



# THE SCOUT'S GUIDE TO...

## *being a Patrol Leader II - a practical guide*

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# *Introduction*

The aim of this handbook is to provide a practical guide of how to be an effective Patrol Leader following the same pattern as the first handbook in this series.

The first thing that you are told at a leadership course is that a leader must lead by example. Fine. But what do I have to do ? What does that really mean to me ? What should I do to lead by example ? (or is this just a bunch of nice words that mean nothing?!?)

Sometimes it is easy to describe what a good leader should be like but when we ask ourselves what we can actually do – we get stuck. This handbook will help you organize a number of different activities and understand what you can achieve by them. We kept the activities under the same headings as the first handbook so that you can relate the theory with the practice.

# *1. Know your Patrol*

## *Aim*

If you don't know the people you are leading – you cannot be an effective leader. The following activities are designed to help you learn as much as possible about the members of your patrol. Use the information you gather to help you in your leadership decisions.

## *Activities*

Prepare an information sheet – Every member of the patrol will have to fill this in. Include all details like contact information, hobbies and the likes and dislikes of the members. This information will be useful for you to get to know your patrol. File these sheets in your PL File.

Set up a Communication Chain – The communication chain must be designed so that you will start the chain by phoning your APL and a few other members and the chain will end when you know exactly if all of your members have received the message or not.

Organise a Patrol Challenge – Using the information you gathered in the information sheets, organize a fun patrol activity where you can get to know you patrol members better.

Prepare a Patrol Training Chart – Does everyone in your patrol have the Scout Standard or the Advanced ? What tests do your patrol members need to work on ? A patrol Training Chart will help you decide on the areas where your patrol need most training, and it will help you choose a Patrol Activity which suits your patrol most.



## *2. Lead by example*

### *Aim*

The old saying “Do as I say but not as I do” has a lot of truth in it ! It is the classic leadership mistake. If the members of your patrol do not see you work hard, they will not work hard. If they do not see you respect them, they will not respect you ! The following activities will help you build a sense of unity within your patrol.

### *Activities*

Patrol Duties - Give a duty to each and every member of your patrol, e.g. Patrol noticeboard, subscriptions, cleaning of the patrol den, patrol equipment etc. Make each member responsible for his duty.

Patrol project – choose a project/job/maintenance that needs to be done at your headquarters or on your troop equipment. Show the patrol the importance of the project and make them proud of their achievements.

Trial Patrol Activity – Make the Patrol plan a patrol activity and prepare a short written report about it. When they are done, discuss the plan and show them how to improve it. After they revise the plan accordingly, use the plan for your next patrol activity and let your APL run it.



# 3. Respect and be Respected

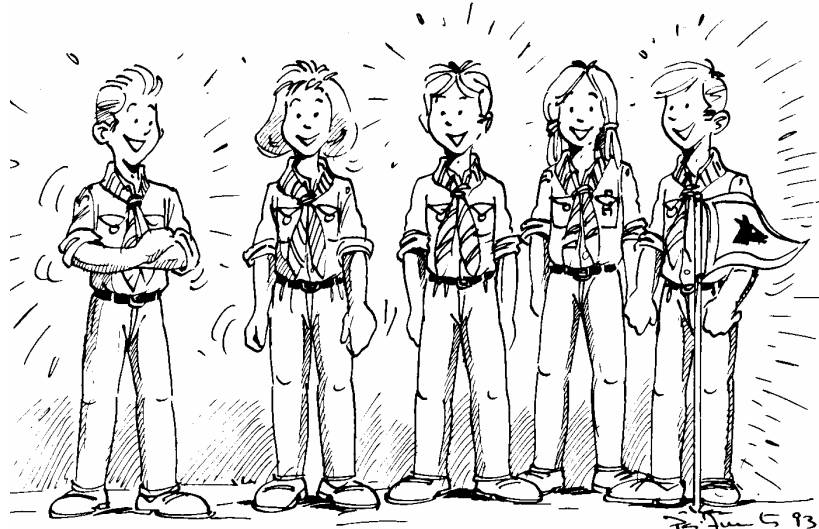
## *Aim*

Respect does not grow on trees. One of the ways to gain respect is to allow someone to understand what it feels to be a Patrol Leader. This is a very effective trick especially in the case of scouts who do not accept the authority of their PL. The aim of the following activities is to make the scouts break out of the routine “shut up and listen” form of leadership and make them start to think as a leader.

