

## **Matching Leadership Styles to the Needs of Scouts, Patrols, and Troops**

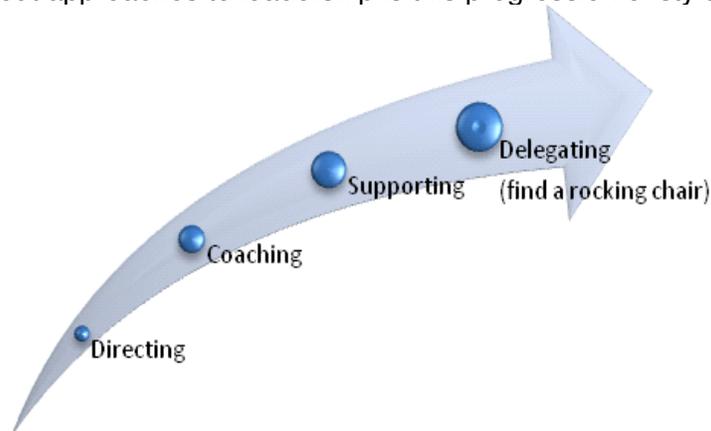
*(Taken from Scoutmaster Specific Syllabus)*

Teams go through various stages of development as they come together. Individual people go through the same stages—and their natural ups and downs—as they take on new tasks or roles.

- Starting out (skills are low; enthusiasm is high)
- Becoming discouraged (skills and enthusiasm are low)
- Making progress (skills and enthusiasm are rising)
- Finding success (skills and enthusiasm are high)

By listening well and by paying attention to other clues provided by Scouts, a Scoutmaster or Jr. Leader can get a sense of the style of leadership needed in a given situation for a boy, for a patrol, and for a troop.

One way to think about approaches to leadership is this progression of styles:



Each fills a particular need. Each can supply what is missing in a given situation or to an individual or team at a certain point in their development.

### **TEAM IN FORMING STATE**

#### **LEADERSHIP STYLE DIRECTING - EXPLAINING**

For a boy new to Scouting, for a Scout taking on a new leadership position, or for a troop undertaking a fresh challenge, what is often missing is a sense of structure and an understanding of what Scouts are supposed to do. A Leader can fill that need through directing—that is, giving clear guidelines. Telling the SPL or Jr. Leaders, "Have the members of your patrol use buckets of water to put out the campfire, and then we can remove any traces that it was here:" is one example of directing.

### **TEAM IN STORMING STATE**

#### **LEADERSHIP STYLE: COACHING - DEMONSTRATING**

As Scouts, patrols, and a troop are becoming more comfortable with their new roles and activities, a Scoutmaster can begin to step to the sidelines and allow boys to assume more responsibilities. Through coaching, the Scoutmaster continues to provide guidance and praise, but also gives Jr. Leaders more room to initiate action, exercise their own judgment, and learn from their own mistakes.

Here's one way coaching works. A Leader shows a Jr. Leader how to do a skill, then the Scout demonstrates his growing mastery of the skill by demonstrating it to the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster can provide feedback that encourages learning, ensures that the Scout understands the skill, and helps him understand why some things are done a certain way. In simple terms, coaching can often be a form of "show and do." (see EDGE teaching method)



#### **TEAM IN NORMING STATE**

##### **LEADERSHIP STYLE: SUPPORTING - GUIDING**

Over time, the youth leaders of the troop should become efficient, confident, and independent. That growth will be reflected in patrols and a troop that are developing into more productive teams. A Leader's leadership recognizes this evolution by shifting from coaching to supporting-providing Scouts with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed, then stepping out of the way to let them thrive. Whenever necessary, the Leader provides supportive guidance, suggests alternative ways of doing things, and offers positive reinforcement, but he or she also makes it clear that the boys themselves are in charge and that the responsibility for much of what happens in the troop is up to them.

#### **TEAM IN PERFORMING STATE**

##### **LEADERSHIP STYLE: DELEGATING - ENABLING**

As individuals and as a team, members of a Scout troop can reach a stage of high productivity. Youth leaders plan and carry out worthwhile troop meetings that lead to exciting outdoor adventures and other troop events, and have the sense that "we did it ourselves." A Scoutmaster who has helped a troop reach this stage can again shift leadership styles, this time to delegating. The Scoutmaster is shifting most of the responsibility for the success of the troop to the boy leaders.

Teams don't start as effective high-performance teams; they grow as they come together as a team. A new team leader changes the dynamics of a preexisting team, such as when a new group of troop leaders steps in. The new leadership team will want to pay close attention to what stages the troop is in as the new leadership team ramps up.

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