recognizes a failure when he sees it. When the next time he takes a hint, coats the "spuds" with mud and buries them in the coals, he recognizes success when they come out unscorched, soft and mealy.

If our boy is to learn that helping other people is worthwhile, his practice of helping in Scouting must be accompanied by satisfaction and his failure to help must be accompanied by annoyance.

The satisfaction or annoyance is greater if it comes from within. If through the interest a boy has in Scouting, we can get him to purpose to be helpful, he's going to be really glad when he is helpful and annoyed when he isn't.

The way his Scoutmaster feels about it will help some, the way his gang feels about it will help more, but the way the boy himself feels about it will help most.

Everyone knows that an earned solution, a self-made decision sticks and gives self-reliance.

The building of traditions in the Troop, accepted and approved by the boys themselves, is a great help in providing a basis for a boy's inner judgement as to whether he has hit the mark.

The writer will always remember the first pie he ever baked on a hike in a reflector baker. It was a successful accomplishment.

We Remember Successful Things

It is the successful things we do, the pleasant things-- which we remember longest, and so we should strive to have the successful things predominate in the experiences of our boys. We should not encourage the boy to undertake so much that success is

impossible, but we should do our best to see that the things he does undertake are successful.

Probably the best method readily at the hand of the Scoutmaster providing satisfactions and annoyances is in the building of public opinion in the Patrol. It is through the Patrol gang that we build real Troop morale and secure the thing we love to call discipline.

If you can convince the Patrol as a whole that it's a desirable thing to have consideration for others and quiet while the notices for next week are being read, the whole Patrol will see to it that obstreperous "Spike" Walsh practices consideration, for not to do so will reflect on the Patrol.

The use of the Patrol in this way has been much neglected. It takes longer and more skill to sell a Patrol a good idea than it does to harangue the Troop and probably that's why so few Scoutmasters take the pains to build Patrol opinion.

Of course you don't get the best results unless your Patrols are boy purposed-- that is made up of boys who want to be together and who will naturally run together, with a Patrol Leader they have selected and are backing and with Patrol enterprises in which they are engaging.

If you are running 1910 model Patrols, you won't get 1928 results therefrom.

Speaking of Punishing

Punishing a boy seems a necessity every now and then.

How far do we get as Scoutmasters when, after a youngster has kicked over the traces, we call him in and, angry ourselves, give him a good bawling out?

He just resents it and usually resolves next time to not get caught.

That's why the thinking Scoutmaster tries other methods. He realizes that punishment from within is better than from without, and so he appeals to the boy's pride, to his best feelings, to the way other people feel about him-- in a friendly and sympathetic way, trying to set up an attitude within the boy, which will produce real regret and determination for success next time.

The times when angry "call downs" are superior to quiet appeals to pride are few and far between.

"Praise publicly and censure privately" is a good rule for the Scoutmaster.

But it isn't that we should make things easy for boys. They don't respect the leader who appeals to them to do a thing, to undertake an enterprise because its easy.

The "They're-only-boys" man has no place in Scouting.

Boys want to do things that are hard, that challenge, that make success difficult to attain. You try letting boys slide through on their tests and see how poorly you will rate in comparison with a man who makes them know their stuff. The presence of a difficulty makes interest greater, effort harder and success sweeter.

Boy is Growing Physically

Let's remember the boy is growing up all the time. He likes to be called a man. He likes to be treated like a man. He likes to be talked to and judged like a man.

Let's make use of Sea Scouting for the older boy-- a program built to fit his nature just as the land program fits the instincts of the early 'teens.

And finally, Mr Scoutmaster, let the boy know you are his friend. The attitudes he gains and the responses he makes will be affected greatly by the way you treat him.

Perhaps you are his hero. What you are and what you do, speak louder to him than what you say.

A brief summary of the above principles might be given to the Scoutmaster as follows:

1. Be a skillful, quiet guide, rather than a noisy promoter.

2. Build morale, rather than obedience.

3. Retain the boy's original interest in Scouting, by playing the game as he sees it.

4. Use the out-of-doors, since interest and experience are best there.

5. You were young once, try to remember back.

6. Get the boy to purpose his own activity.

7. With suggestion, get the boy to wish what he does.

8. Act when the boy is ready to act, and create situations for readiness.

9. Remember one learns by practice. Provide opportunities for the boy to practice the thing to be learned.

10. See that the right practice is accompanied by satisfaction and the wrong practice by annoyance.

11. Remember that satisfaction and annoyance are best when they come from within.

12. Aim to have the boy make successes of the things he undertakes, for successes sake.

13. Remember that a boy learns many things at once. While he is learning a skill, watch out for habits of conduct he is learning too.

14. Use the Patrol and group activities to build morale and public opinion which will cause the boy satisfaction or annoyance.

15. Punishment from within is best. An appeal to pride beats a bawling out.

16. Coercion MAY be followed by interest, but it's the last choice.

17. Give the boy opportunities and appeals that challenge.

18. Remember he is growing all the time. He likes manly treatment.

19. Set an example.

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