

THE PARENTAL INFLUENCE  
IN THE  
SCOUTING PROGRAM  
(The North Star Effect)

In Partial Fullfillment for the  
PHD, College of Commissiонер Science

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Scouting Goals.....	2
A. Citizenship.....	2
B. Character.....	3
C. Fitness.....	3
III. Scouting Program.....	4
A. Methods.....	4
B. Patrol Method.....	6
IV. Role Models.....	8
A. Baden Powell's Mentor.....	8
B. Scoutmaster as a Mentor.....	9
V. Scouting's Weaknesses and Strengths.....	11
VI. Parental Role Model.....	12
A. Citizenship.....	12
B. Character.....	14
C. Fitness.....	15
VII. Conclusion.....	17
VIII. References.....	19

## I. Introduction

Boy Scouts of America provides an effective program designed to build desirable qualities such as citizenship, character, physical and mental strength in young men. Together, these three goals are developed or supported by many influences such as; 1) church, 2) family, 3) father, and finally 4) Scouting. These life's influences provide a solid foundation in which a boy becomes a man. Each one of these factors can be self-supporting in its own right - the trunk of a tree if you will. The Scouting program incorporates several of these pillars to support or grow its three aims. The Scoutmaster in combination with the patrol method is one such example. However, I believe that the parental factor mostly influences shaping a youth's character as well as his moral fiber.

With regards to the Scouting movement, the tree-trunk then becomes a solid foundation composed of the father, Scoutmaster and the patrol method. The two former influences are the boys mentor, if you wish. It is a process the boy must go through in order to obtain the rank of Eagle. It does not come easy. But if the boy listens, then he will gain knowledge that will prepare him for the

world in which he lives. For if he follows this path, then he will grow into a strong, solid man.

Now, let's explore further the three branches of Scouting.

## II. Scoutings' Goals

### A. Citizenship

Citizenship is learning about the country in which one lives and how its government operates. A boy learns citizenship through interactions with people - BSA "is to develop in boys the feeling of people's interdependence." He understands the needs of the people. He works within the bounds of the law. In learning about his country's heritage, a boy finds out what America stands for. He learns about the government and how it works. The boy studies the rules of the land and how they apply to everyday living. In essence, the boy respects his country through his understanding of its social, economic and governmental systems.

Learning about citizenship is an on-going process. The boy must be willing to study and learn about his country as well as other nations. By his new found knowledge, he must be able to apply what he knows into his world. In other words, he employs wisdom. Thus, learning citizenship helps one become a better person or an

honorable man who possesses both character and moral strength.

### B. Character

Character development applies to a better self. Character is what the boy is made of. Remember, the boy is always changing. The boy will show signs of character building along his walk in Scouting. The boy is sure of himself, but not conceited. He respects himself and it shows in his appearance and actions. He is a fun young man to be around. The young man knows how to react in an emergency. The young man believes' "in some religious concept and practices his belief in his daily life." This all helps to build a boy's character. Character building is something the boy will have the rest of his life. When you build a boy's character, you are helping him become a better man.

### C. Fitness

Last, but not least, is the exercise aim of scouting. Exercise is very important to the young man's mind and character development. It helps keep him alert for school and what he has to do at home. It helps him stimulate his mind to ask questions. Through questioning, he is provided with answers to guide him through his journey.

Fitness in moral strength is difficult to define. Because what is

moral to one may not be moral to another. So we must teach them different skills to use. He must have courage to stand up for what he believes in - even though other people may persuade him otherwise. He must have respect for those who may disagree with his view-point. He must have the ability to understand and show compassion. He must learn to accept other people's rights and accepting other people as his equal.

### III. Scouting Program

#### A. Methods

Scouting's three aims are developed in the youth through advancement, encouragement and learning. Advancement within the program teaches a boy that he can complete different skills. Skills that give him a sense of well being and accomplishment. Skills that provide him assurances so that he can compete in the journey of life. Skills that give him self-respect. And finally, skills that teach him about his country and how he is a big part of the judicial system. Even though he can't vote, he can influence adults in the way he feels about a certain person or amendment. So along his advancement walk, a boy acquires citizenship skills.

Through advancement, encouragement, and learning, the youth is

given different options in order to achieve Eagle. It is important to teach a boy patient towards his achievements. For forgiveness will make the boy a better man. The scouting personnel help "define the direction in which we propose to lead boys in Scouting." There are people there for him to trust but he must learn to trust himself. That will give him moral fiber in his quest for the ultimate reward, Eagle - "Scouting alone will bring boys into a manhood with these qualities."