## *Activities*

**PL for a Day** – Let each member of the Patrol be the PL of the patrol for a day/hour/activity. Give the new PL a task to accomplish. You must be a simple scout and obey the new “PL”. Afterwards, comment on the leadership style of each member and examine the problems each new PL had.

**Patrol Forum** - Allow every member to have 10 minutes to discuss all the things that he/she does not like in the patrol/troop. For every problem mentioned, the person speaking must give a solution. Listen to everyone and take notes. DO NOT try to justify the criticism. When everybody has given his opinion, draw up an “Improvement Plan” detailing what you would do to solve these problems if you were the Leaders of the Troop. Present your findings to the Patrol Leaders’ Council and to the Troop Leaders.



## 4. Emphasise Teamwork

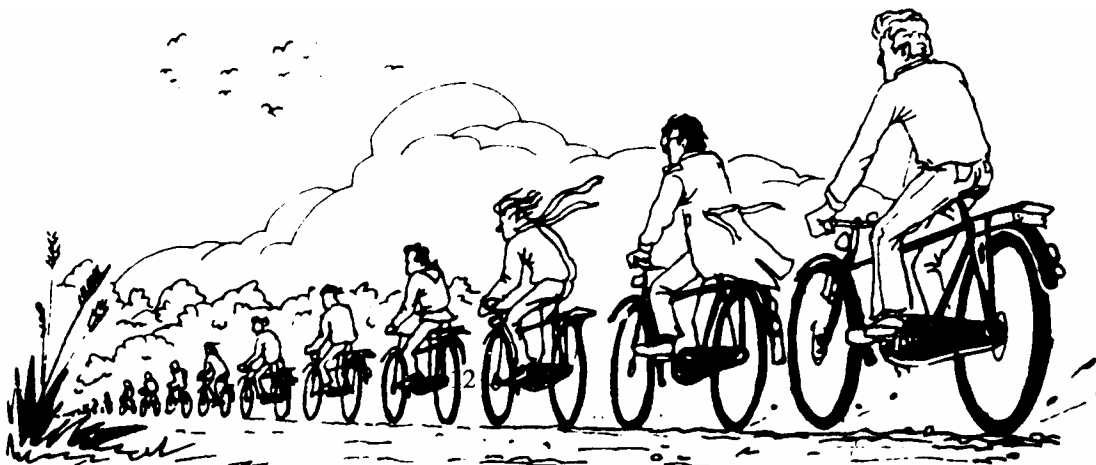
### *Aim*

A team is like a chain. It is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain. The aim of the following activities is to create an environment in which every single member of the patrol has a very important role to play. Whether it is a challenge or just a patrol activity, the role of the PL is to ensure that every member of the Patrol works as a team – rather than actually running the show alone.

### *Activities*

**Patrol Competition** – Challenge another Patrol to a friendly competition e.g. getting more points during the next Troop Fire and Cooking competition. Plan and prepare for the challenge with the whole patrol and give every member an important task. Make sure that you emphasise the fact that the important thing is to be a united team rather than winning the competition.

**Patrol Camp** – The best teamwork builder for a Patrol Leader is a Patrol Camp. Give every member the opportunity to choose at least one activity he or she wants to have during the camp. Remember to involve everyone with all aspects of the camp – everyone should have equal doses of fun, work, duties and rest. After the camp have a short meeting to discuss the camp and list the ways in which you could improve the next one.



## 5. Fun Activities

The main reason why people come to scouts is because it is (or should be) FUN. Is your patrol fun ? Are you fun ? Do you organize fun activities ? Or are you just a bore ??

The aim of the following list of activities is to give you an idea of what a fun activity can be – be creative and come up with your own activities ! Use the information you gathered in the infosheets about the members of your patrol to help you decide !

### *Ideas for fun activities:*

Make up new songs or change old ones... sing when scouts get bored.

Come up with a patrol yell and use it to boost morale e.g.

(PL): "Panther !"

(1<sup>st</sup> Scout): "One !"

(2<sup>nd</sup> Scout): "Two !"

