

Boy Scouts

Do a good turn daily. That is the Boy Scout Slogan. What would the world be like if more of us lived by this standard? The quote below is of a middle-aged man, David Pruett. When Pruett was a youth, like many young men he participated in scouting, and he is also an Eagle Scout. During Pruett's youtube video, he mentions that he tries to apply scouting to his life even still.

This doesn't mean simply do one good turn a day. It is a reminder to be on the look out for opportunities to help though out the day. You don't have to look hard for these opportunities because they will find you if your eyes are open and you have the mindset to see.

Even the smallest act of kindness makes an impact. It is all about helping others and making choices, every day. Do you choose to do a good turn or let the opportunity slip by? The choice is yours (David Pruett. "Usnerdoc" youtube.com).

The Boy Scout program is not just about tying knots, building shelters, making fires, and having food fights; there is a lot more to this organization. For example the Scout Oath is:

"On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The following dialogue is an amazing example of how to "Be Prepared" as the Boy Scout Motto states. This interview is between a reporter and a young boy scout in Iowa the morning after a tornado hit their Boy Scout Camp. The reporter speaks slowly, and with awe as she reads off of her clipboard about the heroic young men who bravely acted on their training in an actual emergency.

Reporter: "I know you say something very interesting Ethan; you say, 'if it had to happen, it was good it happened at a boy scout camp.' Why would a boy at the age of (2) (searches over clipboard) 13, say such a thing?"

Ethan: "Because we were **prepared**. We knew that shock could happen. We knew we needed to place tourniquets on wounds that were bleeding too much. We knew we needed to apply pressure and **gauze**. We had first aid kits, we had everything. We **knew** about this, we knew how to **do** it. We had staff all around that had been trained **for** this. And if it had happened anywhere else, there wouldn't be that much that people know."

The general stigma of being a scout is looked upon as honorable in society. As shown above, the reporter lady does not just talk to Ethan as a 13 year old boy, but also as a young man with courage as she quotes him with, 'if it had to happen, it was good it happened at a Boy Scout Camp.' The two boys that the reporter was interviewing were pretty calm considering what had happened the night before; cabins and trees were ripped from the ground, 4 boys died, and 40 others were wounded as the tornado crashed through the Little Sioux Boy Scout Camp.

There is a certain way that Scouts communicate with each other and it is definitely different with how they speak with their families, friends, and even their Scout Leaders. It is quite interesting to

put a group of boys together from different backgrounds and watch them work together. Not always do they make lasting friendships with other boys, but they learn to work together, and the more they mature and learn from each other, they seem more confident and better able to participate in things non-scout related as well. Below is a quote by Nathan Hadley, an Eagle Scout and the International Indoor Rock Climbing Champion.

I think that the biggest similarity is just the center on the outdoors for me. My kind of more recreational side of climbing, kind of getting outside on my own, camping with some buddies, and doing a lot of climbing on our own, and and it's just very similar to outings that I had with the Scouts, and it's something that I don't feel, that I don't think that I'd be as comfortable with if it weren't for scouting (Nathan Hadley, Vimeo.com).

The two boys in our local WEBELOS troop, (ten year old scouts) when left alone, talk about “cool” movies that they have seen, and “cool” toys that they want, or have. Both of them come from different types of households. Parents are just as much a part of scouting as their children are. So going both ways, there is one boy, “M”, who comes every week, (because he is picked up from home) but cannot always remember the boy scout motto/law, but the other boy, “I”, does not come very frequently, but usually remembers both the motto and the law. Also “M” struggles with reading and some other concepts, whereas, “I” is a very good reader and often makes comments to help contribute to conversations. I have met both “M”, and “I's” parents as well. “M's” parents are a little more laid back and have several children. “I's” parents are more strict and only have two children. Juxtaposing parent's language use with both scouting and everyday life is pretty interesting.

The following dialogue is between a Scout Leader, “J” and the two boys, “I”, and “M.” (Permission from parents was obtained).

J: “Do we know the Scout Motto?”
I: “Do a good turn daily.”
J: “And the Slogan?”
M: “Be prepared.”
J: “Ah, we got 'em backwards. Good job though.”

This following dialogue is about the small fire that started at the LDS Conference Center in Salt Lake City (April 16th) where “J” is an employee. “J” is explaining to the boys what happened in the fire and how bad smoke is for your lungs.