A scout must possess the endurance to pass the physical part of each advancement. So his parents, Scoutmaster and friends all encourage him to go on. While he takes this walk, he is learning. Advancement, encouragement and learning go hand in hand with each other. They are the arteries to the Scouting branches. They supply nutrients to the three aims. In other words, they are the food of Scouting.

### B. Patrol Method

The patrol method is the BSA's tool or vehicle that carries the nutrients of advancement, encouragement, and learning to the Scouting goals. The patrol method enables the boys to help and show each other necessary steps or skills in order to achieve rank advancement. The patrol method instills Scouting's three aims in the following manner:

- 1) Participating citizenship
- 2) Responsibility
- 3) Accepting responsibility
- 4) Group interaction
- 5) Voting
- 6) Teamwork
- 7) Organization

As a participating citizen, the boy learns what it is to be an American and that it is important to be a good citizen. In being a good citizen, he learns to vote for leadership and troop functions. He learns that voting brings about a group conscious. So that if he does not vote, then there can be no group activity. The boy learns to accept responsibility for the voting outcome.

He must learn by doing, thus he is accepting responsibility for his own actions. He learns to work within a group. He is



interacting with other people. What he does will affect everyone else in the group.

Through the patrol method, he learns that teamwork is very important. As a team player he must help with the troop's organization and planning its goals. So the boys learn they must depend on each other in order to accomplish their individual goals. In doing the above group interaction, the boys are acquiring good citizenship training and character development.

The Scoutmaster is the coach and the boys are the players. The Scoutmaster works hand-in-hand with the patrol method. Together, they accept the boy as the rough diamond that he is and helps him learn to shine. It takes a skilled man, like a fine cutting tool, to make the boy shine. The boy's behavior becomes a steady force of good. He learns to take responsibility for his own actions. He just does not get this way overnight. It takes years of training. Along his scouting walk, the boy will remember a lot of people. But the one figure that sticks out the most would be the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster takes this rough diamond and makes him shine with the three aims of scouting. Thus, the boy will become a guiding light himself as he travels in his adulthood.

As you can see, the patrol method's "learn by doing" concept

inherently instills the three aims of scouting in the youth's development. The boys learn by teaching each other as well as other people. The boys often learn best those things they teach to others. Occassionally a summary of reviews and examinations are desirable. "The extent to which they are used depends on the type of skill and how well the student has learned." Baden Powell believed in the process of hearing, seeing and doing. That is the Key to Scouting!

#### IV. Role Models

As the boy travels into manhood, he learns that he is not alone. For if he does walk a lonely path, he will be inadequately trained to deal with life's adversities and triumphs. There are bridges to cross with the coach's aid - guiding light if you will. So throughout our individual journeys, mentors are placed along the way. My father was my mentor who supported, nourished and developed Scoutings three aims within my soul.

##### A. Baden Powells' Mentor

Yes, even BSA's founder, Sir William Baden Powell, had a mentor, Major Frederick Russell Burnham. The structured, nonhumanistic, military program did not provide young Powell with all his virtues, character, and scouting skills. Major Burnham had a few

sayings for his "Scouts" that served with him doing the Boer wars in Africa.<sup>3.4</sup>

"The scout must work where there is no cheering regiment of the eye of the commander upon him. He must find within his own mind the vision to spur him on."

Isn't that what scouting aims are all about. A vision the Scout must find for himself. The Scoutmaster can lead him just so far, but the scout must take the bull by the horns and carry on. At times, the only cheering a scout will receive will be his own. The Major explained<sup>4</sup> to young Powell that the "darkness of the night is his best friend. For it will hide his secret movements although it is at night that physical exhaustion is most apt to breed the cowardice that comes creeping into the bones of every man at times. It is then that the supreme effort must be made to overcome fear and force one relentlessly to gain the information so vital to his commander." Then he goes on to say: "Particular knowledge which the scout is after is the joy of the game and compensates for days and nights of strenuous effort and physical hardship." X

#### B. Scoutmaster as a Mentor

In the same sense, the Scoutmaster is a mentor to the the boy

*Mentor*

scout. He is always there for the boy - more so than any other adult leader in Scouting. He is the unsung hero of the movement. He gives guidance, counseling and support to the youth. In this role, the scoutmaster supports the youth's journey in his quest of scouting's three aims. The scoutmaster shows him that learning is by doing. That he can advance and meet the goals of the scouting program.