(3<sup>rd</sup> Scout): "Three !" (etc etc)

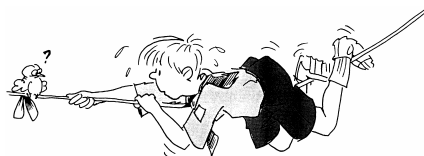
(Last Scout): "Patrol !"

Have a social activity – meet up and have a meal at someone's house or watch a video or DVD...

Meet up for a game of football or volleyball – or go to an event like an airshow or the circus together

Organise a BBQ for the patrol – maybe invite the leaders or another patrol to the activity

Have an "Awards Night" where you will give out the funniest awards you can think of... Smelliest Socks Award, Deepest Sleeper Award...



## 6. A High level of Scouting

### *Aim*

Keeping a High Standard of Scouting in the patrol is a priority for the Patrol Leader. Use the Patrol Training Chart and update it regularly. It will help your patrol measure their progress and it will help you decide which areas need more attention.

### *Activities*

Hold a Patrol in Council specifically for training. Get each member of the patrol to list all the tests/requirements that are missing for their standard. With the help of your APL draw up a master list with the type of tests that are needed most e.g. :

Weather Knowledge	10
First Aid	8
Pack a Rucksak	3

Use this list to plan your Patrol Instructions accordingly.

Together with another patrol, organise a training day at your scout HQ. Plan out a program consisting of training sessions, practical activities and fun games. Ask for the help of the leaders and see if they can help you with testing and so on.



# 7. Be Prepared

## *Aim*

Being a Patrol Leader also implies responsibilities. The members of your Patrol look up to you for ideas, and guidance. You must make sure that you always have a plan up your sleeve just in case...

The following activities are not Patrol based – they are aimed at the individual Patrol Leader. Are you prepared for the following eventualities ??

## *Situations to prepare for :*

- Your patrol is bored... you need 3 outdoor games and 3 indoor games to brighten up an afternoon.
- The leaders tell you that there will be a campfire tonight. You need to prepare 2 original stunts and 2 original songs.
- You have an hour to spare during a camp. You need to prepare a short training session and a related activity... (You will need a session & activity for most of the scout standard tests)
- The SPL is sick and you need to take over the Troop for an afternoon. You will need to prepare an inter-Patrol challenge, a couple of troop games and a fun activity
- You need to plan the Patrol Camp that will be happening next month...
- Two of the scouts in your patrol have a very serious argument and are now not talking to each other. The Patrol seems to be split into two groups. How are you going to handle it ?

## *8. No man is an island!*

### *Aim*

You will only have an effective Patrol if there is a strong sense of teamwork between the Patrol Leader and his assistant. Is your APL ready for the job of PL? Do you use your APL enough? The aim of the following activities is to give you an idea of how effective your APL is and determine if you should change the way you run your patrol.

### *Activities*

Get your APL to organize and run a Patrol Activity alone. Let him use the Number 3 as his APL. During the activity act as one of the normal scouts. Whenever the APL makes a mistake, do not correct him in front of the others... After the activity, have a proper debrief and allow him to criticize his own activity.

Organise a Patrol Activity together with your APL but let the APL run the activity. This will give the APL the chance to understand how important proper planning and preparation is.

Give the APL specific duties in the patrol. Let him give instructions to the Patrol when needed and allow him to run the patrol alone for short periods of time.



# 9. Regular Patrol in Councils

## *Aim*

A Patrol in Council is a tool which allows the PL to manage his Patrol effectively. If you do not have PiCs regularly, something must be wrong !

## *The Patrol in Council*

- Have an agenda of what you want to discuss, and let all the members of the patrol read and add to the agenda before the actual meeting.
  - Keep the meeting short and to the point. It should never take longer than 45 minutes.
  - Take notes of what was said and decided in a logbook.
  - The PiC could be followed a fun activity e.g. watching a video or playing a game - this results in better attendance and more productivity.
  - Know what you want to achieve during the meeting – list the 3 or 4 thing that must be decided.
  - Summarise the main points at the end so that everybody agrees on what you will do next.
  - Let everyone speak—no matter who or what is said. However do not let the meeting go out of point and do not waste too much time on one specific point.
  - Finally, report your conclusions back to the Leaders and the PLC.
- Also remember that the PiC Logbook is a piece of history... take care of it.



# *10. Good Communication*

## *Aim*

How quickly can you contact all your patrol to pass on a message and then receive a reply from them ? The only way to do this quickly and efficiently is to have a solid communications network.

