



ADULT LEADERSHIP

For some, an understanding of the concept of leadership comes from reading a reference document or using a search engine to find a suitable definition. Frequently this is what someone famous has said about the subject, or a definition that has been put together through someone's experience in a situation associated with leadership.

A brief analysis of the accepted definitions of leadership reveals that most tend to focus on individual traits and characteristics. Prominent personalities have their own views and have defined leadership in a way that identifies behaviors that demonstrates authority, control, responsibility, or earning and retaining the trust of others. For example:

"Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." (Northouse, 2010, p. 3, Leadership: Theory and Practice)

Leadership is defined in so many ways that it is hard to come up with a single working definition. An understanding of leadership is not complete without an understanding of the interactions between a leader and their followers.

Leadership is a continuous process, with the accomplishment of one goal often marking the beginning of a new goal. Proper recognition by the leader of the work that those reporting to them are doing is of utmost importance to continually motivate them in the process. This is particularly important when undertaking roles such as being a facilitator, supporter and developer of those individuals and teams.

The Collaborative Process of Leadership

Leadership is also a collaborative process to facilitate change towards a shared purpose. This is one of the special attributes of the *Leadership in Scouting Model*. This process has three main aspects:

- **Establishing a Vision.** Deliberate betterment of society – in line with the purpose of Scouting – is dependent on a view of what the desired future looks like in contrast to the present. This does not mean that the vision has to be fully formed before taking action, nor that it is developed by one individual only (before engaging others). Rather the implication is that leadership requires setting a direction, to enable its pursuit through deliberate action.
- **Engaging and Empowering Others.** Communicating and refining the vision with others, and creating joint commitment to fulfilling it. Leadership is consequently defined as involving more than one person, and the people involved could play several different roles during the process.
- **Facilitating Change towards the Purpose.** The purpose of Scouting assumes a realized betterment of society through concrete change. Leadership hence requires action.



Leadership is a Process

Regardless of what our perception of leadership in Scouting is, it plays a vital role in ensuring that young people are given opportunities to develop and grow through an exciting youth programme, supported at all levels by competent adults.

While our leadership responsibilities may differ whether at unit level or in another capacity or management function, everyone who undertakes a leadership role comes to Scouting with a set of individual characteristics and traits based on his/her beliefs and value systems, that together add value in providing leadership that is as diverse as the people themselves. It is that diversity and individual difference that makes leadership in Scouting unique.

Styles of Leadership in Scouting

Leadership in Scouting can be distinguished from other leadership thinking through a unique combination of the following characteristics:

- **Values-based Purpose.** Scouting is based on the vision of creating a better world through its inclusive values. These values are both embedded in and expressed through the Scout Promise and Law, and guide the actions of Scouts in their undertakings
- **Empowerment of Individuals.** Scouting empowers young people as autonomous and responsible individuals, with well-developed personal meaning and understanding of the self. This also includes executive functions such as conscientiousness, self-confidence, persistence, resilience, and self-discipline, among others

- **Collaboration with Others.** People with leadership roles and the other participants collaborate towards a shared purpose. All take an active role, and the leadership roles fluctuate between people depending on the situation
- **Process of Learning by Doing.** Scouts take action to facilitate change towards the purpose, but the process is simultaneously an opportunity for learning and development of others



Characteristics of the Leadership in Scouting

Scouting's values base, its active demonstration of learning by doing, its collaboration with others (both young people and adults), and its strong emphasis on the empowerment of individuals sets it apart as a unique leadership training institute. It encourages all involved at whatever age or level to grow through a developing leadership focus, and as adults our leadership example should always be first class and exemplary.