However, due to time constraints, the Scoutmaster can only reinforce the youth's character moral fiber. The Scoutmaster's attention is divided among many youths. Thus, the solid moral character soul can only arise from the youth's family upbringing. It is this character fiber that is not only supported and nourished by the Scoutmaster but receives strong support from the church as well. More particularly, it is the parental influence which is the guiding light or pillar of citizenship, character, and physical and moral strength.

## V. Scouting Strengths and Weaknesses

From the above discussion, the scouting program excels in citizenship development and physical fitness for the youth. Parentally bred moral fitness is only slightly influenced by such exemplary scouting role models as the scouting professional and volunteer adult leader. Character building is limited by the time element. It is this lack of leadership which allows the moral trait or fiber to deteriorate.

As the least developed aim within the scouting program, moral character growth is best accomplished by a much closer mentor - the father image. Like Baden-Powell's mentor, Major Frederick Burnham, my father provided me with relevant insights which further developed my moral fiber and well-being. All of which firmly provided a strong foundation for the reaching out of my branches. In combination with the scouting program, then my moral character was honed to that fine quality diamond.

Below are just a few representative examples of how a particular parental influence coupled with the scouting program enhances an individual's growth into a meaningful ~~and lasting~~ adulthood. Like what a stone-cutter can do to a rough diamond, my father's actions helped me shine.

## VI. Parental Role Model

### A. Citizenship

My father's heritage teachings were through example and show-and-tell. He was the food that gave me the inspiration to grow. Quite often in the Scouting program, the Scoutmaster and/or professional are somewhat radisant in their role-model stewardship.

My father would put out the American flag everyday. By his own special input and support, he would tell me what a great country we live in. And that through their own input, a man or women could do anything they want to in this country. He explained to me how the flag stands for our freedom that we fought for. The greatest one being the Revolutionary war. He took me to the home of Betsy Ross and showed me where the lady lived that made our great flag. Seeing history first-hand made it so much more enjoyable to me. That one talk and show performed by my father made my history branches stronger. The diamond now had a facit put in her mist.

Supplementing the Betsy Ross visit, Dad also took me to Valley Forge where Washington and the Continental Army fought. And then

on to Morristown N.J., where Washington fought the British at Jockey Hollow Trail. Last but not least was where the troops fought at Cowpens in South Carolina. This was history in the making. It meant alot to me seeing and learning in my father's presence of what a great nation that we live in.

At 15, Dad allowed me to go to Europe. He wanted me to find out what other nations and cultures were like. I discovered first-hand how other governments operated. It made me appreciate this country more. We do have alot of freedom compared to other countries. When I came back from Europe, my father and I talked about the things I learned. This type of feedback is not readily obtainable from the Scouting system. There are just not enough leaders around to do this.

Dad also would tell me stories about his navy days and about our family heritage. He explained about how my ancestors settled in North Carolina in the 1700's. And about how they fought in both the Revolutionary and Civil wars. I would feel very proud when I could wear my fathers navy uniform. Because he wore it when he was defending this country. Scouting does not give one this special kind of reinforcement - handing heritage down from generation to generation. So this particular scouting walk alongside my father taught to be a good citizen and gave me pride

in being an American.

### B. Character

My father taught me to respect myself and to always remember who I am. He always told me to look neat and clean. He would say appearance is a reflection on how you feel about your-self. People can tell alot from your appearance. Dad always said if you improve on your appearance that you will always feel better about your-self. I have found that to be so. Your actions have alot to do with the way you look and feel. So I always try to look my best.

I'll never forget the time when Dad helped me with my 7th grade science project which gave me confidence within my-self. It was on conservation. We worked togther comparing the effects of erosion on mountains. I won the blue ribbon. My confidence was at a maximum then. But, Dad would not allow conceit to set in. For if you succeed, you don't have too "toot your own horn" because others will do that for you. To this day my father still refuses to accept credit for the birth of Camp Bob Hardin.

He also told me to be honest with other people. To always be up front with the people you deal with. You never tell stories to them or about them. All a man or women has is his word.



Remembering what Dad always said, "your word is your name. Once you have your name on it you are bound to up hold it".

Since I can remember Dad and I always had hobbies. He believed in keeping me busy because it kept me away from mischievous deeds. Swimming was one of my hobbies. I just loved to swim on a hot day. All of these things helped build up my confidence. I could do anything if I put my mind to it.