Today, in the age of mobile phones and email, your task is simpler... but it still requires a bit of planning to get it right. The aim of the following activities is to help you test your communication system between your patrol and find out where the weakest link is.

## *Activities*

Make a list of all the members in your patrol. Write down the date and time and then start your phone/sms/email chain and ask each scout to relay a message back e.g. if they are coming to the next scout meeting. Do not tell them that you are testing the communication system! As the replies come back to you, write down the date and time the reply came back.

Did everyone get the message ?

Did everyone reply ?

What was the shortest reply time ?

What was the longest reply time ?

Did everyone reply with the correct information ?

Did you make all the calls or was the task distributed ?

You may find that different people respond better to different means of communication... One scout may always respond to an sms on his mobile, while another prefers if you call at home after 6pm.

Use the results of this activity to update your information sheets !

# 11. Be Positive

## *Aim*

Do you have the right attitude to be a leader ? Do you leave a positive effect on your scouts ? When you no longer remain a PL, how will your scouts remember you ?

Do we need a little work on our attitude ??

The following tasks will start you off in the right direction...

## *Activities*

Put yourself in a positive mode ! Make a list of the members of you patrol and list the good qualities they have. When you are done, look at the list of good qualities and see if there is a pattern you can exploit e.g. if many of you scouts are good at football, you can organize a Football Patrol Challenge...

What do your scouts think about you as a PL ? Ask the question by giving your scouts a thinking challenge... What would they change or do differently if they were to become Patrol Leaders today ?? Keep your ears and eyes open... you will learn a lot from this one !

Set up a "Correction Procedure" - Never criticise, embarrass or call a scout stupid in front of the others. A real leader will call the scout aside and explain what he did wrong and how he can improve. This will give you instant respect from that scout. Think of the best way to correct each and every member of your patrol in the best way possible.



## 12. Get help from the leaders

### Aim

Every good leader knows his or her limits. There are some things which you cannot do alone and getting help from others who are better trained or who have more experience than you is the only way to survive.

The aim of the next set of questions is to help you determine your limits and to see if you know where to get help from.

### Activities

Make a list of 3 scouting areas where you feel you are not so good at. Make a leaders or other PLs who are very good in these areas and can really help you.

Make a list of examples where you should not take the responsibility of the situation on your own, but where you should get help from your leaders.

Using the names of your leaders and fellow PLs as a guide, plan an imaginary training camp. During this camp, the different Leaders/PLs will be giving training sessions on the different scouting topics, apart from doing the normal camp duties. How would you divide the different tasks to the different leaders, and why ?



## *13. You're a role model!*

### *Aim*

A Patrol Leader has the power to make the rest of his scouts copy what he does simply by doing it himself. If the PL says that it is cool to wear a t-shirt inside out, you can make a bet that most of the patrol will do the same...

The aim of the following activities is to help you realize how much your scouts actually copy you – and to help you use this to your advantage...

### *Activities*

Start a new trend in your Troop by doing something as a Patrol that the rest of the Troop will want to copy... invent a cool patrol yell or print your own Patrol T-shirts or make an interesting mini-pioneering structure to decorate your den.

Try a new leadership technique. Find a task or job that needs to be done and start doing it in front of the rest of the patrol. Make the task seem interesting and fun. Do not ask for help but if anyone shows an interest in what you are doing, allow them to help you. If you do this right, within a few minutes all or most of your patrol will be helping you – the trick is to make the task seem fun.

Now for something a bit original. If you are a role model, your scouts must have their own perception of you in their minds... So play this game... (and have a good laugh) Get each member of your patrol to remember some event in the past that reminds them of you – whether something funny that happened or some event that made you very angry and make them act it out – while imitating you. While this will probably be really entertaining for the patrol – it should give you an insight to what kind of role model you are.

## 14. Overview

Being a Patrol Leader should give you the experience to organize activities and solve problems with a positive, hands-on, and practical approach.

In the first handbook, the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> point dealt with “When to draw the line” and “Train your Successor” respectively.

Once you reach this stage of the handbook, you should have enough experience in organising activities to be able to come up with a few interesting ones yourself.

As a final word of advice, remember that everybody makes mistakes because nobody is perfect ! However, a good leader will learn from his mistakes. And a really good leader will also learn from the mistakes of others !