J: “Smoke is really, really bad for your lungs. It's really thick and it can stick to your lungs.”
I: “What about campfire smoke?”
J: “Campfire smoke is bad too, but when there's a fire in a building, the smoke doesn't have anywhere to go, whereas campfire smoke just goes into the air. And when you have a campfire, it's **just** wood, so it burns relatively clean. But when there's a fire in a building, there's wood, there's paint, there's carpet, there's plastic and rubber, insulation on wires, the fire involved large batteries, so battery acid and plastic. The smoke was very black and sticky. The fire was put out by fire extinguishers because it was so far inside the building that the firefighters couldn't bring their fire hoses in that far.”
I: “How many fire extinguishers are there?”
J: “In the Conference Center?”
I: “Yeah.”
J: “Tons and tons! The Conference Center is huge so there are a lot of fire extinguishers.”

I: "How did the fire start?"

J: "There were some batteries that were involved, but we're not sure yet whether the batteries started it, or if it began near the batteries."

I: "How big were the batteries?"

J: "A rack of them weighs about as much as both of you combined and there are sixteen racks."

I: "Do you think the batteries overheated?"

J: "Yeah, it's possible. We're lookin' into it."

During this dialogue, Boy Scout "I," asked a lot of questions; not only the ones in the example, but many others. Later on he also shared a story of how one of his friends was playing his Xbox when the Xbox blew up. During this entire conversation, Boy Scout "M" sat with his head in his hands seemingly listening, but might not have been. Boy Scout, "I" wanted to keep hearing about the details of the fire.

The way that Scout Masters/Leaders speak to Scouts seems to always be with encouragement and support. The Scout Leaders want the boys that they look over, to succeed, and therefore speak encouragingly to the boys. For example in the dialogue, when "J" asked about the Boy Scout Slogan and Motto, both boys got mixed up, but "J" still told them good job. The boys are supposed to speak back to their leaders with respect. There are always exceptions, but the boys that follow what Scouts are taught, look to the their leaders for guidance and with respect. It is within the norms to have good manners and to be respectful as a scout.

Boys are still boys, and there is plenty of fun involved with Boy Scouts, but they are also taught to be: Trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. (The Boy Scout Law). An example of being brave would definitely be the boys at the Little Sioux Boy Scout Camp mentioned previously. Not only did the scouts act *after* the incident of the tornado, but during the incident as well. Within the cabins and other buildings of the campsite, many of the older boys jumped on top of the younger boys, putting themselves in danger, in order to protect the others.

There are certain types of discourse strategies used to maintain the scouting community. For example, the Scout Master usually has a weekly or bi-monthly meeting with the Scout Leaders in order to discuss the progress of the boys, Scout Camp, new activities that can be used to keep the boys interested in scouting, and of course Pack Meetings where the boys are awarded badges for completing specific requirements. All of the topics talked about in the "Scout Master/Leader meetings" are also discourse strategies to maintain the scouting community. Interestingly enough that I picked my topic on Boy Scouts, because 2012 is the 100th anniversary of the Eagle Scout!

The Eagle Scout Board of Review is where a Boy Scout goes for his final interview in order to become an Eagle Scout. The Eagle Scout Board of Review is in place to see the boy's understanding and adherence to the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and all that entails in scouting. The Eagle Scout Board of Review asks about the boy's camping experiences; good or bad, and what he learned from them. They ask about his scouting experiences; which leadership positions has he held, what his responsibilities were in each of his positions. They ask about the boy's Eagle Scout project; how it helped others, which group that it helped. The Eagle Scout Board of Review also asks about the boy's future goals; college, armed forces, etc..

Unfortunately, not much discourse is available because the interviews are kept pretty private between the board members and the individual scout; parents are not even permitted into the room until toward the end of the interview.

The accessibility of the language to outsiders of Boy Scouts depends on a couple of factors. As mentioned before, parents are just as much a part of scouting as the scouts themselves. The accessibility is wide open, but depending on if people are willing to be involved in scouting, or not. Scouting does not exclude anybody who is willing to be a part of it. However, religion is a major part

of scouting. If boys are brought up in a religion, scouting would be more readily available to them, than boys without a religious upbringing.

In conclusion, there is a lot more to Boy Scouts than just playing around in the woods. Boy Scouting is an opportunity for boys to learn survival skills, respect, how to interact well with other boys their age, learning to set goals and accomplish them, and absolutely to have fun in doing all of these things. Language use is an important part of scouting; in all of the above topics, and of course when reciting the Scout Slogan, Motto, Law, and last, but not hardly least, the Scout Oath.

“On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”

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