I got introduced to God by attending Church every Sunday with my father. That God was a loving God and he cared about his children. So I have a strong faith in God and know that he will protect and look after me.

#### C. Fitness

Since I can remember Dad has supported me in a program to keep me physically fit. We have done alot of sporting activities together. Dad always stayed in shape and active in work.. Also we would do alot of swimming together and that was good exercise. We would swim everyday at camp. Dad made exercise fun and therefore you wanted to participate.

Equally important, exercise keeps one mentally alert. Exercise keeps the brain waves aflowing. It keeps you alert and mentally

awake. Exercise helped me with problem solving in school and work. Dad assisted by using the "question and answer" technique. This method stimulated new ideas for old problems. That approach has always helped me throughout my life. Dad taught me well.

Moral fitness is very important to personal growth. Moral fitness is a subjective criteria - what may be moral to one may not be moral to another. Dad always told me to live by the Golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". One must understand people and their individual rights. One must also respect the rights of others and have interest in their viewpoints. Dad always said that "no one is better or worse than you are. That all people are equal".

Finally, now we come to emotional fitness. Dad taught me how to adjust in new surroundings brought about by the professional Scouting career. A professional Scouter moves about once in every three years. Thus, I had to learn to adjust to new and changing environments. It taught me to roll with the punches. Moving gave me self-discipline and self-control. New Jersey folks would tease me about my southern accent. And I had to learn how to control my anger. Dad told me that "no matter how I felt, I should wear a smile and have an enthusiastic attitude".

## VII. Conclusion

Scouting does not offer the individual concern that only the parent can give to a scout. Scouting is not around when a child calls out when he is hurt. It is the parent who will mend the hurt and provide encouragement to continue on. I have walked many trails with my father and few Scouting trails alone. My father has always been there when I needed help. Scouting does not give that sense of ancestry that the family heritage provides. My father gave me my roots and its history. Scouting didn't provide the food for my particular branches to grow, because women were not allowed in the Scouting movement at the time. Oh, I knocked on Scouting's door but it didn't let me in. It wasn't until I was 15 that I was able to participate in Scouting through Exploring. Scouting has always been slow to conform to the changing world. It lingers in old ideas and philosophies Scouting did not grow with me. It was my father who took my hand and guided me down the scouting trail through his eyes. He gave me the key which unlocked the door to a great adventure.

Although the Scouting program is geared towards indoctrinating Scouting's Three Aims in the character of our youth, its mission can't be done without the parental factor. Scouting does provide; however, the mechanism for which a person or individual (whether

it be the Scoutmaster or parent) can influence the youth's structure. But scouting is not coherent to an individual's needs. It physically doesn't have the time to spend with each youth. The scouting program is a collage of patrol method, advancement, new skills, group interaction, leadership, authority, etc. All of these guiding lights are unfocused. They are a myriad of stars in the night sky. It is only from the parental guidance that the Three Aims of Scouting can be probably focused - the North star if you will.

In essence then, the scouting program is the person and the person is the scouting program!

## VIII. References

- 1) "The Official Scoutmaster Handbook", Boy Scouts of America, 1981, p 100.
- 2) ibib, p99.
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- 5) "Boy Scout Handbook", Boy Scouts of America, 1965.

College of Commissioner Science  
Cluster College of Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoah Councils  
Readers Certification Approval

This is to certify that I have read and approve the following described thesis.

Title: *The PARENTAL influence IN The SCOUTING PROGRAM  
(The NORTH STAR Effect)*

Submitted by: *ROBERTA ANN JUSTICE EGAN*

This certification is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PH. D. Degree in Commissioner of Science as offered by the Cluster College of Commissioner Science of the Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoyah Councils, Boy Scouts of America.

My appointment as a reader for this purpose was approved at the faculty meeting held at Fletcher, North Carolina, October 18, 1986.

*Paul Rutherford*  
Signature of Reader

*3/18/87*  
Date

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*George D. Fields, Jr.*  
Signature of Reader

*14 March '87*  
Date

*George D. Fields, Jr.*

*well organized - personally oriented with  
subject of parental influence.*

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READER'S APPROVAL

This is to certify that I have read and approve the thesis

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submitted by: *Raketa Ann Jackson Egan*

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Signed: *Juan B. Smith*  
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My appointment as a reader for this purpose was approved at  
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