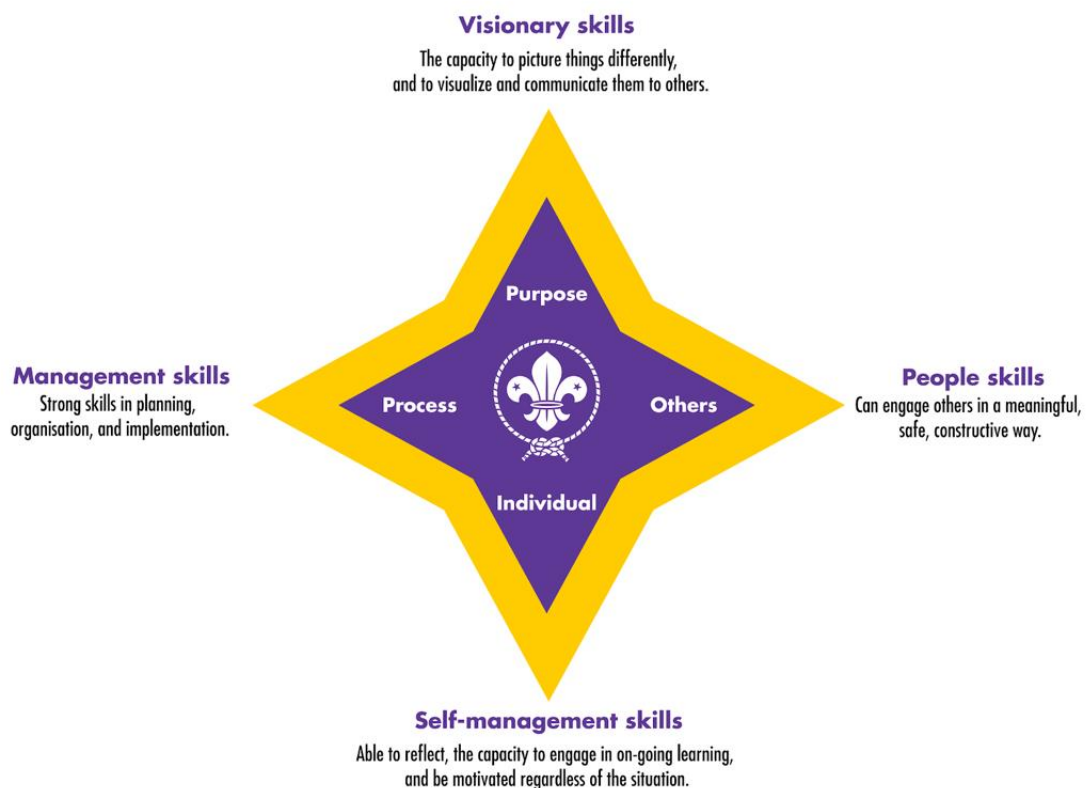
It is easy to access leadership models that can apply to Scouting. As a Movement we have been doing this for a long time. However, it all depends on the context of the application, as any model can be made to fit. All the external models can be useful in exploring leadership and extending our knowledge and understanding of what it is. While there have been numerous attempts over the years to describe a Scouting leadership model that we can call our own, it has been difficult to agree on a suitable one.

The Model of Leadership in Scouting

The Leadership in Scouting Model was developed after careful examination of and research into what Scouting leadership can be. The example is worth exploring.

The model has four dimensions from which we can derive four skills set:

- **Visionary Skills** (PURPOSE): the capacity to picture things differently, and to visualize and communicate them to others.
- **Management Skills** (PROCESS): strong skills in planning, organisation, and implementation.
- **People Skills** (OTHERS): can engage others in a meaningful, safe, constructive way.
- **Self-Management Skills** (INDIVIDUAL): able to reflect, the capacity to engage in on-going learning, and be motivated regardless of the situation.



Leadership in Scouting Model

There are significant resources available on-line in the area of leadership, and it should be the responsibility of every adult in Scouting to know everything they can about this important area, particularly when it comes to improving their own leadership to be the best that it can be.

WOSM Services, through the Adults in Scouting Service area, can provide additional support and provide other opportunities to explore this essential area of Scouting.



For an extra challenge, while looking at this chapter search for as many leadership models, styles and theories as you can find. See what you can discover about them, but more importantly what can you learn about yourself that will improve your leadership skills. Ask yourself this question: How can I be a better leader in Scouting?

Visit also:

[Further External Reading](#)

[World Scout Youth Programme Policy](#)

[WOSM - 21st Century Leadership](#)